



**Corporate Policy and Performance Board**

**Tuesday, 30 October 2012 6.30 p.m.  
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn**

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

**Chief Executive**

**BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

<b>Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chairman)</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Joe Roberts (Vice- Chairman)</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Ellen Cargill</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Mark Dennett</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Stan Hill</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Chris Loftus</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Alan Lowe</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Angela McInerney</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Gareth Stockton</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
<b>Councillor Kevan Wainwright</b>	<b>Labour</b>

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 Ext. 16 8276 or e-mail [ann.jones@halton.gov.uk](mailto:ann.jones@halton.gov.uk) for further information.  
The next meeting of the Board is on Thursday, 10 January 2013*

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

**Part I**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)</b>	
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 and voting on the item.	
<b>3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b>	<b>1 - 3</b>
<b>4. EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES</b>	<b>4 - 10</b>
<b>5. SSP MINUTES</b>	<b>11 - 19</b>
<b>6. DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ISSUES</b>	
<b>(A) MARKETS UPDATE</b>	<b>20 - 24</b>
<b>(B) TECHNICAL REFORM OF COUNCIL TAX</b>	<b>25 - 30</b>
<b>(C) LOCALISATION OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT</b>	<b>31 - 45</b>
<b>(D) BUSINESS PLANNING 2013-16</b>	<b>46 - 48</b>
<b>7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING</b>	
<b>(A) STAFF ACCIDENT/VIOLENT INCIDENT STATISTICS</b>	<b>49 - 60</b>

***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:** Corporate Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 30 October 2012

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Resources

**SUBJECT:** Public Question Time

**WARD(s):** Borough-wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).

1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
- (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
- (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
- (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
- (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
  - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
  - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
  - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
  - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chairperson will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

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

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

#### **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

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

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board  
**DATE:** 30 October 2012  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Board Minutes  
**WARD(s):** Boroughwide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board and Executive Board Sub are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.**

**3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

**4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

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

**5.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

None

**5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

None

**5.3 A Healthy Halton**

None

**5.4 A Safer Halton**

None

**5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

**6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 None.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

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

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Extracts of Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee Minutes that are relevant to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board**

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**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 6 September 2012**

<b>56</b>	<b>SPENDING AS AT 30 JUNE 2012</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which summarised the overall revenue and capital spending position as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

In overall terms, revenue expenditure was £0.6m below the budget profile, however, this was only a guide to eventual spending. It was noted that spending on employees was £137,000 below the budget profile at the end of the quarter.

Members were advised that the economic downturn continued to affect income. A number of income budgets were below their profile including market rents, industrial estate rents, commercial rents, stadium fees and charges and catering sales. These budgets would be closely monitored during the year to ensure the overall budget was balanced.

With regard to capital spending, it was reported that spending to the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011 totalled £9.8m, which was 88% of the planned spending of £11m at this stage. However, this only represented 17% of the total capital programme of £56m (which assumed a 20% slippage between years).

The Council's Balance Sheet was monitored regularly in accordance with the Reserves and Balances Strategy which formed part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The key reserves and balances had been reviewed and were considered prudent and appropriate at this stage in the financial year.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to the absolutely essential;
- 2) Directorates continue to closely control spending on agency staff and overtime, so that spending in these areas continues to reduce; and

- 3) Strategic Directors ensure overall spending at year-end was within their total operational budget.

<b>57</b>	<b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2011/12</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which reviewed activities on Treasury Management for the year 2011/12, in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement.

The annual report covered:-

- Capital activity during the year;
- Impact of this activity on the Council's underlying indebtedness (the Capital Financing Requirement);
- Reporting of the required prudential and treasury indicators;
- Overall treasury position identifying how the Council had borrowed in relation to this indebtedness and the impact of investment balances.
- Summary of interest rate movements in the year;
- Detailed debt activity; and
- Detailed investment activity.

In addition, the report provided details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlighted compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by Members.

RESOLVED: That the actual 2011/12 Prudential and Treasury Indicators in this report be approved and the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2011/12 be noted.

<b>58</b>	<b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2012/13 – 1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER APRIL TO JUNE</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The report provided supporting information on the economic background, economic forecast, short term rates, longer term rates, temporary borrowing/investments and new borrowing. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

<b>59</b>	<b>DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the first quarter to 30 June 2012.

The Board was reminded that in September 2011, it had approved a revision to reporting arrangements on performance, in the light of emerging national and local circumstances. The approved changes included presentation of Directorate Performance Overview Reports on a quarterly basis and progress against the Corporate Plan on a six monthly basis; the development and use of a priority based performance report for each Corporate Priority and Policy and Performance Board; and departmental performance reports to be made available via the intranet and the Members' Bulletin.

It was noted that a review of the Council's existing performance management and monitoring arrangements had been undertaken in 2011, based upon an agreed set of principles, which had been agreed by the Corporate Policy and Performance Board, based around the better management of performance information in terms of both strategic focus and volume. The Directorate Performance Overview Report (DPOR) provided a strategic summary of the key issues arising from performance in the relevant Quarter for each Directorate. DPOR's from 2012/13 would be presented to Executive Board in line with the presentation of Quarterly Financial Statements. Information for each of the Council's Directorates were attached at Appendices 1-3. The Board noted that monitoring of all relevant high risks would be undertaken and progress be reported against the application of the risk treatment measures in Quarters 2 and 4.

RESOLVED: That the report and progress and performance information be noted.

<b>60</b>	<b>GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services, on the draft Statement of Gambling Policy 2012, for consultation.

The Board was advised that the Gambling Act 2005 required local authorities to produce a Statement of Gambling Policy (the Statement) every three years. The current Statement, which became effective on 31 January 2010, was attached at Appendix 1, and it was

noted that this would be used as the consultation document, in the absence of any further guidance issued under the Gambling Act 2005.

The Board was advised that there were no substantive changes proposed to the current Statement, except for an updated list of Consultees in section 2 and the Responsible Authorities in section 4. The consultation period would end on 8 October, after which a final version would be brought back to the Executive Board, for final adoption by full Council in December 2012.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) for the purposes of section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005, the draft Gambling Policy, attached to the report, be used as the Council's consultation document;
- 2) the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to determine all matters relating to the consultation process; and
- 3) following the consultation process, a report be brought back to Executive Board.

#### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2012**

<b>66</b>	<b>THE GRANGE SCHOOLS VACANT SITES</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which sought approval to demolish the buildings currently used as The Grange Nursery, Infant and Junior Schools.

The Board was advised that The Grange all through school, which was under construction as part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, was due for completion by April 2013. The existing sites and buildings housing the Nursery, Infant and Junior Schools, would be declared surplus to Educational requirements and returned to the corporate property portfolio.

