

Public Document Pack



Executive Board

Thursday, 24 January 2013 2.00 p.m.
The Boardroom, Municipal Building

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R'.

Chief Executive

ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

PART 1

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1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
3. CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO	
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*Please contact Angela Scott on 0151 511 8670 or
Angela.scott@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 7 February 2013*

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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24 January 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Capital Programme – 2013/2014

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides an update of the schools capital programmes for 2013/14 for the Children & Enterprise Directorate.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the position in respect of the announcement of capital funding for 2013/14 be noted;**
- 2) the proposals to be carried out from Capital Maintenance be agreed; and**
- 3) a further report be submitted to Executive Board when capital allocations are confirmed.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Department for Education normally announce the schools capital grant allocations in December to enable local authorities to plan and implement capital programmes the following April. The Department for Education has recently advised local authorities that the capital allocations of Basic Need, Condition Maintenance and Devolved Formula Capital will be confirmed by the end of January 2013.

3.2 An important part of the capital programme is the Capital Maintenance Programme where key elements of school buildings are replaced in a rolling programme of works which include boiler and heating installations, electrical installations, window and roof replacement works.

3.3 Often these works can only be carried out during school holidays to minimise disruption to schools. In order for these works to be scoped and procured it is necessary for design work to be carried out in advance so that works can commence on site early in the financial year and to take advantage of school holidays at Easter and Summer. It is proposed to carry out the design works

in advance of the notification of capital allocations for those works detailed in Appendix 1.

- 3.4 A further report will be submitted to Executive Board when capital allocations are announced by the Department for Education detailing the proposals to be carried out as part of the Capital Programme 2013/14.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The capital maintenance element and the schools modernisation projects in the Capital Programme will allow the Council to continue to meet its requirement to enhance the learning environment through capital projects allocated in accordance with the priorities identified in the Asset Management Plan.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The capital maintenance programme will contribute to Halton's Carbon Management Programme by producing more energy efficient buildings.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Capital Programme will address condition and suitability issues within school buildings and will improve the learning environment for children and young people

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

N/A.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

6.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 It is necessary to carry out advance design works prior to the DfE notification of capital allocations in order to allow sufficient time for design, procurement and to carry out works. If the advance design was delayed there is a risk that it would not be possible for works to be carried out making best use of school holidays.

7.2 It is current practice for schools to contribute towards the cost of works. This consultation with schools has yet to take place therefore if schools are not willing to contribute these projects will not be carried out in 2013/14.

7.3 In the event that schools are unable to contribute towards the cost of the works when completed, an element of the contingency budget can be used for this purpose. The school would then be required to make their contribution in the next financial year.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Access Initiative Programme provided funding to authorities to improve the accessibility of mainstream schools for pupils with disabilities and the wider community. Consideration to access issues is given in all building projects. The capacity of schools to meet the needs of children with more complex needs and disabilities will be developed further through building works at schools.

9.0 REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 To deliver and implement the capital programmes.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 Not applicable.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 Capital Programmes to be implemented with effect from 1 April 2013.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Schools Capital Letter – DfE 08/11/2012	Children & Enterprise	Phil Dove

School	Description
The Bridge School	Boiler, Hot water heater and storage tank (phase 1 of 1)
Brookfields School	Swimming pool boilers and Air Handling Plant (phase 1 of 1)
Simms Cross School	Phase 3 Electrical work and lighting - Nursery & 1st floor room
Farnworth CE Primary School	Infant area Boiler and Radiators (phase 3 of 3)
Moorfield Primary School	Secondary return system to main supply.
Chesnut Lodge School	Heating distribution pipework and radiators to school (phase 1 of 2)
Gorsewood Primary School	Distribution Boards, Lighting, Emergency Lighting, power and ceiling replacement (phase 3 of 3 - Nursery area)

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24 January 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children & Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Re-designation and extension of age range at Ashley School

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides a summary of the outcome of the first phase of consultation on the re-designation and extension of age range at Ashley School. It identifies the key issues raised and seeks approval to commence statutory consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That Executive Board:

- 1) **Considers the response to the first phase of consultation;**
- 2) **Agrees to the revised post-16 capacity; and**
- 3) **Gives approval to proceed to statutory consultation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 3.1 The Council is committed to providing a range of Special Educational Needs services that can respond to the needs of individual pupils and takes into account parental preference. These services begin with mainstream provision within all schools. It is then complemented by Resource Base provision within particular schools. Finally, the Council has a range of specialist provision in Special schools. Such a diverse range of provision means that schools can cater for individual needs of Halton's children and young people
- 3.2 A gap in special school provision has, however, been identified for vulnerable pupils with a diagnosis of Autism and for those with identified Social Communication Needs who have a moderate to high learning ability. In addition, many of the parents/carers of these young people have expressed the view that the provision offered for these young people should be from 11-19 years.

- 3.3 The National Autistic Society (NAS) was commissioned to conduct a review of progress against the NAS report produced in 2008 and make further recommendations on improvements.
- 3.4 Two reports have been presented to the Executive Board one was in May 2012 and the other was in October 2012. The recommendations in sections 3.3 and 3.4 below were highlighted to members in the October 2012 report.
- 3.5 The NAS report in section 4.6.3 made the following recommendation:
Consider designating Ashley School as a Social Communication Needs and Autism 11 - 19 School. In this way, Halton Borough Council will be able to meet the needs locally of all pupils with Social Communication Needs and Autism in Halton, except those with autism and the most complex need.
- 3.6 In section 4.8.5 the NAS having identified a gap in provision, emphasises the need to extend provision and recommends that the council: *Consider extending the age range of provision within Special Schools to 19, with appropriate curricula and post 16 options. This would then match that provision currently used for some pupils in out of borough placements.*
- 3.7 The Executive Board gave its approval for phase one (informal) of the consultation process to begin on the re-designation of Ashley Special School as an 11-19 school for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC).
- 3.8 Approval was given to:
- (i) commence consultation on changing the age range and the designation of Ashley School; and
 - (ii) to set aside £450,000 from the Schools Capital Basic Need budget for 2012/13 and that an additional £50K be put aside from any future Education Capital budgets allocated for 2013/14 to address the adaptations that will be required.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The consultation timetable below was approved by members and the informal consultation closed on 7 December 2012.

18th October 2012	29th October 2012	7th December 2012
Executive Board meeting	Phase 1 of informal consultation commenced for 6 weeks	Consultation closes
24th January 2013	31st January 2013	28th March 2013
Executive Board	Phase 2 Statutory	Executive Board

meeting	consultation commences for 6 weeks	meet to determine the response to the proposal
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- 4.3 The consultation included: School Staff, Governors, schools, parents and carers, organisations supporting parents and carers, pupils, trade unions, neighbouring authorities, Riverside College, Diocesan authorities and Health representatives.
- 4.4 Consultation meetings were held with staff and governors. Pupils and parents were also consulted. A public meeting was held at the school on 8th November 2013. The notes of this meeting along with a map of provision, details of the proposal and a number of frequently asked questions were placed on the website for information.
- 4.5 The first phase of the consultation process to re-designate Ashley Special School closed on the 7th December 2012. 145 written responses were received and out of these 132 supported the proposal. 12 of the respondents did not support the proposal and 1 respondent did not indicate their position. A summary of the responses is attached at Appendix A.
- 4.6 A number of questions/issues were raised in the first phase of the consultation. Appendix B provides a summary of frequently asked questions following the consultation sessions. Appendix C summarises the written questions with the answers during the consultation.
- 4.7 The key issues raised during the consultation were as follows:
- the size of provision – would it be large enough;
 - training for staff;
 - expansion of the physical environment of the school;
 - increased choice;
 - whether the school would have to change its status to an Academy;
 - extension of the age range from 16 – 19; and
 - impact on the provision currently offered by Riverside College.

5.0 STATUTORY PROPOSAL

- 5.1 The re-designation and expansion of the age range at Ashley provides the Local Authority with the opportunity to address a gap in provision and ensures children and young people in Halton have access to appropriate provision within their community.

5.2 Executive Board is asked to consider the responses received to the consultation and give approval to the commencement of statutory consultation on 31st January 2013.

5.3 The statutory proposal will seek views on the following:

- Re-designation of Ashley School so that it can cater for vulnerable pupils, with a diagnosis of Autism and for those with identified Social Communication Needs who have a moderate to high learning ability;
- Provision of 70 places for pupils aged 11-16; and
- Extension of the age range to 19 with the provision of up to a maximum of 42 post-16 places

5.4 A full copy of the proposed statutory notice and proposal is attached in Appendix D and E.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 £450,000 from the Schools Capital Basic Need budget for 2012/13 and an additional £50K has been reserved from the capital budget to address the adaptations. A detailed feasibility study will be undertaken to identify the costs, the phasing and the timescale required for any capital development.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As a result of the review of special educational needs provision in the Borough the cohort of young people at Ashley has been gradually changing. There has been a reduction in numbers as many young people are now able to access appropriate provision in mainstream schools and resource provision settings. In addition, the school now has an increasing number of young people on role with Autism and Social Communication Needs.

7.2 To ensure improved provision for children and young people at Ashley there will be a need to further develop resources and the learning environment along with the skills and expertise of staff.

8.0 Implications for the Council's Priorities

8.1 Children and young people

The re-designation of Ashley school will ensure that children and young people placed in this provision will be not isolated from their peers and their local communities. This will have a positive impact on their achievement and well-being. Investment in the Ashley School re-designation will benefit local children and their families, and ensure opportunities for inclusion and sustained contact with their communities.

8.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The capital development will provide some opportunities for local businesses and this will make a positive contribution to the local economy

8.3 A Healthy Halton

The re-designation of Ashley school will allow for multi-agency working on the site. Health professionals will ensure the health and well- being of pupils are promoted and supported.

8.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

9.1 The re-designation of Ashley Scholl will ensure an inclusive and coherent approach to matching the needs of children and young with ASC locally. The quality of the provision will meet NAS standards and currently Ashley School is judged as a good school by Ofsted. Parents and carers will have a better choice of high quality provision for their children locally.

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

10.1 A gap in provision has been identified for vulnerable pupils with a diagnosis of Autism and for those with identified Social Communication Needs who have a moderate to high learning ability.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 No change to the current provision was considered however this was rejected as it would not address the gap in provision identified and the views of the majority of the consultees.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

12.1 The next phase of the consultation is scheduled to commence on 31st January 2013 for 6 weeks.

13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
NAS Report April 2012	Rutland House	Steve Nyakatawa

Executive Board Reports – May and October 2012	Halton Borough Council Website	As above
Phase 1 Consultation documents	HBC website	As above

000000ASHLEY RE-DESIGNATION FEEDBACK RESPONSES - 2012

Respondent	School / Other	Yes	No
Councillor	LA	Y	
Councillor	Halton Castle Ward	Y	
Guardian	Grange	Y	
Parent	Brookfields	Y	
not specified	Weston Point	Y	
Parent	The Brow	Y	
Parent	Bankfield	Y	
Parent	Oakfield	Y	
Grandparent	Simms Cross (Y1 ASD)	Y	
Parent	Ashley School	Y	
Parent	The Grange	Y	
Governor/Staff	Ashley School	Y	
Staff		Y	
Staff		Y	
Staff		Y	
Staff	Ashley School	Y	
Staff	Ashley School	Y	
Staff			N
Staff	Ashley School	Y	
Staff		Y	
Staff		Y	
Parent	Chesnut Lodge	Y	
Parent/Carer/ Guardian/ Halton Resident	Cavendish	Y	
Headteacher	Cavendish	Y	
Halton Resident	Halton Autistic Family Support Group supporting 100 members	Y	
Parent	Brookfields	Y	
Parent	The Grange	Y	
Parent	Ashley School	Y	
Parent	Brookfields	Y	
Parent	Brookfields	Y	
Parent	Sts Peter & Paul	Y	
Carer	Ashley School	Y	

Appendix A

000000ASHLEY RE-DESIGNATION FEEDBACK RESPONSES - 2012

Chair of Governors	Ashley	Y	
Governor	Ashley	Y	
Other	CHAPS	Y	
Parent	Ashley	Y	
not specified	Sts Peter & Paul	?	
Parents	Ashley	Y	
Parent	Sts Peter & Paul	Y	
Parent	St Edwards Catholic Primary	Y	
Staff		Y	
Staff/Governor	Ashley	Y	
Staff		Y	
Parent	Ashley		N
Staff		Y	
Staff		Y	
	Ashley	Y	
Staff/Governor	Ashley	Y	
Staff	Ashley	Y	
Staff		Y	
Staff	Ashley	Y	
Staff		Y	
Staff	Ashley	Y	
Staff	Ashley	Y	
Other (Pupil)	Ashley		N
Other (Pupil)	Ashley	Y	
Other (Pupil)	Ashley	Y	
Other (Pupil)	Ashley		N
Other (Pupil)	Ashley		N
Other	Ashley	Y	
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Pupil	Ashley		N
Pupil	Ashley		N
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Student	Ashley	Y	

000000ASHLEY RE-DESIGNATION FEEDBACK RESPONSES - 2012

Chair of CYP Voluntary Sector Forum	Manager, Canal Boat Adventure Project	Y	
Parent	Ashley	Y	
Parent		Y	
Parent/Carer	Murdishaw West Primary	Y	
Parents	Hillview School.	Y	
Governor		Y	
Staff	Ashley School	Y	
Staff		Y	
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Staff	Ashley	Y	
Staff		Y	
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Pupil	Ashley	Y	
Foster Carer	Ashley	Y	
Parent	Riverside College		N
Parent	St Bede's Junior	Y	
Parent	Brookfields		N
Parent CHAPS	OBA - at present home schooling	Y	
Parent CHAPS	Palacefields	Y	
Parent CHAPS	Murdishaw West	Y	
Parent CHAPS	Simms Cross	Y	
Parent CHAPS	All Saints Upton CofE Primary	Y	
Governor	Ashley School	Y	
Parent	St Basil's and Brookfields	Y	
Autism and Transition Lead	Halton Communities Directorate	Y	
Deputy on behalf of Riverside College	Riverside College		N
NHS Merseyside	Lead for complex care commissioning	Y	
Head of School	The Grange Primary	Y	
Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher	Brookfields School	Y	

000000ASHLEY RE-DESIGNATION FEEDBACK RESPONSES - 2012

	Woodview Child Development Team	Y	
Executive Headteacher	The Grange	Y	
LA	ASD Specialist Teacher	Y	
Halton Resident	Ditton Primary	Y	
	Retired Headteacher St Ambrose Catholic Primary School	Y	
Parent of autistic young person	Retired police officer	Y	
Other	Retired School Advisor, current School Governor	Y	
LA	SEN Officer	Y	
LA	SEN Officer	Y	
LA	SEN Officer	Y	
	TOTALS	132	12

Appendix B

Proposal to change the age range and re-designate Ashley School

Frequently Asked Questions

(1) Will extending the age range at Ashley to 19 impacts on the total numbers of LDD students attending Riverside College?

There has been an increase in the number of learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities in recent years. In 2010/2011 there were approximately 74 Halton students attending different post-16 establishments. The estimated number for 2013/2014 is 117. In 2012/2013 Riverside College has been funded for 50 learners. In 2013/2014 the estimated figure is 51.

(2) When will Ashley start to offer post-16 places?

Ashley current offer provision for pupils aged 11-16 years old. In order to provide quality post-16 provision both the environment and the curriculum will need to be developed. The current school premises will need to be extended and remodelled. This will be undertaken in 2013/2014 so that post-16 provision can be offered from September 2014.

(3) Will all Ashley pupils stay on at the school until they are 19?

The most appropriate post-16 provision for any current Ashley pupil will be determined at the annual review of the statement of SEN and will be based on the individual needs of the young people and the place that best meets these needs.

(4) How do I know which is the most suitable school for my child?

The most suitable schools is the one that offers the most appropriate curriculum for your child and allows your child to learn and make progress with other children with similar needs.

(5) What is the offer at Cavendish?

Cavendish has consistently offered an outstanding curriculum as reflected in the past three OfSTED Reports. Currently we run 3 personalised curriculum routes:

Years 7 & 8 follow the National Curriculum including core subjects of English, Maths & Science also PHSE & ICT. Other subjects such as History & Geography, Art, Design & Technology etc as umbrella subject coverage i.e.

Creative Arts or Humanities. The curriculum is delivered in a similar way to the primary school model with, currently three teachers offering the curriculum range.

Years 8, 9, 10 & 11 continue to follow the national curriculum however this is delivered as a modular approach and includes accreditation routes. The accreditation routes range from ASDAN, AQA or GVNQ to GCSE dependent on the students assessed ability. Qualifications tend to be ASDAN and AQA as these are pre-entry accreditations to GCSE and GVNQ. Media and Hospitality and Catering are particular strengths in the school and we are well equipped with computers, tablets and digital technology; the school has a home economics room where students can study catering.

Years 12 & 13 follow a vocational curriculum. This is a curriculum designed to prepare students to leave school and onwards to either further education colleges, employment or bespoke packages. They continue to follow the above accreditation routes however also complete an Employability accreditation. Employability focuses on Communication & Literacy, rather than English and Functional Numeracy rather than Mathematics. The Basic Skills qualification offered is recognised as a GCSE equivalent in numeracy and English. This course is similar to that offered in Colleges to adults who did not achieve GCSEs whilst at school.

There is a further curriculum which is offered to our students who require highly personalised learning and is completely tailored to the individual. This is a Functional Skills Curriculum and focuses on access skills including developing flexibility of thought and thinking skills. The accreditation routes are the same and the students will access the subjects and subject specialist teachers through bespoke timetabling.

Underpinning all learning in school is the development of students' communication skills and we currently have two Speech & Language Therapists who deliver individual and group language sessions across the school.

What is the offer at Ashley?

At Ashley School we offer a broad and balanced curriculum. We ensure that all students have equal access to a wide range of experiences and subsequent development of skills. The culture of Ashley School ensures that all pupils, regardless of their gender, social or cultural background or ability are able to access the full curriculum.

Our fundamental purpose is to ensure that high quality learning takes place through a curriculum suited to the different needs of all students bearing in mind the requirements of the National Curriculum.

In Key Stage 3 & 4, students study all subjects that are their entitlement within National Curriculum guidelines.

At Key Stage 4 students are offered accreditation, Students follow courses which reflect their academic ability,

English	GCSE or Entry Level
Maths	GCSE or Entry Level
Science	GCSE or Entry Level
ICT	Functional Skills L1, L2, Entry Level 2 & 3
Art & Design (Fine Art)	GCSE
Art & Design (Textiles)	GCSE
Sports Leader	Level 1 & Level 2
Drama	Entry Level
Food Technology	Entry Level
Child Care	Entry Level
Design Technology	Entry Level
Motor Vehicle	Entry Level
ASDAN Youth Award	Bronze & Silver Award

CCA(Construction Awards Alliance) Level 1

Pupils at Ashley School are encouraged to join in the varied range of activities both within and outside school hours. Ashley Adventurers, Outdoor Learning and lunchtime ICT, Art and Pool Club.

I live in Runcorn but would like my child to attend Ashley school is this possible?

Your child could attend Ashley, regardless of your location in the borough, if the school curriculum and provision met your child's needs.

I live in Widnes but would like my child to attend Cavendish is this possible?

Your child could attend Cavendish, regardless of your location in the borough, if the school curriculum and provision met your child's needs.

Can my child attend Riverside College for post-16 provision?

The college has extensive provision for students with special educational needs and learning difficulties if this provision met your child's needs it would be possible for them to attend.

Riverside College Provision

Riverside College offers both specialist and mainstream provision from Entry level to level 3 (equivalent to A level). Foundation Studies offers an individually tailored programme which focuses on developing life skills and employability. All students undertake work placements as part of their preparation for employment and complete targeted qualifications. The department specialises in MLD, ASD and social and emotional difficulties. For those students accessing College mainstream provision (Vocational or A level) targeted one to one support is put in place.

Responses to pre-statutory consultation

Will Ashley be regarded as a "new" school? If so will it have to be established as an Academy?

It will not be a new school. It will remain a community special school.

Is it big enough? Would it provide summer clubs?

If this proposal is approved, Halton will no longer have a gap in its provision for children and young people with social communication and autism needs. Currently the range of provision includes, mainstream with support, specialist resourced bases in mainstream schools and special school provision. This will be sufficient to meet demand for the foreseeable future.

Have you got the trained staff?

The Staff are in the process of undertaking extensive training and professional development to ensure they have the expertise and skills required to meet the needs of the changing cohort at Ashley School.

Would it provide summer clubs?

Holiday support could be considered as part of the extended school offer.

Will MLD (Mild Learning Difficulties) children still be accepted at Ashley?

The current cohort of MLD pupils will continue to be supported at Ashley School. If the re-designation is agreed, Ashley School will look to accept pupils with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) with specific language, social and communication needs.

Support for MLD pupils will however be available in mainstream schools.

Will the authority guarantee finance, resources, staff support?

The school will be funded through the High Needs funding formula.

Training and support will be provided for staff.

The learning environment of the school will be adapted as appropriate to meet the needs of the pupils. Capital funding has already been set aside to fund this work if the re-designation/extension is agreed.

The local authority will continue to support the school so that it gains National Autistic Society (NAS) accreditation.

Will this be an addition to the options already available to young people?

The Ashley re-designation is vital to ensuring a continuum of provision in Halton for pupils with specific language, social and communication needs and autism.

This is, therefore, an addition to existing provision.

A central claim is that the creation of 51 places for ages 16-19 at Ashley School will bring back into the borough students who currently attend institutions elsewhere.

The proposal is to address a gap in provision for vulnerable children and young people (ages 11-19) with a diagnosis of autism and identified social communication needs within Halton Borough Special School Provision.

Following the first phase of the consultation it has been proposed that the number of places for students aged 16-19 be reduced from 51 to 42 so that it is more closely aligned to the places offered from 11-16.

Since it is proposed that a re-designated Ashley School would offer 51 places for ages 16 -19 we are deeply concerned that the additional students will be those currently studying at Riverside College.

Under the existing arrangements 45% of Ashley pupils transfer to Riverside College.

At transition from Key Stage 2 parents look for 11-19 provision as they believe this provides stability and continuity for their children. Many of the parents of vulnerable children with a diagnosis of ASD and identified social communication needs have indicated that they would want 11- 19 special school provision.

More recently there has been an increase in vulnerable children with a diagnosis of ASD and identified social communication needs accessing Ashley. This is evidenced by the change in pupil needs of those transferring to Ashley. It is anticipated that over the next few years Ashley will be entirely populated with these young people. It is therefore anticipated that the young people that would have previously attended Ashley and transferred to the College will be educated within the mainstream provision in Halton are likely to move through to the college from another route.

Over the past four years the College has worked very closely with Halton Borough Council to build up post- 16 provision for students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD)

It is acknowledged that the college has worked closely with HBC to develop good effective post 16 provision for students with LLDD. It is anticipated that the offer from Ashley will complement this provision as it is aimed at supporting a different

cohort of young people, those with a diagnosis of Autism and identified Social Communication needs that are vulnerable and require ASC specific provision 16-19 delivered in a small school setting.

Data received by the college from officers of Halton Borough Council does not support the claim that the re-designation of Ashley will reduce the number of young people aged 16-19 with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) placed in out of borough provision.

A number of factors have led the local authority to consider this proposal. These are as follows:

- i) The number of children on the ASD Pathway or on the waiting list to get a diagnosis;
- (ii) The gap in provision as expressed by parents;
- (iii) the increase in the number parents taking the local authority to tribunal on the grounds that there is a gap in provision;
- (iv) The independent review undertaken by the NAS which highlighted the gap in provision;
- (v) the number of young people aged 11-19 in out of borough provision.

If the gap in provision is not addressed, parents will seek out of borough provision.

Over the past four years the College has worked in partnership with Halton Borough Council to build up post -16 provision for students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD). Independent external assessment of Riverside College's provision for people with LLDD indicates it is grade 1 outstanding.

The proposal to re-designate Ashley School puts at risk all that has been achieved in recent years and may make college provision for students with LLDD unviable.

We acknowledge that provision at Riverside College is excellent for the majority of students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD). However, parents have expressed a view that there is a gap in provision for vulnerable young people with a diagnosis of autism and identified social communication needs.

It is hoped that Riverside College and Ashley School can work together to provide the best possible offer for our young people.

45% of Ashley pupils transfer to the College and it is important to note the change in the pupils now being admitted to Ashley. More vulnerable pupils with a diagnosis of

ASC and identified social communication needs are being admitted to Ashley School.

Following phase 1 informal consultations and further analysis of the data regarding demand for ASC specialism post 16 the capacity has been reduced from 51 to 42.

Parents are making representations for more specialist provision in advance of Year 11 and this is their right under the statutory processes.

The proposal to re-designate Ashley School is based, to a significant extent, on the recommendations put forward by the National Autistic Society (NAS).

Given the failure of the NAS researchers to assess provision at the College, it is not reasonable to place reliance on their recommendations in so far as they relate to post- 16 education in the borough.

The gap in provision had already been identified through feedback from parents and the number of parental appeals and cases taken to SENDIST were increasing. The NAS review tested this out with schools/parents and pupils and confirmed the overwhelming view is that there is a gap in provision in Halton from 11-19.

The College would have appreciated consultation on this proposal at a much earlier stage. Many aspects of the proposal remain unclear.

The college was consulted in line with other stake holders and will continue to be part of the consultation process.

We ask that this proposal be put on hold until it can be fully explored and understood by all parties.

Given that there is an acknowledgement by the parents, pupils and the school that a gap exists, the local authority needs to address this issue as soon as practicable. The provision must meet the needs of our children and young people, delaying the process means that some young people will not have the provision that meets their needs locally. In addition, the local authority will be vulnerable at any appeals that occur in the future.

Ideally we would like to develop a consensus with partners on the best way forward in this area.

In terms of the future, there will be the opportunity for close partnership working between the college and school - based provision.



Re-designation and extension of age range of Ashley School

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Halton Borough Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to Ashley School (Community Special School), Cawfield Avenue, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 7HG, from 01 September 2013.

The current provision is a 120 place school for children and young people aged 11-16 with Cognition and Learning (MLD) combined with the emotional and social aspects of behaviour, emotional and social development. It is proposed to establish provision at Ashley School for 112 children and young people aged 11-19. The school will cater for vulnerable pupils with a diagnosis of Autism and those with identified Social Communication Needs who have a moderate to high learning ability. There will be 70 places for ages 11 - 16 and 42 places for ages 16 – 19.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Ann McIntyre, Operational Director - Children Organisation and Provision, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, Cheshire. WA7 2GW. Telephone Number 0151 511 7332 or <http://www3.halton.gov.uk/news/newsroom/305542/>

Within six weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Mr M Reaney, Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes WA8 7QF.

Signed:

31st January 2013

PROPOSALS FOR PRESCRIBED ALTERATIONS OTHER THAN FOUNDATION PROPOSALS: Information to be included in or provided in relation to proposals

Insert the information asked for in the expandable box below each section.

In respect of a Governing Body Proposal: School and governing body's details

1. The name, address and category of the school for which the governing body are publishing the proposals.

N/A

In respect of an LEA Proposal: School and local education authority details

1. The name, address and category of the school and a contact address for the local education authority who are publishing the proposals.

The school is Ashley School, Cawfield Avenue, Widnes, Cheshire. WA8 7HG. The category of the school is a Community Special School.

The Local Education Authority publishing the proposal is Halton Borough Council, Kingsway, Widnes, WA8 7QF.

Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation

2. The date on which the proposals are planned to be implemented, and if they are to be implemented in stages, a description of what is planned for each stage, and the number of stages intended and the dates of each stage.

The proposals are planned to be implemented September 2013 for the re-designation and September 2014 for the commencement of Post-16 provision.

Objections and comments

3. A statement explaining the procedure for making representations, including—
- (a) the date by which objections or comments should be sent to the local education authority; and
 - (b) the address of the authority to which objections or comments should be sent.

Part (a)

The publication date of the statutory notice is 31st January 2013. There will be a six week representation period.

Part (b)

All comments must be put in writing to Mr M Reaney, Operational Director - Legal & Democratic Services, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes WA8 7QF

Alteration description

4. A description of the proposed alteration and in the case of special school proposals, a description of the current special needs provision.

It is proposed to establish provision at Ashley School for 112 children and young people aged 11-19 with complex social communication needs and autism.

- 70 places for ages 11 - 16
- 42 places for ages 16 - 19

The current provision is a 120 place school for children and young people aged 11-16 with Cognition and Learning (MLD) combined with the emotional and social aspects of behaviour, emotional and social development.

School capacity

5.—(1) Where the alteration is an alteration falling within any of paragraphs 1 to 4, 8, 9 and 12-14 of Schedule 2 or paragraphs 1-4, 7, 8, 18, 19 and 21 of Schedule 4 to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007, the proposals must also include—

- (a) details of the current capacity of the school and where the proposals will alter the capacity of the school, the proposed capacity of the school after the alteration;

Current capacity 120 places for children and young people aged 11-16.

It is proposed to establish provision at Ashley School for 112 children and young people aged 11-19. The school will cater for vulnerable pupils with a diagnosis of Autism and those with identified Social Communication Needs who have a moderate to high learning ability. There will be

- 70 places for ages 11 - 16
- 42 places for ages 16 - 19

- (b) details of the current number of pupils admitted to the school in each relevant age group, and where this number is to change, the proposed number of pupils to be admitted in each relevant age group in the first school year in which the proposals will have been implemented;

Based on the October 2012 School Census the pupil numbers at Ashley School were as follows:

Year 7 – 7 Pupils

Year 8 – 13 Pupils

Year 9 – 14 Pupils

Year 10 – 16 Pupils

Year 11 – 18 Pupils

- (c) where it is intended that proposals should be implemented in stages, the number of pupils to be admitted to the school in the first school year in which each stage will have been implemented;

It is anticipated the post-16 provision will not be offered until September 2014.

- (d) where the number of pupils in any relevant age group is lower than the indicated admission number for that relevant age group a statement to this effect and details of the indicated admission number in question.

As above

(2) Where the alteration is an alteration falling within any of paragraphs 1, 2, 9, 12 and 13 to 4, and 7 and 8 of Schedule 2 or paragraphs 1, 2, 8, 18 and 19 of Schedule 4 to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 a statement of the number of pupils at the school at the time of the publication of the proposals.

On the October 2012 Pupil School Census, Ashley School had 68 pupils

Implementation

6. Where the proposals relate to a foundation or voluntary controlled school a statement as to whether the proposals are to be implemented by the local education authority or by the governing body, and, if the proposals are to be implemented by both, a statement as to the extent to which they are to be implemented by each body.

N/A

Additional Site

7.—(1) A statement as to whether any new or additional site will be required if proposals are implemented and if so the location of the site if the school is to occupy a split site.

N/A

(2) Where proposals relate to a foundation or voluntary school a statement as to who will provide any additional site required, together with details of the tenure (freehold or leasehold) on which the site of the school will be held, and if the site is to be held on a lease, details of the proposed lease.

N/A

Changes in boarding arrangements

8.—(1) Where the proposals are for the introduction or removal of boarding provision, or the alteration of existing boarding provision such as is mentioned in paragraph 7 or 14 of Schedule 2 or 4 to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 —

- (a) the number of pupils for whom it is intended that boarding provision will be made if the proposals are approved;

N/A

- (b) the arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children at the school;

N/A

- (c) the current number of pupils for whom boarding provision can be made and a description of the boarding provision;

N/A

- (d) except where the proposals are to introduce boarding provision, a description of the existing boarding provision.

N/A

(2) Where the proposals are for the removal of boarding provisions or an alteration to reduce boarding provision such as is mentioned in paragraph 7 or 14 of Schedule 2 or 4 to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 —

- (a) the number of pupils for whom boarding provision will be removed if the proposals are approved;

N/A

- (b) a statement as to the use to which the former boarding accommodation will be put if the proposals are approved.

N/A

Transfer to new site

9. Where the proposals are to transfer a school to a new site the following information—

- (a) the location of the proposed site (including details of whether the school is to occupy a single or split site), and including where appropriate the postal address;

N/A

- (b) the distance between the proposed and current site;

N/A

- (c) the reason for the choice of proposed site;

N/A

- (d) the accessibility of the proposed site or sites;

N/A

- (e) the proposed arrangements for transport of pupils to the school on its new site;

N/A

- (f) a statement about other sustainable transport alternatives where pupils are not using transport provided, and how car use in area will be discouraged.

N/A

Objectives

10. The objectives of the proposals.

To create a secondary Autism specific provision for vulnerable pupils with higher ability diagnosed as having Autism and Social Communication Needs. The age range will be 11-19, within the context of an existing maintained day special school in Halton Borough.

Consultation

- 11.** Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including—
- (a) a list of persons who were consulted;
 - (b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
 - (c) the views of the persons consulted;
 - (d) a statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements in relation to the proposals to consult were complied with; and
 - (e) Copies of all consultation documents and a statement on how these documents were made available.

Part (a)

The following people were consulted as part of the consultation:

Staff and Governors
Pupils and parents
Halton Schools
Trade Unions
Local Colleges
Elected Members
Executive Board
Other Neighbouring Authorities
Diocesan Authorities
NHS Merseyside
Public Health - Eileen O'Meara
Powerful Voices – Alison Upham
Adult Services – Dwayne Johnson
Parent Partnership – Jenny Nuttall
Children's Trust Board Members
Voluntary Sector Lead – Norma Horny (Canal Boat Project)
HAFS
CHAPS (Chester Aspergers Parent Support)
Independent Providers

Part (b)

The minutes of the public consultation meetings are available on the website. Three separate meetings were held for Staff, Governors and the public/parents.

Information was posted and distributed to schools, placed on public notices in all schools and key information points such as Children Centres, Direct Links and on the website

Project costs

12. A statement of the estimated total capital cost of the proposals and the breakdown of the costs that are to be met by the governing body, the local education authority, and any other party.

The estimated cost is £500,000 and will be met through the Local Authority Capital allocation.

13. A copy of confirmation from the Secretary of State, local education authority and the Learning and Skills Council for England (as the case may be) that funds will be made available (including costs to cover any necessary site purchase).

N/A

Age range

14. Where the proposals relate to a change in age range, the current age range for the school.

11-16 year olds

Early years provision

15. Where the proposals are to alter the lower age limit of a mainstream school so that it provides for pupils aged between 2 and 5—

- (a) details of the early years provision, including the number of full-time and part-time pupils, the number and length of sessions in each week, and the services for disabled children that will be offered;

N/A

- (b) how the school will integrate the early years provision with childcare services and how the proposals are consistent with the integration of early years provision for childcare;

N/A

- (c) evidence of parental demand for additional provision of early years provision;

N/A

- (d) assessment of capacity, quality and sustainability of provision in schools and in establishments other than schools who deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage within 3 miles of the school;

N/A

- (e) reasons why such schools and establishments who have spare capacity cannot make provision for any forecast increase in the number of such provision.

N/A

Changes to sixth form provision

16. (1) Where the proposals are to alter the upper age limit of the school so that the school provides sixth form education or additional sixth form education, a statement of how the proposals will—

- (a) improve the educational or training achievements;
- (b) increase participation in education or training; and
- (c) expand the range of educational or training opportunities for 16-19 year olds in the area.

To provide an Autism specific provision for vulnerable pupils with higher ability as well as Autism and Social Communication Needs. Age range 11-19, within the context of an existing maintained day special school in Halton Borough. This will fulfil an unmet need and parental preference within the Borough.

(2) Where the proposals are to alter the upper age limit of the school so that the school will provide sixth form education, the proposed number of sixth form places to be provided.

42

17. Where the proposals are to alter the upper age limit of the school so that the school ceases to provide sixth form education, a statement of the effect on the supply of 16-19 places in the area.

Special educational needs

18. Where the proposals are to establish or change provision for special educational needs—

- (a) a description of the proposed types of learning difficulties in respect of which education will be provided and, where provision for special educational needs already exists, the current type of provision;

The provision will meet the needs of vulnerable children & young people with a diagnosis of Autism and Social Communications needs. These children and young people will be unable to access the existing provision because they will be deemed as too vulnerable to be supported within the context of mainstream resource based provision and too able to access the existing 11-19 Special School provision

- (b) any additional specialist features will be provided;

Workshops and life skills block

(c) the proposed numbers of pupils for which the provision is to be made;

112

(d) details of how the provision will be funded;

Local Authority Capital allocation and schools own budget

(e) a statement as to whether the education will be provided for children with special educational needs who are not registered pupils at the school to which the proposals relate;

Opportunities for partnership working with the local FE college and 6th forms will be explored.

(f) a statement as to whether the expenses of the provision will be met from the school's delegated budget;

The provision will be funded through the DSG high needs block.

(g) the location of the provision if it is not to be established on the existing site of the school;

N/A

(h) where the provision will replace existing educational provision for children with special educational needs, a statement as to how the local education authority believes that the new provision is likely to lead to improvement in the standard, quality and range of the educational provision for such children;

Provision for children & young people with Cognition & Learning and BESD can be met from within the context of mainstream secondary provision within Halton

(i) the number of places reserved for children with special educational needs, and where this number is to change, the proposed number of such places.

The school capacity will change from 120 to 112.

19. Where the proposals are to discontinue provision for special educational needs—

- (a) details of alternative provision for pupils for whom the provision is currently made;

Mainstream secondary high schools with additional resources via place plus and enhanced provision where appropriate

- (b) details of the number of pupils for whom provision is made that is recognised by the local education authority as reserved for children with special educational needs during each of the 4 school years preceding the current school year;

January 2012 - 76
January 2011 - 78
January 2010 - 83
January 2009 - 93

- (c) details of provision made outside the area of the local education authority for pupils whose needs will not be able to be met in the area of the authority as a result of the discontinuance of the provision;

N/A

- (d) a statement as to how the authority believe that the proposals are likely to lead to improvement in the standard, quality and range of the educational provision for such children.

The proposal would ensure small group teaching, Autism specific and accredited provision, with a curriculum and environment differentiated to address the learning style and needs of vulnerable children and young people with a diagnosis of Autism and specific needs in the area of social communication.

20. Where the proposals will lead to alternative provision for children with special educational needs, as a result of the establishment, alteration or discontinuance of existing provision, the specific educational benefits that will flow from the proposals in terms of—

- (a) improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment with reference to the local education authority's Accessibility Strategy;
- (b) improved access to specialist staff, both educational and other professionals, including any external support and outreach services;
- (c) improved access to suitable accommodation; and
- (d) improved supply of suitable places.

- a) The numbers of pupils with Cognition & BESD attending the provision are

diminishing as greater opportunities are made for them within mainstream provision. Wider social opportunities as well as a wider curriculum choice made available leading to greater opportunities for independence within appropriately differentiated learning environment

- b) Local Authority maintained support staff will continue to be made available to support and guide staff as well as the opportunity for assessment and monitoring through statutory processes.
- c) Mainstream High Schools currently provide support and accommodation to meet this category of need for many other young people within the Borough
- d) Places currently available

Sex of pupils

21. Where the proposals are to make an alteration to provide that a school which was an establishment which admitted pupils of one sex only becomes an establishment which admits pupils of both sexes—

- (a) details of the likely effect which the alteration will have on the balance of the provision of single sex education in the area;

N/A

- (b) evidence of local demand for single-sex education;

N/A

- (c) details of any transitional period which the body making the proposals wishes specified in a transitional exemption order (within the meaning of section 27 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975).

N/A

22. Where the proposals are to make an alteration to a school to provide that a school which was an establishment which admitted pupils of both sexes becomes an establishment which admits pupils of one sex only—

- (a) details of the likely effect which the alteration will have on the balance of the provision of single-sex education in the area;

N/A

- (b) evidence of local demand for single-sex education.

N/A

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Extended services

23. If the proposed alterations affect the provision of the school's extended services, details of the current extended services the school is offering and details of any proposed change as a result of the alterations.

N/A

Need or demand for additional places

24. If the proposals involve adding places—

- (a) a statement and supporting evidence of the need or demand for the particular places in the area;

N/A

- (b) where the school has a religious character, a statement and supporting evidence of the demand in the area for education in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination;

N/A

- (c) where the school adheres to a particular philosophy, evidence of the demand for education in accordance with the philosophy in question and any associated change to the admission arrangements for the school.

N/A

25. If the proposals involve removing places—

- (a) a statement and supporting evidence of the reasons for the removal, including an assessment of the impact on parental choice;

N/A

- (b) a statement on the local capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

N/A

Expansion of successful and popular schools

25A. (1) Proposals must include a statement of whether the proposer considers that the presumption for the expansion of successful and popular schools should apply, and where the governing body consider the presumption applies, evidence to support this.

(2) Sub-paragraph (1) applies to expansion proposals in respect of primary and secondary schools, (except for grammar schools), i.e. falling within:

(a) (for proposals published by the governing body) paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 to Schedule 2 and paragraphs 12 and 13 of Part 2 to Schedule 2; ;

(b) (for proposals published by the LA) paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 to Schedule 4.

of the Prescribed Alteration regulations.

(3) Whilst not required by regulations to provide this information for any LA proposals to expand a voluntary or foundation school, it is desirable to provide this below.

Additional information in the case of special schools

26. Where the proposals relate to a special school the following information must also be provided—

(a) information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of the pupils (distinguishing boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school;

Currently 120 co-educational 11-16 day special school

(b) information on the predicted rise or fall (as the case may be) in the number of children with particular types of special educational needs requiring specific types of special educational provision;

(c)

There is currently an increase in children & young people in Halton being assessed as having needs along the continuum of Autism and Social Communication. In the recent review of Special Educational Needs in Halton specialist provision has been re-designated to respond to this trend.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of children & young people diagnosed with Moderate Learning Difficulties and an increase in the diagnosis of Autism and Social Communication Needs

Halton has developed a multi-agency pathway approach to the diagnosis of Autism and Social Communication disorders. There are currently 91 children referred to this pathway and we anticipate that a percentage of these will fall into the vulnerable higher ability bracket.

- (d) a statement about the alternative provision for pupils who may be displaced as a result of the alteration;

Pupils will be accommodated alongside age appropriate peers within the context of maintained secondary provision in Halton.

- (e) where the proposals would result in the school being organised to make provision for pupils with a different type or types of special educational needs with the result that the provision which would be made for pupils currently at the school would be inappropriate to their needs, details of the other schools which such pupils may attend including any interim arrangements and transport arrangements to such schools;

Existing pupils will remain at the provision until 16. From 2014 the most appropriate post 16 provision will be determined at the Annual Review of the statement of SEN.

- (f) where the proposals relate to a foundation special school a statement as to whether the proposals are to be implemented by the local education authority or by the governing body, and if the proposals are to be implemented by both, a statement as to the extent to which they are to be implemented by each body.

N/A

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24th January 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Communities

PORTFOLIO: Communities

SUBJECT: The Cheshire Police and Crime Plan – Making Cheshire an even safer place to live

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To brief Members on the draft Police and Crime Plan for Cheshire 2013 – 2016 - Making Cheshire an even safer place to live

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members note and approve the response to the Plan as detailed in section 6.0.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, Police & Crime Commissioners must produce a Police & Crime Plan for their area for the term in which they will be in office.

3.2 Following the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in November 2012, the draft Police and Crime Plan has been developed for Cheshire and sets out the Commissioner's objectives during his period of office for consultation.

3.3 The development of the Plan has taken into account a range of information regarding local and national priorities through a stakeholder analysis. The stakeholder analysis pulls together information from a number of sources in order to meet the statutory requirements for producing the plan, including:

- Public priorities (beat meeting priorities, focus groups, formal Consultation processes and public surveys);
- The Constabulary's' Strategic assessment (including an assessment Of current demand, performance levels, risk and environmental scanning);
- Partnership priorities; and
- National drivers including legislation, e.g. Home Office Strategies and Strategic Policing Requirement issues.

- 3.4 Information regarding financial and other resources and crime and disorder reduction grants has not yet been included, as the police grant announcement was only made by the Home Office on 19 December 2012.
- 3.5 Actions will also be included under each of the Commissioner's objectives identified within the Police and Crime Plan. These actions are currently under development and will be included in the final version of the police and crime plan.

4.0 Draft Police and Crime Plan

4.1 The PCC sets five key objectives within the draft Police and Crime Plan and for each of these objectives a number of performance measures are proposed to monitor progress. These are listed below, however there is further detail on the background information which has led to the objectives in the full document attached in Appendix 1.

4.2 Objective 1 - Enhance frontline policing to enable the Constabulary to prevent and further drive down crime.

4.2.1 First and foremost the Constabulary is here to provide policing to the communities of Cheshire. This policing service needs to be flexible and adaptable to respond to the wide and varied range of crimes and incidents that affect you as residents. As part of this priority, the PCC will work with the Chief Constable to develop the way we deal with the issues presented by anti-social behaviour, business crime and rural crime and to make our roads safer.

4.2.2 Suggested performance measures

- Total number of recorded crimes;
- Proportion of staff resources allocated to frontline duties;
- Total number of anti-social behaviour incidents;
- Total number of rural crimes;
- Total number of business crimes;
- Proportion of people who perceive ASB to be a problem in their area;
- Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions; and
- Proportion of people to perceive drug use or dealing to be a problem in their area.

4.3 Objective 2 - Protect Cheshire's communities from harm

4.3.1 Crime is on the decline, however there are still sections of our community who are more vulnerable to becoming the victim of crime. The PCC wants to ensure that the Constabulary continues to develop services which protect these most vulnerable people and communities as well as tackling the more serious and organised crimes and civil emergencies which we may need to be able to respond to on a local, regional and national basis.

4.3.2 Suggested performance measures

- Recorded number of rape offences;
- Recorded number of sexual assault offences;
- Number of repeat incidents of domestic abuse that are case managed; through a Multi- Agency Risk Assessment Conference;
- Measure to possibly be added regarding human trafficking; and
- Measure to possibly be added re child sexual exploitation.

4.4 Objective three - Support victims and witnesses of crime and take a robust stance in tackling those who continue to re-offend.

4.4.1 The PCC wants to ensure that victims and witnesses of crime are at the centre of the criminal justice system and are able to help develop the services needed not only to support them but to improve services for the future. Many offenders who continue to commit crimes within our communities have underlying factors which, if tackled, would help to prevent them from committing further crimes. These factors can range from alcohol and drug abuse to housing and social care problems as well as health related problems such as mental health. By taking a robust stance not only will we seek out the right criminal justice outcomes but also work in partnership to design and tailor individual solutions which will help to prevent further re-offending.

4.4.2 Suggested performance measures

- % of crimes solved;
- % of offenders dealt with who have been dealt with by the police previously (in the last two years);
- Percentage of users satisfied with the service they received; and
- % of victims of anti-social behaviour satisfied with the action taken in response to their Incident.

4.5 Objective four - Continue to build on the strong partnership between the police and the communities of Cheshire.

4.5.1 The success of the Police and Crime Commissioner will depend on his understanding of those issues that are important and helping to shape the police service to address those issues. In doing this the PCC is committed to being an accessible Commissioner who will hold regular surgeries and public meetings as well as embracing technology to undertake as many on-going conversations with residents as possible. The PCC will work with the Constabulary to ensure that the tremendous work undertaken by Neighbourhood Policing Teams continues and we build strong community relationships and encourage participation in the development of local services.

4.5.2 Suggested performance measures

- The proportion of respondents that state that the police are interested in the issues that concern people living in this area;

- The proportion of respondents that state that the police in this area successfully solve problems in the long term; and
- Total number of complaints and the number of complaints upheld.

4.6 Objective five – Ensure the delivery of an efficient and effective police service. This will include building on the use of innovative technology to deliver better services to the communities of Cheshire

4.6.1 One of the PCC core functions will be to ensure that the Constabulary provides not only a responsive policing service for the residents of Cheshire but one that is also as efficient and effective as possible. The PCC will work with the Constabulary to focus on where and how the PCC can work in partnership with other police forces or other agencies to drive down the costs of buying products and services. The PCC will look for ways to reduce bureaucracy to ensure officers are on the street and not behind a desk, ensure that we find the most cost-effective ways of delivering all of our services and look at ways to increase income streams all to help in closing the funding gap. The PCC is committed to seeking out more innovative ways to use technology and will also look at ways to maximise income generation in order to offset the impact of cuts to police funding.

4.6.2 Suggested performance measures

- The cost of delivering policing in Cheshire per head of population; and
- Average working days lost due to sickness.

5.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

5.1 Consultation on the Police & Crime Plan is required under section 14(3) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

5.2 The closing date for comments on the draft Police and Crime Plan is the 25th January 2013.

5.3 Following the consultation, an updated Police and Crime Plan will be presented to the Police & Crime Panel in February who will report/ make recommendation(s) to the Commissioner on the Plan. The Commissioner is scheduled to consider the Panel's report/recommendations at the Decision Meeting on 26 February 2013 and must provide the Panel with the response.

5.4 During March 2013, arrangements will then be made for an executive summary to be produced and for the Plan to be published and disseminated.

6.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSE

6.1 Whilst it is acknowledged that the Police and Crime Commissioner has not had a great deal of time to prepare the Plan since his appointment, the timescales for responding are extremely short. However, many of the

areas identified are consistent with the Commissioner's Manifesto and are areas which the Council may wish to support.

- 6.2 It is worth noting that the Commissioner has stressed that he has taken stakeholder views into consideration when producing the Plan. From Halton's perspective, the objectives are very similar to the themes which the Safer Halton Partnership has been focussing upon for the last number of years and also contained within our joint strategic needs assessment for crime. Within Halton, we have focused upon the 4 "P"s i.e. Prevent, Protect, Prosecute and Partnership and the Commissioner's objectives are largely similar. It is particularly encouraging that the Commissioner wishes to provide more focus upon anti-social behaviour and safeguarding vulnerable people. These are two areas where the communities and partners in Halton believe there should be more focus. In addition there are wider issues which he recognises require more consideration such as victim support, human trafficking and road safety. The latter has been a priority for Halton for some years and it is important that the Commissioner considers ways to prevent injuries and deaths on our roads.
- 6.3 However, there are some areas where Members may wish to highlight in our response, in particular, we believe there should be more focus upon domestic violence, alcohol/drugs and linkages with mental health, prolific and persistent offenders and integrated offender management. In Halton repeat domestic violence offenders are of particular concern, indeed in 2011 Members agreed more investment in the domestic violence service. It is a similar position relating to alcohol where we have encountered particular problems with the night time economy and emergency admissions to hospital.
- 6.4 Whilst the Plan references Police Community Support Officers (page 6) it is not entirely clear what their specific role will be in community safety and this requires clarification. In addition there has been previous concerns raised about the use of technology, in some cases making it too bureaucratic in others the lack of usage.
- 6.5 Whilst 'percentage measures' have been in operation for some time the Council will require some confirmation about how the local initiatives will be monitored, supported and funded.

7.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The policy implications of the Plan relate primarily to the Safer Halton priority as set out below, however this is a cross cutting work area which has wider implications on other areas of council business.

8.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 It has recently been agreed that the funds transferred to the PCC (circa £100k) will be pass-ported directly back to the Community Safety Team under a 12 month SLA. This is a very positive decision as there was some

uncertainty regarding how this funding would be deployed by the PCC. The SLA will be drawn up by the end of January 2013.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

9.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Police and Crime Plan will impact on the Children and Young People as it includes anti-social behaviour as a priority.

9.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The Police and Crime Plan will tackle offending as a priority so working with other partners to provide training and get offenders into work will be essential.

9.3 A Healthy Halton

Drug and alcohol abuse and supporting vulnerable people are key objectives within the Police and Crime Plan, as is supporting victims of crime all of which will impact on health.

9.4 Environment and Urban Renewal

The quality of life in Halton is directly influenced by crime and the fear of crime, so providing safe neighbourhoods, roads and town centres will positively impact on the environment and regeneration of the borough

9.5 A Safer Halton

The Police and Crime Plan directly supports delivery of the Safer Halton priority and will influence the work of the community safety team. Whilst the objectives cover the priorities for Halton, identified within our Sustainable Community Strategy, we need the detail on financial and other resource allocations and the action Plan, before we can fully understand the direct implications for Halton

10.0 RISK ANALYSIS

10.0 The future funding implications for non mainstreamed services may seriously impact on the Local Authority's delivery of community safety services and safeguarding issues.

11.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES

11.0 The possible impact on delivery of services to some of Halton's more diverse communities.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTIONS 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the Meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24th January 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Policy & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the renewal of discretionary non-domestic rate relief for two organisations currently in receipt of the relief and who continue to satisfy the appropriate criteria.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

Under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988, discretionary rate relief be granted to the following organisations at the percentage indicated, for the period from 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2016:

Halton Community Transport	20%
Moorfield Sports & Social Club	100%

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council is allowed to grant discretionary rate relief to organisations that are either a charity or a not for profit organisation. This relief may also be awarded to Community Amateur Sports Clubs.
- 3.2 On 13th December the Board approved the granting of discretionary rate relief for a further three years for all existing recipients, except Halton Community Transport and Moorfield Sports and Social Club for whom additional information was requested. Additional information has been obtained in respect of the latter two organisations, which confirms that they are both still eligible to receive discretionary rate relief. A summary of the financial implications is shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The Council currently grants discretionary rate relief to organisations for a three year period and Regulations require that organisations are given twelve months' notice of ceasing that relief. In March 2012 the Council therefore gave the required twelve months' notice to both of these organisations, as 2012/13 is their third year of receiving relief.

3.4 The Board has in previous years chosen to support these organisations by granting them discretionary rate relief. In light of the current financial constraints upon the Council, the Board could however decide not to grant relief to organisations, or to renew it for a shorter period, or at a lower percentage.

3.5 It is proposed that discretionary rate relief is granted from 1st April 2013 for a further three years at the current percentage, as these two existing recipients continue to meet the appropriate criteria.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Board is required by the Regulations to consider each application on its own merit. Any recommendations provided are given for guidance only and are consistent with previous decisions, where applicable, and Council policy.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 For any discretionary rate relief granted to organisations who receive mandatory rate relief 75% of the cost will be funded by the Council. Whilst in cases where mandatory rate relief has not been awarded by Government 25% of the cost of discretionary rate relief will be funded by the Council. Appendix 1 identifies the current cost to the Council for each application, the total of which can be met from the existing discretionary rate relief budget.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Moorfield Sports & Social Club engages heavily within this particular demographic.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None specifically applicable.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None specifically applicable.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None specifically applicable.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None applicable.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no risks associated with the proposed action.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Both of the applicants offer their services to all sections of the community, without any prejudice.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Review forms and supporting evidence	Kingsway House, Caldwell Road, Widnes	Phil Murphy, Business Rates Manager

Discretionary Rate Relief Only (Not for Profit Organisations)

Moorfield Sports & Social Club is a “not for profit” organisation and, as such, is not entitled to mandatory rate relief. The club has previously applied to the Council and been granted 100% discretionary rate relief. The cost of discretionary rate relief for “not for profit” organisations is currently funded 75% by Government and 25% by the Council.

Liabe Party	Amount of Relief Awarded	25% Cost to HBC (2012/13)
Moorfield Sports & Social Club	£4,725.00	£1,181.25

Top-Up Discretionary Rate Relief (Mandatory Rate Relief Also Awarded)

Halton Community Transport is a registered charity and receives 80% mandatory rate relief. In respect of the remaining 20%, the organisation has previously applied to the Council and been granted the full top-up discretionary rate relief to provide 100% relief. The cost of top-up discretionary rate relief is currently funded 25% by Government and 75% by the Council.

Liabe Party	Amount of Relief Awarded	75% Cost to HBC (2012/13)
Halton Community Transport	£1,305.30	£978.98

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 24th January 2013
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Children and Enterprise
PORTFOLIO: Resources
SUBJECT: Daresbury Funding
WARD(S) Daresbury

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- provide an update on funding for the development of Sci-Tech Daresbury
- to seek approval to accept written offers for Regional Growth Fund (RGF) and Growing Places Fund (GPF)
- to seek authority to enter into an agreement with the Sci-Tech Daresbury Joint Venture partners to utilise the Growing Places Fund and the Regional Growth Fund grant for the development of Sci-Tech Daresbury.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- i) **The Board accepts the offer of £9.77m of Regional Growth Fund (RGF) from the Office for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS);**
- ii) **The Board accepts the offer of £1.8m of Growing Places Funding (GPF) from the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership;**
- iii) **The Board gives the authority for the Council to enter into back to back contracts with the JV Partners for the delivery of the project; and**
- iv) **The Board agrees to the Council entering into a claw back agreement with Joint Venture partners at Daresbury in accordance with the RGF and GPF offers.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 **Sci-Tech Enterprise Zone Daresbury**

Sci-Tech Daresbury is a key strategic site. It is an international hub for world class science. In August 2011, part of Sci-Tech Daresbury became an Enterprise Zone.

A Daresbury Joint Venture Partnership was set up in 2010 and is a

50:50 private:public partnership between Langtree, STFC (Science and Technology Facilities Council), and Halton Borough Council.

The aim of enterprise zones is to attract new businesses with simplified planning rules, super-fast broadband and reductions in business rates. Business rates growth within the zone is retained by Halton Borough Council for the 25 year life of the zone.

- 3.2 On 17th October 2012, the Daresbury JV Partnership was informed that it had been successful in securing £9.77m of Regional Growth Fund (RGF) grant-aid. The application has four key components:
- 1) **Project Tech Space** - the construction of high quality, flexible office space which will enable businesses to grow and expand, as well as specialised laboratory space to help businesses which rely on laboratory space to develop their respective products;
 - 2) **Power (Phase1)** –Part of the RGF bid will be used to increase the power capacity needed to support future science and technology facilities planned for the campus.
 - 3) **Environmental Improvements** this element of the grant will pay for the purchase of land, site clearance, and landscape improvements to bring together sites in a better managed way within a quality environment .
 - 4) **Transport Improvements** - to provide better public transport provision to and from Daresbury, thereby improving access to job opportunities for all.

The total cost of the works is now estimated to be £22m. Funding has been identified as follows: RGF £9.77m, STFC £800k, JV Board £7.43m, and Scottish Power £1.6m.

The bid included a realistic target on job creation of 747 direct jobs and 313 indirect

An offer letter for the RGF grant has been received from the department for Business and Innovation. A working group has been set up to complete the due diligence process with a completion date of 19 March 2013 and the final offer to be signed off by 19 April 2013.

- 3.3 Following an invitation from the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to bid for Growing Places Funds (GPF), an application was submitted, in contribution to the JV Board match. The application was for £1.8m to fund the same infrastructure works as listed in 3.2.

The GPF loan was approved in November 2012. We anticipate a

written offer being with the Council soon. These funds are offered on condition that the Council makes 'best endeavours' to repay the GPF. GPF is a revolving fund (effectively an interest free loan) and the funding is to be reinvested within the Liverpool City Region. The application stated that the first repayments would be due in August 2015 and the final in December 2019.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Daresbury strategic site is included in the Council's Corporate Plan, the Halton Partnership and Halton Borough Council Urban Renewal Strategy and Action Plan, and supports the Council's Urban Renewal corporate priority. Grant funding is essential to facilitate the delivery of Daresbury.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Council is committed to securing as much external funding as possible to support the delivery of Daresbury. The Regional Growth Fund grant referred to in this report supports that commitment.

5.2 There are financial implications for the Council in accepting the RGF funding; in broad outline the risks are that minor breaches of the agreement (e.g. failures to provide, or delays in providing, information such as performance reports) can result in the Office for Business, Innovation and Skills having the right not only to discontinue funding for the future, but also to demand the return of funding received prior to any breach of the agreement.

This could have extremely serious consequences for the Council's services given that the maximum funding to be received under the agreement is £9.77m.

5.3 With regards to GPF, whilst there is no formal clawback agreement imposed on the Council, the Council must budget for the repayment of the £1.8m either when the development is complete or by December 2019, whichever is sooner.

In the event the development does not go ahead, the burden of the repayment would rest with the Council purse along with the interest charges associated with borrowing £1.8m.

As is usual with such arrangements, the funding offer places the balance of risk with the Council. Although some risks have been negotiated away, the most prominent risks for the Council remain:

The repayment of the GPF by December 2019.

The expectation that the development will provide 747 jobs.

The responsibility for State Aid compliance rests with HBC. For this reason Halton has already taken advice regarding the potential implications of European Commission rules and regulations.

These risks are similar to those previously accepted by Members in connection with other projects such as 3MG and Widnes Waterfront.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

There are no implications associated with this report.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Overall the development of Sci-Tech Daresbury will assist in providing job opportunities for local people and will go some way in addressing the level of unemployment in Halton. The next phases of development are estimated to create up to 1,060 new jobs.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

There are no implications associated with this report.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

There are no implications associated with this report.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The development at Daresbury will act as a catalyst to attract developers and new businesses to the area by creating an attractive, well-accessed and serviced area, which provides a safe and attractive environment for employees and visitors.

The Enterprise Zone aims to deliver 25% of the employment land for the borough. The programme will also provide improvements to the local area, and in particular key gateway sites alongside the A558 and A56.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are risks to the Council in entering into the Contract with the office for Business, Innovation and Skills. These same risks have been acknowledged and accepted previously, e.g. previous NWDA funding agreements on 3MG and on the Widnes Waterfront Programme.

The risks are that minor breaches of the agreement (e.g. failures to provide, or delays in providing, information such as performance reports) can result in the Business, Innovation and Skills office having the right not only to discontinue funding for the future but also to demand the return of funding received prior to any breach of the agreement. This could have extremely serious consequences for the Council's services given that the maximum funding to be received under the agreement is £9.77m.

There are also risks for the Council in entering into an agreement with the Liverpool City Region LEP for GPF. The risks are that the Council may be asked to repay GPF if the development does not go ahead, and the loan will have to be repaid by December 2019.

It is, therefore, recommended that Halton Council enters into a clawback agreement with JV Partners to underwrite and share the risk in the event that the jobs or investments presented in this report do not materialise.

Members are advised that, on balance the benefits of the scheme, that is job creation and growing the borough's economy, outweigh the risks. The risks will be mitigated by sound project management and monitoring of expenditure. Equally, grant will only be drawn down as and when programme milestones have been met. Finally, the Council has a good track record of managing and delivering schemes of this scale and complexity.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no issues arising out of this report.

9.0 **REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

9.1 On 17th October 2012, the Daresbury JV Partnership was informed that it had been successful in securing £9.77m of Regional Growth Funding (RGF) and £1.8m of Growing Places Funding.

10.0 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

10.1 If the offer of these funds were not accepted the Borough would lose the opportunities provided by £11.57m plus match funding.

11.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

The final grant offer will be signed off by 19th April 2013 following due diligence.

12.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Regional Growth Fund Application	Municipal Building 5 th Floor	Steph Davies
Growing Places Fund Application	Municipal Building 5 th Floor	Steph Davies

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	24 January 2013
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Communities
PORTFOLIO:	Neighbourhood, Leisure and Sport
SUBJECT:	Halton Housing Strategy 2013-2018 - Draft
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Halton's Housing Strategy 2013-18 as a draft for public consultation.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That**

- i) **The Board approve the content of the draft Housing Strategy and note the arrangements for public consultation as outlined in 3.4.1 of this report.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 **Background**

3.1.1 Under Part 7 of the Local Government Act 2003 local authorities are expected to produce a Housing Strategy which gives an overview of housing in their district and sets out priorities for action.

3.1.2 The 2003 Act states that:

"A local housing strategy is the local housing authority's vision for housing in its area. It sets out objectives and targets and policies on how the authority intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role and provides an overarching framework against which the authority considers and formulates other policies on more specific housing issues."

3.1.3 That strategic housing role is defined, in the Department for Communities and Local Government's 2007 document Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable, as providing "vision, leadership, planning and delivery to:

- assess and plan for current and future housing needs of the local population,
- make the best use of existing housing stock,

- plan and facilitate new supply,
- plan and commission housing support services which link homes to support and other services that people need to live in them, and
- have working partnerships that secure effective housing and neighbourhood management."

3.1.4 The statutory guidance "Creating Strong and Prosperous Communities" published in July 2008 reaffirmed this expectation and placed greater emphasis on housing's contribution to the authority's vision for sustainable communities as set out in its Sustainable Communities Strategy.

3.1.5 The guidance states that local authority housing strategies must:

- fully reflect the wider vision of the authority and its partners;
- reflect a clear and evidenced approach and
- provide a strong focus on how partners will deliver their commitments.

3.1.6 There have been significant achievements since the last Housing Strategy was published in 2008 including:

- Successful delivery of phase 2 of the Castlefields regeneration programme, this has so far resulted in £30 million of new development replacing the last deck access dwellings remaining in the Northwest.
- A further £5 to £10 million of development is being sought for Castlefields in the proposed draft strategy.
- Halton Housing Trust delivered on its commitment to bring all former council housing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard 12 months ahead of the Government's 2010 target date.
- Since that time the Trust has developed a comprehensive neighbourhood investment programme which will see £262 million investment in the former Council stock between 2009 and 2015 and has built its first new affordable homes in the Borough.
- Development of an additional 256 new affordable homes bringing approximately £30 million of external investment into the Borough. This includes the development of an additional extra care scheme in Halton. The outcome of further pending investment bids to the HCA are due to be reported by February, 2013.
- Crisis intervention in the form of emergency support has helped prevent homelessness for over 600 families over the last three years.
- Clearance of all backlogs in adaptations in 200 socially rented homes.;
- Development and implementation of a new Homelessness Strategy with increased emphasis on prevention which has drastically reduced levels of statutory homelessness to an all time low.
- In the last financial year, 187 appeals on benefit decisions were attended by the Council's welfare rights team with an 84% success rate. These have resulted from referrals through the improved tenancy

sustainability service offered by the Housing Solutions team.

- Since January 2010, The Housing Solutions dedicated Mortgage Rescue Adviser has provided advice to 187 households and as a result 94 cases were prevented from repossession.
 - Through the Castlefields Regeneration programme approximately 15 apprenticeships/ traineeships has been secured through construction of new build homes and external makeover of retained projects. As the Programme has been 'on the ground' for over 10 years several phases of apprentices have graduated into permanent employment. The creation of the Village Square has created further local job opportunities. Additionally the involvement of HPIJ within the Programme has created/safeguarded a further 139 jobs.

3.2 Draft Halton Housing Strategy 2013 - 2018

3.2.1 The draft Strategy takes a slightly different approach from previous years in that two documents have been produced. The Strategy itself (Appendix A) is a short, easy to read document which focuses on the strategic objectives, priorities and planned activities for the next three years which are detailed in an action plan. This is supported by an evidence paper (Appendix B) which sets out the context in which the Strategy has been developed and brings together key data and information on housing issues and services which have helped to shape the strategic objectives and priorities.

3.2.2 It is important to note that the draft Strategy has been developed in a time of rapidly declining resources for public services generally and for housing, in particular, due to the discontinuation of the Regional Housing Pot which previously was the main funding stream for the housing capital programme. Consequently the strategy reflects a realistic assessment of what can be achieved within existing and likely future resources. However the strategy means we can provide an evidence base when potential funding streams become available in the future and we will continue to explore all sources of funding on an ongoing basis to ensure we deliver the Strategy.

3.3 Housing vision, objectives and priorities

3.3.1 The Strategy contains three overarching strategic objectives with priorities within each as set out in the paragraphs below. The objectives are designed to contribute to the vision for housing:

Housing vision

Halton offers a broad range of good quality housing which meets the needs of existing communities, helps attract new residents to the Borough and contributes to the creation of sustainable communities.

3.3.2 **Strategic objective 1 – To plan for and facilitate housing growth and support economic growth**

- Priority 1A: To increase the supply of market and affordable housing through partnership working and support to developers and Registered Providers;
- Priority 1B: To support the implementation of the Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan.

3.3.3 **Strategic objective 2 – To meet the housing and support needs of Halton’s communities and promote choice**

- Priority 2A: To increase the supply of housing for vulnerable people;
- Priority 2B: To prevent homelessness;
- Priority 2C: To improve access to social housing and home ownership and promote choice;
- Priority 2D: To target housing support to those who need it most.

3.3.4 **Strategic objective 3 – To improve housing conditions and make the best use of the housing stock**

- Priority 3A: To complete the regeneration of Castlefields estate;
- Priority 3B: Explore the implications of private rented sector growth;
- Priority 3C: To improve the energy efficiency of housing and tackle fuel poverty;
- Priority 3D: To make the best possible use of the existing housing stock.

3.4 **Next steps**

3.4.1 It is intended that the draft Strategy be the subject of a seven week consultation period with partners, stakeholders and residents between 4th February and 22nd March 2013. This will be achieved through distribution to various partnerships, including the appropriate Policy and Performance Board and stakeholder groups, other local authorities and a copy will be placed in Halton Direct Links, main Council libraries and on the Council’s website.

3.4.2 The Strategy will also be publicised via the usual media outlets including the Civic magazine which is distributed to every household in the Borough.

3.4.3 Barring the need for any major changes to the document as a result of the consultation, it is intended that the Strategy will be presented to Executive Board for consideration before May 2013.

3.4.4 A questionnaire will be developed to collate feedback as part of the consultation process.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Housing Strategy will set the context for future policy development relating to housing and will have a significant influence on related policies and strategies e.g. Homelessness Strategy and Tenancy Strategy

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The financial implications of delivering the Strategy are outlined in the Action Plan contained in the draft Strategy. In particular the delivery of affordable housing is dependent on future levels of resources from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) or other sources that may arise. At the time of writing Government announcements regarding future funding levels for the HCA are awaited although it is not clear at the present time when such announcements will be made.

5.2 The draft Strategy is deliverable within staffing resources prevailing at the time of writing, however, any change in staffing levels as a result of the need to make efficiency savings could impact upon successful delivery of the Strategy.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The Housing Strategy aims to increase the supply of affordable housing and improve housing conditions which will have a beneficial impact on families with children among other household groups.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None directly, although programmes to increase the supply and energy efficiency of housing could result in additional jobs and skills for the Borough. Construction and other investment offers the opportunities for increased jobs and apprenticeships locally.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

A number of priorities contained within the Strategy e.g. around fuel poverty, provision of supported housing and improving conditions in the private sector will have positive health benefits for some of Halton's most vulnerable residents.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

A number of priorities contained in the Strategy e.g. prevention of homelessness and regeneration of Castlefields will contribute to the creation of safer and stronger communities.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The draft Strategy aims to promote housing growth and support economic growth in the Borough which will have a positive impact on the built environment.

The Homes and Community Agency provide some funding for the development of new housing although they prioritise sites which have

available planning consent or where planning consent is in the pipeline.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Delivery of some of the Strategy is dependent on the continued availability of resources from external funding streams e.g. from the Homes and Communities Agency. Future reductions in funding levels could impact upon the ability to deliver some of the targets contained in the Action Plan.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Strategy specifically aims to meet the housing needs of vulnerable people due to age or disability and will therefore have positive impacts for these groups.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

Under Part 7 of the Local Government Act 2003 local authorities are expected to produce a Housing Strategy which gives an overview of housing in their district and sets out priorities for action.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not applicable.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

May 2013.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Housing Strategy	Runcorn Town Hall (second floor)	Joanne Sutton
Housing Strategy evidence paper	Runcorn Town Hall (second floor)	Joanne Sutton



A Housing Strategy for Halton

2013 to 2018

Consultation Draft

February 2013

Contents

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Context	4
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Our vision, objectives and priorities	6 - 12
Action plan	13-18

Foreword

Halton's Draft Housing Strategy 2013-18 has been prepared following a time of rapid change for all forms of housing.