It was noted that once the buildings were vacated, they could present an on-going risk to the Council and it was proposed that demolition would reduce the risks associated with the sites. The cost of this was estimated to be in the region of £150,000, and Members were advised that this could be funded out of the capital receipt for the sale of the land, in due course.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Grange Nursery, Infant and Junior School buildings are demolished once they are vacated, following the completion of the new Grange All Through School being constructed under the BSF programme; and
- 2) in respect of the above, in order to reduce risk with regards the existing buildings once they become vacant, a tender process be undertaken through the Chest, in order to obtain competitive quotes for the demolition of the buildings to ensure that a contractor is in place to commence the works as soon as the Authority has vacant possession.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board  
**DATE:** 30 October 2012  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive  
**SUBJECT:** Halton Strategic Partnership Board minutes  
**WARD(s):** Boroughwide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.**

**3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None.

**4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None.

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

**5.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

None

**5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

None

**5.3 A Healthy Halton**

None

**5.4 A Safer Halton**

None

**5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

**6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 None.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

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

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, 13 June 2012 at the Karalius Suite,  
Stobart Stadium, Widnes**

**Present:**

<b>Board Members:</b>	David Parr (Chairman)	Chief Executive – HBC
	Paula Cain	Halton Chamber of Commerce
	Cllr Dave Cargill	Cheshire Police Authority
	Simon Clough	Children & Young People – HBC
	Lorraine Crane	Children & Young People - HBC
	Rev Jeremy Duff	Faith Community
	Kate Fallon	Bridgewater NHS Trust
	Eileen O'Meara	Director of Public Health
	Terry Parle	Sports Partnership
	John Rigby	Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy
	Wesley Rourke	Employment, Enterprise and Property HBC
	Michael Sheehan	Riverside College
	Richard Strachan	Cheshire Police
	Alex Waller	Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service
	Sally Yeoman	Halton and St Helens VCA

**Advisors to the Boards**

Mick Noone	Policy, Planning and Transportation - HBC
Lisa Driscoll	Policy & Strategy – HBC
Tim Gibbs	Policy & Strategy – HBC
Alam Graham	Communications – HBC
Shelah Semoff	Policy & Strategy – HBC

<b>In Attendance:</b>	Michelle Simpson	Committee Services Officer - HBC
	Monsignor John Devine	North West Churches' Officer for Faith and Society

Apologies for Absence: Nick Atkin, Simon Banks, Cllr Fry, Cllr Gerrard, Ray Jones, Ann McIntyre, Janine Peterson and Cllr Polhill.

**1 MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2012 having been printed and circulated were agreed as a correct record.

**2 MONSIGNOR JOHN DEVINE : ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION AND IMPACT OF THE FAITH SECTOR**

The Board received a presentation from Monsignor John Devine, on the economic contribution and impact of the faith sector. The presentation outlined the following:-

- how faith communities were adapting were adapting to the current economic and political climate;
- background in terms of whether the faith dimension added value to communities;
- results from research of faith communities in Northwest England;
- details of twelve case studies of how faith communities contribute to social and economic wellbeing;
- findings, organisational characteristics and conclusions from the twelve case studies;
- what challenges were identified;
- details of funding, staffing and volunteers from the projects; and
- current challenges for faith communities;

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the presentation be received and comments raised noted; and
- (2) Monsignor John Devine be thanked for his informative presentation.

### **3 PARTNERSHIP OUTCOME AND PRIORITY MAPPING**

The Board considered a report which informed the Partners that combining partnership targets and priorities with individual organisational priorities and targets presented an opportunity to maximise potential for meaningful partnership collaboration.

The Board was advised that it was proposed that following the discussions as part of the Open Forum Topic, a more complete Partnership outcome and priority mapping exercise was undertaken to enable a better understanding and align the agendas and priorities in response to the emerging changes in the architecture of the public sector. This would be undertaken as a phased approach. Phase 1 would involve mapping and Phase 2 of the exercise would be to use the information to inform the future work programme and to identify and reduce duplication amongst partners wherever possible.

The Board agreed the adoption of the priority and outcome mapping exercise as a way forward and noted it would help identify areas of cross working and areas of duplication to help the Board become more efficient.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The proposal to conduct a more extensive outcome and priority mapping following the Open Forum Topic Discussion be endorsed; and
- (2) The information gathered be used to consider how we can deliver on our key objectives and commit to working together to improve outcomes and reduce duplication as a result be agreed.

#### 4 INFORMATION SHARING PROTOCOL - UPDATE

The Board considered a report which provided the Partners with an update on progress made in updating the Information Sharing Protocols made since the HSP Board Meeting on 7 March 2012.

The Board was advised that the sharing of information between partners was a key element in the effective development and delivery of the Halton Strategic Partnership. Information sharing was essential for any partnership to work effectively together.

The Board was further advised that it was essential to ensure that information shared by partners was stored and used in a constructive and legal manner. In order to achieve this, an overarching set of data sharing principles had been agreed at the HSPB in March and the Board had also agreed to undertake an audit of the range of data sharing agreements that were already in place across the Partnership.

It was reported that it was anticipated that the revised Tier 1 template prepared by the Information Governance Team would be signed off by June 2012. These would also be checked and agreed by the HBC legal team and then made available for use.

It was reported that the Information Governance Team would seek to ensure that all partners had signed up to the Tier 1 agreements and HSP and SSP partners would be included in this process. A central database and diagram mapping out which agreements existed would then be developed. Copies would be saved on Halton Borough Council's intranet and also, it was anticipated, would be accessed via the new Halton Strategic Partnership website.

It was also reported that the Tier 2 template, specifying what information was being shared, by whom, and in what format would also be made available and could be used when a need to share more complex, personalised data arose.

The Board discussed confidentiality of information and how this process would make information sharing more simple. Members were requested to identify a key contact within their organisation to assist with data issues in order to facilitate the roll out of Tier 1 agreements to all partners.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made to date be noted; and
- (2) a key contact from within their organisation able to assist in the development and management of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Agreements as necessary be identified.

## 5 WNF FINANCIAL SUMMARY UPDATE

The Board considered a report which gave the Partners an update on the year end spend profile for WNF for the financial period March 2011 – April 2012, and sought delegated powers for SSP Chairs to reallocate a small amount of the slippage.

The Board was advised that the spreadsheet attached at Appendix 1 to the report showed WNF project spend for the financial period of March 2011-April 2012. The profile showed that of the 21 projects supported during the 2011-12 financial year:-

- twelve schemes had exhausted their funding;
- three had returned funds to the central pot;
- one had the funding reallocated to the 2012-13 financial year to sustain two health related projects; and
- six had funds carried over (all of these were within the Safer Halton Partnership and five were part of the review which Board Members had previously been informed of).

The Board was further advised that there was currently a total of £170,000 of WNF slippage remaining with the Accountable Body. This money was made up of:-

- Cancelled accruals from 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12;
- Funds returned to the central pot by SSPs; and
- A small amount of funding that had not been allocated.

It was reported that in the 2011-12 financial year the Partnership had managed to reallocate £1.4m of WNF that had been saved following a mid-year evaluation exercise. The remaining £170,000 came from this funding and was the end of the WNF allocated to Halton in 2008

In conclusion, it was reported that the Partnership had recently been focusing on two big issues, health and returning people to work. The SSP Chairs were due to meet in early August, and at their last meeting in April, it had been agreed that, subject to the Board's approval, that SSPs be asked to

submit proposals on how best to use the remaining funding in line with the Partnership's existing priorities. Board Members were asked to support this proposal

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The content of the report be noted; and
- (2) SSP Chairs reallocate the remaining WNF slippage as they see appropriate and in accordance with the Partnership's agreed priorities.

## 6 SSP KEY MESSAGE / ISSUES

The Partners each gave an update on their areas in respect of Health and Wellbeing, Children and Young People, Safer Halton, Employment Learning and Skills and Environment and Regeneration.

In particular the following points were noted:

- In relation to Health good progress had been made with tobacco control and there was an increase in people who had quit smoking. The target for 2011/12 had been exceeded by 3.6%;
- Hospital admissions for alcohol related problems had also improved when compared to statistical neighbours;
- Halton had passed supplementary planning guidance to prevent fast food takeaways opening within 400 yards of schools to help reduce obesity rates among school children;
- Local GP's were forming a Clinical Commissioning Group to buy hospital health services and manage contracts and would focus on community wellbeing, and more interaction with patients. Health Actions Zones were to be introduced (the formal name of areas was still to be finalised);
- There was a reduction of 50% in the infant mortality rate;
- Teenage pregnancies had reduced by 60% for quarter 1 of 2011/12;
- With regards to Employment, Learning and Skills, enhanced partnership working has resulted in excellent progress during 2011/12;
- Despite the reduction in income the Citizens Advice Bureau was continuing to operate extremely well, an evening service had been piloted and they were looking to make it permanent in July 2012;

- The Halton Employment Partnership was working with Mersey Gateway bidders for contractor and apprenticeship work;
- There was an Employment Day on 6<sup>th</sup> July at the Heath where people would be celebrating the success of local businesses and the attraction of inward investment in the Borough and how this translates to employment opportunities.;
- The number of people with no qualifications had reduced from 16.8% to 12.8% in quarter 4 of 2011/12;
- There was an increase in people achieving NVQ Level 4;
- In relation to children and young people 87% of students left school with 5 GCSE's graded A-C and 56% left school with grade A-C in English and Maths;
- The NEET figure had reduced by 3% and more work was being targeted in hot spot areas such as Windmill Hill;
- The Team around the Family approach for delivering services to local communities, was a re-shape in service delivery working with whole families to improve self esteem and confidence;
- In relation to Environment and Regeneration it was noted that Councillor John Gerrard was the new Chair for the SSP and there would be a review of the terms of reference which would be brought back to a future meeting;
- The bid for the Local Sustainable Transport bid was unsuccessful, however Officers were contesting the decision with the DfT and were waiting for a response;
- In relation to Safer Halton it was noted that 6 posts had been removed from the Community Safety Team saving £152,000 per annum;
- The key work streams were being redesigned with a focus on reducing re-offending and hate crime;
- ASB had been reduced by 12% overall in addition to youth ASB which was reduced by 20% and neighbourhood nuisance was reduced by 50%;
- The overall crime figures had reduced by 9% across the year which indicated the benefits of partnership working; and

- The Board was informed of the creation of Police and Crime Board to which would scrutinise the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

RESOLVED: That the verbal updates be noted.

## 7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mr Terry Parle updated the group on progress made for the Community Engagement Strategy.

It was noted that there had been some slippage with the timescales and all the outcomes had not been met. Only one nomination had been received for the task and finish group. Board Members were requested to nominate an appropriate person to join the group by forwarding their details to Shelah Semoff.

RESOLVED: That Partners forward the name of an appropriate nominee to join the Community Engagement Group, to Shelah Semoff.

## 8 INFORMATION ITEMS

*Note: The following items of business were for information only and were not discussed by the Board.*

- Support for 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Representation;
- Alcohol Strategy;
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Communications Update;
- Troubled Families;
- SCS Year End Performance Report;
- Children and Family Poverty Strategy – Update;
- Public Services (Social Value) Act;
- Enhanced Partnership Working – Update; and
- Topic Group Discussion.

RESOLVED: That all the information items be noted.

*Meeting ended at 11.35 a.m.*

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board  
**DATE:** 30<sup>th</sup> October 2012  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise  
**PORTFOLIO:** Resources and Physical Environment  
**SUBJECT:** Markets Update  
**WARD(S)** Appleton

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on changes to how the Borough's markets are being managed and to set out proposals for improving the markets offer.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- 1) Members note changes made to the management of the markets; and**
- 2) Members support the submission of the list of actions to the Executive Board.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 In January 2012 the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) Consultancy Services (NCS) completed a review of Widnes Market. NABMA is the recognised voice of local authority markets.

In February 2012 a report to the Council's Executive Board reaffirmed the Council's policy that the Widnes Markets (indoor and outdoor) and the outdoor market at Runcorn are regarded as key assets in Halton's town centres and that the vitality of the town centres and, in turn, the future sustainability of the markets are inextricably linked.

3.2 However, the Executive Board concluded that the NABMA recommendations contained in the review would need to be evaluated. Members requested that, were there to be any financial implications associated with the implementation of these recommendations, then a further report would need to be provided.

3.3 In April 2012 the Council aligned the management of the town centres and markets within a more clearly defined economic regeneration brief and brought town centre management, markets operations and town centre regeneration within one reporting arrangement. It was acknowledged that vibrant town centre including thriving markets, can contribute to the overall

offer that the Borough can make to potential inward investors or employers, and also offer a shopping environment that will attract shoppers from Halton and beyond.

3.4 The management of the markets fall within the remit of the Regeneration team (led by one of two regeneration managers). The Trader Liaison and Regeneration Officer is responsible for the management of the markets. Support is provided by two part time (fixed term to April 2013) town centre coordinators.