Halton's previous Housing Strategy (2008-2011) pre-dated the economic downturn and subsequent housing market decline. It achieved and exceeded many of the targets set for it, including:



- Successful delivery of phase 2 of the Castlefields regeneration programme, this has so far resulted in £30 million of new development replacing the last deck access dwellings remaining in the Northwest;
- Development of an additional 256 new affordable homes bringing approximately £30 million of external investment into the Borough. This includes the development of an additional extra care scheme in Halton. The outcome of further pending investment bids to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) are due to be reported by February, 2013;
- Since the Bond Guarantee System was introduced in 2009, 67% are ongoing, 15% ended without a claim and 18% ended with the bond being claimed;
- Crisis intervention support in the form of emergency support over the last three years has helped prevent homelessness for over 600 families;
- Clearance of all backlogs in adaptations in 200 socially rented homes;
- Development and implementation of a new Homelessness Strategy with increased emphasis on prevention which has drastically reduced levels of statutory homelessness to an all-time low;
- Since January 2010, the Housing Solutions dedicated Mortgage Rescue Adviser has provided advice to 187 households and as a result 94 cases were prevented from repossession;
- Halton Housing Trust delivered on its commitment to bring all former council housing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard 12 months ahead of the Government's 2010 target date. Since that time the Trust has developed a comprehensive neighbourhood investment programme which will see £262 million investment in the former Council stock between 2009 and 2015 and has built its first new affordable homes in the Borough.

The next strategy seeks to take account of the changed economic climate, reduced public investment and legislative challenges such as Welfare Reform, the Localism Bill and changes to planning law.

Some of the housing issues in Halton include:

- Securing investment to build new homes or improve existing ones.
- Rebalancing the housing market to meet people's needs and aspirations.
- An ageing population.

To address the issues we face, we will need to continue to prioritise and innovate. The new strategy has to encourage growth if we are to realise the vision for housing in Halton.

We would welcome your comments on the strategy outlined in this document and the supporting evidence paper.

Yours sincerely,

CLlr Phil Harris

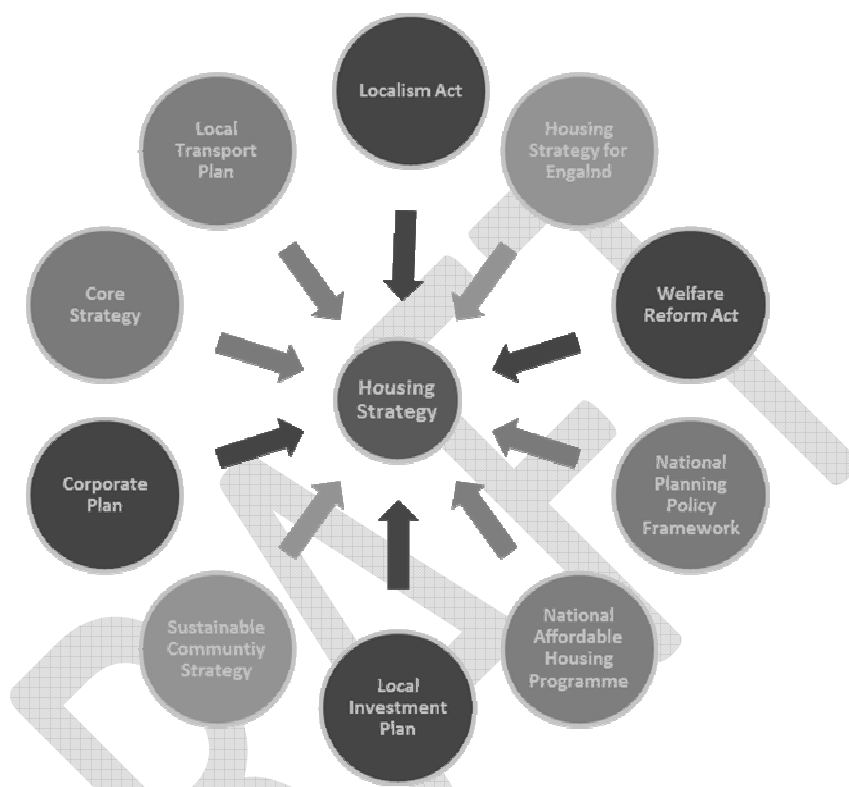
Executive Board Member for Housing Strategy.

Should you have any questions or comments relating to the document, please send these to Joanne Sutton, Principal Policy Officer, Halton Borough Council, Runcorn Town Hall, Heath Road, Cheshire, WA7 5TD. E-mail: joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk. Please submit any comments by no later than noon on Friday 22nd March, 2013.

DRAFT

Context

Halton’s Housing Strategy has been developed in the context of a wide range of national, regional and local policies, strategies and plans as summarised in the diagram below. Further details of how these influence the Strategy can be found in the Housing Strategy evidence paper.

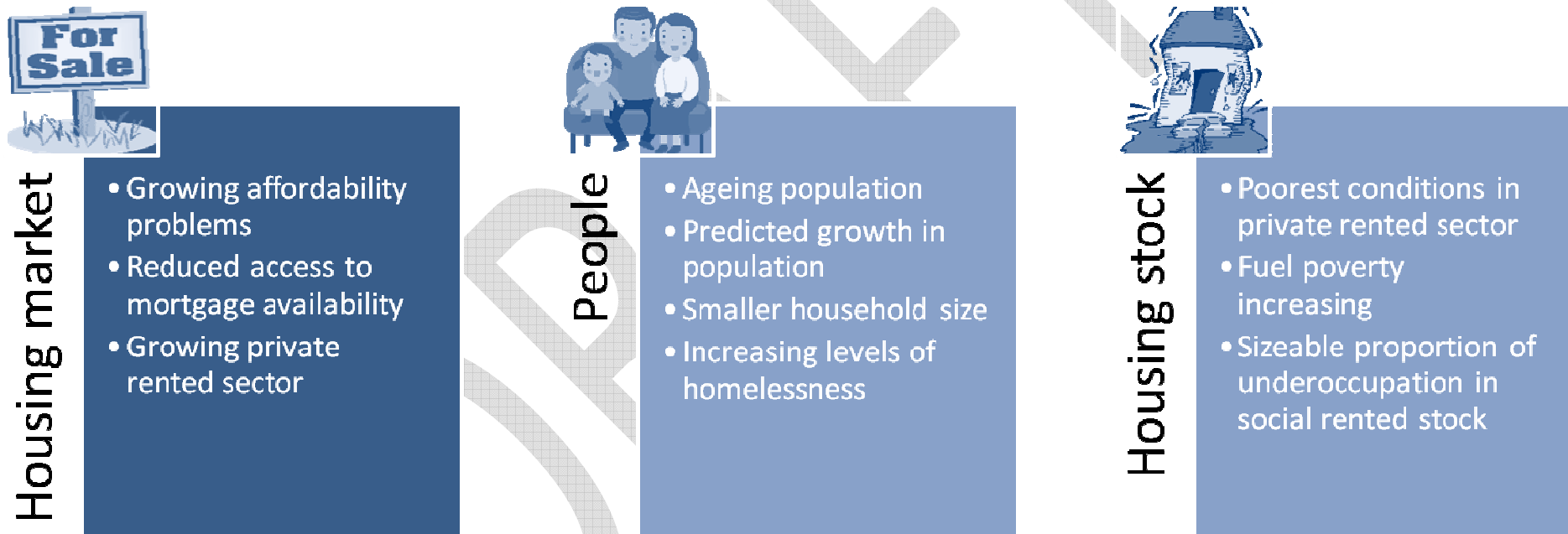


Housing services play a cross cutting role in meeting Halton’s priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, as demonstrated in the table below.

A Healthy Halton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Improving housing conditions and energy efficiency •Maintaining independence through adapting property
Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Introducing new technologies in energy efficiency projects •Apprenticeships and local labour in housing contracts
A Safer Halton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Removing category 1 hazards within the home •Tackling anti social behaviour on estates
Children & Young People in Halton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reducing overcrowding •Preventing homelessness
Environment and Regeneration in Halton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tackling obsolete housing •Provision of new affordable housing

Housing issues

The key housing issues which influence this Strategy are examined in detail in the Housing Strategy evidence paper. They can be summarised under three main themes as illustrated below. These themes have influenced the development of our three overarching strategic objectives and the priorities within each of these, as described in more detail in the next section.



Our vision, objectives and priorities

Our vision for housing in Halton

Halton offers a broad range of good quality housing which meets the needs of existing communities, helps attract new residents to the Borough and contributes to the creation of sustainable communities.

To help achieve the vision, we have adopted three strategic objectives each containing a set of priorities as detailed below. The Strategy goes on to explain why each of the priorities has been selected, what we hope to achieve and how we plan to achieve it.

Strategic objective 1:

To plan for and facilitate housing growth and support economic growth

- Priority 1A: To increase the supply of market and affordable housing through partnership working and support to developers and Registered Providers
- Priority 1B: To support the implementation of the Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan

Strategic objective 2:

To meet the housing and support needs of Halton's communities and promote choice

- Priority 2A: To increase the supply of housing for vulnerable people
- Priority 2B: To review future Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision
- Priority 2C: To prevent homelessness
- Priority 2D: To improve access to social housing and home ownership and promote choice
- Priority 2E: To target housing support to those who need it most

Strategic objective 3:

To improve housing conditions and make the best use of the housing stock

- Priority 3A: To complete the regeneration of Castlefields estate
- Priority 3B: To explore the implications of private rented sector growth
- Priority 3C: To improve the energy efficiency of housing and tackle fuel poverty
- Priority 3D: To make the best possible use of the existing housing stock

Priority 1A: To increase the supply of market and affordable housing through partnership working and support to developers and Registered Providers		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated population and household growth • Need to encourage immigration to support economic development projects • Core Strategy target of an average of 552 additional homes per annum • Level of need identified in Strategic Housing Market Assessment and as set out in evidence paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average of 552 additional homes built per annum • A realistic target of 100 additional net affordable homes per annum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Core Strategy • Identification of development sites through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment • Update Site Allocations Supplementary Planning Document • Implementation of Affordable Housing Policy • Partnership working and support in securing funding

Priority 1B: To support the implementation of the Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to achieve economies of scale and consistency of approach • Effective targeting to areas most in need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet targets in Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in LCR structure and programmes

Priority 2A: To increase the supply of housing for vulnerable people		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43% projected population growth in people aged 65 and over between 2008 and 2023 • Need for older people to maintain independence • Need for more adapted and adaptable housing • Shortage of suitable housing for other groups needing specialist provision e.g. Adults with Learning Difficulties, people with Physical and Sensory Disabilities • Need to rebalance temporary accommodation for young, single people so that there is provision on both sides of the Borough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise number of extra care units over the Strategy period (minimum of 100 by 2015) • Increase in the number of wheelchair accessible dwellings and homes built to Lifetime Homes Standard • Provide supported housing in Widnes for the single homeless in Widnes. • Provide additional accommodation for adults with learning difficulties and physical disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify suitable sites for older persons housing and provide support for funding bids • Implement aspiration in Design of New Residential SPD for new developments of 10 dwellings or more to provide 10% wheelchair standard dwellings • Encourage development of homes that meet Lifetime Homes standard in line with the Core Strategy • Commission supported housing for single homeless people in Widnes • Commission 10 bungalows for adults with physical and learning difficulties • Partnership working and support to developers in securing funding

Priority 2B: To review future Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Planning Policy Framework places a duty on local authorities to identify sites for five years worth of Gypsy and Traveller provision Under the Housing Act 2004 local authorities are expected to periodically assess the need for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in their area Last assessment was completed in 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to date assessment of need Identify sufficient site provision to meet assessed need for next five years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Cheshire wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Incorporate Gypsy and Traveller provision in development of Site Allocations Development Plan Document

Priority 2C: To prevent homelessness		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to minimise impacts of Welfare Reform Act 2012 To avoid social impacts of homelessness To reduce the cost and impact of placing families in temporary accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To at least reduce levels of statutory homelessness to 2010/11 levels (78 presentations, 37 of which owed the full statutory duty) over the Strategy period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake strategic review of homelessness Update Homelessness Strategy Engage with stakeholders and partners via the Homelessness Forum to minimise the impact of Welfare Reform Act 2012

Priority 2D: To improve access to social housing and home ownership and promote choice		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve transparency of the allocations system To improve neighbourhood sustainability Due to difficulties getting a foot on the housing ladder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fair and transparent allocations system that promotes choice Increase the range and awareness of intermediate housing products to assist more first time buyers access the market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and develop sub regional Choice Based Lettings system Implement the Affordable Housing Policy which includes a proportion of intermediate housing Develop a Marketing Strategy to promote the various forms of home ownership available

Priority 2E: To target housing support to those who need it most		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to ensure value for money in housing support services Scrutiny of supported accommodation suggests that some residents may not need support services offered Need to ensure fair access to accommodation based support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality and fitness for purpose of temporary accommodation for single, homeless people Supported housing is offered to those in greatest need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconfigure existing provision of housing for single homeless people Improve accommodation for people fleeing Domestic Violence Introduce a Housing Support Gateway system and undertake effective monitoring of the system

Priority 3A: To complete the regeneration of the Castlefields estate		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to build on success of 10 year Masterplan • Continue the momentum of delivery of new mixed tenure homes • Some deck access flats remain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of at least 350 new (predominantly private) homes by 2023 • Provision of a further 150 new affordable homes by 2015/16 (included within targets above) • Physical enhancement and energy efficiency improvements to 500 retained two storey system built homes by 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of action plan for next 10 years • Neighbourhood extension of Lakeside and Canalside • Continue to take strategic leadership role within the Castlefields Regeneration Partnership

Priority 3B: To explore the implications of private rented sector growth		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced mortgage availability • Reduced availability of social housing • Conditions in private rented sector generally worse • New power to discharge statutory homelessness duty through an offer of private rented accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of accredited landlords from 39 to 50 by end of Strategy period • Increase the number of accredited properties from 141 to 200 by end of Strategy period • Policy position on use of PRS to discharge statutory homelessness duty agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Private Rented Sector project plan • Consider implementing new flexibilities to discharge statutory homelessness duty through private rented sector (including carrying out suitability assessment)

Priority 3C: To improve the energy efficiency of housing and tackle fuel poverty		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on health • Fuel poverty increasing • Positive impact on climate change • Need to maximise household incomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve SAP ratings in private sector stock • Minimise levels of fuel poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued development of Healthy Homes Network • Develop new Affordable Warmth Strategy • Promote Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation • Develop and implement HECA further report and progress reports

Priority 3D: To make the best possible use of the existing housing stock		
Why is this a priority?	What do we want to achieve?	How do we plan to achieve it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of welfare reform • Impact of empty homes • Potential to maximise New Homes Bonus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the opportunities for underoccupying social tenants to find accommodation best suited to their needs • Bring 25 long term empty homes back into use over the Strategy period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support RPs in their implementation of the National Homeswap schemes • Review the Halton Tenancy Strategy • Work with RPs to identify empty properties suitable for lease/acquisition using HCA empty homes funding • Undertake survey of owners of empty homes to establish what support can be provided • Develop a more proactive approach to bringing empty

		homes back into use
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Housing Strategy for Halton 2013 to 2018: Action Plan

Objective 1: To plan for and facilitate housing growth and support economic growth

Priority	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
To increase the supply of market and affordable housing through partnership working and support to developers and Registered Providers	Implement Core Strategy	From 2013	HBC Planning Department	Staff time	Average of 552 additional homes built per annum
	Update Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment annually	Annual assessment	HBC Planning Department	Staff time	
	Update Site Allocations Supplementary Planning Document	2014/15	HBC Planning Department	Staff time	
	Implement Affordable Housing Policy	2013 onwards	HBC Planning and Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	Average of 100 additional affordable homes built per annum
	Support Registered Providers in securing funding for the delivery of the Affordable Housing Programme	As and when support required	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time HCA resources	25% of new developed built as affordable housing subject to site viability assessments
To support the implementation of the Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan	Participate in and support sub regional projects originating from LCR Housing and Spatial Planning Group	As and when required	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	Meet targets in Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan

Objective 2: To meet the housing and support needs of Halton's communities and promote choice

Priority	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
To increase the supply of housing for vulnerable people	Increase the supply of housing for older people through identification of sites, supporting Registered Provider funding bids and procure support and care services	Throughout period of the Strategy	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	HCA funding (capital) Revenue implications for housing support and care services (amount dependent on bids)	100 units of additional older persons housing over the Strategy period
	Implement aspiration in Design for New Residential SPD for new developments of 10 dwellings or more to provide 10% wheelchair standard dwellings	As and when planning applications received	HBC Planning	Staff time	Aspirational target of 30 wheelchair accessible dwellings built per year (subject to site viability)
	Encourage development of homes that meet Lifetime Homes standard in line with Halton's Core Strategy	As and when planning applications received	HBC Planning	Staff time	Aspirational target of 25% increase in the number of homes built to Lifetime Homes standard (subject to site viability)
	Commission supported housing scheme for single homeless in Widnes	2013/14	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time Revenue implications for housing support service	Development completed by 2014
	Commission 10 bungalows for rent for adults with physical disabilities and learning difficulties	2013/14	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time Council or HCA grant	Development completed by 2014

Priority	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
To review future Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision	Participate in Cheshire wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	2013/14	Divisional Manager (Planning and Development Services)	Staff time Approx £8,000 contribution to be identified	Identify sufficient site provision to meet assessed need for next five years
	Incorporate Gypsy and Traveller provision in Site Allocations Development Plan	2013/14	Divisional Manager (Planning and Development Services)	Staff time	
	Deliver an additional 12 permanent pitches adjacent to existing transit site	2013/14	Divisional Manager (Planning and Development Services)	Staff time HCA funding (£800k)	New 12 pitch site completed
To prevent homelessness	Undertake strategic review of homelessness	2013/14	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	To maintain the number of statutory homeless acceptances to no more than a 10% increase per year of 2011/12 levels (64 acceptances)
	Update Homelessness Strategy	2013/14	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	
	Engage with stakeholders and partners via the Homelessness Forum to minimise the impact of the Welfare Reform Act 2012	2013/14	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	
To improve access to social housing and home ownership and promote choice	Monitor and develop sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme	Throughout period of Strategy	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time Running costs (£125k pa)	Provision of a cost effective, fair and transparent allocations system that promotes choice Percentage of bids within each banding Number of private homes let through system
	Implement the Affordable Housing Policy which includes a proportion of intermediate housing	2013	HBC Planning Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	50% of units delivered through affordable housing policy to be intermediate housing (subject to demand and viability)
	Develop a Marketing Strategy to promote the various types of low	2013	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	Develop a Marketing Strategy to promote the various types of low

Priority	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
	cost home ownership products and support Government initiatives such as New Buy				cost home ownership products and support Government initiatives such as New Buy
To target housing support to those who need it most	Reconfigure existing provision of housing for single homeless people	2013/14	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	Improve the quality and fitness for purpose of temporary accommodation for single, homeless people.
	Review existing provision of supported accommodation for households fleeing domestic violence	2013/14	Operational Director (Prevention and Assessment)	Staff time Possible capital and/or revenue funding	Dependent on outcome of review
	Introduce Housing Gateway Support system and undertake effective monitoring of the new system	2013/14	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time Staff costs Annual IT costs	Supported housing services are provided to those in greatest need

Objective 3: To improve housing conditions and make the best use of the housing stock

Priority	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
To complete the regeneration of the Castlefields estate	Implement 10 year action plan	Throughout period of Strategy	HBC Major Projects	Staff time	Delivery of at least 350 new (predominantly private) homes by 2023 Provision of a further 150 new affordable homes by 2015/16 Physical enhancement and energy efficiency improvements to 500 retained two storey system built homes by 2016
	Neighbourhood extension of Lakeside and Canalside	2015/16	HBC Major Projects	Staff time Other (?)	
	Continue to take strategic leadership role within the Castlefields Regeneration Partnership	Ongoing	HBC Major Projects	Staff time	
To explore the implications of private rented sector growth	Implement Private Rented Sector project plan	2013/14	HBC Environmental Protection	Staff time Promotional budget (£5k from Homelessness Prevention fund)	Increase in the number of accredited landlords from 39 to 50 by end of Strategy period Increase the number of accredited properties from 141 to 200 by end of Strategy period Policy position on use of PRS to discharge statutory homelessness duty agreed
	Consider implementing new flexibilities to discharge statutory homelessness duty through private rented sector	2013	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	
To improve the energy efficiency of housing and tackle fuel poverty	Continued development of Halton Healthy Homes Network	Ongoing	HBC Environmental Protection	Staff time	Improved SAP ratings in private sector stock from 56 to 60 by time of next Private Sector Stock Condition survey
	Develop new Affordable Warmth Strategy	Ongoing	HBC Environmental Protection	Staff time	
	Promote Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation	October 2013 – ongoing thereafter	HBC Environmental Protection	Staff time	
	Develop and implement HECA further report and progress	March 2013 – progress reports every two years	HBC Environmental Protection	Staff time	

Priority	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Resources	Success measures and outcomes
	reports	thereafter			
To make the best possible use of the existing housing stock	Support Registered Providers in their implementation of the National Homeswap schemes through promotion on HBC website and CBL systems	2012/13 and ongoing	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	Maximise opportunities for underoccupying social tenants to find accommodation more suited to their needs
	Review the Halton Tenancy Strategy	September 2013	Divisional Manager (Commissioning)	Staff time	
	Work with RPs to identify empty properties suitable for lease/acquisition using HCA empty homes funding	2012/13/14	HBC Environmental Protection	Staff time	Bring 25 long term empty properties back into use through direct intervention over the Strategy period
	Undertake survey of empty homes to establish what support can be provided by the Council	2013/14	HBC Environmental Protection	Staff time Postage costs (contribution from Homelessness Prevention Fund)	
	Develop a more pro-active approach to bringing empty homes back into use	2013/14	HBC Environmental Protection	Staff time Budget to carry out works in default (?)	



**A Housing Strategy for Halton
2013 - 18**

Evidence Paper

**Consultation draft
February 2013**

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Glossary

Affordable Housing	Housing at a price below private market prices, which includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing.
Affordable Rented	Housing let by Registered Providers of social housing at a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent.
Assured Tenancy	Introduced by the Housing Act 1988, assured tenancies are a form of residential tenancy that give a degree of security so that the tenant cannot be evicted without a reason. At the time of writing, they are the main form of tenancy used by Registered Providers of social housing.
Assured Tenancy	Shorthold Assured Shorthold Tenancies are the most common form of tenancy offered by private landlords. The tenancy is granted for a fixed period of time (usually 6 months) following which the tenancy usually converts to a Periodic tenancy which is automatically renewed every 2 months. The landlord can terminate the tenancy at any point by issuing a section 21 notice, which effectively gives the tenant two months notice to leave, however a court will not enforce the notice unless at least six months have elapsed from when the initial tenancy was granted.
The Bedroom Standard	The Bedroom Standard is the most commonly used measure of overcrowding and underoccupation. A standard number of bedrooms is allocated to each household in accordance with its age/sex/marital status composition and the relationship of the members to one another. A separate bedroom is allocated to each married or cohabiting couple, any other person aged 21 or over, each pair of adolescents aged 10 - 20 of the same sex, and each pair of children under 10. Any unpaired person aged 10 - 20 is paired, if possible with a child under 10 of the same sex, or, if that is not possible, he or she is given a separate bedroom, as is any unpaired child under 10.
Choice Based Lettings	Choice Based Lettings is a method of allocating social housing which involves available properties being advertised locally and interested applicants expressing an interest or “bidding” on advertised properties. The property is then offered to the bidder with the highest level of assessed need.
CORE	The Continuous Recording of Lettings and Sales in Social Housing in England (known as CORE) is a national data collection system which records a wide range of information on social housing lettings and sales and the households they are let or sold to. The system provides valuable information for the development of national and local housing policies.
Concealed household	The Halton Strategic Housing Market Assessment defines concealed households as those that need or are likely to form within the next two years. Typically they are currently housed with family or friends and are an important element in considering future need for affordable housing.
Decent Homes Standard	The previous Government set a target that all social housing must meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. To meet the standard homes must meet the statutory minimum standard for housing (i.e. free from category 1 hazards under the HHSRS – see below), must be warm and weatherproof and have reasonable modern facilities.

Extra care housing	Extra care housing is a form of specialised housing scheme, usually for older people, which provides a range of care and support services on site. It differs from sheltered housing in that it provides a higher level of on site support and includes care services.
Homebuy	Homebuy is the term used by the Government to describe the various different types of shared ownership and shared equity products available to help people buy their own home.
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the national housing and regeneration agency for England. It provides investment for new and improved affordable homes and regeneration projects. It is also the main regulatory body for Registered Providers of social housing.
Household reference person	The Strategic Housing Market Assessment uses the term Household Reference Person to describe the person completing the SHMA survey form on behalf of the household.
Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)	The Housing, Health and Safety Rating System replaced the fitness standard as the Principal means of assessing housing conditions in 2004. It uses a risk based scoring approach to assess hazards within the home. The presence of “category 1” hazards indicates that the home is below the statutory minimum standard.
Housing Market Area	A geographical area which is relatively self contained in terms of reflecting peoples choice of location for a new home.
Indices of Multiple Deprivation	The English Indices of Deprivation measures relative levels of deprivation in small areas of England called Lower Layer Super Output Areas. It combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation. The data is produced at Lower Super Output Area level, of which there are 32,482 in the country.
Intermediate housing	Intermediate housing is housing provided at prices and rents above those of social rent but below market rents and prices. Examples include shared ownership, affordable rents and shared equity products.
Landlord Accreditation	Landlord Accreditation schemes are voluntary schemes, often run by local authorities, which encourage good standards in the private rented sector by allowing owners to apply for accredited status to demonstrate that they are a responsible landlord.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the collective name for the local authority’s Core Strategy and related planning policies. The National Planning Policy Framework published in 2012 replaces Local Development Frameworks with local plans.
Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) arrangements are a way of working out Housing Benefit for people who rent from a private landlord. LHA rates are based on the size of household and the area in which a person lives to work out the amount of rent which can be met with HB. HB paid under the LHA arrangements is normally paid to the tenant, who will then pay the landlord.
Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	A Partnership that brings together representatives from local statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors to address local problems, allocate funding and discuss local strategies and initiatives. In Halton the LSP is often referred to as the Halton Strategic

Partnership.

New Town Estates	Runcorn’s New Town estates sprang up in the late 1960s following the designation of Runcorn as a New Town area in 1964. They were developed as overspill estates to tackle a housing shortage in Liverpool. Initially managed by the Runcorn Development Corporation, the housing was transferred to a variety of housing associations in 1974 , following the disbanding of the Corporation.
Older People	In general for the purposes of this document the term “older people” refers to any person aged 65 or over unless otherwise stated. However some housing schemes for older people will accept people over the age of 55.
Private Sector Stock Condition Survey	Local authorities have a statutory duty to keep housing conditions in the area under review. Stock Condition Surveys are the principle means of assessing those conditions. They provide vital evidence to support the development of housing strategies and housing assistance policies. Government guidance recommends that local authorities undertake stock condition surveys every 3 to 5 years.
Regional Spatial Strategy	Regional Spatial Strategies were introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as a means of providing a spatial vision and strategy specific to each region in the country. They set housebuilding targets for each local authority area which were expected to be reflected in local planning policies. Regional Spatial Strategies were abolished by the Coalition Government in July 2010 so that top down targets for house building no longer exist.
Registered Provider	Registered Provider is the new term for providers of social or affordable housing who are registered with the Homes and Communities Agency. They were previously referred to as Registered Social Landlords. They are almost always non profit making Housing Associations or Trusts, although in recent years some private developers have started to build and manage affordable housing and so have also registered with the HCA.
Shared Ownership	Shared Ownership schemes are used to help people to get a foot on the housing ladder by allowing them to buy a proportion of a home with a mortgage while the other proportion is rented, usually from a Registered Provider.
Sheltered housing	Sheltered housing refers to specialist housing schemes, usually for older people, that either have a warden living on site or have access to 24 hour emergency assistance through an alarm system.
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA) are a key component of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the community’s need for more homes. The aim of a SHLAA is to identify enough developable land in the area on which to deliver new housing for at least the next five years.
Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA)	Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) is a study of the operation of a Housing Market Area (HMA) and of housing need within the area. Since HMAs cover more than one local authority area SHMAs are usually carried out in conjunction with other local authority areas. Government recommends that all local authorities undertake SHMAs on a periodic basis to inform development of their planning and housing policies and has produced guidance for their use.

Supported accommodation/housing Supported accommodation is a catch all phrase that refers to any type of accommodation that offers on site support to enable occupants to live independently. Examples include young persons hostels, extra care housing and sheltered housing.

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is prepared by local strategic partnerships (LSPs) as a set of goals and actions which they, in representing the residential, business, statutory and voluntary interests of an area, wish to promote. The SCS should inform the Local Development Framework (LDF) and act as an umbrella for all other strategies devised for the area.

Vulnerable people There is no one definition of vulnerable people which covers all contexts. For safeguarding purposes a vulnerable adult is described as a person:

“ Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.”

However a broader definition is sometimes used by Government for the purposes of allocating resources which can include anyone aged 65 or over, disabled people, claiming benefits and/or families with children under 5.

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Foreword

This document sets out a comprehensive overview of housing in Halton in 2012/13. It is intended to provide the evidence base to Halton's Housing Strategy 2013 to 2018 which describes the Council's housing priorities for the coming five years. The findings from the evidence paper have been used as a basis on which to consult with stakeholders and the wider public with a view to developing these future priorities.

The evidence paper sets housing in its policy context and takes account of the wide range of housing reforms introduced by the Coalition Government since 2010 including the Government's Housing Strategy for England; the Localism Act 2011 and Welfare Reform Act 2012.

It uses a range of information sources to build a comprehensive picture of housing including Halton's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and local statistical returns as well as national datasets such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

I have pleasure in commending the document to you.

Councillor Phil Harris

Executive Board Member for Housing Strategy



Further information on this paper and the separate Housing Strategy 2013-18 can be obtained by contacting Joanne Sutton, Halton Borough Council on 0151 511 8750 or emailing: joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk. This evidence paper is available in different formats upon request.

Part One – Resources

Introduction

In common with many public service areas, Housing budgets have seen substantial reductions over the last 12 to 18 months as a result of the Government policy of deficit reduction. This will, inevitably, impact on our ability to deliver the same level of service that residents have come to expect. The current position with regard to financing the Housing service is set out in this part of the document.

Funding for Council Housing services

Regional Housing Pot

Until April 2011 the Regional Housing Pot was the main source of funding for the Housing Capital Programme, for the most part, funding assistance for housing renewal (grants and loans) and energy efficiency. The Regional Housing Pot funding stream came to an end in April 2011 along with the disestablishment of regional governing bodies. Consequently, the Council's ability to deliver a housing capital programme which adequately meets the needs identified in this evidence paper has been severely compromised. This will be reflected in the Council's Housing Strategy Delivery Plan which will set out our priorities and ambitions for housing in the context of a realistic level of future resources.

New Homes Bonus (NHB)

The New Homes Bonus replaced the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant in April 2011. The intention of NHB is to act as an incentive for local authorities to deliver housing growth by match funding six years worth of Council Tax for each new home built. An additional £350 is paid annually for each affordable home that is built and the grant applies to empty properties that have been brought back into use.

For 2012/13, the authority was awarded £856,871 in New Homes Bonus. While this funding is of course welcome, it is top sliced from the Local Authority Grant Settlement so in effect is not really new money. The funding is not ring fenced for housing use.

Supported housing funding

There have been changes to the way that supported housing is funded. In 2011 the ring fence was removed for Supporting People services nationally and the funding was subsumed into Council's Area Based Grant allocation. In Halton, this has resulted in a 7.6% decrease in the funding available for supported housing services on 2010/11 levels. The allocation for 2012/13 is shown in the figure 1.1 below.

Housing funding 2012/13

Delivery of the housing service in 2012/13 will be supported through a variety of different funding pots as illustrated in figure 1.1 below which shows monetary allocations for housing where these are known. The nature of the funding sources available illustrates an emphasis on services designed to

support vulnerable people while there is little funding available for other elements of the strategic housing service e.g. improving housing conditions, bringing empty homes back into use and commissioning research for future strategic development.

Figure 1.1 – Funding sources for strategic housing delivery 2012/13



The table below shows the allocation of capital resources for housing related activity for 2012/13.

	2012/13 Capital Programme
Disabled Facilities Grants (incl. capitalised salaries)	735,000
Energy Promotion	6,000
Stair lifts	250,000
Registered Providers Adaptations (Joint Funding)	550,000
Choice Based Lettings	28,946
Extra Care Naughton Fields	463,186
Bungalows at Halton Lodge	464,000
Sensory Hub	15,000
TOTAL	2,512,132

The Council will also seek to maximise resources from ad hoc grant opportunities as and when they arise. For example, the Department of Health’s Warm Homes, Healthy People funding stream provided funding for emergency heating and advice schemes to support vulnerable people to keep their homes warm during the winter months of 2012/13.

Other Housing funding

National Affordable Housing Programme

Registered Providers have agreed four year programmes with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver 320 affordable homes in Halton over the next four years. Unfortunately, the way the new funding model is structured means that it is not possible to provide a monetary value at local authority level.

Get Britain Building

The Get Britain Building scheme was announced in the Government's Housing Strategy as a £400 million investment fund designed to kickstart pipeline developments which have stalled but are otherwise ready to start or progress. The fund which provides commercial loans is mostly aimed at small and medium sized builders whose developments have come to a halt due to the uncertain market conditions. A prospectus providing further details was published in December 2011. Two schemes in Halton were originally shortlisted but now look unlikely to proceed.

Homelessness Grant

Halton provides support for homeless people through an annual grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which for 2011/12 was £50,000. Specific funding of £65,000 has also been allocated in the form of a one off grant for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme to provide support for households in danger of losing their home due to mortgage arrears. In addition, the Cheshire wide Partnership Group has been successful in securing £30,000 from DCLG to assist with the development of prevention initiatives. Halton is also involved with the Merseyside sub regional group which was awarded £470,000 by CLG to develop prevention initiatives such as the No Second Night Out scheme.

Future resources

It is anticipated that future investment will be limited to funding Disabled Facilities Grants and support for other vulnerable groups and that the local authority role in housing may increasingly be more about facilitating and co-ordinating rather than direct investment of resources.

Consultation question 1: Does this section of the Strategy give a realistic view of the likely level of future resources? Has anything been excluded that should be included?

Part Two - Context

National Policy

Laying the Foundations: The Housing Strategy for England

The Housing Strategy for England was launched on 21st November 2011. It sets out, in one overarching document, the Government's plans to address problems in the country's housing market through increasing the supply of homes, reforming social housing, supporting growth in the private rented sector, encouraging local authorities to bring empty homes back into use and improving choice and housing support. Much of the Strategy restated policies that had already been announced, however, there were some new initiatives designed to breathe life into the country's stagnant housing market. Among the most significant announcements were:

- A new £400 million "Get Britain Building" fund for small and medium sized developers whose developments have come to a halt due to uncertain market conditions;
- Introduction of a mortgage indemnity scheme to provide 95% mortgages on new build homes for first time buyers struggling to secure mortgage finance through conventional means;
- A competitive bidding process to encourage large scale, locally planned and community driven development;
- Plans to release enough public sector land to build 100,000 new houses through a "buy now, pay later" deal with developers;
- Consultation on reducing the length of time that must elapse before developers can seek to renegotiate section 106 agreements with local planning authorities;
- £100 million match funding to help bring empty homes back into use, with a further £50 million for those areas worst affected by empty properties;
- Consultation on increasing Right to Buy discounts with plans for every home sold to be replaced by a new home;
- Proposals to reform stamp duty to support large scale investment in the buy to let market;
- An allocation of £400 million for homelessness prevention and the launch of a ministerial working group to address the causes of homelessness;
- A new deal for older peoples housing and encouraging local authorities to make provision for a wide range of housing types including specialised housing for older people.

Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 16th November 2011. The Act sets out plans to give communities and local authorities greater powers and freedoms and introduces new Community Rights such as the Community Right to Challenge the delivery of local authority run services; the Community Right to Bid for assets of community value and the Community Right to Build small developments in their area without the need for planning permission. The Act also introduces a General Power of Competence for local authorities to do anything not specifically forbidden by law and paves the way for neighbourhood planning and directly elected mayors.