3.5 It must be noted, that in the last two years the number of staff working in the markets has been reduced by approximately 50%. Emphasis, therefore, has been placed on deploying our limited staff resources more effectively i.e. 'having the right people, doing the right job, at the right time'. There has also been a streamlining of cleaning, caretaking and security functions within the market.

3.6 Since April, existing systems and procedures within the markets are being improved and in some instances new procedures have been introduced to ensure that the markets are 'fit for the future'. New colleagues should be commended for their hard work in bringing in new changes in difficult circumstances.

A number of formal and informal meetings have been held with traders to advise them of the proposed changes to the management of the market.

3.7 New Market regulations and a written protocol have now been introduced. Although initially nervous of the proposed changes, it is fair to state that these measures have been welcomed by the vast majority of Traders because the documents clearly set out the respective roles and responsibilities of Traders and Markets staff.

3.8 Running alongside the introduction of new procedures, there has been a tightening up of issues such as 'encroachment' and displaying of goods

3.9 A 'new stall requests' panel has been introduced. The panel comprises, the Portfolio Holder, Operational Director, Trader Liaison and Regeneration Officer and a Market Trader. The panel ensures that decisions on new stalls are made in a strategic, fair and transparent way. As 'landlord' the final decision to accept or not accept a new tenant rests with the Council.

3.10 There have also been a number of marketing and promotions events in the market and examples include: -

- Easter give away of a day break via local coach company Hardings travel following Easter egg hunt for children;
- Diamond Jubilee June Bank Holiday: Pre bank holiday voucher give away by on street sandwich board person, over £800 in one pound vouchers

were redeemed in the market during the promotion;

- The Widnes Market Pound. A bank, set up in the market sold pounds that were only currency within the market. For every £10 bought by the customer, we gave them £1 free, so wherever the money was spent, they were able to spend and get 10% extra at no cost to them. Over £8,500 Widnes Market Pounds were purchased, most were spent in the market on larger objects such as carpets and fireplaces. However, some of the smaller traders also found them being used during the Love Your Market month;
- Widnes On Sea: four days of activity including a Victorian Helter Skelter, children's fairground rides, Face Painting, Donkey rides, traditional Punch and Judy plus a mini beach. Over 11,000 vouchers were handed in for the rides and activities over the 4 days. Vouchers were obtained by purchasing goods from the market traders. This took place on the last full week of August, preceding the Bank Holiday.

3.11 In all the above promotions have resulted in a reach on Facebook of over 130,000 people per event, with a peak of 200,000 for the Widnes on sea promotion.

Press coverage has increased by over 200% from where it was two years ago and the take up of stories has increased from sub regional to regional, national, periodical and trade press, with requests for further information being made from all sources.

3.12 Since April the focus has been on diversifying the offer at the market. This has been evidenced by the relocation of the Shopmobility service within the market hall. Similarly, colleagues within the Economy Enterprise and Property department who are responsible for business start-ups, have been working with markets staff to support potential entrepreneurs by offering space within the indoor and outdoor markets.

3.13 Occupation of stalls at the market are very good (91% full) and requests for new business are steady. Between July 2012 and September 2012 we have received 19 new stall requests on the market, of which 6 have been accepted. During this time traders have given notice on 3 stalls..

3.14 It is appreciated that there still a number of improvements to make to how the markets are managed. For example, the markets financial systems are being updated, Sunday trading is also being piloted in the 'run up' to Christmas and an energy audit is being undertaken. The team have talked about the possibility of allowing traders to advertise (at a small cost) in the entrance foyer. Staff are looking at an improved market stall layout plan with colour coding of the stalls in the market entrance with the advertising around this.

Overall, the market remains vibrant.

3.15 Consequently, new staff on the market have now had an opportunity to evaluate the NABMA report and its recommendations and would now wish to propose some actions and activities for Members' consideration aimed at improving the markets

3.16 Proposals are set out as follows: -

### **IMPROVEMENT WORKS**

#### **INDOOR MARKET**

- Refurbish the main entrance with improved lighting, decoration, signage
- Allow for closing off some end shutters on selected small stalls to put new seating
- Allow for possible upgrade of the ground floor public toilets
- Allow for upgrading 2 No stalls to act as an event space
- Introduce Footfall Counters
- Installation of WiFi

#### **OUTDOOR MARKET**

- Remove and replace 2 no ornamental lighting columns with standard columns
- Allow for new entrance upgrade with signage to match indoor market including reconfiguring the fencing as required
- Improved branding and marketing and signage and sheeting for stalls

It is proposed that these matters be considered through the usual budget process.

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no further policy implications associated with this report.

### **5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The costs of the proposals are contained within Appendix 1. The costs can be met from within existing budgets. This has been agreed by the Council's Accountancy team, using carry forward from last year's budget.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

N/A

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

The markets allows potential entrepreneurs and fledgling businesses the opportunity to set up in a supportive and low risk environment.

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

N/A

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

N/A

**6.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal**

As mentioned earlier in the report, the markets contribute to supporting the respective town centres. It also encourages local residents to ‘shop local’.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There is a risk that the Council does not see a return on its investment through increased footfall in the markets and wider town centres and an increase in traders paying rent. However, it is argued that a modest investment at this time will help to consolidate the role of the markets in town centre regeneration.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The proposal includes improving the access to the market. A disability audit has taken place and the proposals reflect recommendations arising from the audit.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
NABMA Review	Floor 5 Municipal Building	W Rourke
Research and Intelligence Widnes Market Questionnaire and Review July 2011	Floor 5 Municipal Building	W Rourke

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 30<sup>th</sup> October 2012

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Policy and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Technical Reform of Council Tax

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1. The Local Government Finance Bill, which is passing through Parliament, will introduce a number of technical changes to Council Tax billing. This report details the changes together with existing powers to reduce the discount on empty properties. As the Bill is still making its way through the Parliamentary process further changes to regulations are still possible. Members will be updated at the meeting.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board be recommended to approve the proposed changes to Council Tax discounts and billing as outlined in Section 4 below.**

## **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. The proposals outlined in the Local Government Finance Bill give billing authorities greater discretion over the reliefs from Council Tax available in respect of second homes and some empty properties.
- 3.2. The proposed changes are:
- i. Giving billing authorities the power to levy up to full Council Tax on properties designated as Second Homes
  - ii. Replacing exemption Classes A and C with discounts, the amount of which would be for the billing authorities to determine
  - iii. Allowing billing authorities to levy an 'empty homes premium' in respect of dwellings liable for Council Tax
  - iv. Allowing authorities to publish online the 'information to be supplied with demand notices'
- 3.3 In addition there are existing powers under the Local Government Finance Act (as amended) to reduce the discount on long term empty properties to 0%.