The Act also contains a number of Housing reforms which will impact directly on the Council's local authority strategic housing role, including:

- Giving local authorities greater freedom to decide who is eligible to apply for social housing. More recently, the Government has issued new guidance for allocation schemes which, amongst other provisions, gives greater priority for housing to ex servicemen and women. The Property Pool Plus allocations policy is in the process of being reviewed in light of the new guidance.
- Introduction of new fixed term tenancies for social housing tenants and requirement for the local authority to produce a Tenancy Strategy to guide Registered Providers in their use. This is considered in more detail later in this evidence paper.
- The power for local authorities to discharge their statutory homelessness duty through an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector without the applicant's consent.

The Act also changes the regulatory framework for Registered Providers by abolishing the Tenant Services Authority and placing greater emphasis on tenant involvement in regulation with remaining regulatory functions transferring to the Homes and Communities Agency.

Welfare Reform Act 2012

The Welfare Reform Act received Royal Assent on 8th March 2012. The Act has been described as the biggest shake up of the benefits system in 60 years. It aims to simplify the system and create the right incentives to get people into work by ensuring that no individual is better off by not working. Key features of the Act that will have the most significant impact on Halton's residents are:

- Introduction of Universal Credit. The level of Universal Credit is to be capped at £26,000. While it is estimated that only a small number of Halton residents will see their income reduce as a result of the cap, some will be very significantly affected (up to £500 per week). In addition, Housing Benefit is to be included in Universal Credit and will consequently be paid directly to tenants of social housing. There are fears that this will lead to an increase in rent arrears which, in turn, could lead to a rise in homelessness and could impact upon the ability of Registered Providers to secure private investment at competitive rates to maximise their capacity to deliver additional affordable housing.
- Replacement of Disability Living Allowance with a Personal Independent Payment (PIP) for those of working age. Halton, which has been selected as a pilot area for the scheme, has a disproportionate amount of disabled residents and the change to PIP will involve a reduction in the numbers of those receiving financial assistance.
- Changes to Housing Benefit including the introduction of an under occupancy penalty for households whose homes are deemed to be too large for their needs. Described as the "Bedroom Tax", this change will have a very significant impact in Halton, where it is estimated that as many as 3,000 social housing tenants could lose benefits. The situation is compounded by a shortage of smaller properties in the Borough to facilitate downsizing. Changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA), most significantly the extension of the age threshold for the shared accommodation rate from 25 to 35. This will affect around 234 claimants in Halton, whose benefit entitlement will reduce from £91.15 to £53.54 per week. Private tenants will also be affected by plans to uprate LHA by the Consumer Price Index rather than the Retail Price Index currently used.

It is too early to assess the impact of other reforms such as the ongoing reassessment of Incapacity Benefit claimants against the stricter criteria of the Employment Support Allowance, changes to Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans and forthcoming reforms to Council Tax benefit which will include a 10% cut in scheme funding and “localised” benefit schemes.

National Planning Policy Framework

The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012. It sets out, in a more condensed version of previous guidance, the Government’s planning policies and how it expects these to be applied and aims to simplify the country’s planning system to achieve sustainable development.

The NPPF replaces the need for Local Development Frameworks with Local Plans which local authorities must develop to meet objectively assessed needs and which must have sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change. For housing development, it reaffirms the requirement to assess need through a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (preferably developed in conjunction with other authorities in the Housing Market Area) and to identify opportunities to meet that need through the development of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

The framework has a clear emphasis on growth and on accelerating the planning process. A key challenge for the development and delivery of Local Plans will be how to balance the need for rapid housing and economic growth with the need to protect Green Belt and to promote the highest possible standards of sustainable development.

Affordable Rents

Affordable rent is the new rent model which the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) expect that Registered Providers will adopt for new build housing and for an agreed proportion of existing stock as it becomes vacant. Affordable rents are set at up to 80% of market rents in the area. The additional income raised through affordable rents is to be invested in new housing development and it is anticipated will help fund the shortfall as a result of significant cuts to the HCA National Affordable Housing Programme. While this could lead to an increase in rent levels for some tenants and could result in a two tier system whereby tenants in similar properties are paying different rents, it is likely that the impact in Halton will not be as great as in higher value areas due to relatively low private rents in the Borough.

Sub Regional context

Liverpool City Region Housing and Spatial Planning Forum

Halton Borough Council is represented on the Liverpool City Region Housing and Spatial Planning Forum, which acts as an advisory group to the Liverpool City Region Cabinet on housing and planning issues. The Forum provides the mechanism for the co-ordination of activity between the participating local authority areas and is a key delivery agent in developing and implementing the priorities contained within the Local Investment Plan described below.

Examples of sub regional projects overseen by the Forum include:

- Development and implementation of the sub regional Choice Based Letting Scheme Property Pool Plus (described in more detail later in this evidence paper);
- A co-ordinated approach to delivery of the successful bids to HCA to bring empty homes back into use, including development of a standardised lease agreement and inspection report;
- Co-ordination of affordable housing delivery and stalled/pipeline sites with a view to maximising funding opportunities to kickstart development.

The Group provides an opportunity to pool knowledge, experience, skills and resources from participating local authority areas with a view to maximising housing investment, choice and provision for the city region area and support the economic potential of the sub region.

Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan 2

The Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan (LIP) 2011-15 builds on the success of the interim plan for 2010/11 which has helped to secure over £80m of housing and regeneration investment in the City Region. The LIP has three primary roles:

- As a prospectus for housing and regeneration investment in the Liverpool City Region;
- To clarify the City Region's priorities to support economic growth whilst maintaining the momentum of regeneration;
- Inform HCA's business plan by setting clear priorities for future investment in the City Region.

The Plan identifies the challenges facing the City Region and the priorities for action, including:

- Raising the quality of and diversification of the housing offer as a means to harness economic potential;
- Bringing long term empty properties back into use as a means of increasing the supply of affordable housing;
- Addressing housing market failure in the core conurbations of Liverpool, Wirral and Sefton and also prioritise investment in the areas with greatest economic potential and market strength;
- Working with Registered Providers to ensure an appropriate mix of development based on evidence from Strategic Housing Market Assessments;
- Making best use of the existing stock, including developing measures to address under occupation;
- Developing opportunities for institutional investment in the private rented sector;
- Meeting the needs of an ageing population and supporting vulnerable people;
- Maximising the development opportunities presented by public landholdings in the City Region.

Local Context

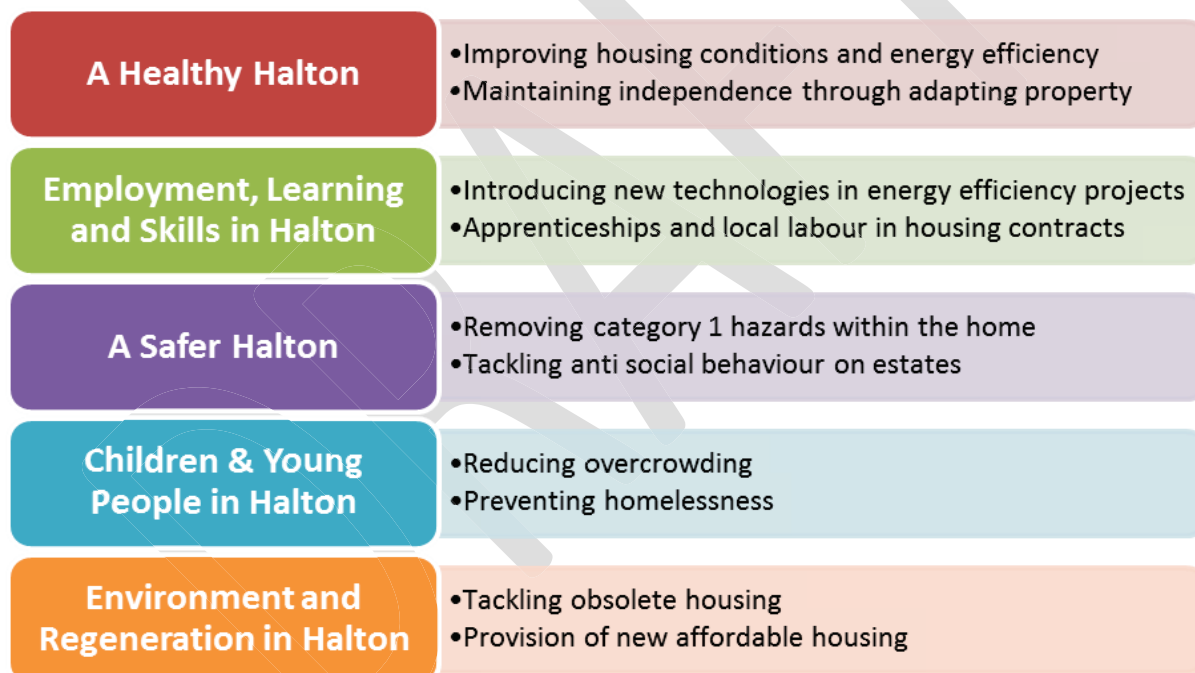
Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026

Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the vision for the Halton that the Council and its partners, under the umbrella of the Halton Strategic Partnership, would like to see emerge by 2026. The Strategy's five priority themes are:

- A Healthy Halton
- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
- A Safer Halton
- Halton's Children and Young People
- Halton's Environment and Regeneration

Housing has a significant contribution to make to each of the five priority themes as illustrated in figure 2.1

Figure 2.1 – Housing's contribution to Halton's priorities



Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan presents the Council's response to how it will help implement the Community Strategy. This is achieved through a framework consisting of a hierarchy of Directorate, Divisional and Team Service Plans known as "the Golden Thread" that are directly aligned to ensure that the strategic priorities are cascaded down through the organisation through outcome focused targets.

The five strategic priorities are also mirrored in the make up of the Council's Policy and Performance Boards which, together with the Executive Board, provide political leadership of the Council.

Progress in achieving the objectives contained in the Service Plans is reviewed regularly as part of the Council's performance management culture, and further scrutiny is exercised by Members through the Policy and Performance Boards.

Halton's Core Strategy

Halton's Core Strategy was adopted in November 2012 having been through Examination in Public and having been subject to examination by the Planning Inspectorate. The Strategy sets a minimum housing requirement of 9,930 net additional homes between 2010 and 2028, equating to 552 dwellings per annum. It is anticipated that almost 60% of the dwellings over the Strategy period are to be built in Runcorn. An average of at least 40% of new residential development should be developed on previously developed (brownfield) land over the period.

New homes will be delivered from a variety of sources including from sites currently available for housing development where work is either underway, planning permission has been granted or the site has been allocated for residential development and from sites which have the potential to contribute to housing land supply e.g. identified housing opportunities within Key Areas of Change (i.e. 3MG site at Ditton, South Widnes, East Runcorn and West Runcorn), new housing or mixed use allocations in subsequent Development Plans and appropriate windfall development. In accordance with Government guidance the Council will seek to maintain a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land. The Strategy identifies opportunities to develop 1,400 homes in Daresbury and 1,400 homes in Sandymoor in Runcorn East and 1,500 homes in Runcorn West, mainly on the Runcorn Waterfront site.

The Core Strategy contains an affordable housing requirement of 25% of the total residential units proposed on schemes comprising 10 or more dwellings (net gain) or 0.33 hectares or greater for residential purposes. The Council will seek to secure an equal split between social/affordable rent tenures and intermediate housing tenures across the Borough. Provision of affordable housing must meet the identified housing needs as set out in the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment and is to be provided in perpetuity. The affordable housing contribution may only be reduced where robust and credible evidence is provided to demonstrate that the affordable housing target would make the scheme unviable.

An Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document has been adopted to support the policy which provides additional guidance for all parties involved in the delivery of affordable housing through the planning system.

Tenancy Strategy

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, Halton has developed a Tenancy Strategy which sets out what types of tenancies the Council recommends that Registered Providers should offer locally, the length of those tenancies and the circumstances in which they should be offered and renewed. The Strategy, which was formally adopted by the Council in September 2012, recommends that Providers continue to offer Lifetime tenancies but recognises that Providers may wish to make use of the new fixed term tenancies introduced by the Localism Act to make the best use of their housing stock. Where this is the case, the Strategy advises that fixed term tenancies should be for a minimum of five years and are not suitable for:

- Existing social housing tenants who became assured tenants prior to 1st April 2012 and who are transferring to another property;
- Where the property is part of a supported housing development that provides specialist accommodation for particular client groups, including sheltered housing.
- Where the tenant is someone over the prevailing state retirement age.
- Where the property is located in an area of very low demand and/or high multiple deprivation where the local authority has serious concerns about the long term sustainability of the area. In these circumstances, the local authority will initiate discussions with the relevant Provider(s) to request that they temporarily suspend the use of fixed term tenancies in that area.
- Where a tenant with a secure or assured tenancy is required by a Provider to move due to redevelopment e.g. they are being required to move, not seeking to do so.

The Strategy also recommends that in most cases fixed term tenancies are renewed upon review, particularly where the household contains children or has been offered in response to particular set of vulnerabilities and the household is still assessed as being vulnerable or the property has been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person and that person still resides in the property and needs the adaptations. The circumstances in which it is recognised that Providers may not wish to renew the tenancy are where:

- There has been a substantial improvement in the household's financial circumstances to the extent that continued occupation of the property by the household would present a conflict with the charitable objectives or primary purpose of Providers to provide housing for those in necessitous circumstances.
- There has been a change in the composition of the household which has resulted in the household under occupying the accommodation.
- An adapted property is no longer suitable for the tenant's needs e.g. where adaptations have been provided for a disabled person who is no longer resident in the property, the adaptations are no longer required, and there are other families needing this type of adapted accommodation.

In the latter two circumstances the Strategy advises that Providers should seek to offer suitable alternative accommodation in their own or another Provider's stock. The Council does not expect fixed term tenancies to be used as a means of enforcing tenancy conditions but recognises that there may be cases where enforcement action is so far advanced that it may not be appropriate to renew the tenancy.

Consultation question 2: Does this part of the evidence paper give an adequate overview of the national, sub regional and local context? Are there any other issues that have not been covered?

DRAFT

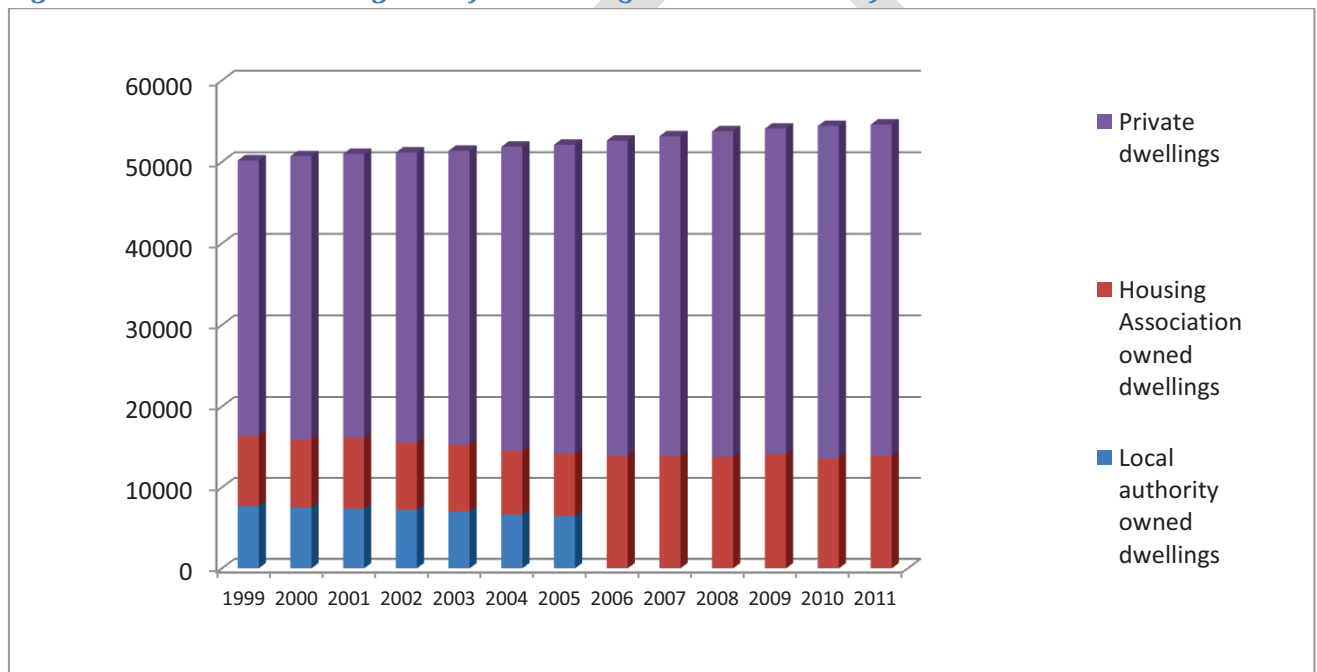
Part Three – Halton’s Housing

Overview

Tenure

Halton’s housing stock can be characterised by a relatively high proportion of social rented properties (around 25%), resulting from the development and subsequent transfer of housing in Runcorn’s New Town estates, and a private sector skewed towards lower value, semi detached and terraced homes. Figure 3.1 illustrates the growth in the private sector (20% in the 12 years from 1999 to 2011) and the steady decline in the total social housing stock of around 15%. As illustrated in the chart, the Council transferred its housing stock to a newly created Housing Association, Halton Housing Trust, in December 2005.

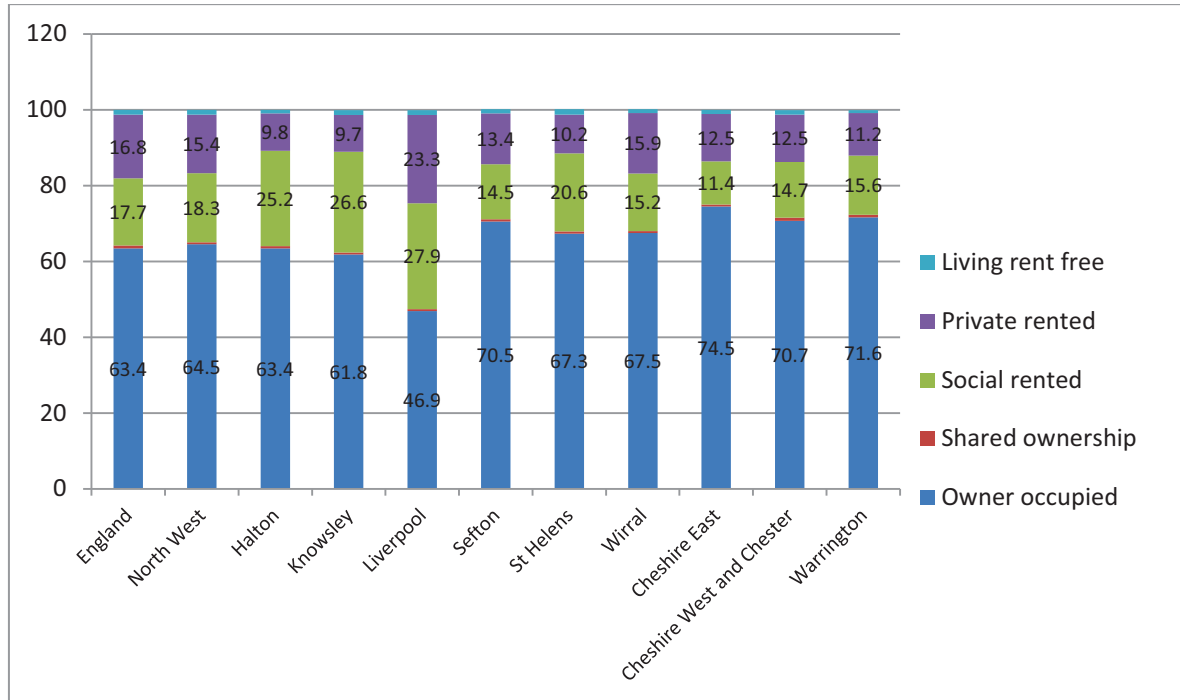
Figure 3.1 – Halton’s housing stock from 1999 (from HSSA returns)



More recently the Borough has witnessed a dramatic growth in the private rented sector, from only 4% of the total housing stock at the time of the 2001 Census to 10%. It is thought that this is due to limited mortgage availability and long waiting lists for social housing fuelling demand for the sector, and the availability of Buy to Let mortgages and concept of housing as a long term investment fuelling supply. This growth has included the Council examining its approach to the sector as part of a Member led scrutiny review, which is described later in this document.

Census data from 2011 allows us to compare Halton’s stock profile with that of national and regional housing profiles and with neighbouring local authorities as shown in figure 3.2 below. As illustrated, Halton has a larger than average social rented sector and a relatively small private rented sector.

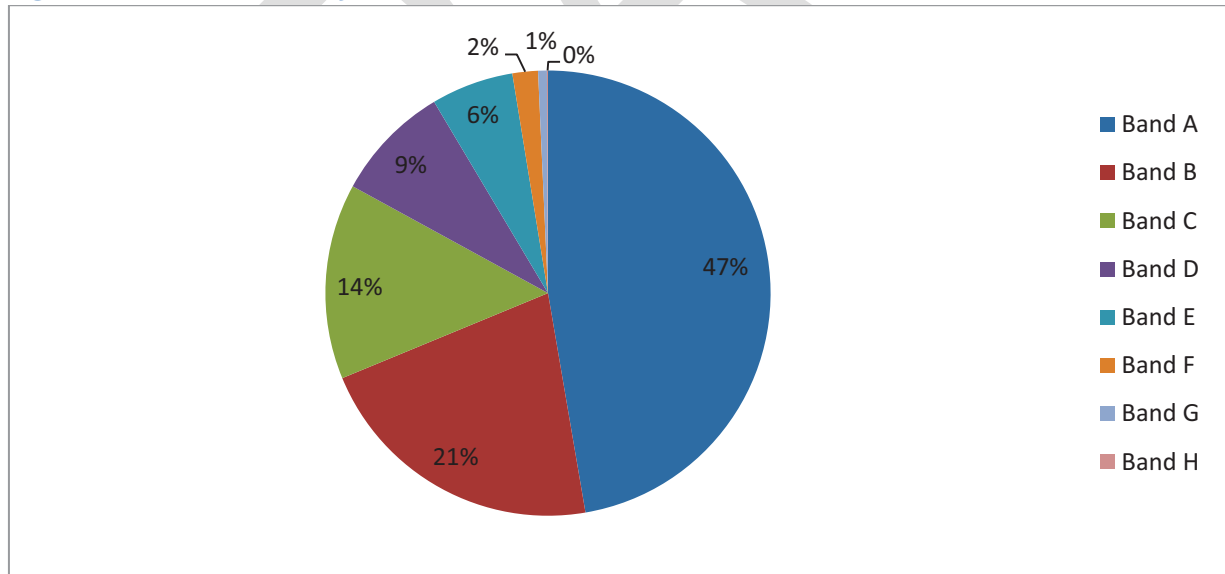
Figure 3.2 - Sub regional tenure comparison (Census 2011)



Property values

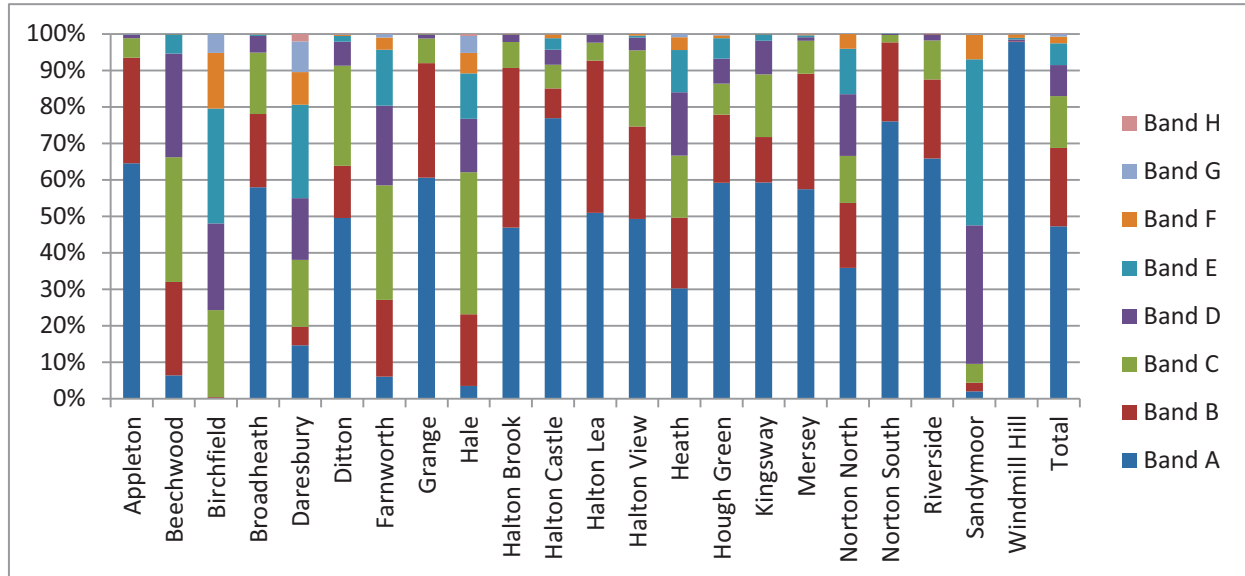
The stock profile in Halton is skewed towards lower value properties, with 68% of dwellings in Council Tax Bands A or B, as illustrated in figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3 - Breakdown of Council Tax Bands in Halton



Analysis of Council Tax Band by ward, as illustrated below, reveals that the lowest value stock is concentrated unsurprisingly in the wards containing the highest proportions of social housing. Higher value properties are concentrated in Birchfield, Daresbury and Hale wards.

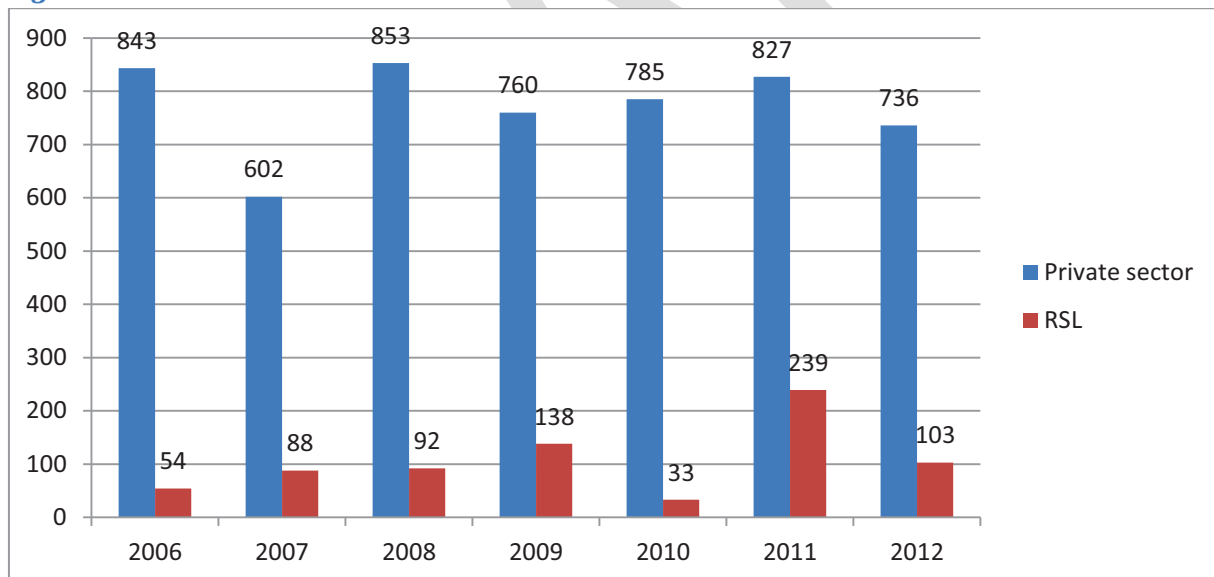
Figure 3.4 – Council Tax bands by wards



Empty Homes

The proportion of long term empty private homes in Halton at around 1.5% to 2.2% is consistent with Regional figures and those of neighbouring local authorities. Figure 3.5 below shows the number of vacancies over 6 months in both the private and social rented sectors.

Figure 3.5 – Vacancies over 6 months



Analysis of the geographical spread of all empty homes reveals no neighbourhood or street level “hotspots”, however, the three wards with the highest proportions: Mersey (6.61%), Riverside (5.63%) and Appleton (4.49%) are those containing more properties in Council Tax Bands A and Band private rented properties suggesting a connection between these factors. The Council takes action to remedy empty homes where a complaint is received and is supportive of initiatives to reduce the number of empty homes as and when funding is available. For example the Council has recently worked with Halton Housing Trust to secure HCA funding to bring 8 empty homes back into use through acquisition. Additional resources would be needed to take a more pro active approach.

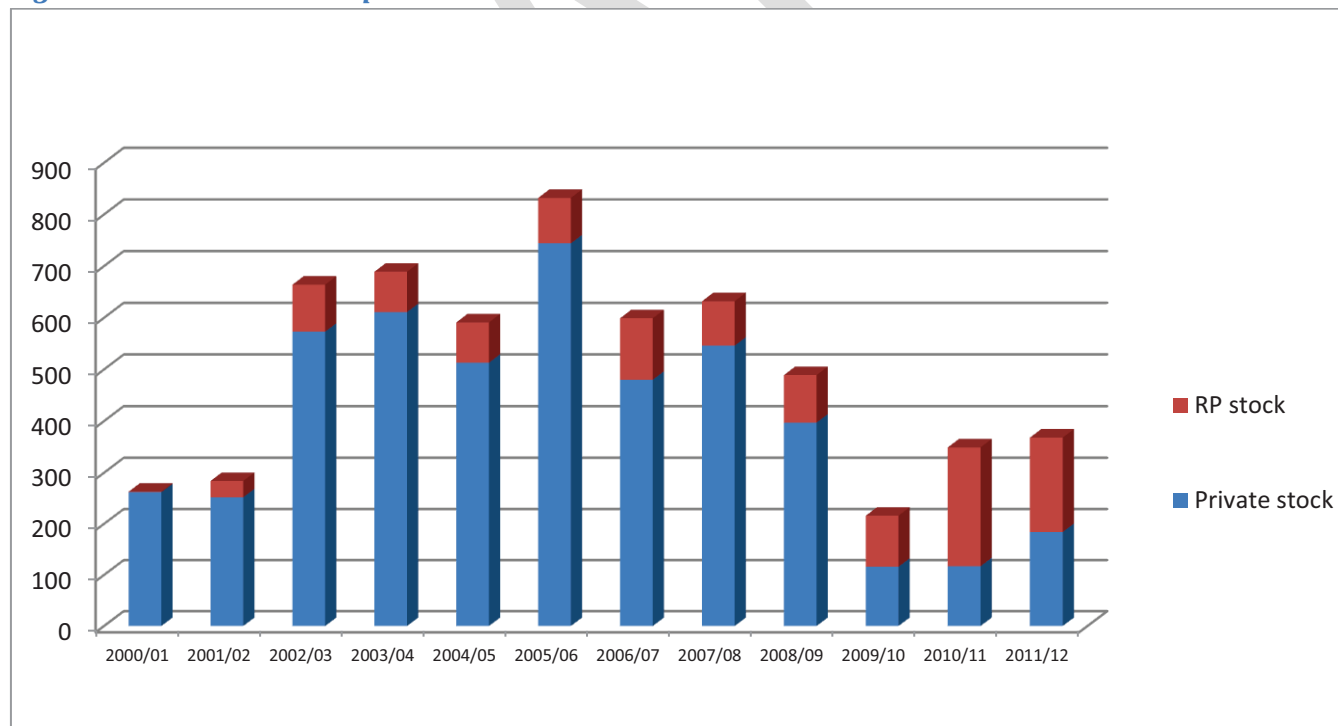
A survey of owners of long term empty private sector homes undertaken in 2009 revealed that around 41% required investment to bring them back into use, although in the majority of cases improvement or modernisation work was already underway. The majority of respondents indicated that they anticipated that the property would be occupied within a 12 month period, only 10% thought it would still be empty due to either the level of work required or current market conditions.

The number of long term vacant properties in the social housing stock varies greatly from year to year as illustrated above. However, the numbers are heavily influenced by the current state of play with regard to regeneration programmes. For example, the increase in 2011 is due largely to the number of properties awaiting demolition in Castlefields as part of the ten year Masterplan. Consequently, the number of social housing properties empty for more than 6 months, which under normal circumstances represents less than 1% of the total social housing stock, is not a cause for concern.

New housing

Figure 3.6 illustrates the number of newly built properties in the Borough as reported in Housing Flows Reconciliation returns. The chart demonstrates the impact of the recent economic downturn on new build completions, which have fallen by over 500% on peak levels in 2005/06 and fall way below the former target of 500 per annum set out in the now defunct North West Regional Spatial Strategy.

Figure 3.6 – New build completions 2000 onwards



Source: DCLG Housing Flows Reconciliation returns

The chart also demonstrates growth in social housing developments over recent years, part funded by the Homes and Communities Agency’s (HCA) National Affordable Development Programme. Registered Providers in Halton have agreed their development programmes with the HCA for the four year period 2011 to 2015, resulting in the following planned new developments.

	1 Bed Flat	2 Bed Flat	2 Bed Bungalow	2 Bed House	3 Bed House	Total
Runcorn	0	38	7	26	48	119
Widnes	39	116	5	11	30	201
Total	39	154	12	37	78	320

In addition to the above, a new 47 unit extra care scheme at Naughton Fields, Liverpool Road, Widnes funded from 2008/11 National Affordable Housing Programme has recently been developed.

Halton's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment allows us to forecast the number of total expected completions for Runcorn and Widnes for the four years to 2016/17. Note that at this stage tenure is unknown so these figures include both market and affordable anticipated housing development.

	Approx Completed Units 2013/14	Approx Completed Units 2014/15	Approx Completed Units 2015/16	Approx Completed Units 2016/17
Runcorn	232	502	688	560
Widnes	338	328	441	165

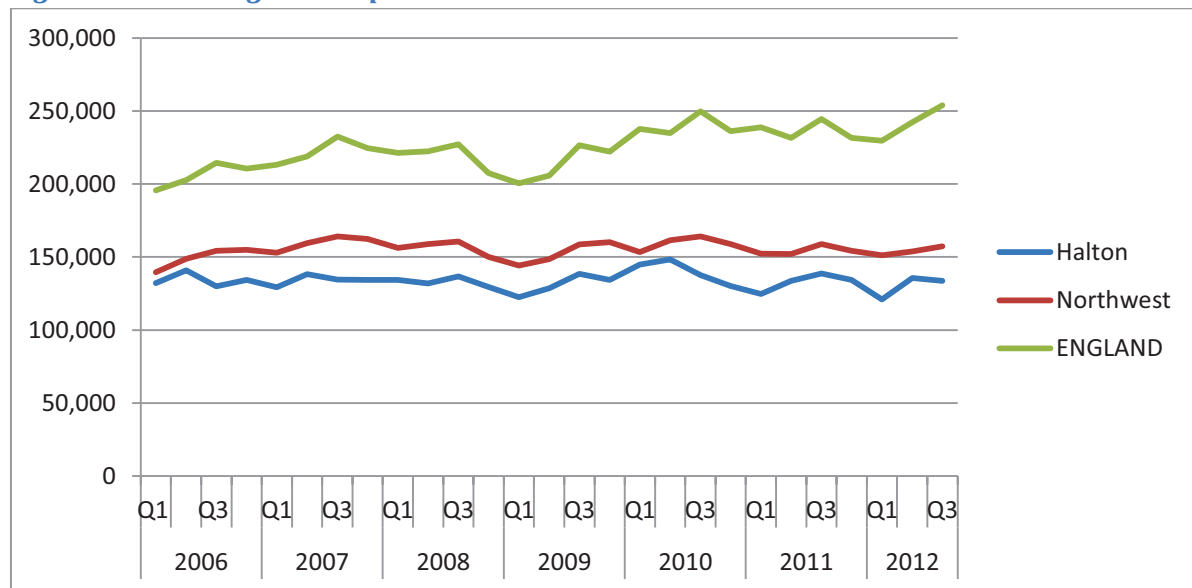
The Council is keen to fulfil its role in facilitating new housing development through the Local Development Framework and has prepared a comprehensive list of potential housing development sites that are likely to come forward over the next 15 years. These are contained in a document called the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which is updated annually. This can be viewed at <http://www3.halton.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/planning/294413/>.

The Housing Market

House prices

Average house prices in Halton are lower than regional averages and significantly lower than national averages as illustrated in figure 3.7. Based on provisional estimates at quarter 3 2012 the average house price in Halton was £133,550 which was £23,693 lower than the North West average.

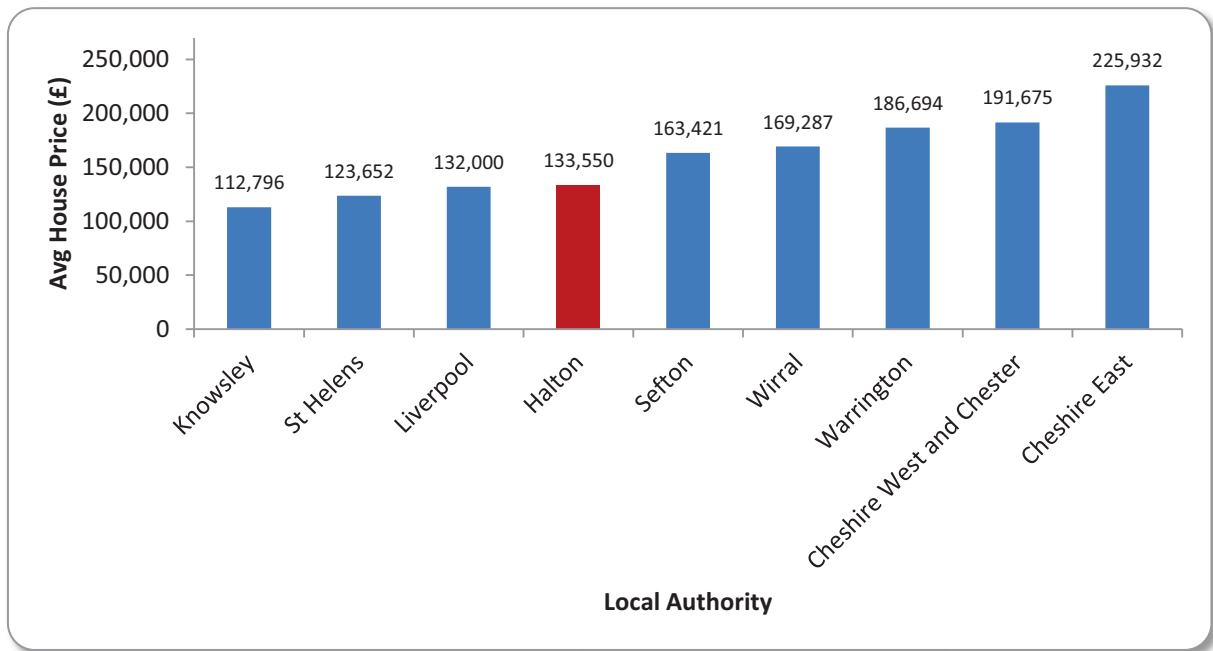
Figure 3.7 – Average house prices



Source: Land Registry

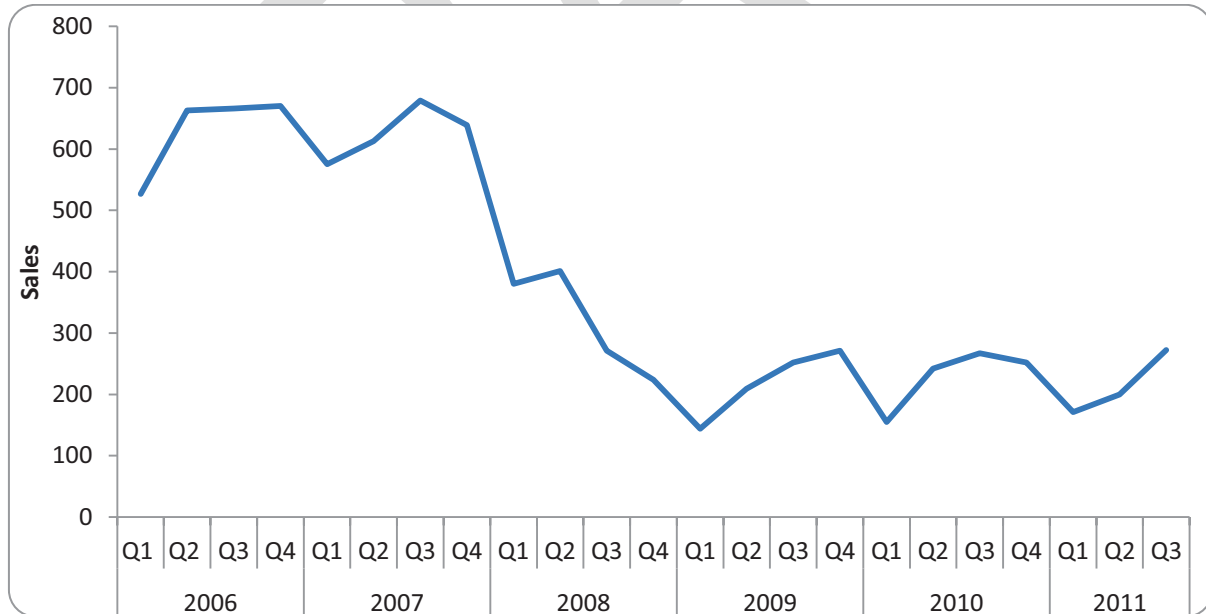
Historically house prices in Halton along with those in Knowsley have tended to be the lowest in the Liverpool City Region. However latest figures (quarter 3 2012) suggest that local average house prices have overtaken Knowsley and St Helens and are more on a par with Liverpool as shown in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8 – Sub regional comparison of average house prices (Quarter 3 2012)



In common with the regional and national position, the economic downturn and consequential housing market conditions has led to a dramatic decrease in the number of sales as demonstrated by figure 3.9, declining by almost 60% between the peak at quarter 3 2007 and the corresponding quarter in 2011.

Figure 3.9 – Average sales

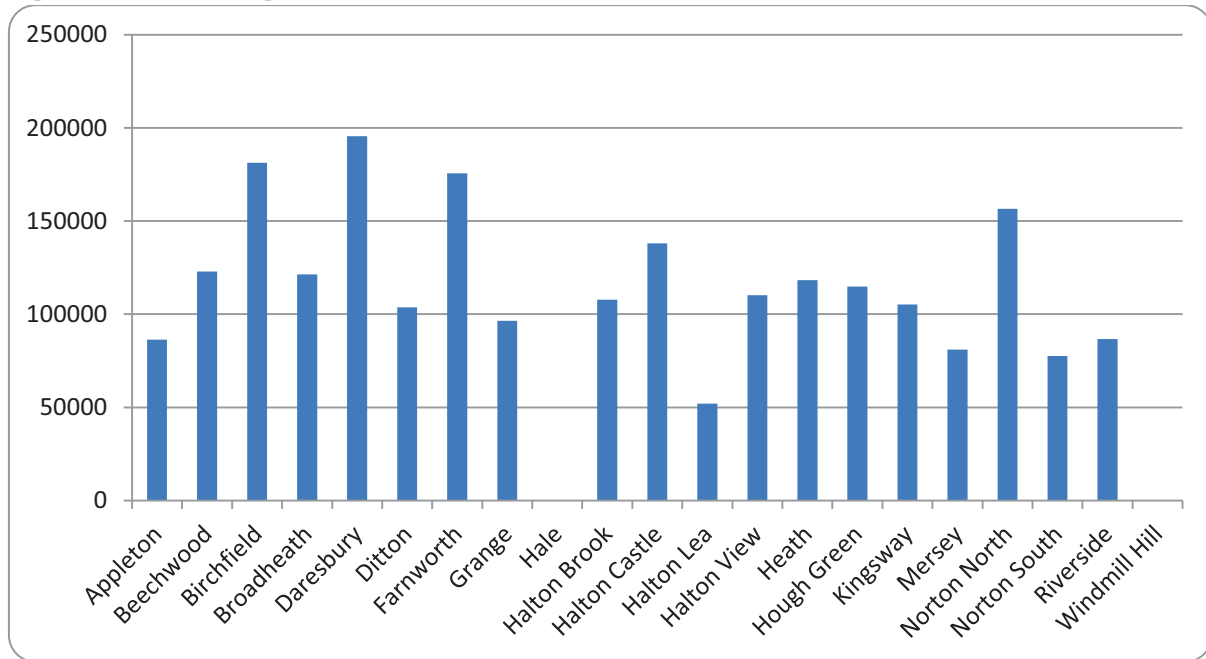


Source: Land Registry

Analysis at ward level at figure 3.10 reveals the disparity in house prices across the Borough. Average house prices in Daresbury and Birchfield which have a high proportion of new build, executive style homes are almost four times as much as those in the area with the lowest average house price in quarter 3 2011 (Halton Lea). Average house prices in wards containing New Town

estates and those with a high proportion of smaller terraces and private rented stock (e.g. Appleton and Mersey) are unsurprisingly lower.

Figure 3.10 – Average House Prices Quarter 3 2011

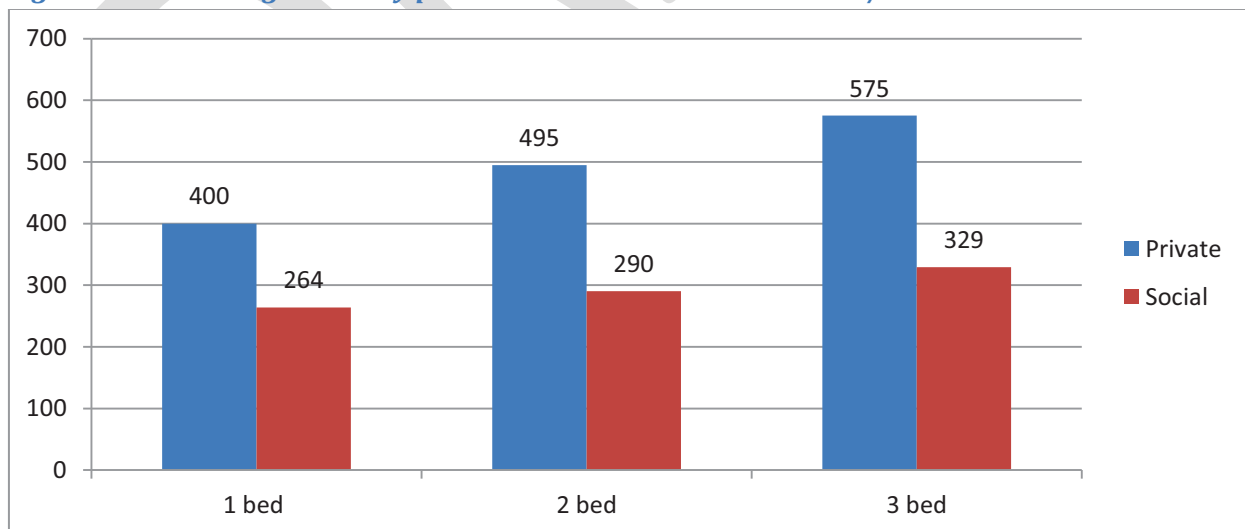


Source: Land Registry

Rent levels

The Halton Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) used CORE data on new social lettings and Valuation Office Data to compare the relative rent levels in the social and private rented stock. Figure 3.11 illustrates this differential.

Figure 3.11 – Average monthly private and social rent levels 2009/10



As shown, social rents were found to equate to around 58% of prevailing market rents, indicating the potential impact of the new affordable rent regime which, if rents are raised to the full 80% threshold, would see the average monthly rent for a 3 bedroom social rented property rise to around £460 per month. The SHMA also found that rent levels in the social housing sector were

increasing at a much faster rate (up by around 27% on 2004/05 levels) than private rents, which had remained relatively static over the same period.

Affordability

The Halton Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2011 collected a range of information regarding household financial circumstances relevant to their ability to afford market housing in order to assess the level of annual affordable housing need. In summary, the findings were that:

- Average gross household income was £25,662 with a much lower median income level of £18,954.
- Average household savings were £3,756 (taking into account non mortgage debts) but again the median was much lower at £290.
- Around a third of households were in debt and a further quarter had no savings.
- Average equity was £95,138 and 1,588 households were in negative equity.
- An estimated 4,307 new households were likely to form in the next two years.
- Around 40% of these had an income of less than £10,000 and 81% less than £20,000.

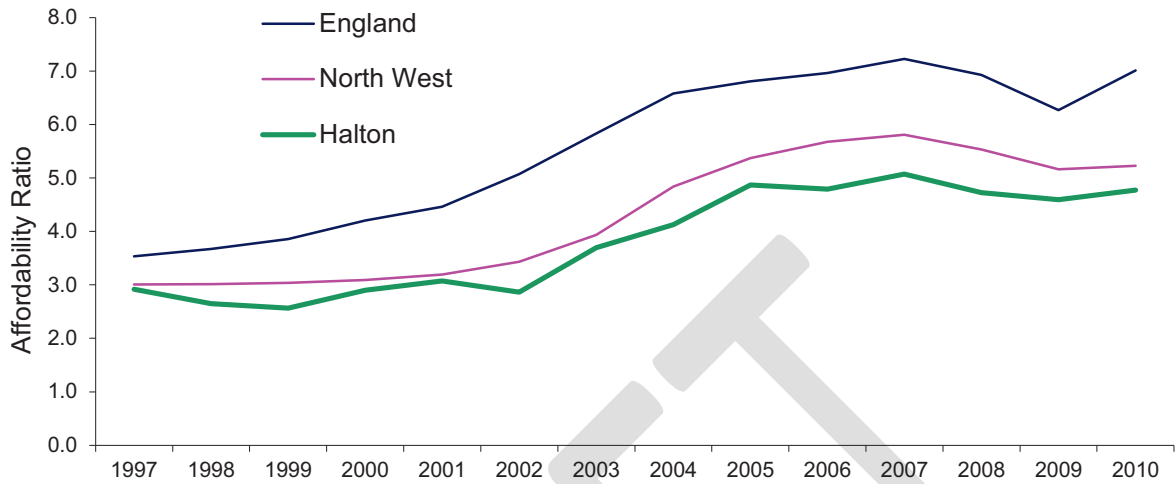
Using the affordability criteria below, the survey found that around 32% of households were unable to afford home ownership. When taking into account the need for a 20% deposit requirement this figure increased to 46.5%.

“Assessing whether a household can afford home ownership - A household is considered able to afford to buy a home if the residual cost is no more than 3.5 times the gross household income. The residual cost is calculated by deducting any capital that is available for use towards home ownership (e.g. savings or equity) from the overall cost of the home.”

Using the Government recommended model which takes into account backlog and newly arising need and likely future supply, the survey assessed a need for 891 affordable homes per annum for the next five years, 65% for social/affordable rent and the remaining 35% split between intermediate rent, shared ownership and low cost home ownership. This figure represents a significant increase on the 2006 Housing Needs Survey which estimated a need at that time for 176 affordable homes per annum, clearly demonstrating the impact that the economic downturn has had on the housing market. However, given an overall average target of 552 new homes within Halton’s Core Strategy delivery of 891 affordable homes per annum appears unrealistic.

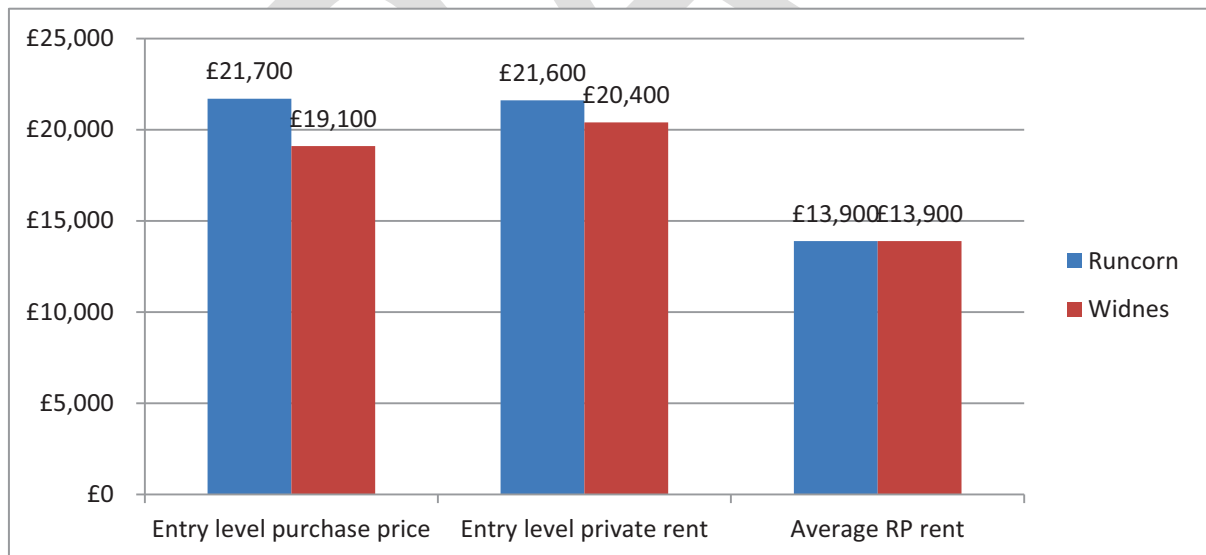
Analysis of median house prices compared to average incomes reveals that Halton has an affordability ratio of 4.8, lower than the regional ratio of 5.2 and significantly lower than the national affordability ratio of 7.0. Figure 3.12 below illustrates how the affordability ratio has increased since the house price boom at the turn of the century.

Figure 3.12 – House price to income affordability ratio



The SHMA also estimated the income levels required to access two bedroomed accommodation in the owner occupied, private rented and social rented sectors without subsidy in Runcorn and Widnes, with the results shown in figure 3.13.

Figure 3.13 – Indicative income required to purchase/rent without subsidy

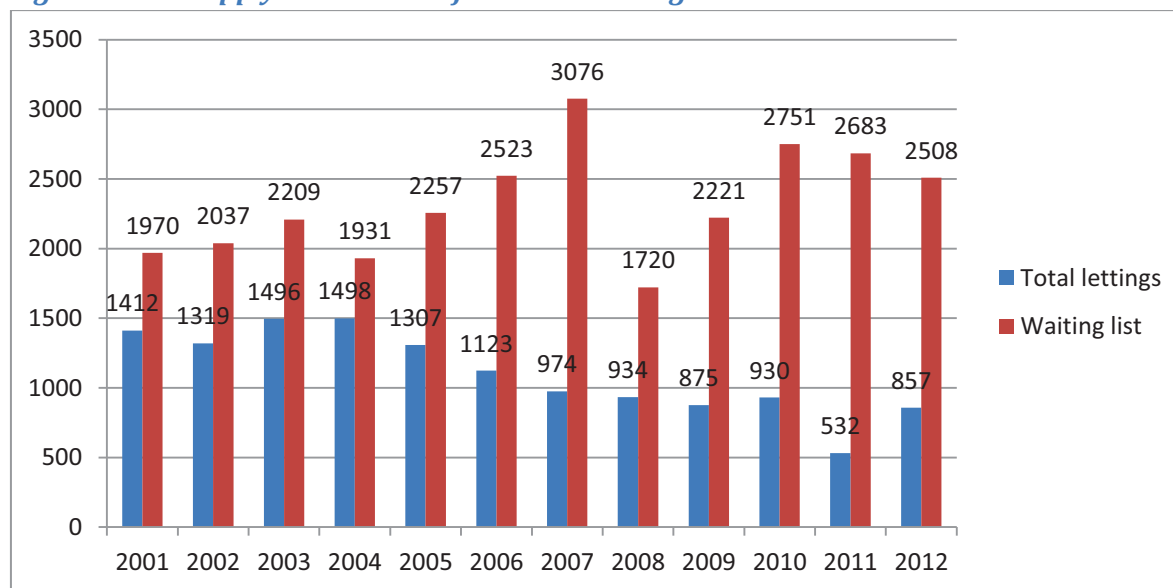


Supply and Demand for housing

Information on the supply and demand for social housing can be obtained from the annual English Local Authority Statistics on Housing (formerly Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix) which collects data on the number of people on the Council’s waiting list and the number of homes available for letting during the year. Figure 3.14 below illustrates the widening gap between the number of

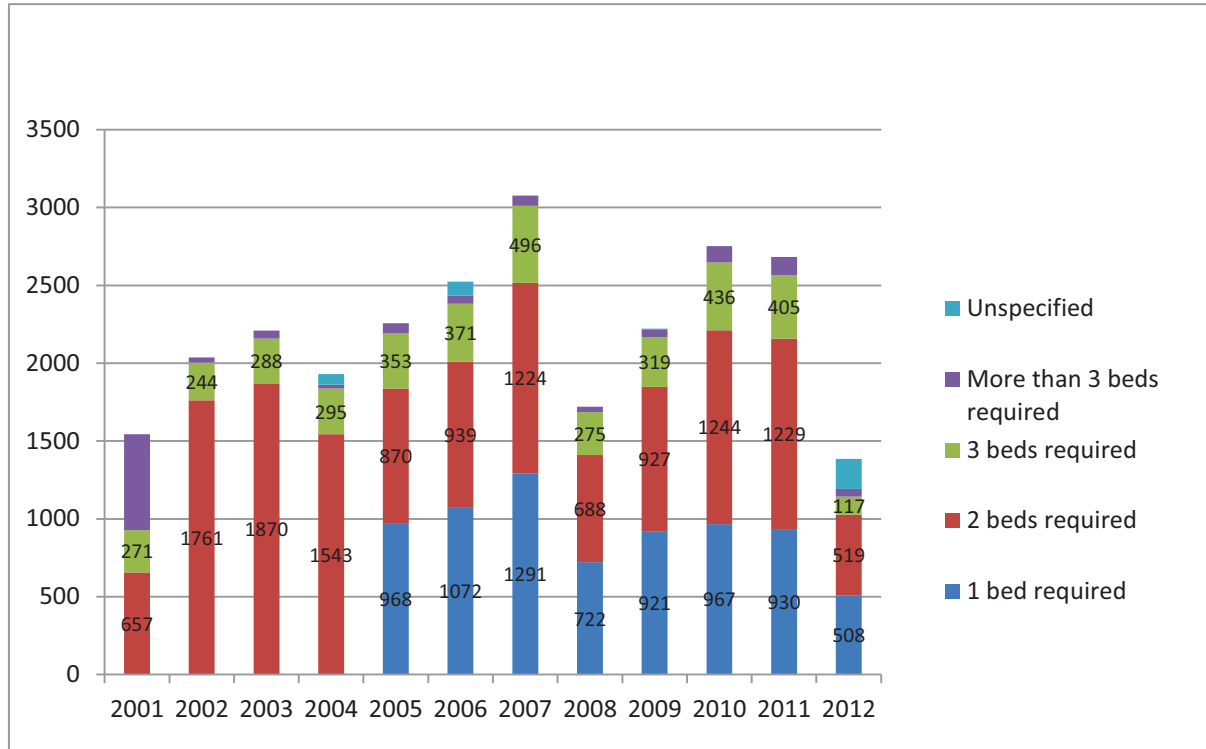
people registered for social housing and the total available lettings during the year, indicating the impact of recent housing market conditions on mobility within the sector.

Figure 3.14 – Supply and demand for social housing



Further analysis of the waiting list reveals the need for smaller one and two bedroom accommodation, as illustrated in figure 3.15 below. This is reflective of smaller household sizes and the number of single and couple households on the waiting list. The drop in the number of applications in 2012 as shown in the graph below reflects the fact that at the time the data was collected Halton Housing Trust was midway through a re-registration exercise in preparation for the move to Choice Based Lettings.

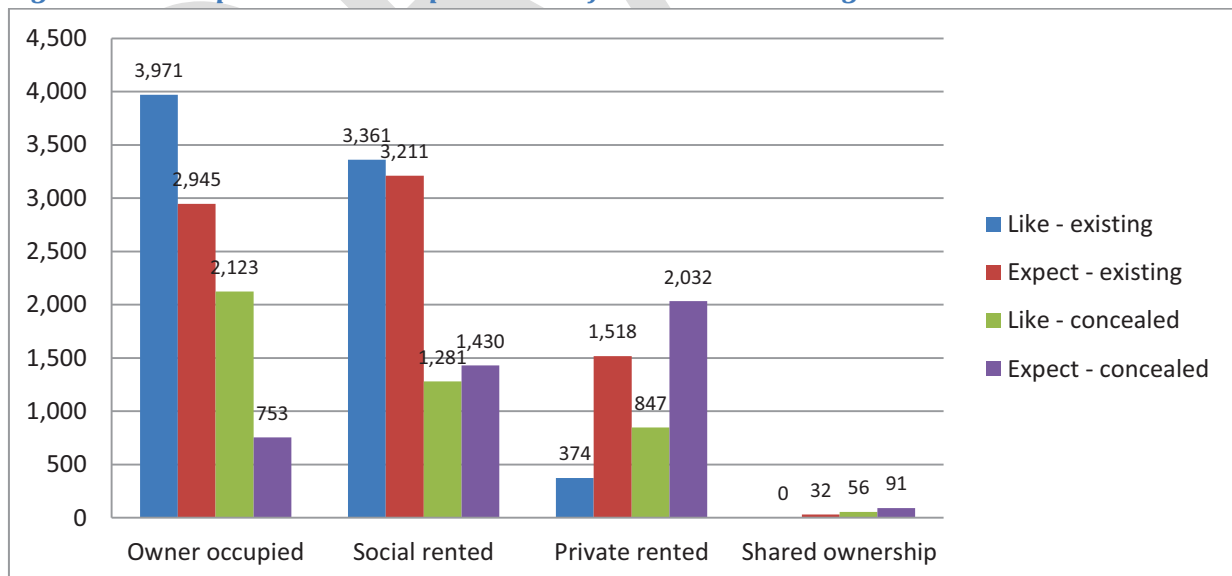
Figure 3.15 – Housing waiting list – number of bedrooms required



Source: ELASH/HSSA returns - NB Prior to 2005 data for 1 and 2 beds was combined.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment collected information on tenure aspirations and expectations of existing and concealed households who indicated that they needed or were likely to move within the next two years.

Figure 3.16 – Aspirations and expectations of households looking to move



The results, illustrated in figure 3.16, reveal the strength of demand for home ownership but the much lower expectation that this would be attained, particularly from concealed households. Social housing was also in demand but households felt that this was more attainable. There was relatively low demand for private rented housing although the responses to the question of expectation reveal

the extent to which the private rented sector is seen as attainable and is to some extent “plugging the gap” in meeting housing need. The survey revealed little demand for shared ownership, however, the relative scarcity of intermediate housing in Halton could have had a bearing on this.

Perhaps unsurprisingly there was a high level of demand for three or four bedroomed detached or semi detached housing amongst existing households. Three quarters of existing households expected to move within Halton with the Birchfield/Farnworth/Halton View area reported as the most popular location.

Only 55% of concealed households expected to move within Halton and while demand was also high for a detached or semi detached house, 56% expected that they would move to a flat or maisonette with similar proportions willing to accept one bedroom accommodation.

Housing Conditions

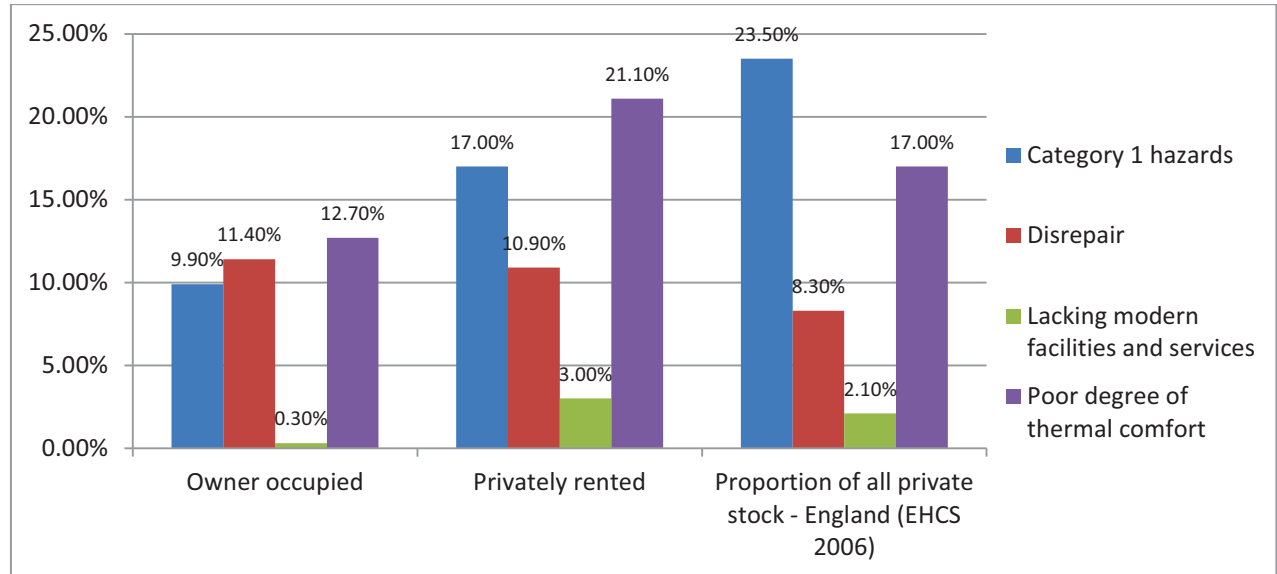
Decent Homes

The Decent Homes Standard uses four broad criteria to assess housing conditions, that is that housing should:

- A - be above the legal minimum standard for housing (measured by the presence of category 1 hazards under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System), and
- B - be in a reasonable state of repair, and
- C - have reasonably modern facilities (such as kitchens and bathrooms) and services, and
- D - provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (effective insulation and efficient heating).

Just over a quarter (26.2%) of private sector dwellings in Halton failed the Decency Standard at the time of the latest Private Sector Stock Condition Survey, equating to 10,500 dwellings. This was significantly lower than the national rate of 36.3% (English House Condition Survey 2006) and the North West rate of 37% (“Establishing a Decency Baseline for the Private Sector in the North West”).

The most common reason for failing the Standard was due to a poor degree of thermal comfort affecting over half of non decent properties followed by the need for repair and the presence of a Category 1 hazard. Only 300 properties failed due to a lack of modern facilities. This is illustrated in figure 3.17 which gives a comparison of the proportions failing the standard for each reason in the owner occupied and private rented stock and with national figures from the English House Condition Survey 2006.

Figure 3.17 – Proportion of homes failing the decent homes standard by reason for failure

The total cost to remedy each criteria is as follows:

Category 1 hazards - £21 million

In need of repair - £18 million

Lacking modern facilities - £3 million

Thermal comfort - £9 million

Higher rates of non decency are found in Runcorn than Widnes (27.8% compared to 24.5%) with pre 1919 terraced stock more likely to be affected.

Around 29% of vulnerable households living in the private rented sector were found to live in non decent homes, equating to 4,420 households, with vulnerable households living in Runcorn more likely to be living in non decent homes than those in Widnes. Other households that were more likely to live in non decent homes include households with an income of under £10,000 (35%) and those where the head of household is under 25 (41%).

Halton Borough Council collects annual data from Registered Providers related to the condition of their stock. Data for 2011 reveals that all social housing stock in Halton met the Decent Homes Standard and none contained category 1 hazards under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System. It can, therefore, be concluded that the social housing stock in Halton is in good condition.

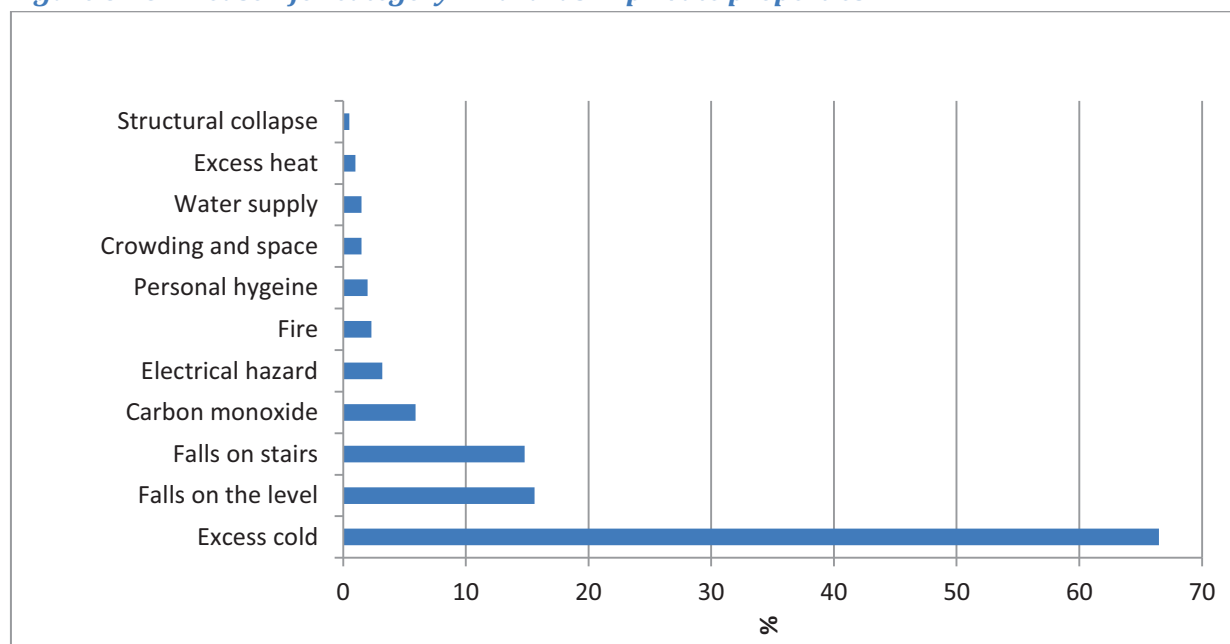
Category 1 hazards

The Housing, Health and Safety Rating System replaced the Fitness Standard in 2004, as the principal method of assessing housing standards for local authorities. It adopts a risk based scoring approach which measures the likelihood and severity of certain hazards occurring within the home, with those properties scoring above a certain threshold deemed to contain Category 1 hazards.

The Halton Stock Condition Survey found that 4,400 dwellings contained Category 1 hazards with 3,900 being houses and an estimated 500 flats. This represents 11% of the private sector stock which is significantly lower than the national and regional figure (23.5% and 44% respectively).

Almost two thirds of all category 1 hazards identified by the survey were attributable to excess cold with falls on the level and falls on stairs being the second and third most common hazard. Figure 3.18 shows the results of the survey in relation to all Category 1 hazards.