## **4. MAIN CHANGES**

### **4.1. Second Homes Discount**

#### **Current situation**

Councils currently have discretion to award Second Homes Discount to properties notified as second homes. This includes furnished properties between lets. This discount can be between 10% and 50%. Certain classes of second homes must be awarded 50% discount (where the owner is required to live in job related premises e.g. pub landlords, caretakers, members of armed forces in family accommodation)

Halton currently has 64 properties classed as a second home and awards 50% discount. It is not known how many of these would fall into the job related class.

#### **Government proposal**

To amend legislation to allow Councils to levy up to 100% of the Council Tax on second homes. This does not affect the current job related concession for second homes (they will still be entitled to 50% discount).

#### **Proposed Approach**

From 2013/2014 the discount applied will reduce to 0%. This would result in an additional £34,000 being billed.

#### **Potential issues**

Information would have to be collected to determine which properties fall under the protected categories outlined above.

### **4.2 Exempt Class A: Empty dwellings undergoing major repair**

#### **Current Situation**

Unoccupied properties which are undergoing major repair or structural alteration are 100% exempt from Council Tax under Class A exemption, for a maximum of 12 months, after which they are subject to the 'Long Term Empty' discount. In Halton this is set at 50%. There are currently 43 properties receiving Class A exemption.

#### **Government proposal**

Class A exemption is to be abolished and replaced with a discount which Councils can set between 0% and 100%. The period of the discount will be 12 months, after which they will be classed as 'Long Term Empty' and become subject to Halton's charge for long term empty properties.

### **Proposed Approach**

From 2013/2014, reduce the discount on Class A properties to 50% for 12 months, followed by a 0% discount thereafter. This would result in an additional £20,000 being billed.

### **Potential issues**

Reducing or removing the discount could deter potential developers from purchasing such properties thus rendering them long term empty.

Setting the discount level below 25% could result in owners creating 'bogus' occupants living alone in order to attract the 25% single occupier's discount. More visits by council officers would be required to verify such claims.

## 4.3 **Class C Exemption: Properties empty up to 6 months**

### **Current situation**

Dwellings which become empty and unfurnished are currently 100% exempt from Council Tax for up to 6 months under Class C exemption. Once the 6 months has expired, the property is subject to the 'Long Term Empty' discount. In Halton, this is set at 50%. There are currently 537 properties receiving Class C exemption.

### **Government proposal**

Class C exemption is to be abolished and replaced with a discount which Councils can set between 0% and 100%. The Government intends to allow councils complete discretion over the level of discount and the time period for which it may apply to an empty home. Properties which have been unoccupied for more than 6 months will continue to be classed as 'Long Term Empty'.

### **Proposed Approach**

From 2013/2014, 100% discount to be maintained for a period of 4 weeks followed by 25% discount for the remainder of the 6 month period. After the 6 month period a 0% discount to be applied. This would result in an additional £220,000 being billed.

### **Potential issues**

Setting the discount level below 25% could result in owners creating 'bogus' occupants living alone in order to attract the 25% single occupier's discount. More visits by council officers would be required to verify such claims.

There could be issues with collectability and avoidance.

#### 4.4 **Empty Homes Premium**

##### **Current situation**

Currently, homes which are classed as Long Term Empty' are homes which have been empty for 6 months or more. They currently receive a 50% discount for an indefinite period.

##### **Government proposal**

The proposal is to give billing authorities the option to levy an Empty Homes Premium on the Council Tax payable on dwellings which have been left empty for at least 2 years or more. The maximum premium which an authority will be able to apply will be 50%.

##### **Proposed Approach**

From 2013/2014, to apply an Empty Homes Premium of 50% to properties which have been unoccupied and unfurnished for two years or more. There are currently 235 properties in Halton that would be affected. This would result in an additional £128,000 being billed.

##### **Potential issues**

Introducing the premium in connection with the other changes would increase the Council Tax payable from 50% to 150% from April 2013 for properties that have been empty for 2 years or more.

#### 4.5 **Information to be supplied with Demand Notices**

##### **Current position**

Currently the information to be supplied with Demand Notices is produced in the annual Council Tax leaflet.

##### **Government proposal**

Proposal is for billing authorities to be able to discharge their duty to provide the information that must be currently supplied with demand notices by publishing it online subject to the right of any resident to require a hard copy.

##### **Proposed Approach**

That the production of the annual Council Tax leaflet ceases in its present format. The information to be supplied online with a note being placed with the Council Tax bill to this affect. A hard copy to be printed off and sent to any resident requesting one.

#### 4.6 **Long Term Empty Discount**

In addition to the changes outlined above the Council already has existing powers under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) to reduce the discount on empty properties to 0%.

##### **Current situation**

Currently, homes which are classed as 'Long Term Empty' are homes which have been empty for 6 months or more. They currently receive a 50% discount for an indefinite period. There are currently 657 properties classed as 'Long Term Empty'.

##### **Proposed Approach**

From 2013/2014, the discount to be reduced to 0%. This would result in an additional £300,000 being billed.

##### **Potential Issues**

Setting the discount level below 25% could result in owners creating 'bogus' occupants living alone in order to attract the 25% single occupier's discount. More visits by council officers would be required to verify such claims.

There could be issues with collectability and avoidance

#### **5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1. The proposals outlined above relate to the billing of properties. It is unclear at this stage how much of the newly billed amount will be collected
- 5.2. There is a resource issue with regard to the billing and collection of the new amounts. An issue which is exacerbated by the abolition of Council Tax Benefit and the additional billing and recovery that the subsequent new local Council Tax Reduction Scheme will require, which is to be introduced at the same time in April 2013.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 Apart from raising additional revenue the proposed changes should give incentives to owners of properties in the Borough to bring properties back into use as soon as possible.

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 The timescale for introduction is achievable and the IT software can already handle the changes.

7.2 The changes are being introduced at the same time as the abolition of Council Tax Benefit and the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. This will create a resource issue within the Revenues and Benefits and Customer Services Division, therefore consideration will be given to how this additional workload can be accommodated within the Division's structure.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The proposed billing process has the potential to affect any Council Tax payer in the Borough. An Equality Impact Assessment will need to take place once the Scheme is agreed.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Local Government Finance Bill	Revenues & Benefits & Customer Services Division Kingsway House Widnes	Peter McCann

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 30<sup>th</sup> October 2012

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director – Finance

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Localisation of Council Tax Support

**WARD(S):** Boroughwide

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To update the Board on the results of the public consultation on the 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme'.
2. **RECOMMENDATION: That following the consultation process the 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme', as previously outlined, be recommended to Executive Board for adoption by the Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.**

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. As part of the 2010 Spending Review the Government announced an intention to localise support for Council Tax from 2013-14 and to reduce expenditure on this benefit by 10%. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 provides for the abolition of Council Tax Benefit. Provisions for the localisation of Council Tax support are included in the Local Government Finance Bill which is currently before Parliament. It is expected that a one-off transition to the new localised schemes of support will take place from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.
- 3.2. Although the proposals are for each Local Authority, either on its own or in partnership with other authorities, to draw up its own scheme there are certain areas which the Government is not leaving to local discretion.
- 3.3. The Government has stated that there will be a 10% overall reduction in the amount of expenditure on this scheme. The implications of this are that there will be approximately £1.4m less paid out in help towards Council Tax in Halton.
- 3.4. The Government has made clear its intention that no pensioner will be worse off when Council Tax Benefit is abolished. This is to avoid low-income pensioners experiencing any increase in their Council Tax liability as a result of the reform, and will also ensure that future eligible pensioners will have the same support as existing eligible pensioners.

- 3.5. At present, Halton has a Council Tax Benefit caseload of some 15,400. Of these 6,400 are pensioner households. This means that for non pensioner households the overall reduction will be closer to 17%.
- 3.6. There may also be other groups who could struggle to pay Council Tax who the Government may wish to ensure that local authorities offer support. Decisions to extend protection to other groups will need to be balanced by the need for local authorities to manage the financial implications of offering support for Council Tax, and the potential impacts on Council budgets and other Council Tax payers.
- 3.7. At present these groups are not defined, but the implication is that each local authority may choose to define groups of people most in need who will warrant protection as well. The consequence of widening any protection is that there will be even less help available to the remaining caseload.
- 3.8. The new scheme needs to be in place by April 2013. In reality, due to the setting of Council Tax and billing process, a new scheme would need to be in place by October 2012. If a local scheme is not agreed by the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 then a default scheme will be imposed by the Government. The default scheme is to all intents and purposes the existing scheme and would leave the Authority with a £1.4m shortfall.

#### 4. Public Consultation

- 4.1 Prior to the adoption of any scheme a consultation process with major preceptors and the public had to be undertaken. The public consultation ended on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012. The 39 responses received to the consultation are attached in Appendix 1. A summary of the responses is given in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

Total Responses to consultation	39
Received from Residents of Halton	35
Received from carer of a Halton resident	1
Received from representatives of RSL's	3

- 4.2 There has been a relatively limited response to the consultation process. However, every attempt was made to engage with all residents in the Borough, both benefit claimants and non-benefit claimants as the financing of the scheme affects all council tax payers in the Borough.
- 4.3 Statistically, from the responses that were received, the majority were in favour of the scheme. However, even from those in favour, responses did suggest that it was not ideal but that the Council had little alternative. In the main none of the respondents were able to suggest a workable alternative and there is nothing in the responses received that would necessitate a change to the scheme that was proposed.

- 4.5 The major precepting bodies were also consulted regarding the proposed scheme and have both responded. Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service has no comments regarding Halton's scheme. Cheshire Police Authority stated that they were not in a position to respond formally to the four Cheshire Councils' consultations on the council tax reduction schemes. This is for two reasons. Firstly, as the Authority will be abolished on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012 and will not be setting next year's budget nor council tax, Members felt the Authority did not have the right to comment on the schemes. Secondly they recognised it was a sensitive political matter on which they were unlikely to reach unanimous agreement in framing a response.

## **5.0 PROPOSAL**

- 5.1 The existing regulations relating to Council Tax Benefit are used as the basis of the Local Support Scheme for Halton. This will ensure that existing support for claimants with disabilities, claimants with children and claimants who are working are maintained.
- 5.2 At the end of the existing calculation an appropriate percentage reduction is made from every non pensioner award of benefit to cover the shortfall in the government grant allocation for Halton. This deduction will be in the region of 21.55%. This would ensure that the bulk of the shortfall would be contained within the overall support awarded to claimants. This percentage is to be reviewed later in the year when the grant allocation is known. Further reviews to take place on an annual basis.

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

- 6.1 As the Council administers over £11m of Council Tax Benefit, changes to this scheme will have major implications both for recipients of any new scheme, as well as for Council Tax payers generally. It has the potential to affect all Council priorities.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 In view of the proposed new funding arrangements the Council carries the risk that the cost of any scheme which exceeds the Government's grant allocation will need to be borne in full by the Council.
- 7.2 The introduction of the new scheme will have implications with regard to the IT system currently used for paying Council Tax Benefit and the Department of Works and Pensions are in discussions with the major software suppliers. At the present moment Northgate, the Councils supplier of the Revenues and Benefits system, are anticipating to make amendments to the system to accommodate the proposed change. This will not be deliverable until the autumn and hence cannot be guaranteed until that date. The risk will be reduced by working closely over the coming months with Northgate Information Solutions, who supply the existing Revenues and Benefits system, to make best endeavours that the adaptations for Halton are deliverable on time.

7.3 Due to the reduction in overall payments some Council Tax payers who have previously had their Council Tax met in full by benefit may, under any local scheme, be billed for the first time. This will have a major impact upon the recovery of Council Tax, with implications for recovery procedures, staffing levels and the cost of recovery, in addition to confusion for many Council Tax payers in the Borough. Dependent upon the local scheme there may also be the challenge of collecting relatively small amounts of Council Tax from these people with all the associated problems which were highlighted under the Poll Tax.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Any local scheme would need to ensure that no particular groups of individuals were adversely affected by the change and take into account that pensioners are to be protected. An Equality Impact Assessment will need to take place once the Scheme is agreed.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Localising Support for Council Tax in England - DCLG Consultation Document	Revenues & Benefits & Customer Services Division Kingsway House Widnes	Peter McCann



## APPENDIX 1

### Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation responses

Total Responses	39	Of those who are residents of Halton:	
Received from residents of Halton	35	Receive Council Tax Benefit	13
Received from carer of a Halton resident	1	Are of working age	23
Received from representatives of RSLs	3	Are of pension age	9
		No age specified	4