Figure 3.18 – Reason for category 1 hazards in private properties

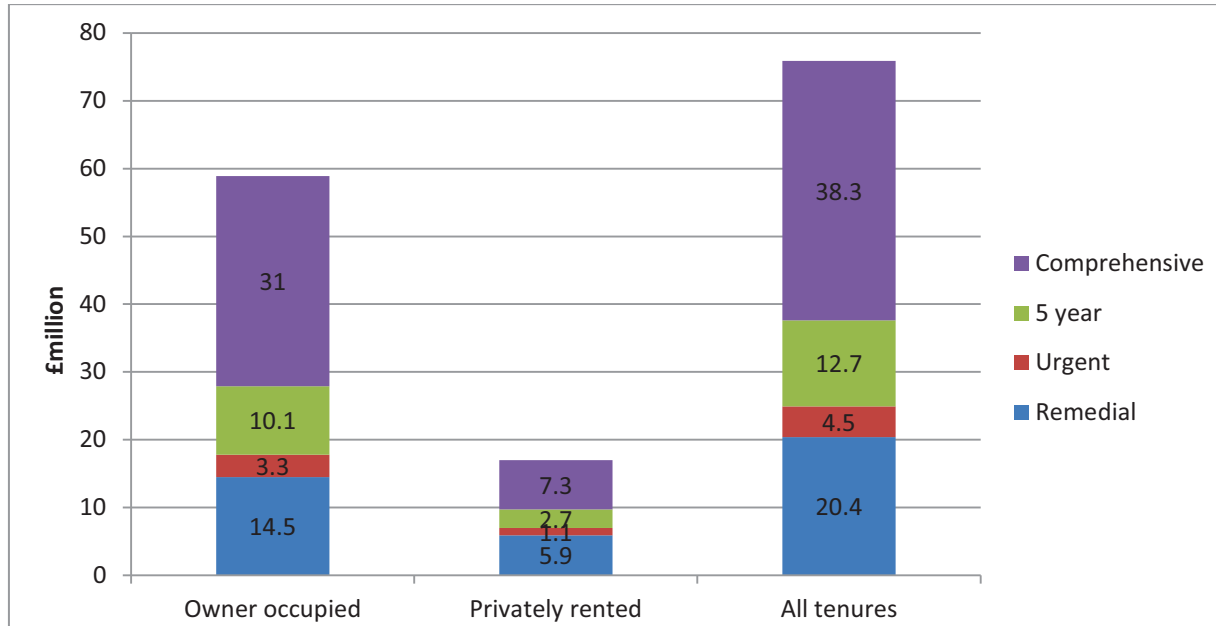


The survey found that Category 1 hazards are more prevalent in terraced houses (47% of terraced stock) and flats (32% of flats) and that the proportion of properties containing Category 1 hazards increases according to the age band of the dwelling, with 26% of pre 1919 dwellings containing Category 1 hazards compared to 3% of dwellings built post 1990.

A higher rate of Category 1 hazards was found in Runcorn than Widnes (12% compared to 10%). Higher rates were also found in dwellings occupied by households with an income under £10,000 (15%), on benefit (14%), where the head of household is under 25 (23.5%) or over 65 (12%) and for households containing someone with a disability (13%).

Figure 3.19 illustrates the cost of remedying Category 1 hazards, ranging from a total cost of £20 million, averaging £4,800 per dwelling, just to remedy the hazards to £80 million for comprehensive repair to all dwellings containing Category 1 hazards, at an average of £17,900 per dwelling. Although total costs to remedy hazards in the private rented sector are lower, the average cost per dwelling just to remedy category 1 hazards at £6,200 is higher than for owner occupied properties at £4,400 per dwelling.

Figure 3.19 – Cost to remedy category 1 hazards

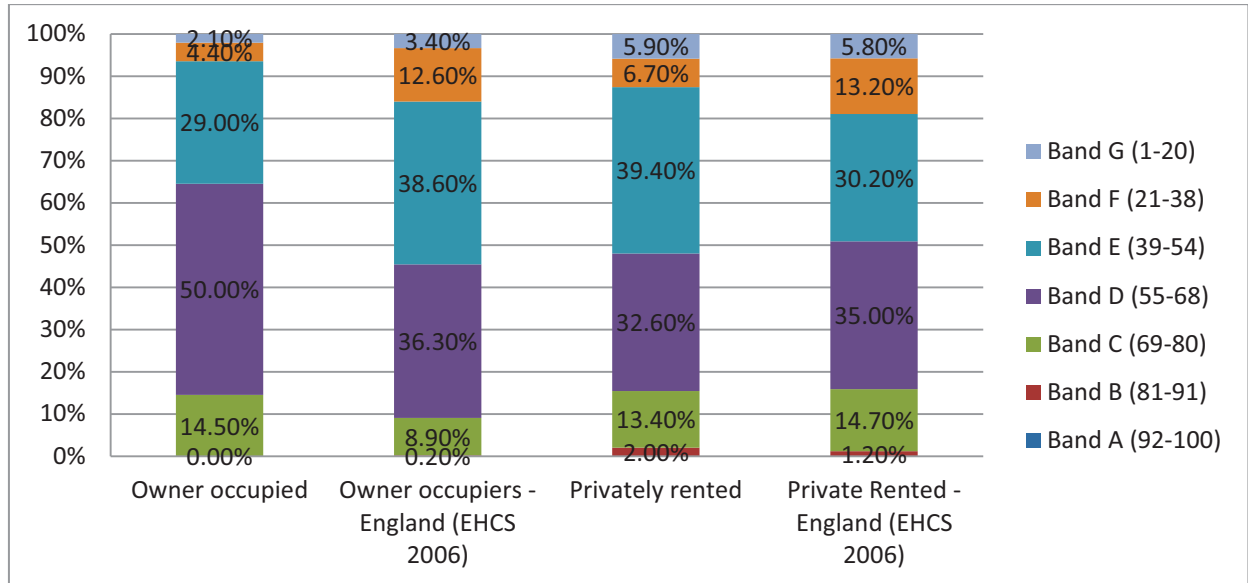


Energy efficiency

The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) uses a scale of 1 to 100 to assess the relative energy efficiency of dwellings with higher ratings indicating higher levels of energy efficiency. The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey undertaken in 2009 found that on average energy efficiency levels in the private stock (owner occupied and rented) were higher than the national and regional averages (Average SAP rating of 56 in Halton compared to 49 and 51 respectively). It found that there had been a significant improvement on the average SAP rating of 48 recorded by the previous Stock Condition Survey undertaken in 2003, indicating substantial improvements in the energy efficiency of the stock in the intervening period.

Figure 3.20 shows the distribution of SAP ratings for each tenure and compares these with the national distribution using data from the English House Condition Survey 2009.

Figure 3.20 – Distribution of SAP ratings in the private sector

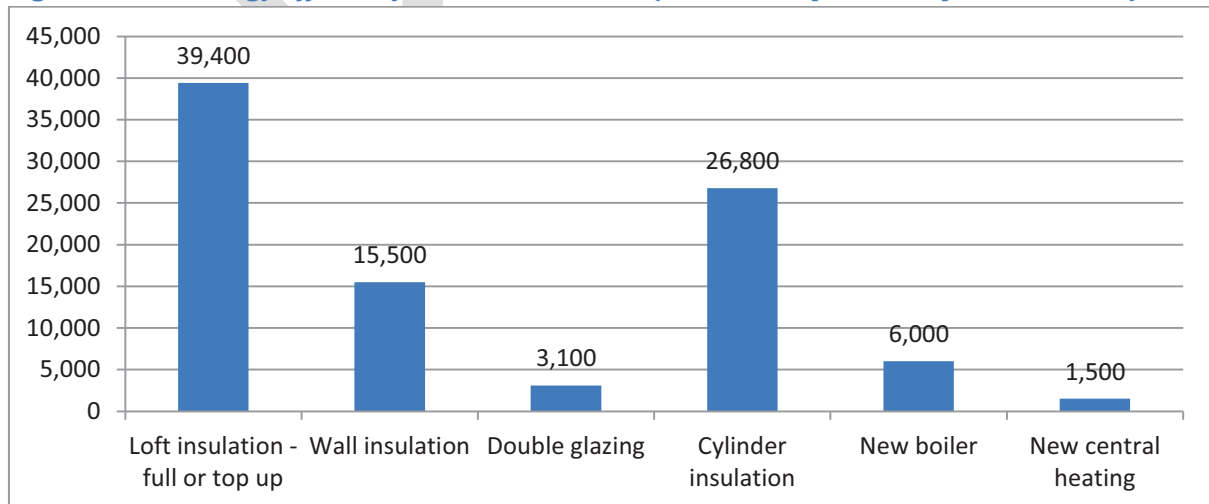


The least energy efficient dwellings are, unsurprisingly, pre 1919 terraces and the most energy efficient dwellings are post 1990 purpose built flats. There was no difference between SAP ratings for Runcorn than those for Widnes.

National Indicator 187 measured the proportion of households on an income related benefit living in dwellings with SAP ratings below 35 and 65 and above. The last survey completed found that 6.8% of households in receipt of an income related benefit live in a dwelling with a SAP rating below 35 and that 24.2% live in a dwelling with a SAP rating of 65 and over.

Figure 3.21 illustrates the improvements that would be necessary to bring all private sector homes up to standard. As shown, virtually all 40,100 properties in the sector would benefit from some type of improvement with loft insulation (whether full or top up) required to around 97% of dwellings to bring up to current recommended levels of 270mm. Obviously, not all of these dwellings would need or qualify for financial support to carry out these improvements but, as an indication, the total cost of installing all these measures is £54.3 million, equating to an average of £1,350 per dwelling.

Figure 3.21 – Energy efficiency measures needed (owner occupiers and private rented)



Castlefields Regeneration

The Castlefields Regeneration Partnership was established in 2002 to tackle serious decline and deprivation on the Castlefields New Town estate in Runcorn. Founding partners include local residents, Halton Borough Council, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Liverpool Housing Trust (LHT) and Plus Dane Group. As it has embraced new opportunities the partnership has grown to include NHS Halton & St Helens, partner contractors Cruden Construction and Seddon, John McCall architects, Sutcliffe engineers, Bradley Demolition, developer Keepmoat, local artists and the business community.

Over its ten year lifespan, 1,203 deck access units have been demolished, with a further 80 units programmed for demolition in 2012. These have been replaced by 747 new build homes, with 80 new homes currently under construction and a further 400 homes planned over coming years. In December 2011 the 1st phase of the Village Square opened with completion of new shops and flats, this was followed in March 2012 with the opening of a new Community Centre and extensive public realm. A new health centre was opened in May 2012, with a formal grand opening in the summer 2012. Other environmental improvements continue to be delivered within the neighbourhood. A first phase of intervention covering a proportion of the 500 two-storey system built houses was announced in March 2012, this will include external wall and roof cladding to improve the energy efficiency of the properties and the visual amenity of the neighbourhood.

This year, residents will determine priorities for the next ten years and create a continuing action plan. The partnership is committed to the long-term future of Castlefields and in 2012 will deliver a significant public art commission, develop the first private housing for outright sale and introduce innovative energy efficiency technologies to existing homes.

The Partnership is naturally proud of its achievements in transforming the once low demand area of Castlefields to an area of choice for homeseekers and its efforts have been rewarded with a Housing Excellence Award for Best Partnership of 2012. In addition, Castlefields was shortlisted for the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors North West Award for the Village Square development and the UK Housing Award for Partnership of the Year.

The Private Rented Sector

As mentioned earlier in this document, the private rented sector is the fastest growing housing sector in Halton and in the current economic climate is to an extent filling the gap in meeting housing needs as a result of limited mortgage availability and reduced mobility in the social housing sector. This is borne out by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which found that a much higher proportion of households expected that their next move would be to privately rented accommodation than expressed the sector as their tenure of choice.

Despite this growth it must be remembered that private rented housing still forms only a small proportion of the housing stock when compared to other areas as demonstrated in figure 3.2 earlier in this document with an estimated 5,000 properties in Halton owned by private landlords.

The vast majority of landlords are responsible and the Council will continue to develop pro active working relationships with those landlords who wish to improve the standard of their properties and management approaches through voluntary accreditation (described below).

However, other than for certain categories of Houses in Multiple Occupation (of which there are very few in Halton) the sector is largely unregulated. Evidence from the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey reveals that private tenants are more likely to live in a property containing a Category 1 hazard than owner occupiers (17% of private rented compared to 10% of owner occupied housing) and that a third of private tenants live in homes which do not meet the Decency Standard compared to a quarter of owner occupiers.

Levels of energy efficiency are also lower in the sector with average SAP ratings of 53 compared to 57 for owner occupied housing. The Energy Act 2011 states that by April 2016 private landlords cannot unreasonably refuse requests from their tenants for consent to have energy efficiency improvements carried out where financial support is available for example through the Green Deal or Energy Company Obligation. The Act further requires that by April 2018 all privately rented properties should be brought up to minimum standards of energy efficiency (likely to be set at Energy Performance Certificate rating E).

In addition, the termination of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy was the second highest reason for homelessness in the Borough in 2011/12, the numbers having trebled on the previous year, which is in part likely to be as a result of changes to the Local Housing Allowance introduced as part of the current agenda of welfare reform.

The Localism Act 2011 gave local authorities the power to discharge their statutory homelessness duty through an offer of private rented accommodation. At the time of writing the Council has yet to consider its position on this, however, if this policy is adopted locally the accommodation offered will, in accordance with Government Guidance, at least meet suitability standards.

In common with many other local authorities, the Council takes a dual approach to the private rented sector with, on the one hand, the accreditation scheme rewarding “responsible” landlords while on the other the Council uses its enforcement powers to take action against less scrupulous landlords whose properties do not meet a satisfactory standard. These two approaches are described in more detail below.

Landlord Accreditation Scheme

Halton’s Landlord Accreditation Scheme has been running for approximately seven years. It is a free and voluntary scheme which offers a range of benefits to qualifying landlords including fast tracking of benefit applications, insurance discounts, seminar invitations and general guidance and support. Landlords must meet required minimum standards to be eligible for accreditation covering the condition of their properties and management standards.

56 landlords have applied for accreditation covering 308 properties out of a total of around 5,000 in the sector. Out of these 34 landlords have reached the required standards to be accredited. A database of known private landlords with properties in Halton has been compiled and these are written to periodically to encourage them to seek accreditation. The scheme is also publicised in newsletters and the Council’s website.

All known landlords are invited to a quarterly Landlords' Forum which provides opportunity for formal discussion on a wide range of relevant issues and for landlords to network and informally discuss issues of common interest. Forum meetings are generally well attended and provoke lively discussion and interesting debate.

Enforcement

Local authorities have a range of powers at their disposal to deal with poor conditions and nuisance in the private rented sector. Halton's Environmental Services team deal with a wide range of enforcement issues, not just housing, including noise nuisance and air and environmental quality. On receiving a complaint from a private tenant, the team will carry out an inspection of the property and if it is found to be below the minimum standard will contact the landlord to request that the remedial works are carried out. In most cases this informal approach works as the landlord quickly responds to the request. However, in some isolated cases, enforcement action, usually involving issuing statutory compliance notices under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, is necessary.

Scrutiny Review into the Private Rented Sector

In 2011 elected members from the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board undertook a scrutiny review into the Private Rented Sector. The review was prompted by a number of complaints of anti social behaviour from private sector tenants and what was felt to be an inadequate response from absentee private landlords.

Members made a number of recommendations including piloting a more pro active approach to the sector, promoting Council services to tenants and landlords in those areas, encouraging landlords to register contact details and apply to join the accreditation scheme and tenants to report any issues with their property to the Council so that they can be taken up with the landlord and, where necessary, enforcement action taken.

An officer working group has been set up to take forward the recommendations.

Consultation question 3: Does this part of the evidence paper give an adequate and accurate overview of housing in Halton? Are there any other issues that should be included?

Part Four – Halton’s People

Overview

Population

The latest ONS mid year population estimates (2010) indicate that there are 119,300 people resident in the Borough. Halton has experienced population growth since 2006 as a result of a combination of higher levels of natural change (more births than deaths) which have outweighed lower (albeit sustained) levels of net out migration. Another factor in this may have been the delivery of larger, more aspirational housing at Upton Rocks in Widnes and Sandymoor in Runcorn which has helped to enhance the housing offer at the upper end of the scale and attracted new residents who may not otherwise have moved to the area.

The overall population is projected to grow to 121,400 by 2018 and 122,900 by 2023 (4% on the latest estimates from 2008) although this growth is lower than the regional and national growth projections of 5% and 11% respectively.

Age

Comparison of the age profile of Halton residents with regional and national figures shows a population skewed towards younger people as illustrated in figure 4.1. For example, an estimated 19% of Halton’s residents are under the age of 15 compared to 17.5% regionally and nationally and there are lower proportions of people aged 75 and over. This relatively young population structure is partly as a consequence of the movement of young families to the Runcorn New Town estates. However, these first generation New Town residents are getting older and are expected to reach retirement age in the period to 2026.

Figure 4.1 – Age profile of the population



Data from the Office of National Statistics shows the projected change in the population by age band to 2023, as below:

- Younger people (0 - 14 year olds) - population projected to grow by 7% (2008 - 2023)
- Working age (16 - 64 year olds) - population projected to decline by 6% (2008 - 2023)
- Older people (65+) - population projected to grow by 43% from 16,900 in 2008 to 24,200 in 2023

Of particular significance to housing provision is the projected growth in the older population. The housing needs of older people will be explored in more detail later in this evidence paper.

Ethnicity

The 2010 Strategic Housing Market Assessment confirmed that Halton has a very small black and minority ethnic (BME) population with 97.6% of households describing themselves as White British. Although the number of respondents was too small to produce wholly reliable results the survey does suggest a small growth in the White Other population, which might be expected as a result of the accession of new member states into the European Union over recent years and also of Mixed Race populations. The survey also found that as a whole BME households are:

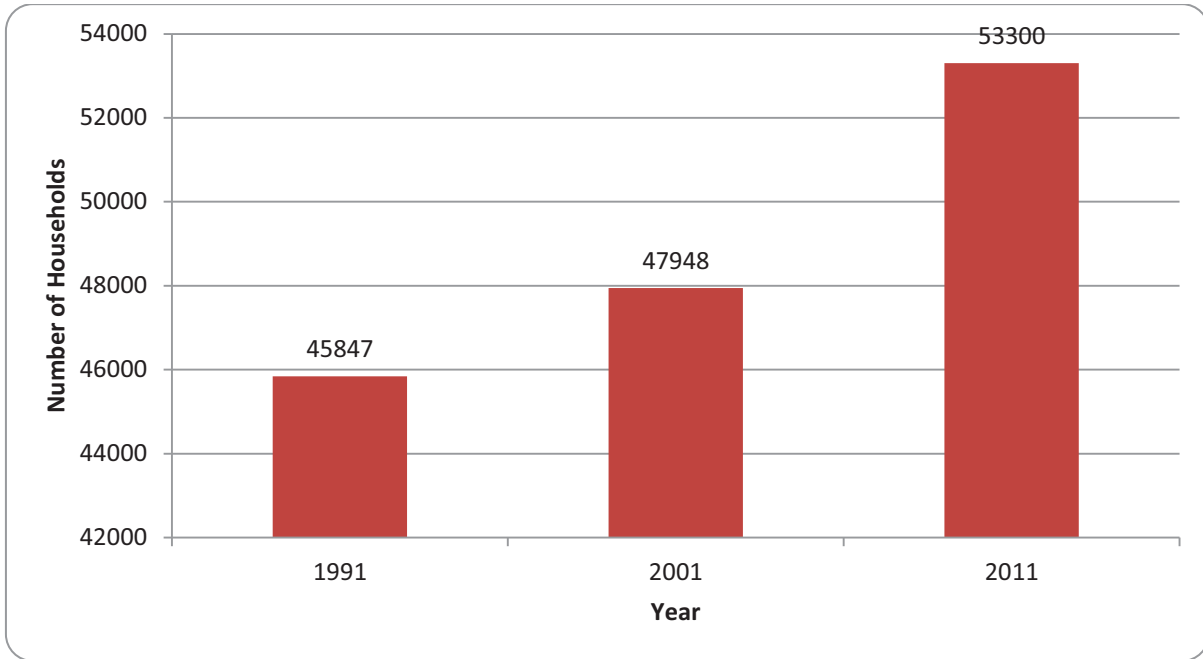
- typically larger than households headed by a White British/Irish person (an average of 2.74 people compared to 2.37 within the White population);
- less likely to rent accommodation (both social and private) and are far more likely than average to be owner occupiers with a mortgage (59% compared to 39% for White households);
- notably less likely than White households to contain a household member with a support need;
- record an average household income of £33,480 which is higher than the comparative figure for White households of £25,512. However, it should be noted that there are a greater proportion of working age BME households in Halton than there are White working age households.

It is important to note that the response to the survey from BME households was small (46 responses) and so the above findings should be treated with a degree of caution, however, the last Housing Needs Survey in 2006 also recorded similar findings.

Households

At 2011 there were 53,300 households living in Halton, representing a 11% increase since the 2001 Census and an 16% increase since the 1991 Census. Figure 4.2 below illustrates the dramatic increase. While recent population growth will be a factor in this increase, the main reason is a fall in household size.

Figure 4.2 – Number of households in Halton



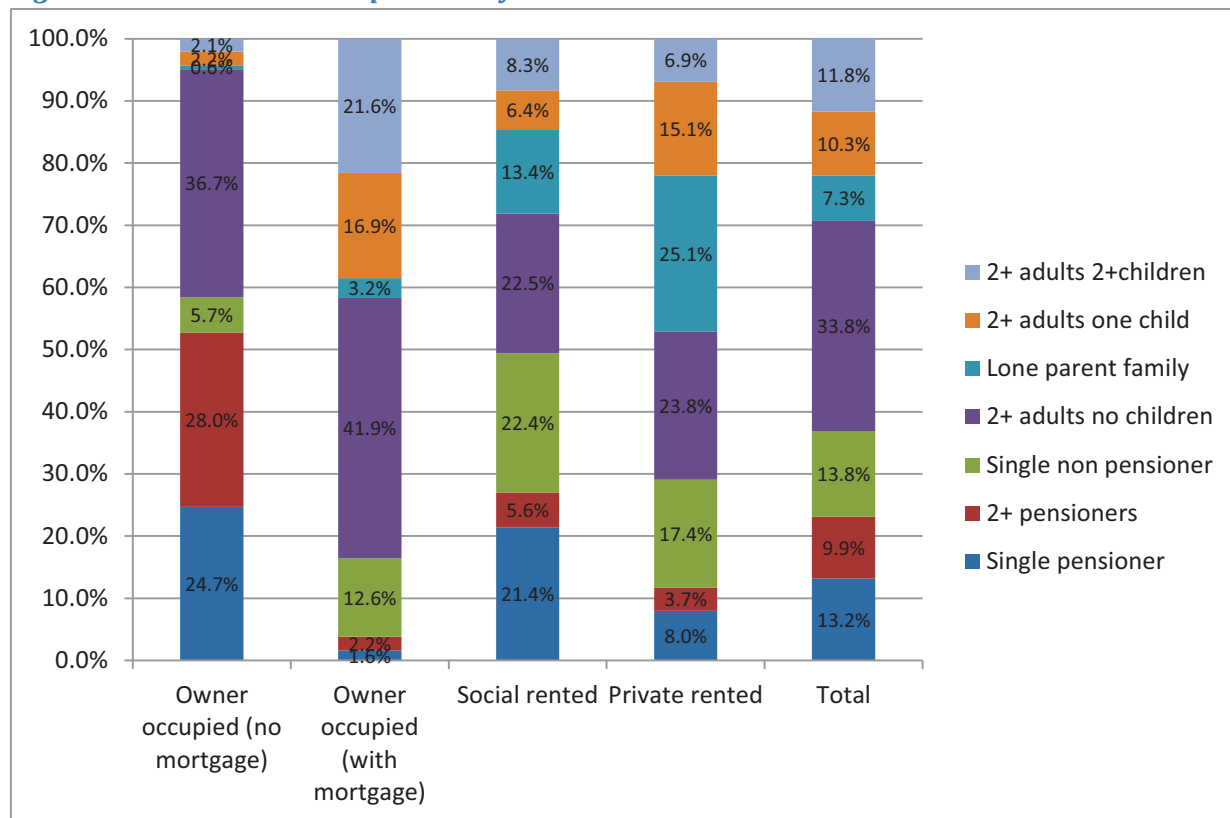
The SHMA found that the overall average household size in the Borough was 2.4 persons but that there were differences according to tenure as illustrated in figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3 – Average number of people in household by tenure



Analysis of household composition as illustrated in figure 4.4 emphasises the differences between each tenure. Of particular interest is the fact that 45% of households living in social housing are non pensioner single or couple households who, if living in accommodation with two or more bedrooms and claiming Housing Benefit, are likely to be affected by the underoccupation penalty as part of the forthcoming welfare reforms. It is also interesting to note the disproportionate amount of families with children, particularly lone parent households, living in the private rented sector where, as we have already seen, housing conditions tend to be the poorest.

Figure 4.4 – Household composition by tenure



Economic analysis

Deprivation

Halton is ranked 27th most deprived area out of 326 local authority areas according to the 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This has worsened slightly from a rank of 29th from the IMD 2007 although there has been little change in the deprivation score.

The most deprived ward in Halton is Windmill Hill, while the least deprived ward in Halton is Birchfield. 26% of Halton’s population live in areas that fall in the top 10% most deprived nationally, this is more than the national figure (10%) but lower than the Liverpool City Region figure (31%).

The ward with the most improved average IMD score between 2007 and 2010 in Halton (therefore the largest decrease in deprivation) is Halton Lea. Halton Castle, Windmill Hill and Halton Lea have seen the largest improvements in the Barriers to Housing and Income domain. The wards with the highest ranking for Barriers to Housing domain are Beechwood, Daresbury and Heath which is presumably indicative of a lack of affordable housing, particularly in the first two areas.

Unemployment

Halton continues to have high levels of unemployment compared to regional and national rates. Latest figures show that 18.7% of the resident working age population claim out of work benefits, compared to 15% for the North West and 11.9% nationally (Feb 2012). Employment Support

Allowance and Incapacity Benefit make up the largest proportion of these (10.3% of the working age population) followed by Job Seekers Allowance (5.8%).

12.2% of 18-24 year olds claim Job Seekers Allowance, a third of whom have been claiming for over 6 months.

Figure 4.5 below uses data from the SHMA to illustrate the economic status of the household reference person living within each tenure. As might be expected, the majority of housing owned without a mortgage is occupied by retired people and a third of social housing tenants are retired. The chart also shows the high proportions of unemployed people living in rented accommodation.

Figure 4.5 – Economic status of household reference person by tenure



Income

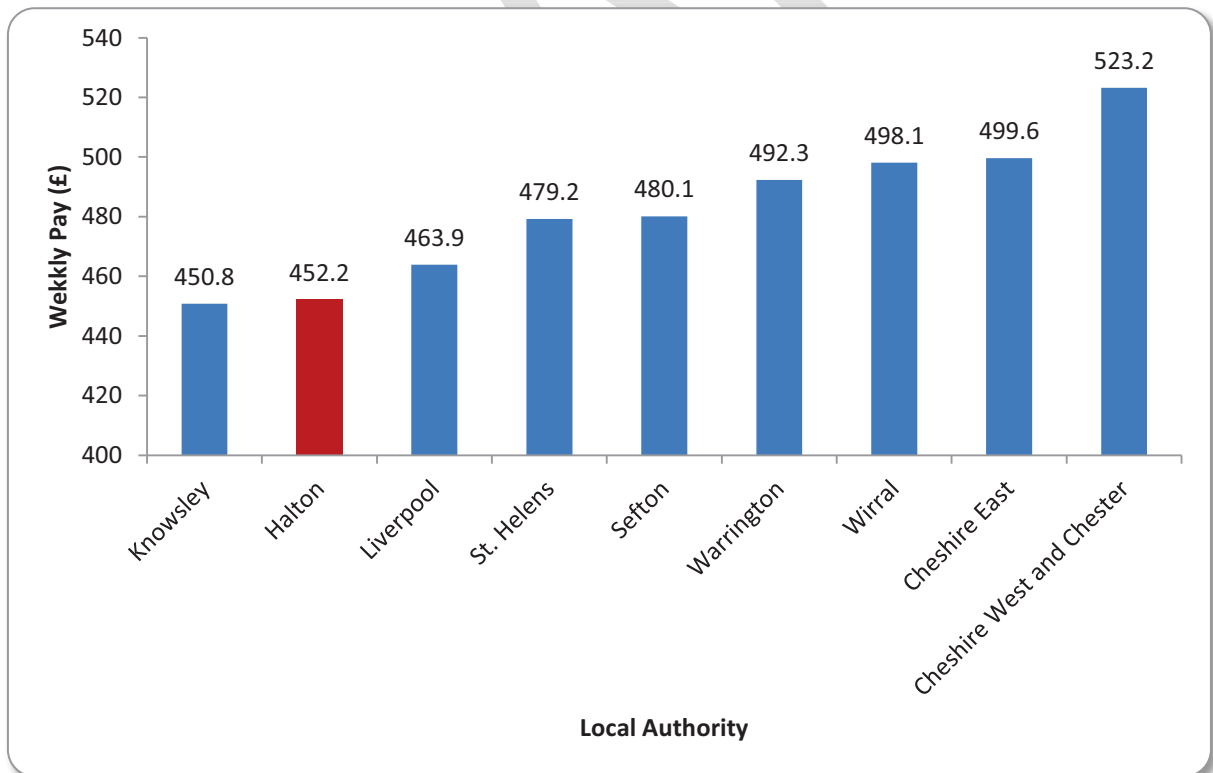
The SHMA used data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings for 2004 and 2009 to assess the median income of residents in full time employment. The results, illustrated in figure 4.6 below, show the gap between annual earnings of Halton residents and those living in the North West and Great Britain.

Figure 4.6 – Annual gross income of full time employed residents 2004 and 2009 – median income (SHMA)



More recent data from the Office for National Statistics allows us to compare the median weekly gross pay for full time workers in 2012 with neighbouring local authorities. The results, illustrated in figure 4.7 reveals the extent to which the Borough lags behind surrounding areas.

Figure 4.7 – Median weekly gross income 2012 (full time workers) (ONS)



Health and Housing

The links between health and housing are wide ranging and well documented. Improving housing conditions and the energy efficiency of housing can bring numerous health benefits as highlighted in the 2010 Marmot Review of Health Inequalities “Fair Society, Healthy Lives”. This study found that countries with more energy efficient housing have fewer excess winter deaths and that there is a strong relationship between cold housing and cardio vascular and respiratory disease. For example, it found that children living in cold homes are more than twice as likely to suffer from a variety of respiratory problems than children living in warm homes and that cold housing negatively affects children’s educational attainment, emotional well being and resilience to illnesses.

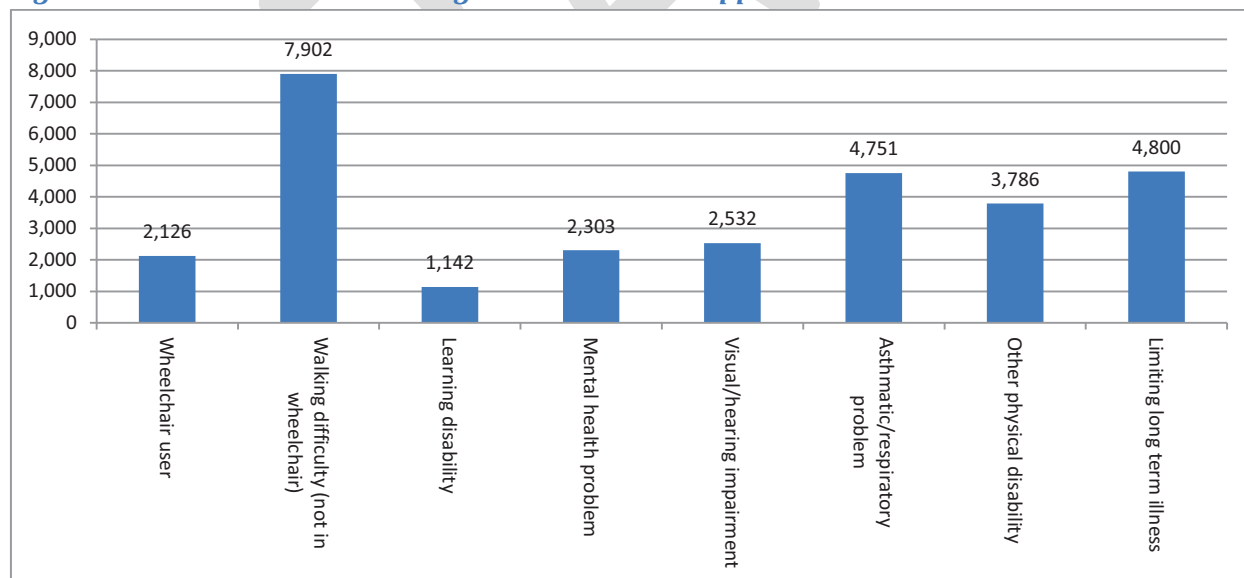
The relationship between health and housing is not just confined to the energy efficiency of housing. The removal of hazards in a property can help to reduce the number of accidents in the home, in turn removing the need for unnecessary hospital admissions and surgery and maintaining the independence of the occupier.

There are also links between housing and mental health. For example, fuel poverty, poor quality housing and overcrowding are associated with stress, anxiety, depression and poor mental health and studies have shown a relationship between insecurity of tenure and poor mental health.

Need for adaptations

The SHMA found that an estimated 15,104 households in Halton contained someone with a support need, representing 29% of all households in the Borough. People with a walking difficulty were the most predominant group, affecting 7,902 households (15% of all households) as shown in figure 4.8.

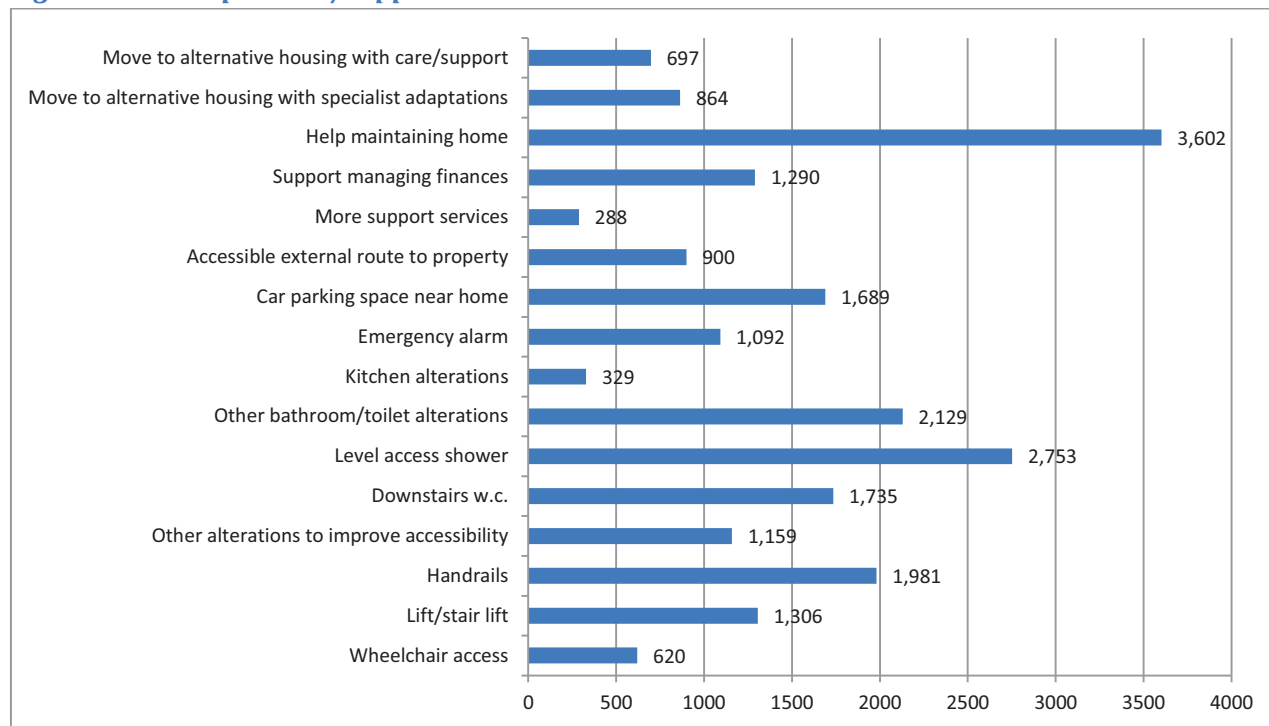
Figure 4.8 – Households containing someone with a support need



Respondents were asked to indicate whether there was a need for adaptations to their existing accommodation or a need for additional support services, with the results illustrated in figure 4.9 below. The results show requirements for a wide range of adaptations or support with help maintaining the home, provision of a level access shower and other bathroom/toilet alterations being the most common. In the social rented sector the Council, working in partnership with Registered Providers, has been successful in clearing the backlog of requests for adaptations that

had built up over a number of years. However there remains a level of need in the owner occupied and private rented stock although the figures shown in 4.8 below need to be treated with a degree of caution since they are based on survey respondents' assessment of need rather than an assessment by a qualified Occupational Therapist.