### Responses from Housing Associations

Comments about propose scheme	Alternative suggestions
<p>HALTON HOUSING TRUST</p> <p>Halton Housing Trust understands the difficult situation faced by the council in the current challenging financial conditions as it attempts to develop a fair and equitable local support scheme with the shortfall in income and within the parameters for the scheme set by central government. Having considered the proposals the Trust is concerned about how these may impact on the most financially vulnerable residents within the borough many of which will be Trust customers. The Trust believes that the flat rate proposals will cause financial hardship on resident who are already least able to make a contribution and who may already be adversely affected by other aspects of welfare reform especially the size criteria (bedroom tax), benefit cap and impact of the change to Universal Credit. The proposed scheme would potentially impact most on long term full council tax benefit</p>	<p>As with any organisation Halton Borough Council have the alternative options of reducing their costs or increasing their income to meet the expected £1.4 million shortfall from the cut in funding from Central Government. As Halton BC have undertaken cost cutting measures to reduce its costs over the last 2 years there would be concern as to where further cuts could be made without having a direct impact on services, leading to a negative impact on the local economy as well as potentially hitting the most vulnerable in the borough many of which are Halton Housing Trust Customers. In 2113/14 with the potential/likely ending of the Council Tax Freeze Grant from central government the council may consider an across the board increase in Council Tax charges to ensure that those with higher income make additional contribution. If possible this may be combined with increased differential in charges between the Council Tax bands to reflect income</p>

claimants who have historically not made council tax payments. Added to this there may be additional difficulties in the process of paying the proposed charge as many may not have bank accounts with the option to pay via direct debit. This will leave them having to pay using other methods which will add further inconvenience and require additional budgetary skills. There is also concern over the collection and recovery procedures especially the use of liability orders /bailiffs with their associated fees and the stressful impact on the potentially vulnerable. A resident may have an initial small amount of council tax arrears however the costs of collection which will be recharged to the customer may be considered excessive and massively increase the balance owed far outweighing the original debt.

differentials .This may be fairer as it would mean that those with additional income and potentially the ability to pay make their contribution. Additional options would be to lobby central government for changes to the current regulations for example the removal or additional means testing of the single person discount. The council may also consider more direct charging for services that are not considered essential or higher charges on those services where there is a current charge The council may want to consider alternative changes to the council tax benefit scheme which could allow for a potentially more progressive local scheme rather than a flat rate charge to all these could include:

- Lowering the maximum level of savings below which a claimant can still apply, to focus support on those most in need.
- Increase in levels of non-dependant deductions from Council Tax especially for those on a higher income
- Adjust any tapers so that there are higher charges for those with additional income

To provide additional support to the most vulnerable claimants there could be consideration of the development of a discretionary Council Tax Benefit system (similar to DHP) for those most in need to apply for additional help. A further assistance would be for the council to lobby to be allowed to deduct the charges direct from benefits/UC without a liability order (or costs waived) for these on lowest income levels. There is also concern that the current collection and follow up action to chase missing payments will not work well with the change to UC. With monthly payments in arrears claimants are not going to be able to catch up before further charges may be added. The reduction in opening hours of the contact centre makes it more difficult to contact the council to discuss or arrange payments so there would be additional assistance with improved online query service so that help is easier to access. (Although there is concern about the access of the most vulnerable to electronic communication) Residents on income based benefits will be the most affected by this change and to minimise any potential financial hardship it would assist if there was an immediate DSSD

	request made once liability issued to avoid additional charges.
<p>REPRESENTATIVE OF HALTON HOUSING TRUST</p> <p>Long term benefit claimants entitled to full council tax benefit historically will not be used to having to pay towards their liability. They may not have bank accounts set up having always used Post Office accounts for benefit payments in order to pay via direct debit. The additional expenditure may cause severe hardship for many existing benefit claimants. If claimants do not or cannot pay their liability will this result in more liability orders being applied for which would increase the overall amount the claimant is already struggling to pay. Will the same collection and recovery process apply for claimants having to pay the % payment if they default ? Will bailiff action be used for collection of what will amount to relatively low balances ? The existing collection and recovery rate with the use of liability orders and bailiffs could be considered excessive when the amounts needing collection may be relatively low. Will an option for direct deductions from benefit be considered to avoid customers defaulting and them incurring liability order and bailiff charges and fees ?</p>	None
<p>REPRESENTATIVE OF LIVERPOOL HOUSING TRUST</p> <p>working age tenants in receipt of benefits and under-occupying their property will also have to pay the "bedroom tax" in many cases this will cause financial hardship. In particular, single people receiving JSA will find these extra charges unaffordable and will fall into arrears with their rent and/or Council Tax - based on our contact with tenants.</p>	Could the Council look at reducing any of the exemptions it provides e.g. empty homes/homes undergoing major repairs or reducing the discount that is subsequently given to the property owner to provide a greater income (Council Tax) to the Council which in turn could reduce the amount of Council Tax that tenants etc would have to pay (who currently get CTB)

Responses from Halton Residents

No.	Comments about proposed scheme	Alternative suggestions
1	I think it is a very good idea and agree with it 100%. I work full time, pay full rent and council tax and would love a luxury of a spare room, whilst people on benefits sit at home all day not wanting to work and rely on the working class and government to pay for them and I do not agree with people having properties they don't need i.e - a couple living in a 3/4 bedroom house when there is clearly no need for them to be, so yes I vote make them pay extra for their spare rooms or move them to smaller properties and let hard working people who pay full rent have a nicer home.	
2	Not great but under the circumstances with funding being cut by central government I don't think there is any alternative.	No
3	The reduction scheme will be a good idea on a whole but won't it just increase the council tax debt not increase the income for Halton.	
4	Asking current recipients of Council Tax Benefit to pay towards their Council Tax bill appears to be the fairest way of funding the new scheme. It is correct that residents of state pension age should be protected from any reductions in support. I certainly would not like to see the funding shortfall covered by further cuts in Halton Council services, particularly at a time when the Council's resources are being decimated by the Government. Nor would I think it fair to ask Council Tax payers to fund the shortfall. As Council Tax bills already help to fund support for those in receipt of Council Tax Benefit, Council Tax payers would effectively be paying twice. Local authorities have been given an extremely difficult balancing act by the Government and I think Halton's proposed scheme is a fair solution.	
5	I think that the scheme makes sense and it may discourage people from thinking they have a 'free-ride'	
6	I think this is a very good idea	
7	It's a great idea, the government are at last trying to do something about people who rely on handouts instead of working for a living. Yes, this may also affect people with disabilities etc and something should be done about this, but not most of the other groups. I am disgusted that our Council are trying to find ways around what will be a good policy.	I don't feel that an alternative is needed apart from anyone with severe disabilities ( not just someone who is signing on )
8	I think a contribution for all is fair, providing that you can means test it fairly and that you can actually get those on the lowest incomes to pay it at all.	No, I think a percentage reduction from all is the only fair way to do it.