Figure 4.9 – Adaptations/support services needed



Demand for supported housing

The SHMA collected information about the moving intentions of households and, in particular, asked respondents who were seeking a move whether they would be seeking supported housing. The vast majority (over 90%) indicated that they would not, however, those that did anticipate moving to supported housing expressed a preference for sheltered housing with a warden, as indicated in figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10 – Demand for supported housing

These figures must be viewed with some caution as whilst the postal survey did provide definitions of the different types of housing, the subtle differences may not have been fully understood. It is interesting to note, however, that demand for extra care accommodation evidenced through the SHMA, at 154, is significantly higher than that found by the last Housing Needs Survey undertaken in 2006, perhaps reflecting a growing awareness of this type of supported housing. This is not dissimilar to the estimate produced in 2008 by Tribal Consulting which looked at the potential demand for extra care based on care homes admissions and those in receipt of significant community care packages.

The Tribal study estimated an immediate demand for 137 additional units of extra care, rising to 196 in 2017. The study was based on 2008 based population projections which have turned out to underestimate the numbers of older people in Halton compared to the 2011 based population forecasts.

Updating the population assumptions in the Tribal study produces a revised demand estimate of 199 units in 2011, rising to 272 in 2021, which reduce to 112 and 185 when existing extra care provision is netted off. Fuel Poverty

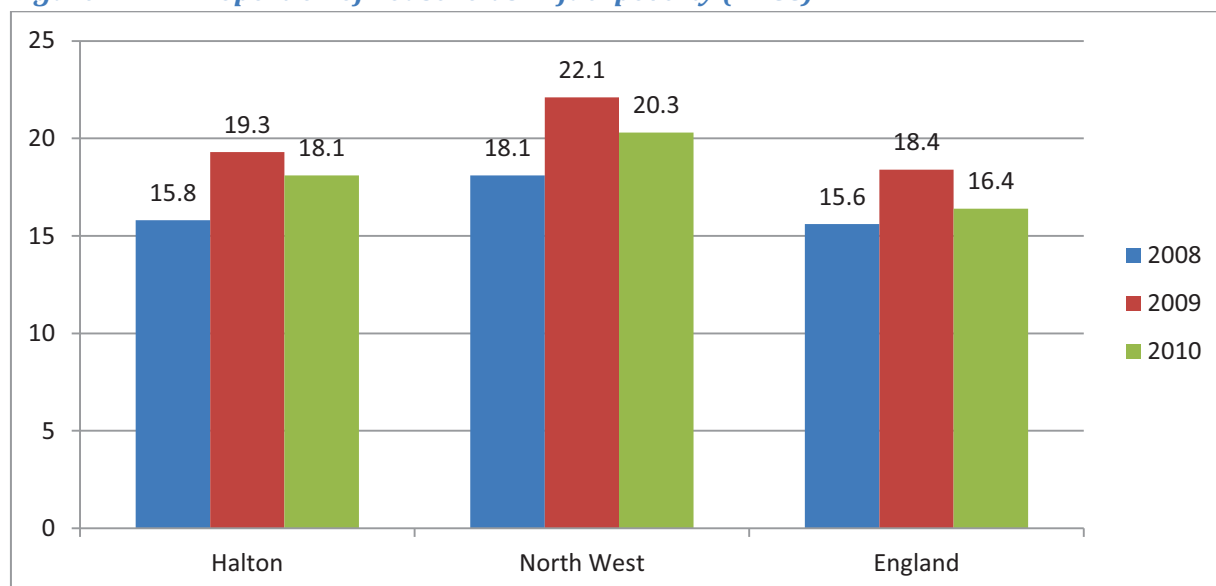
The current definition of fuel poverty deems that a household is in fuel poverty if it must spend more than 10% of its income on maintaining a satisfactory heating regime. Whether a household is in fuel poverty or not is determined by the interaction of a number of factors, notably:

- The energy efficiency of the property;
- The cost of energy;
- Household income;
- The size of the property relative to the number of adults in the household.

Latest figures from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (2010) suggest that approximately 18.1% of households in Halton are in fuel poverty, equating to 9,420 households. This proportion is lower than the regional figure but higher than national levels, as illustrated in figure 4.11, which also shows the steep rise in the proportions of households in fuel poverty from 2008 to 2009, equating to

over 1,800 households. This is likely to be due to the impact of rising fuel costs at a time when income levels have remained static, or in some cases fallen. Current levels are likely to be higher still due to significant increases in fuel costs since 2009.

Figure 4.11 – Proportion of households in fuel poverty (DECC)



The geographical distribution of fuel poverty reveals that low value areas containing high proportions of private sector housing (e.g. Appleton, Ditton and parts of Heath, Kingsway and Mersey wards) have higher levels of fuel poverty (between 25% and 35% of households). It is interesting to note that despite relatively lower income levels, levels of fuel poverty in the Runcorn New Town estates are not as high as might be expected. This is likely to be due to the relative age of the housing stock and the impact of improvement programmes to bring homes up to the Decent Homes Standard.

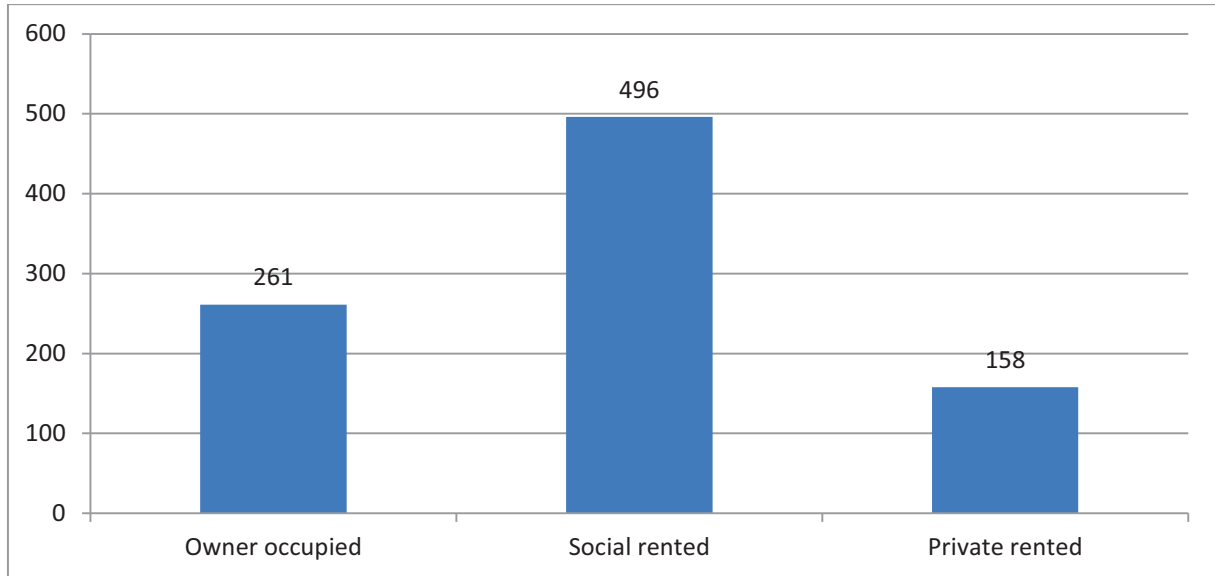
Space issues

Overcrowding

Findings from the Halton SHMA indicate that around 915 households (1.7% of all households) are classed as overcrowded using the bedroom standard (the most commonly accepted method of assessing overcrowding). Data from the Survey of English Housing (SEH) suggests that nationally levels of overcrowding stand at 3.0%.

There are a disproportionate number of households classed as overcrowded living in rented accommodation as shown in figure 4.12 below, where proportions exceed 3% of households in both social rented and private rented sectors compared to less than 1% of owner occupied accommodation.

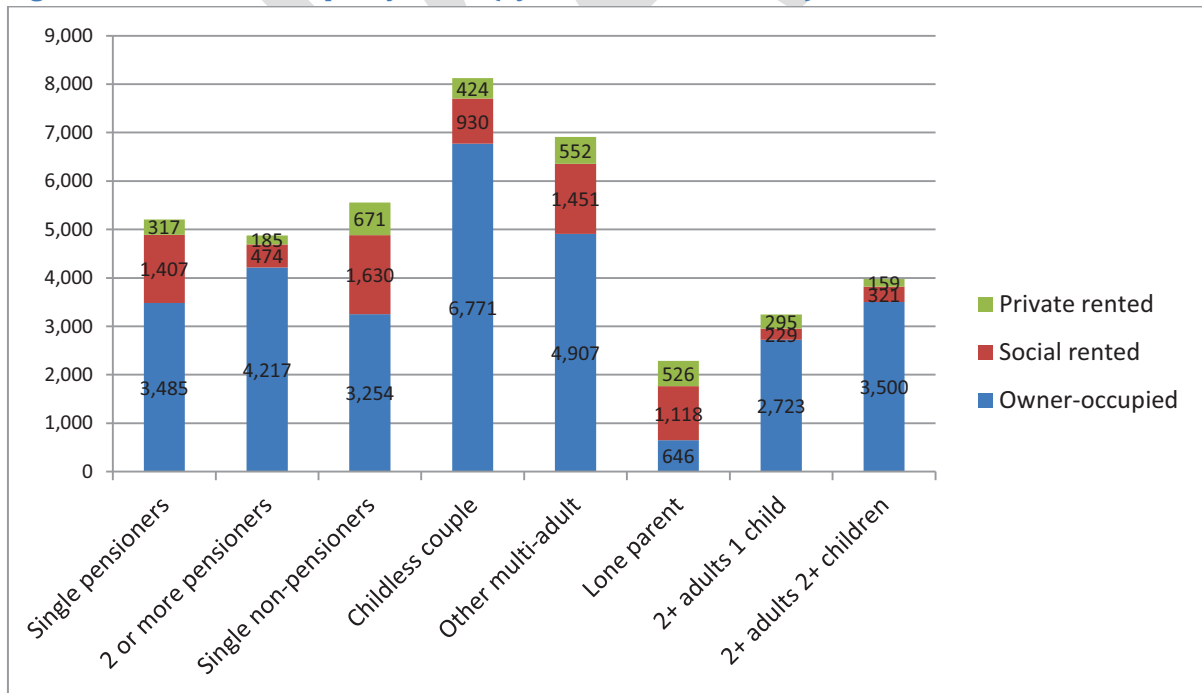
Figure 4.12 – Number of households living in overcrowded accommodation



Underoccupation

Figure 4.13 illustrates the number of people underoccupying their accommodation by at least one bedroom (using the bedroom standard) by tenure and by type of household. Underoccupancy levels are around 54% for owner occupied and social rented stock but are higher (62%) for households living in the private rented sector.

Figure 4.13 – Underoccupancy levels (by 1 or more bedrooms)



As might be expected, single person and couple households are more likely to underoccupy their accommodation, however, it is interesting to note that 5,679 non pensioner households underoccupy social rented accommodation. It is likely that a sizeable proportion of these

households claim Housing Benefit and will, therefore, lose some of this benefit as a result of the underoccupancy penalty to be introduced in April 2013 as part of the Welfare Reform Act.

Impact of welfare reform

Part two of this evidence paper described the changes to Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance as a result of the Welfare Reform Act. Using information from the Council's Housing Benefit department and the SHMA it is possible to estimate the number of households who will be affected by the changes, as follows:

Change	Estimated number of households affected	Extent of impact
Introduction of Universal Credit	104 cases identified by HB as to be potentially "capped"	Total payments capped at £26,000 – loss of income for some households very significant (as much as £500 per week) Housing Benefit is first to be capped Payments made direct to claimant – possible increase in rent arrears and homelessness. Monthly payments could cause budgeting issues for households
Replacement of Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	It is estimated that 10,600 Halton residents claim DLA	The change to PIP will involve a reduction in the numbers of those receiving financial assistance. Claimants could be put off by face to face interview. Those receiving low rate care element unlikely to qualify. Losing DLA will result in loss of disability premiums awarded as part of other benefits.
Replacement of Incapacity Benefit with Employment Support Allowance	Exact numbers are unknown but Halton has a disproportionate amount of people claiming Incapacity Benefit	ESA is designed to reduce the number of people who are classified as unable to work. A large proportion of appeals to date have been successful, however, there is a very long wait for appeals (up to 12 months)
Extension of the Single Room Rent Allowance to 35	234	£37.61 reduction in weekly LHA entitlement
Underoccupancy penalty	SHMA suggests this may affect: 2,311 under occupying by one bedroom, 725 under occupying by 2 bedrooms 92 under occupying by 3 bedrooms	Those under-occupying their social housing property by one-bedroom to lose 14% of their HB and those under-occupying by two or more bedrooms to lose 25%.

The figures above show the extent to which Halton's households are likely to be impacted by welfare reforms. The implications of these changes for some of Halton's households and for the organisations who support them are likely to be significant. The expected impacts include an increase in rent arrears as households struggle to balance household budgets which could, in turn, put pressure on landlords to take action in order to minimise a build up of arrears. Registered Providers in Halton have been pro active in engaging with tenants who are likely to be affected and in many cases have expanded their in house financial support services available to ensure that their tenants are fully prepared for the changes.

There are also potential impacts for Council services resulting from a potential increase in homelessness applications and need for temporary accommodation including Bed and Breakfast (the costs of which are considered on the next page) and in demand for welfare benefits advice.

The impacts are likely to be further compounded by the localisation of Council Tax from April 2013 which will require some households who previously received 100% Council Tax benefit to make a contribution to accommodate a 10% reduction in Government funding and the transfer of the Social Fund from Department for Work and Pensions to local Councils which will also reduce the amount of funding available for Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants. The scheme will also replace cash payments to claimants with alternative forms of payment e.g. vouchers.

Homelessness

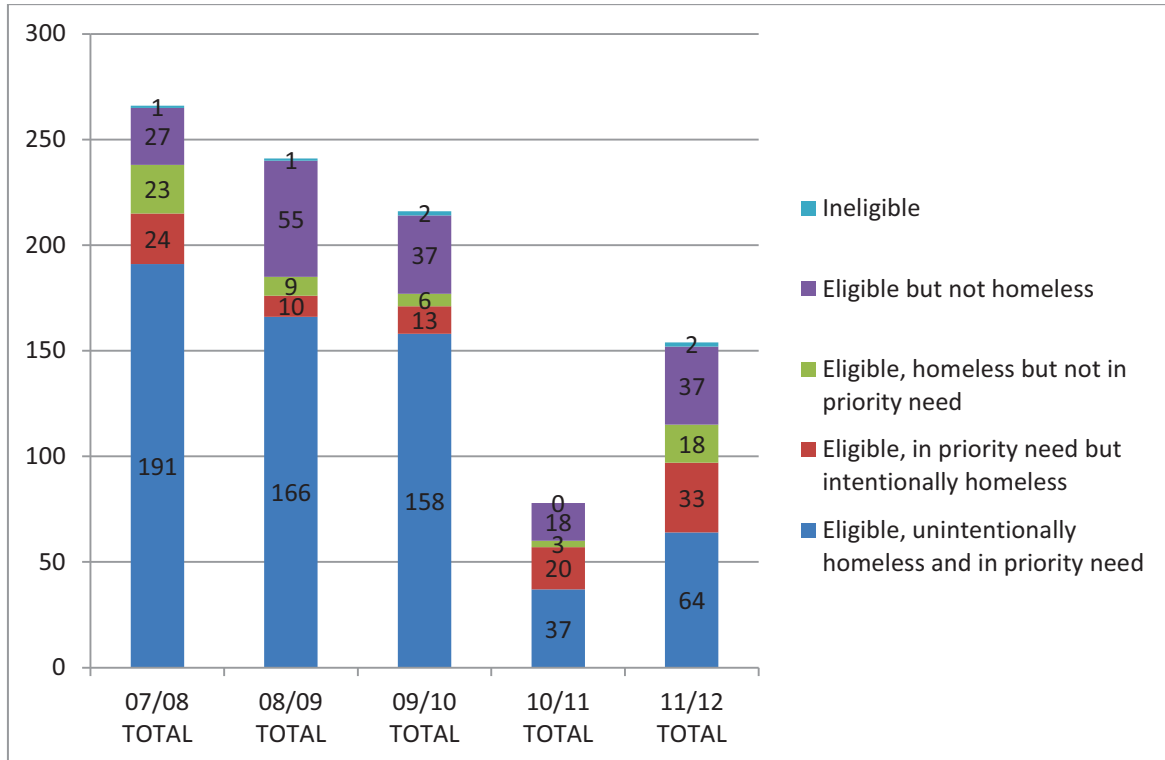
Levels of homelessness

In common with other local authority areas, homelessness in Halton is on the increase. In 2011/12, 154 households applied to the authority as homeless compared to 78 for the whole of 2010/11. Of these 154 households, 64 were found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need compared to 37 in 2010/11. Almost half of those accepted as statutorily homeless in 2011/12 were single women with at least one child and 35% in this period were between the ages of 16 and 24. Generally only a small number of ethnic minority households apply as homeless (4 in 2011/12), however, this is in keeping with the low proportions of ethnic minorities living in Halton.

Trends

Figure 4.14 illustrates changes in levels of homelessness over the last 5 years. It shows how homelessness has increased in 2011/12 compared with the previous year but also how 2010/11 had seen a very significant decrease on the three years before that. Total applications in 2007/08 were over three times as high as the number of applications in 2010/11. This is almost entirely due to the success of the authority's preventative approach to homelessness which is described in more detail below.

Figure 4.14 - Homelessness trends

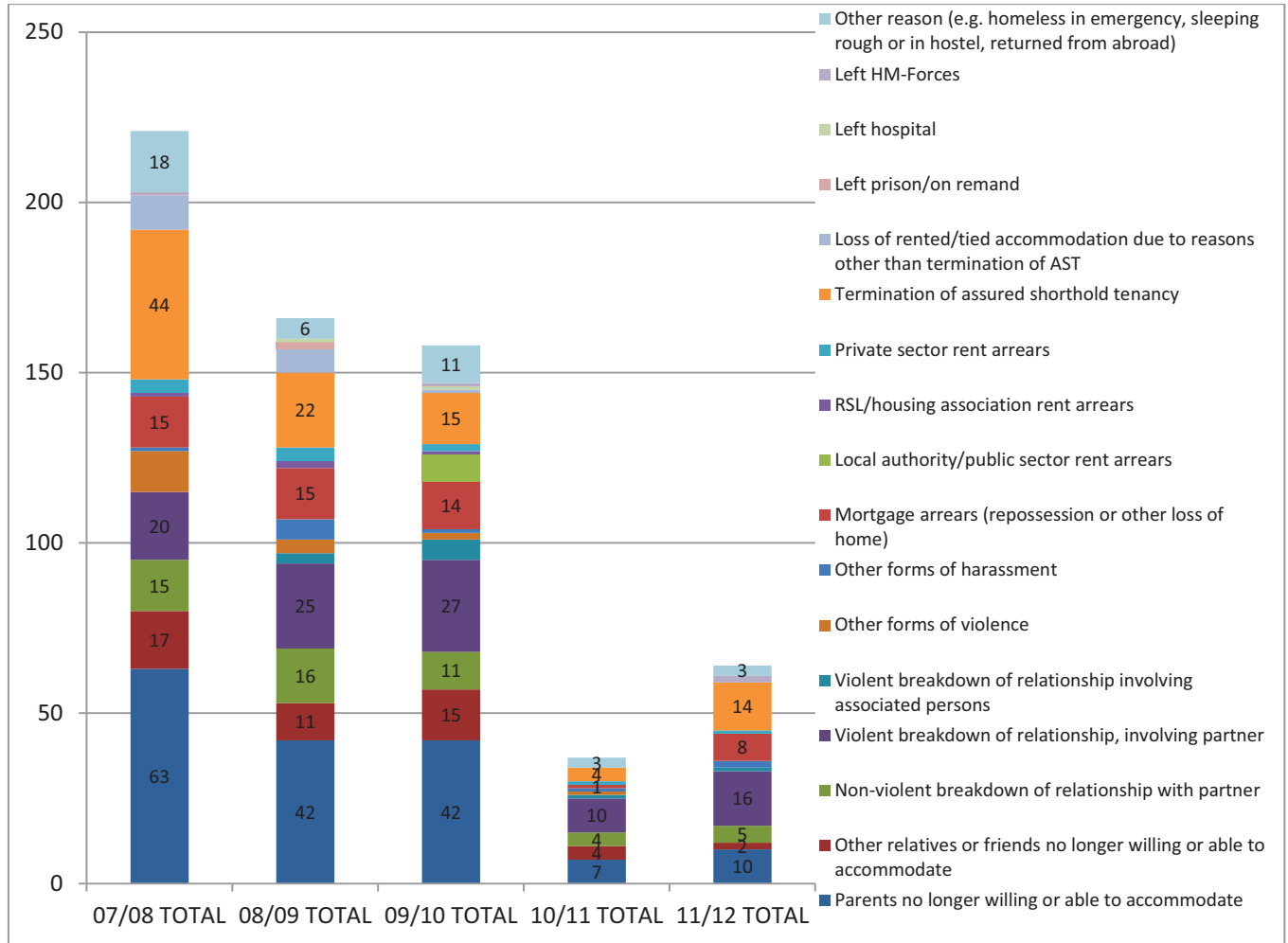


Reasons

Figure 4.15 below illustrates the reasons behind homelessness and how these have changed over time, largely as a result of the preventative work referred to above. In particular, the number of households made homeless as a result of parents or others no longer willing or able to accommodate has reduced by 87%. While there have also been decreases in homelessness for other reasons, it is worrying to note that the main reason for statutory homelessness is domestic violence affecting 15 households so far in 2011/12, however this could reflect the increased need for crisis intervention and less opportunity for preventative work.

The termination of assured shorthold tenancies is the second biggest reason for homelessness in 2011/12, the numbers having trebled on the previous year. These trends are perhaps indicative of the current economic climate and, possibly, the impact of impending welfare reform which could encourage private landlords to evict tenants who are claiming Housing Benefit in favour of those who are working.

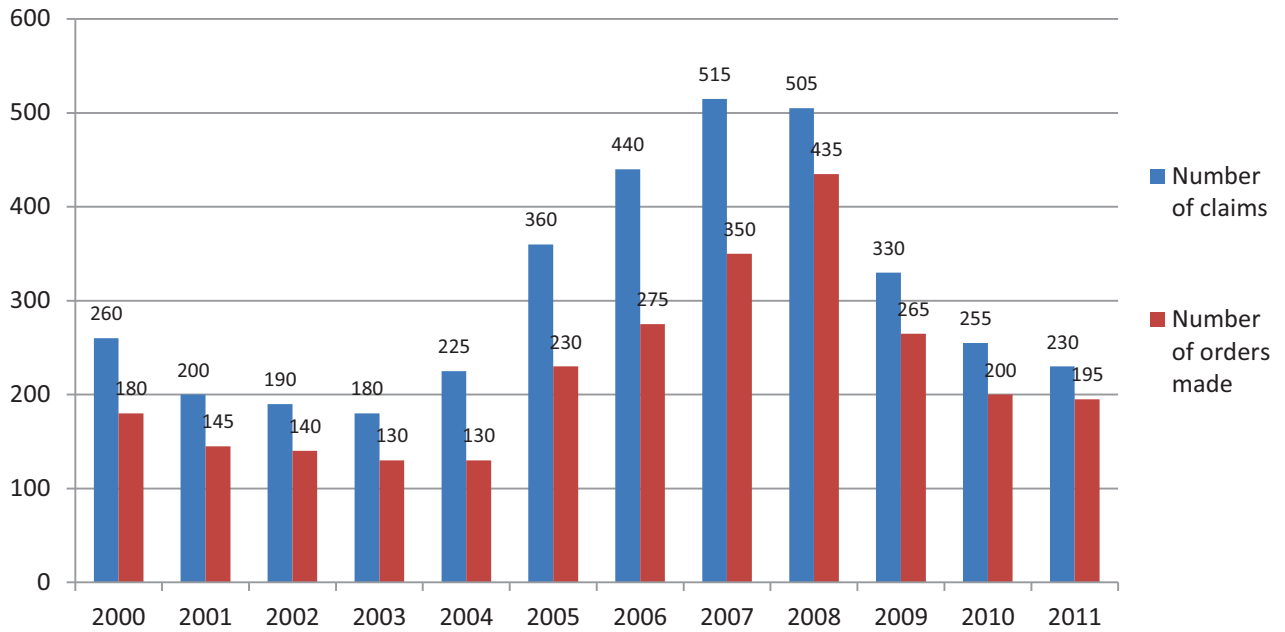
Figure 4.15 – Reasons for homelessness



Repossessions

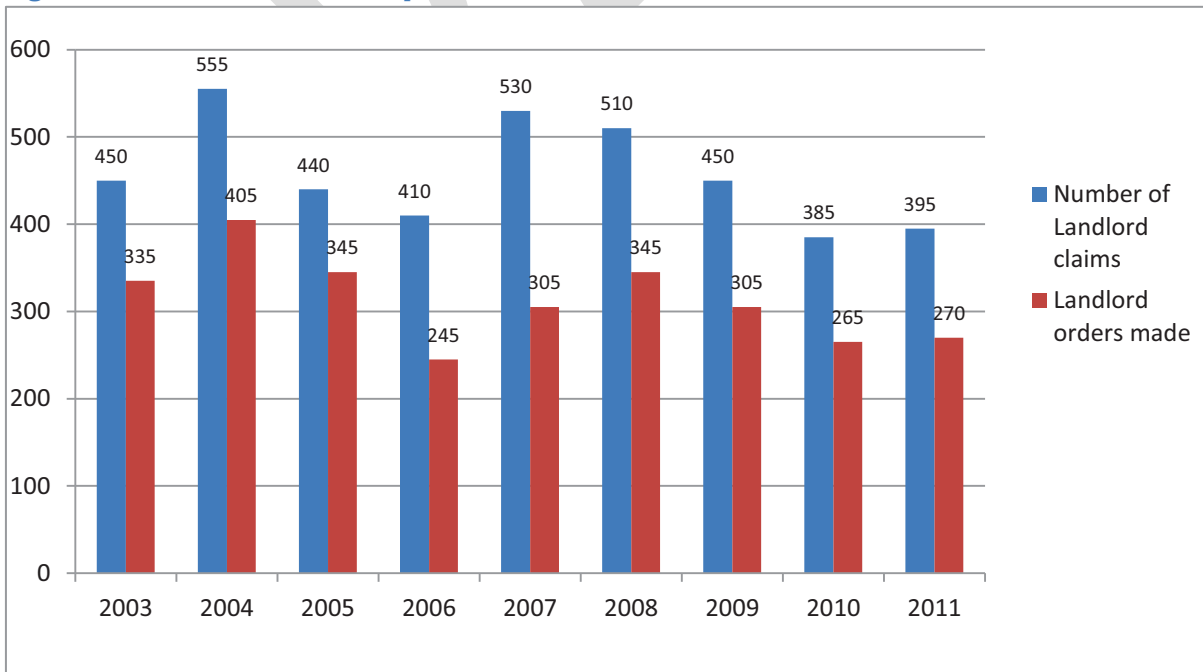
Much work has been done over recent years to stem the rise in repossessions and the number of orders granted has decreased by 55% from a peak in 2008, as illustrated by figure 4.16. The number of repossession claims and orders in 2011 was lower than they were in the years leading up to economic downturn.

Figure 4.16 – Annual mortgage possession claims and orders made



The number of landlord possessions has also been in decline, as illustrated in figure 4.17 below. However, figures for 2011, reveal that the number of claims submitted and orders made has started to creep back up, which is consistent with the increase in homelessness caused by termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancies for the same period.

Figure 4.17 – Annual landlord possession claims and orders made



Costs of homelessness

According to figures released by the Department for Communities and Local Government the average cost to the local authority of statutory homelessness is £5,500 per household. This compares to an estimated cost of preventing homelessness of £500 per household as illustrated in the table below.

	What's involved	Approximate costs
Statutory homelessness	Single person presenting as homeless on the day would warrant a full homeless assessment consisting of; Housing Solutions Adviser time Temporary Accommodation Provision Homeless investigation – contacting relevant agencies etc. to clarify information submitted Homeless Decision If accepted, securing suitable accommodation to discharge homeless duty	£5,500
Prevention	Single person threatened with homelessness (ordered to leave within period of time) Prevention assessment Prevention options offered to client – BGS, Prevention fund, Negotiation with parents / landlord to sustain tenancy.	£500

The Council started to develop its preventative approach (examined in more detail below) in 2007/8. At that time the Council regularly temporarily placed homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation to fulfil its interim duty to accommodate households while investigations were taking place. This practice has virtually ceased due to the wide range of prevention measures the authority now uses. As an example in April 2008 to August 2008 bed and breakfast costs to the authority were £133,252. Costs for the same period in 2012 were nil.

The costs associated with the various prevention options available are as follows:

Prevention option	Average cost
Bond Guarantee Fund	£500
Prevention fund (assists with deposits, minor repairs, rent arrears etc)	Up to £500
G.I.F.T (Furniture incentive scheme for 18-25 year olds)	£100
Discretionary Housing Benefit – HB payment to assist clients experiencing financial difficulties etc.	£10 to £25 per week for an agreed period of time
Mortgage Rescue Scheme – Assist tenants and homeowners to remain within their homes	Up to £3,000
No second night Out – Halton is one of the six sub regional authorities to sign up to the service to tackle rough sleeping.	Externally funded

Prevention

Figure 4.18 illustrates the authority’s success at preventing homelessness and enabling potentially homeless people to remain in their current home as reported to the CLG as part of the local authority’s P1E return. As shown the main measure used is crisis intervention in the form of emergency support which over the last three years has helped prevent homelessness for over 600 families.

Figure 4.18 - Homelessness prevention measures – household able to remain in current home

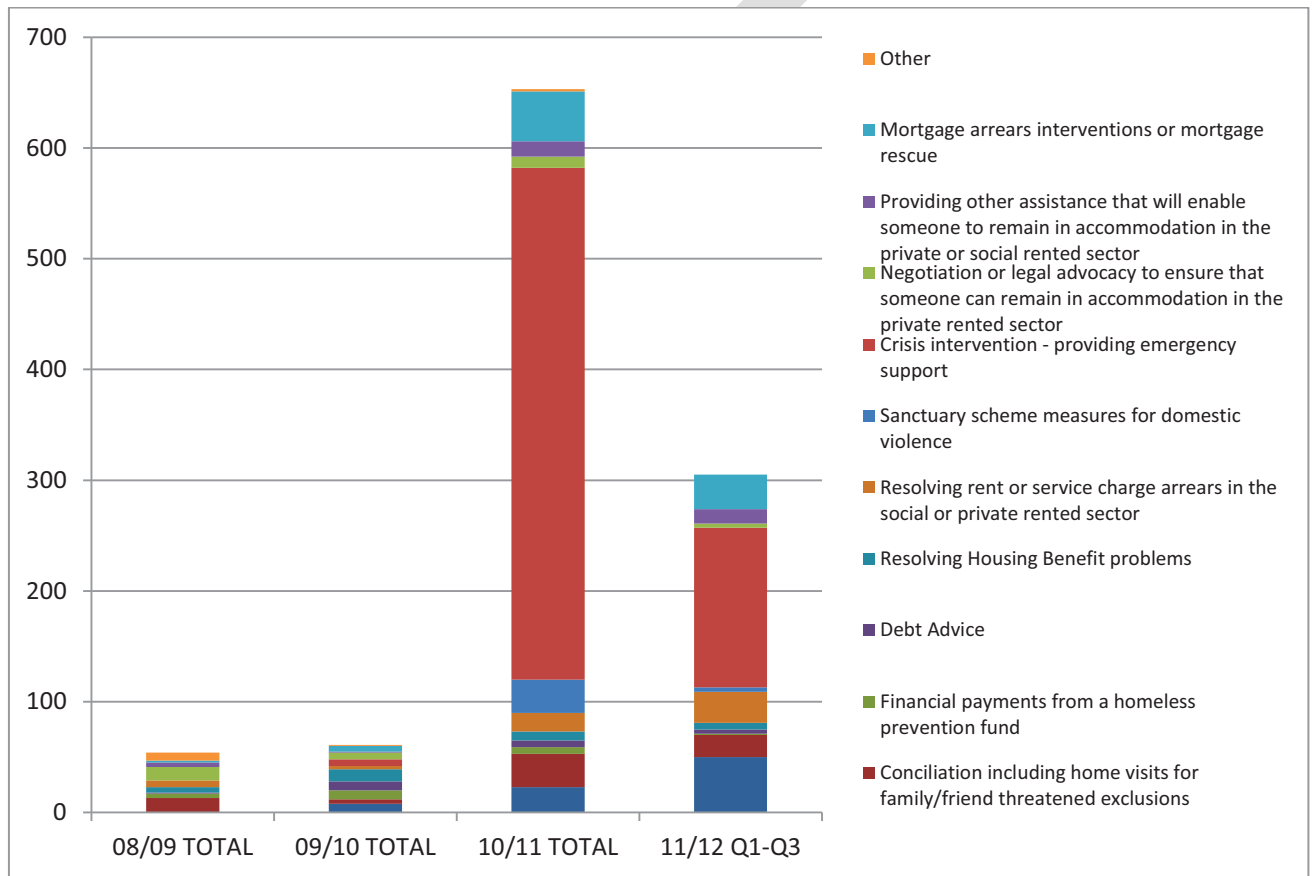
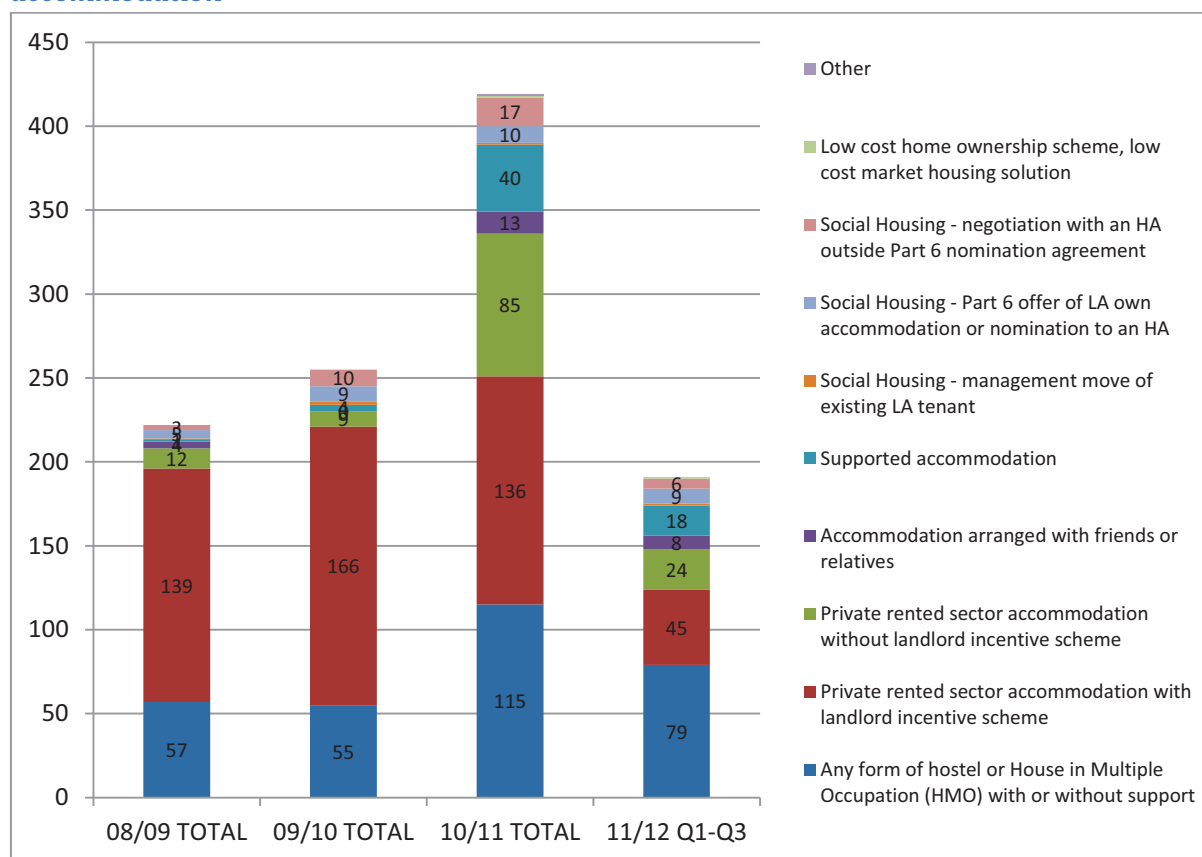


Figure 4.19 below details the prevention measures that have necessitated a move to alternative accommodation. It illustrates the success of the Bond Guarantee Scheme and the relationship the authority has developed with accredited private landlords in providing alternative accommodation for potentially homeless people. It also demonstrates the role that providers of supported housing schemes play in alleviating homelessness.

Figure 4.19 – Homelessness prevention measures – household assisted to obtain alternative accommodation



Rough sleeping

Halton participates in the annual Cheshire rough sleepers count. Despite rigorous searches of likely sleeping places, to date, no actual rough sleepers have been encountered on the night of the counts. This is not to say that rough sleeping does not occur in the Borough, merely that the annual snapshot has not uncovered a problem to date.

The Housing Needs of specific groups

Introduction

A model to assess the housing needs of specific client groups was developed by the now disestablished regional assembly (known latterly as 4NW). The specific accommodation based needs for each client group are illustrated in figure 4.20 below. The model points clearly to a substantial need for specialist accommodation for older people, particularly the frail elderly. However, the model should be treated as indicative only and not as a definitive statement of need. For example the Council’s Accessible Homes Register provides detailed information on the number of disabled awaiting suitably adapted housing and the type of housing they need. This is shown at figure 4.21 below. The Council has responded to this identified need and at the time of writing plans to develop a 100 units of extra care housing in Halton are well advanced.

Other vulnerable groups identified as having unmet accommodation needs are single homeless people, people with mental health issues and those with drug and alcohol problems. There is also a

need to review accommodation provision for adults with learning disabilities in terms of the suitability and accessibility of current provision and a need to develop a planned approach to moving to independent, supported accommodation for those living with ageing parents or in unsuitable housing.

Figure 4.20 – Accommodation based support needs

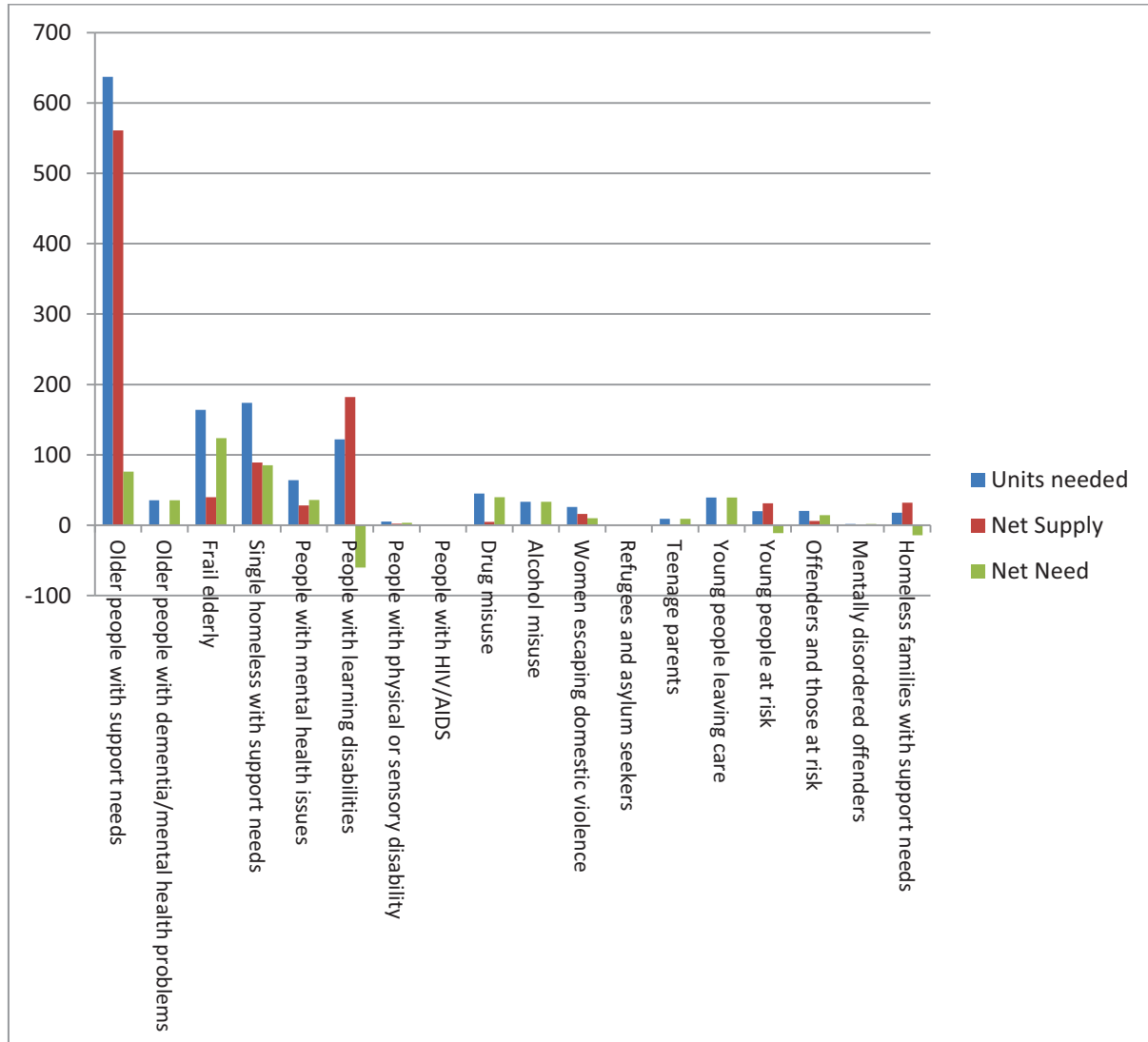
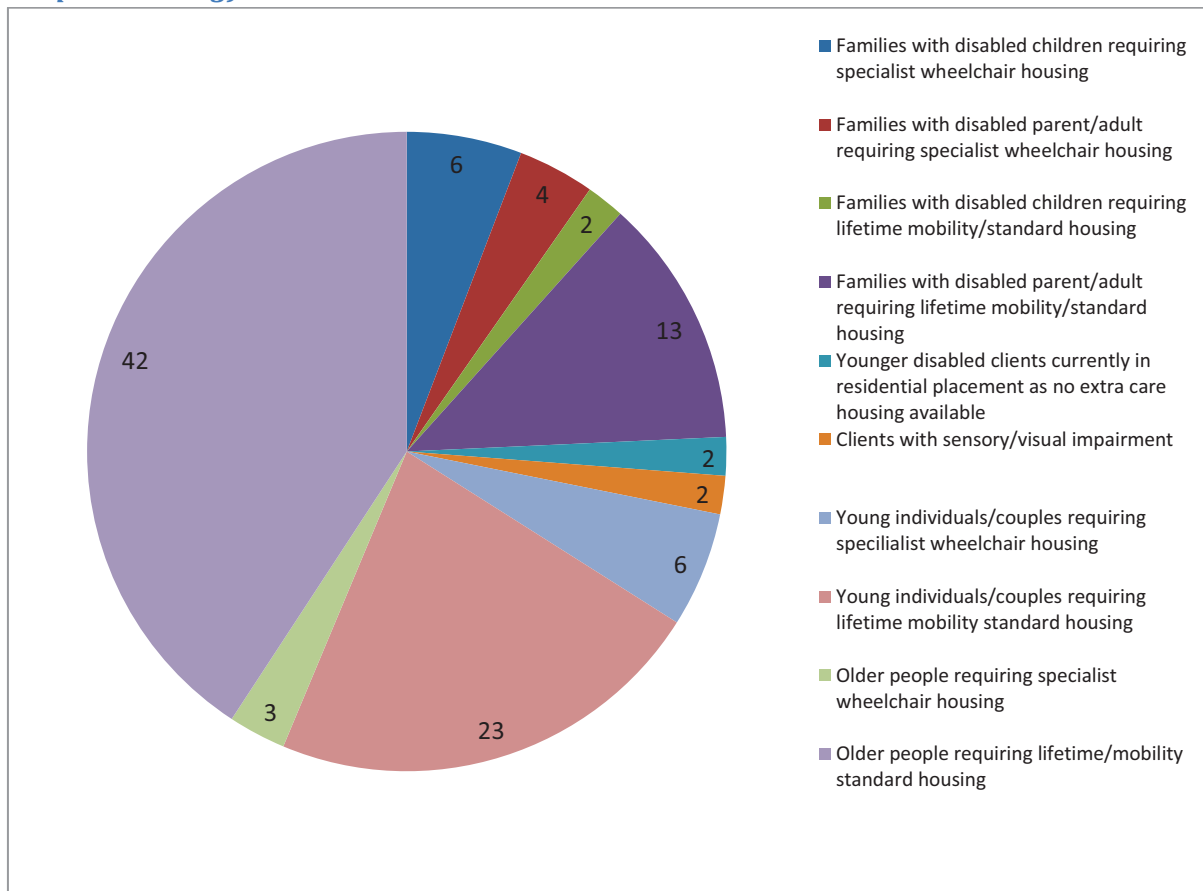


Figure 4.21 – Halton BC Accessible Homes Register (number of clients awaiting suitably adapted housing)



Gypsies and Travellers

Halton has two Council owned Gypsy and Traveller sites. The well-established Riverview site at Widnes has 23 permanent pitches, including a pitch for the resident warden. The site underwent substantial refurbishment in 2008. In 2009, the authority's first transit site was opened in Runcorn offering 14 pitches. There are also two authorised privately run sites, and a third site operating under a temporary planning permission. This gives a current total of approximately 56 pitches in Halton.

Under the Housing Act 2004 all Councils have a statutory duty to undertake periodic assessments of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People in their area. The last assessment, which was undertaken by University of Salford's Housing and Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) in 2007, was a sub regional assessment involving all Cheshire authorities and St Helens. It found a need for between 28 and 32 additional pitches in Halton, which equates to a third of the total need identified for the Cheshire Partnership area. The authority has gone some way to meet this need through the subsequent development of a transit site.

As well as the statutory duty to undertake periodic needs assessments, new Government Guidance in "Planning Policy for Traveller Sites" (DCLG: March 2012) requires local authorities to maintain a five year deliverable supply of residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers sufficient to meet the identified need within their development plan documents. In preparation for this, the Cheshire

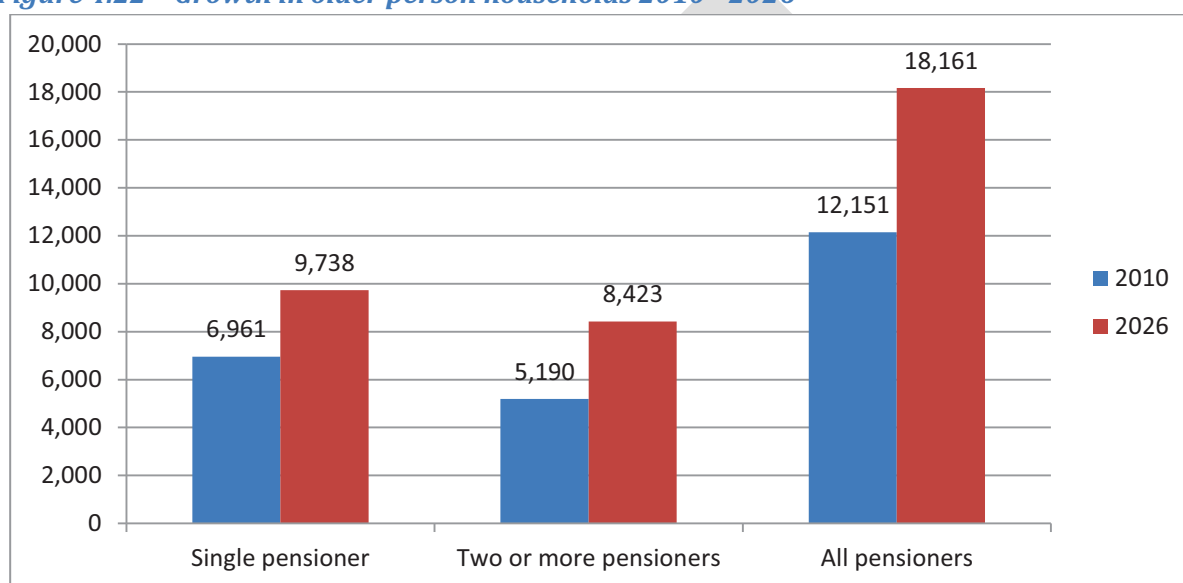
Partnership plans to update its need assessment in 2013. The assessment will include travelling showperson sites.

The Homes and Communities Agency had recently awarded £850k to the Council to develop a further 12 pitch site which will make a significant contribution to meeting existing identified needs.

Older People

The SHMA provides further details on people over the state retirement age prevailing at the time the survey was completed. In particular, the study used demographic modelling to predict changes in the population of older people. It estimated an increase of 6,000 households made up solely of people of pensionable age between 2010 and 2026, increasing the proportion of older person households from 23% to 30% as illustrated in figure 4.22.

Figure 4.22 – Growth in older person households 2010 - 2026



Clearly, this increase will have significant implications for housing provision and related care and support services. The SHMA recommends that the local authority ensure that housing strategies and policies meet the needs of older people by:

- Ensuring that an appropriate percentage of new housing supply will meet the needs of older people and their carers in terms of size, location and design;
- Improving the condition of existing properties so that older people have homes which are warm and secure;
- Working with others to ensure flexible and tailored support for those who need it.

These issues will be addressed through the development of an Older Persons Commissioning Strategy planned for 2013. This will include services to older persons in Halton – including an older persons housing strategy.

Consultation question 4: Does this part of the evidence paper give an adequate overview of households living in Halton? Are there any other relevant issues which have not been covered?

Part Four – Halton’s Services

Homelessness Services

Homelessness Prevention

The Council’s Housing Solutions Team deals with cases of statutory homelessness but the focus of its work is on preventing homelessness from occurring. A wide range of preventative services are offered, including:

Mediation

As already described family breakdown is a primary cause of homelessness, often arising from problems between parents and adult children. Therefore, Housing Solutions work closely with families to re-establish relationships and enable the young person to continue living in the family home where this is appropriate. In April 2011, Housing Solutions received Government funding to recruit a dedicated Young Persons Officer to deal specifically with 16 and 17 year olds and enable a more focussed effort on this kind of work. In 2010/11 the Officer dealt with 97 advice cases, preventing homelessness in 58 cases and in 2011/12 the Officer prevented 55 young people from becoming homeless from a total caseload of 75.

Supported Lodgings (Nightstop)

The Nightstop service has developed a supported lodgings scheme providing very short-term accommodation for young people together with a mediation service which aims to resolve issues which have led to the breakdown in family relationships. The accommodation is provided by a volunteer host family – a network of volunteer hosts have been recruited to ensure appropriate placements are available for young people, whilst more suitable short-term housing is found or until mediation leads to the young person returning to the family home.

Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme

This scheme enables victims of domestic abuse to remain in their home by fitting enhanced security measures where it is safe to do so, is the victim’s choice and the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. The sanctuary measures required are based on individual needs and include repaired, reinforced or replacement doors, hinges and windows, door and window lock and alarms and security lighting. The Council is currently working with partner agencies to develop a Halton Sanctuary Scheme with Registered Providers taking responsibility for the installation of sanctuary measures within their properties and the Council funding sanctuary measures within private sector properties. Halton also has a refuge for women fleeing domestic violence managed by Women’s Aid.

Bond Guarantee Scheme

In an effort to increase prevention of homelessness, a Rent Deposit Scheme was launched in 2007. The scheme was developed to assist homeless individuals and families to access private rented sector (PRS) accommodation by providing the deposit required by landlords. The scheme was very successful but costly so was changed in 2009 to become a Bond Guarantee Scheme (BGS). The

scheme now provides the written promise of the deposit amount should it be required at the end of the tenancy. BGS allows the Council to assist more households into the PRS as no funds are released unless the landlord has reason to claim on the bond for rent arrears or property damage.

For each bond that is provided, there is a written agreement in place, which the tenant, landlord and Council all sign up to. It sets out what the bond can/cannot be used for and makes clients aware that they are responsible for the bond and will be invoiced for any reasonable claim, which ensures they are accountable for their own conduct during the tenancy. The agreement also details the importance of the client saving for their own deposit to eventually replace the need for the bond guarantee.

Of the 328 tenancies created since the introduction of the BGS in 2009, 67% are ongoing, 15% ended without a claim and 18% ended with the bond being claimed (either in part or in full). In the early days of the BGS the criteria was very loosely applied and nearly 100% of those who applied for a bond were granted one. Since this time the criteria has been tightened and therefore, the number of bonds granted has decreased. The decrease in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates has also affected the scheme as it is now more difficult for households to find affordable accommodation in the private rented sector.

In 2010/11, 75% of claims on bonds were either partly or wholly due to rent arrears. In an effort to reduce this, changes to the scheme's processes were made. Applications for direct payment of housing benefit to the landlord were increased (since April 2011 72% of all BGS tenancies had direct payments secured) and greater restrictions were placed on the amount of shortfall clients were permitted.

Mortgage support

The current economic climate has led to an increased number of people finding themselves in mortgage difficulty. In response to this, Halton established a Repossessions Action Plan and Working Group to bring together the work of various agencies in the borough in preventing repossessions. Housing Solutions also has a dedicated Mortgage Rescue Adviser who since January 2010, has provided tailored advice to 187 households and as a result 94 cases were prevented from repossession.

Home Essentials Fund

The lack of furniture and essential equipment can make people reluctant to move from temporary accommodation and can contribute to abandonment of new tenancies. In Halton, this is particularly the case for younger people. In an effort to help towards the cost of setting up a new home, the Council has established a Home Essentials Fund, which those aged 16-25 can access if they have become unintentionally homeless and have been provided temporary accommodation in one of the borough's hostels. The Council will purchase items (up to a total value of £300) from a set list on behalf of the customer to help towards the costs of fully furnishing their new home when they move on.

Since June 2011, 10 young people moving on from hostel accommodation have been provided with essential home items, including microwaves, toasters, bedding and cookery items up to a total value of £300.

Housing Solutions advise or refer customers to other organisations for advice on a range of tenancy sustainment issues to ensure early intervention in the homelessness risk process. In the midst of the current economic climate, one of the key services is that of advice and assistance on debt, welfare rights and money management issues (which are provided in the most part by the Council's own Welfare Rights Service and the Citizens' Advice Bureau. In addition, individual Housing Associations offer services to their own tenants).

The Council's Welfare Rights Service acts as a buffer to homelessness presentations by providing both a preventive and reactive service. The team provides both welfare benefits and debt advice to a specialist level. In terms of debt provision, advice is given from basic debt negotiation through to attending court possession hearings. With regard to income maximisation, the team will carry out simple benefit checks, some form completion and, if people are wrongly refused benefits, assistance with reconsiderations and appeals is offered. Particularly with regard to disability benefits, benefit decisions are often incorrect and in the last financial year, 187 appeals were attended with an 84% success rate. The team also provides a specialist service, funded through MacMillan Cancer Support, to people suffering from Cancers and their immediate families and carers.

Service developments

Following an internal review of the Housing Solutions service undertaken late in 2011, the authority is currently changing the way it delivers homelessness services so that customers can now receive appropriate advice and assistance at the point of initial contact rather than having to wait for an appointment with a Housing Solutions Advisor.

No Second Night Out

Halton is participating in the Liverpool City Region No Second Night Out project. Utilising funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government, the project aims to ensure that by the end of 2012 no one will live on the streets of Liverpool City Region and no individual arriving on the streets for the first time will sleep out for more than one night. It plans to do this by providing a single contact point for reporting rough sleepers and developing a comprehensive menu of services for each local authority area so that tailored support can be offered to rough sleepers to assist them to come indoors. The service works directly with the Housing Solutions Service and external agencies to tackle and address rough sleeping.

Scrutiny review

Elected Members undertook a scrutiny review of Homelessness services in early 2012. The purpose of the review was to examine the provision of temporary accommodation in the Borough and review the extent to which it met housing need and provided value for money. There were a number of conclusions and recommendations arising from the review, the most significant of which was the need to rebalance provision of temporary accommodation for young, single homeless people across both sides of the Borough. This has resulted in the closure of the Runcorn based scheme Halton Goals. Plans to develop a 37 bedroom hostel on the Widnes side of the Borough by 2014 are underway.

Allocations

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

Choice Based Lettings is a relatively new approach to allocating property, which gives homeseekers greater control over the property they are offered as it requires them to express an interest in homes which are advertised locally.

Halton is a partner in Liverpool City Region's sub regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme, Property Pool Plus. The scheme, which went live in Summer 2012, includes five local authority areas and 22 Registered Providers across the City Region. A common allocations policy has been agreed which uses a banding system to prioritise applications for rehousing. Each local authority partner has selected a delivery agent who will manage allocations and maintain the CBL waiting list on their behalf. Halton Housing Trust has been selected as the delivery agent locally and transitional arrangements to move applicants for rehousing from the waiting lists of local Providers to the new IT system are well underway.

It is hoped that Choice Based Lettings will offer a more transparent and streamlined service to households seeking social housing. Support arrangements are in place for households who may experience difficulty in adapting to the new system and "bids" and allocations will be closely monitored to ensure that no one group of people is unfairly disadvantaged.

Private Sector Housing

Housing Renewal

Historically the Council has allocated significant resources to housing renewal in the form of grants and loans for vulnerable homeowners. Since the last Strategy was published in 2008 784 households have received financial assistance from the Council to help improve their homes at a total investment of £2.441 million. However in the current financial climate regrettably there are no longer funds available to finance this work although funding for Disabled Facilities Grants continues to be available.

Energy Efficiency

Introduction

For a number of years the Council has worked in partnership with Energy Projects Plus, a local environmental charity, to deliver energy advice and assistance to Halton residents. Until recently, this has included the management of two locally developed initiatives: the Energy Zone scheme, which provided discounts for insulation works and HEARTH, which provided emergency heating for people with heart and respiratory conditions and which complemented the Health through Warmth Scheme described below. Unfortunately, due to the loss of the Regional Housing Pot which funded these schemes, they were discontinued in April 2011. However, the authority continues to work with Energy Projects Plus to maximise the benefits of national and regional schemes for Halton residents and to capitalize on funding opportunities, as described below.

Warm Front

The Government's Warm Front scheme provides heating and insulation measures for vulnerable households living in energy inefficient dwellings. The scheme comes to an end later this year and will be replaced with the Green Deal described below. Through the Halton Healthy Homes Network, the Council is promoting the scheme to residents to ensure that those who are eligible benefit from the scheme before it comes to an end.

Green Deal

The Green Deal is essentially a framework which allows private companies to offer households energy efficiency improvements with no upfront costs, with the cost of the work recouped through savings in energy bills. The scheme, which is expected to be introduced in October 2012, could see firms such as B and Q or Marks and Spencer becoming Green Deal providers. Their role would be to offer a finance plan to the householder to pay the initial costs of the work which would be recommended by an accredited adviser and carried out by an accredited installer. The householder's contractual relationship, however, would be with the Green Deal Provider.

An essential element to Green Deal is that the expected financial savings are equal to or greater than the cost of the plan (this is known as The Golden Thread). It is, therefore, not suitable for all types of work or properties and, since, the plan is interest bearing, it may not be suitable for those on very low incomes.

However, the Council recognises the potential benefits of Green Deal for households who may not have qualified for means tested assistance and will work with Green Deal Providers and other organisations involved to promote the scheme. As an example, Halton has recently been awarded funding through the Government's City Deal programme to undertake energy efficiency improvements to two properties to act as Green Deal demonstrator projects through regular monitoring of energy savings resulting from the work.

Energy Company Obligation

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) will replace the existing Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) and Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT) managed by energy companies in 2013.

Unlike the Green Deal, which requires households to pay for the measures over time, ECO places an obligation on gas and electricity suppliers to achieve energy savings through a smaller range of measures and expects them to subsidise or fully meet the cost of these measures. There are three elements to ECO which have different eligibility criteria as outlined below.

ECO Carbon Saving

This element of ECO is a grant available to any household requiring solid wall insulation or cavity wall insulation that requires additional work to allow the insulation to be installed ("hard to treat cavity wall insulation"). The grant amount will vary across different suppliers but is expected to be mixed together with Green Deal finance to meet the total cost of the work. Other measures such as glazing, draughtproofing or replacement external doors can be added to the improvement package and may attract additional grant from the supplier.

ECO Affordable Warmth

This element of ECO is a grant available to private sector households in receipt of qualifying benefits. Measures eligible for the grant include loft and cavity wall insulation, insulation for solid walls and rooms in the roof, replacement glazing, new and replacement heating systems and renewable energy heating measures. The government plans to extend the current data sharing agreement between benefits agencies and utilities to enable eligible households to be targeted directly to encourage take up.

ECO Carbon Saving Communities (CSCO)

This element of ECO is a grant, aimed at reducing fuel poverty, that is available to any household within designated low income areas (those lower layer super output areas, LSOAs, identified as the lowest ranked 15% within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation). Halton has 33 such areas within its boundaries. To tackle rural fuel poverty CSCO can also be offered to households in receipt of qualifying benefits who live in rural communities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants. Measures included in CSCO include loft and cavity wall insulation, insulation for solid walls and rooms in the roof, replacement glazing, new and replacement heating systems and draughtproofing.

Health through Warmth

The Health Through Warmth (HTW) scheme was set up by npower in 2000 in partnership with the NHS and National Energy Action (NEA). HTW operates through a locally based referral partnership which seeks to help vulnerable people whose health is adversely affected by cold, damp living conditions. This is achieved by facilitating the installation of appropriate energy efficiency and heating measures, along with the provision of related advice and information.

Clients are referred by health and other key community workers who have attended locally based awareness sessions offered by HTW. HTW Merseyside (including Halton), delivered by Energy Projects Plus, commenced in late 2003 and to date has received over 4,800 referrals and secured over £4m in third party funding in addition to over £0.5m from npower's crisis fund. Key partners are the health sector, local authorities, and community support frontline staff who attend an awareness session and refer into the HTW scheme. Over 1,000 frontline staff have attended awareness sessions, though not all have made referrals into the referral system.

Warm Homes, Healthy People

Halton Borough Council was awarded funding under the Department of Health's Warmer Homes, Healthy People programme to support vulnerable residents through the winter of 2011/12. The funding enabled two energy efficiency programmes to be offered to residents. The Emergency Heat Scheme provided emergency heating systems and repairs for residents and the Heat Aware scheme enabled tailored advice on reading meters and understanding heating controls and energy bills to be delivered within resident's homes. The funding was also used to establish and launch the Halton Healthy Homes Network described below.

Halton Healthy Homes Network

The Halton Healthy Homes Network was officially launched at an event held on Wednesday 22nd February 2012 at Stobart Stadium, Widnes. The event was a great success and the Network now boasts 80 members from a number of different organisations including the council and many of its

partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors and community groups. The aim of the Network is to increase awareness of the health implications of poor housing and fuel poverty so that front line staff from the council and partner organisations and community advocates are able to identify those at risk and signpost them to organisations who can offer appropriate assistance.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in tackling poor housing conditions and reducing levels of fuel poverty in Halton – frontline staff, managers, elected members and community representatives are all encouraged to join. The network is virtual and communication is mostly sustained via email. It is intended that the Network will continue to develop and in time become the main communication source and delivery vehicle for partnership working relating to housing conditions and fuel poverty. Initially it will have a key role to play in ensuring that relevant front line staff and community advocates are fully aware of the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation.

Affordable Warmth Strategy

Halton's Affordable Warmth Strategy was developed in 2010 with the assistance of National Energy Action and Energy Projects Plus. A wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations were also involved in the development of the Strategy. The Strategy has five main aims:

- To raise awareness and understanding of fuel poverty;
- Establish effective referral systems amongst agencies in Halton;
- Improve the housing stock so that it is affordably warm;
- Maximise incomes and improve access to affordable fuel;
- Ensure co-ordination and monitoring of the Strategy.

Steady progress has been made in implementing the Strategy's Action Plan including providing fuel poverty training to front line staff, developing an e-learning training programme and introduction of web based information for householders. The development of the Halton Healthy Homes Network will, it is hoped, enable further progress to be made, particularly in relation to establishing referral systems, however, other aims e.g. improving the housing stock remain more of a challenge due to funding constraints.

Merseyside REECH scheme

Halton has been allocated European Regional Development Funding as part of the Merseyside REECH (Renewables and Energy Efficiency in Community Housing). This will enable external insulation/cladding to be installed at over 60 socially rented properties on the Castlefields estate in Runcorn. A key focus of the scheme is to develop the skills of local people to undertake such retrofit work.

In addition to the REECH scheme Registered Providers have accessed funding under the Community Energy Savings Project to deliver energy efficiency improvements to housing stock in Halton Brook, Grangeway and Ditton and Halton Housing Trust has developed renewable heating schemes in some of their properties in Runcorn. The Council is working with Providers to explore and maximise opportunities presented by the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation.

Adaptations

Home Improvement Agency

The Halton Home Improvement Agency assists households whose homes are being adapted with the help of a Disabled Facilities Grant with a wide range of services, including:

- Providing a list of reputable local builders;
- Giving advice about housing options and conditions;
- Drawing up plans for the adaptation work;
- Liaising with contractors and others involved in carrying out and inspecting the work;
- Help to obtain other support services.

Registered Provider protocol

Historically tenants of social housing have had to wait longer for major housing adaptations from their landlord due to funding constraints. Recognising this inequality, the Council and Registered Providers reached an agreement in 2008 whereby the Council would provide additional financial help Providers to increase the number of tenants benefitting, and to reduce waiting times. A match funding approach was agreed with the Council paying 50% of the cost of the eligible adaptation work.

To encourage ease of participation by Providers the scheme has some flexibility and in particular the agreement offers two routes of organising and delivering the adaptations, either through the Provider or through the Council's Home Improvement Service. In the first two years the scheme has been running, over 200 properties have been adapted, and the Council plans to maintain this progress for the foreseeable future, albeit with reduced funding levels. In 2011/12, the fourth year of operation, twelve Providers had signed up to the joint funding agreement and those that have declined to date hold very little housing stock within the Borough meaning that the majority of social housing tenants in Halton requiring major adaptations should benefit from this funding. The agreements with Providers are due for renewal in April 2012 and it is the intention of the Council to renew these agreements, subject to the availability of resources.

Accessible Housing Service

The Accessible Housing Service aims to provide a link between the Council's Home Improvement & Independent Living Services and housing providers. It works in partnership with all Providers with stock in Halton to enable a better match for disabled applicants to accessible and adapted homes when they become available in the borough. This means that individuals do not have the disruption of adaptations being completed and at a time of increasing financial pressures nationally it is a better use of Council and Registered Provider resources. Disabled applicants of any age from all property tenures are assessed when they have applied for housing to any of the providers, and available void adapted properties are also assessed to try and match applicants to the accommodation best suited to their needs. It is intended that the service will eventually be integrated with the IT system for the sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme.

Anti Social Behaviour

Halton's Community Safety Team responds to complaints of anti social behaviour and takes action against perpetrators where appropriate. They also work closely with Registered Providers of social housing to take an estate based approach to the issue. This approach as well as the introduction of a number of support services for young people has led to significant reductions in the number of incidents in recent years, particularly those perpetrated by young people. For example, in 2011/12 the total number of incidents fell by 12.43% on the previous year's figure while youth anti social behaviour fell by 19.6% in the same period. There has been a corresponding reduction in residents' perceptions that anti social behaviour is a problem as evidenced by a residents survey undertaken in October 2011. Whilst partnership working with Registered Providers and agencies like the Police have reduced anti social behaviour, the Council is not complacent and continues to work to reduce anti social behaviour across Halton.

Supported Housing

In recent years the Council has undergone a process of rationalising services to create efficiencies. This has involved ongoing reviews of service provision in line with the available budget to ensure that resources are focused on those most in need. Current priorities within Halton are the provision of appropriate supported housing for older people, people with physical disabilities and learning difficulties.

Partnership working

The Council has a strong track record of partnership working, both at a multi disciplinary level (through the Halton Strategic Partnership Board) and at a single issue, multi agency level. Examples of successful partnership working on housing issues include the following.

Halton Housing Partnership

Halton's Housing Partnership meets on a bi monthly basis and discusses a wide range of housing and related issues. The meetings are regularly attended by representatives of Providers with the largest stockholdings in Halton as well as a range of Council Officers with an interest in housing and the relevant Executive Board Members. The group is represented on the Halton Strategic Partnership Board to ensure a two way flow of information between the two groups. Recent and current issues being taken forward by the group include financial inclusion, the impact of welfare reform, particularly as a result of the underoccupation penalty and development of the Tenancy Strategy.

Strategic Housing Visioning Group

A review of the Halton Housing Partnership in Summer 2012 resulted in the formation of a new partnership between Halton Borough Council and Registered Providers to focus on high level, strategic issues, known as the Strategic Housing Visioning Group. The group has initially adopted three key themes to focus on:

- Housing and Economic Development
- Welfare Reform and Employment
- Health and Well Being

It is intended that the group will have a long term focus on contemporary and forthcoming developments affecting housing and will oversee the work of the more operationally focused Halton Housing Partnership.

Liverpool City Region (LCR) Housing and Spatial Planning Forum

As previously mentioned the LCR Housing and Spatial Planning Forum is a sub group of the Liverpool City Region Cabinet and advises the Cabinet on housing and spatial planning issues. The Forum, which is attended by the Portfolio Holder for Housing Strategy, meets on a bi monthly basis and was instrumental in the development of the Local Implementation Plan which will guide housing investment in the sub region and has also successfully delivered on joint projects related to empty homes, kickstarting stalled housing developments, energy efficiency for hard to treat properties and Choice Based Lettings.

Consultation question 5: Does this part of the Strategy give an adequate overview of housing and related services in Halton? Are there any other services that should be included?

DRAFT

Appendix One – related documents

Document	Contact
Affordable Housing SPD	Alasdair Cross alasdair.cross@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 7657
Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011-2015	Joanne Sutton joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8750
Choice Based Lettings (Property Pool Plus) Allocation Policy	Steve Williams steve.williams@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8859
Core Strategy	Alasdair Cross alasdair.cross@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 7657
Corporate Plan 2011-2016	Lisa Driscoll Lisa.driscoll@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8012
Design of Residential Development SPD	Alasdair Cross alasdair.cross@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 7657
Housing and Support Strategy for Adults with Learning Difficulties	Liz Gladwyn liz.gladwyn@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8120
Homelessness Strategy 2009-2013 and Strategic Review of Homelessness in Halton 2008	Patricia Preston patricia.preston@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8581
Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy	Available from www.gov.uk

for England 2011	
Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2011 Local Authority Report for Halton Borough Council	Joanne Sutton joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8750
Private Sector House Condition Survey 2009 Report	Joanne Sutton joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8750
Scrutiny Review of Homelessness Services 2011/12 Report	Patricia Preston patricia.preston@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8581
Scrutiny Review of the Private Rented Sector 2012	Joanne Sutton joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8750
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	Alasdair Cross alasdair.cross@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 7657
Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026	Lisa Driscoll Lisa.driscoll@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8012
Tenancy Strategy	Joanne Sutton joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8750