9	It is the fairest scheme you could have come up with however I do think that pensioners should be included.	
10	I think that people should contribute to their council tax regardless of circumstance... on the proviso that people who currently pay the full amount with no benefit aren't penalised and their bills increased to cover those who are currently on benefits. It encourages those people to take responsibility for their income, despite where that may be from, like all working people have to do anyway.	
11	I strongly believe that if everyone paid some Council Tax then the need to penalise the needy would almost certainly be avoided. Why on earth EVERYONE cannot pay some Council tax is beyond me. The free renters, free council tax - got it bloody good	The Council could simple charge everyone some Council Tax!! Why should people who receive lots of benefits not be in a position to pay some Council tax????? They benefit from the services like everyone else and should therefore contribute to them.
12	It is right that the council or council tax-payers cannot be expected to meet the cost between government money and help for those on benefits. Having said the it will be difficult for low income claimants to meet these additional costs of council tax. This is clearly a further cut by government to reduce benefit payments but make local councils responsible for it.	No but should offer help through other council services to get people into work and off benefits
13	I should imagine that very few council taxpayers fully understand the level of support the council makes to benefit claimants. In conversation with various people it is obvious that most people are under the impression that the government fully implement the scheme and it is merely administered by the council. I think the level of support is far too high and as a council taxpayer I feel it is not my responsibility to support claimants. I pay sufficient tax for this. I think the council should stop ring fencing this area and make every effort to reduce its support for the scheme.	It should look to reduce its contribution to the scheme over a 5 year period. It should also seek to engage the Halton residents in fully explaining how the scheme works, what it costs in total and what it costs each council taxpayer.
14	I think it is fair that all residents of Halton should contribute to council tax after all they are receiving the same services as those who pay full council tax. Maybe not relying on the benefits culture could encourage them to stop having children that the state has to finance and earn their living by paid employment.	no

15	<p>Money has to be found to pay for amenities, money has to be found to pay council workers wages, money has to be paid to pay councillors. It has to be found from somewhere!!! If not, we have no amenities, no council workers and no councillors. It is our town and we must pay, even though I think Runcorn has been neglected in the "Halton" partnership. It is about time the government stopped subsidising all the crazy councils in the UK.</p>	<p>A fair system needs to be put into place. Everyone needs to pay something towards our amenities. Doctors need to start thinking about what they are doing when they certify people sick, who are malingerers. Genuinely sick or needy people should receive a reduction. Tighten up on the benefit cheats, we all know plenty who seem to think it is good to get away with it.</p>
16	<p>I believe that the council has very little choice but to impose an across the board reduction in the level of Council tax Benefit paid to claimants under pensionable age. I also believe that this reduction in central Government Grant Aid must not be used as an excuse to further cut back on the level of services offered to Halton residents. The level of reduction must be met by increased collection from people in receipt of CTB.</p>	<p>Yes. Increase CT to the maximum level allowed before it adversely effects Central Govt grant aid and also before you are required to call a referendum</p>
17	<p>It sounds ok but the government says the amount you are awarded is just enough to live on and now you are talking about taking 20% ?+ off them as well which they will pay and will either cut down on food or heating so it will put other costs NHS etc up. We have cut down as much as possible and something has to give bills etc. There are NO jobs in this area unless you come from another country as immigrants are given preference over British people.</p>	<p>Reduce Councillors payments. When companies come to Halton make them employ local people not foreigners who have moved in the area. Hit drug addicts, alcoholics who are abusing the system. Build smaller properties people can down grade to. Check rateable value is not over priced for areas. Are the services we pay for overpriced? Charge everyone a £1 per week and everyone pays.</p>

18	It seems about as fair as it could be in the circumstances. However, being a pensioner it will not impact on me.	The Council could begin by publishing the existing collection and use of Council Tax in a more transparent way. That would give us the data on which to base comments. A detailed breakdown of the collection and spending of Council Tax should be available online for the past 5 years, updated dynamically every week.
19	The new scheme makes Council Tax self-contained and avoids the cross-subsidy created by central government contributing to Council Tax through the existing benefit arrangements. Local authorities raise and spend Council Tax, so logically they should also operate and finance any benefit or reduction scheme, especially if it is means-tested, age-related or tested in any other way.	Councils are political organisations run on party lines. Any scheme must avoid the opportunity for councils, especially one-party or nearly one-party councils, to design council tax reduction schemes to preferentially benefit areas of their community most likely to vote for the party currently in power in the local government. Otherwise any benefit or reduction becomes equivalent to buying votes.

20	Take all circumstances into account, as everybody's outgoings and incomes are different. Make rules open and that everyone knows them so there is less misunderstandings.	Realize that people who have been made disabled not of any fault of their own who only get the basic from incapacity as they can't work, but owned their own home before becoming disabled and there is only one working person in the home. You should take in account that they still have a mortgage to pay because at the moment you just add up all coming money and nothing that has to be paid out i.e., mortgage's, so homes are not getting repossessed don't end up on the street with your family.
21	That the scheme should go ahead with payments being taken from those with the group identified. Those paying full Council Tax should not see increases to avoid this group paying.	NO.
22	The government have left local authorities with no choice but to find savings and unfortunately people will have to suffer in their pockets to achieve the savings. It would seem unfair to increase council tax for all the residents of Halton to find the shortfall and seems fair to ask the people who already have help paying there council tax to contribute towards the savings.	
23	The new scheme looks fair because it will affect everyone and doesn't single anyone out and you claim the same way as now, so it won't confuse people when it comes to claiming. But some people are going to be affected by a number of changes which are happening in April 2013 and they will struggle to pay the new shortfalls, whether they have to pay council tax or the new room tax which they haven't had to pay before.	No it's for the council to decide the best possible way to save money without causing hardship to the Halton people who don't have jobs or on low incomes

24	Unfortunately I think that the scheme is wrong! Pensioners should not benefit from living alone in a 3 bed/4 bedroom property! They have chosen to live there and not move since their children have grown up and left the property and (I know someone whom this should affect) has not worked a day in their life, full CTB/HB free prescriptions, dental you name it and now that they have turned of age to receive their state pension (that they have not paid into the system for!)and now disregarded from the NEW CTB. Very wrong!	There should be no concessions, it should be blanket reform. Everyone is to be effected. if they choose to live in a property with more rooms than they need
25	The poor being kicked in the teeth again!! This on top of my housing benefit being cut next January is seriously stressing me out!! what am I going to do when you come knocking on my door to evict me because I'm in debt up to my eyeballs and have no way of paying you the money you've taken away from me?? ...or I could just STARVE myself and use my food money to make up the difference I suppose!!!	Divert money from non-essential things to help us out. Minor road repairs, minor house repairs, things like that!! Halton is going to be overrun with homeless and destitute people soon!!!
26	This is just a tax on the poorest and more vulnerable people in society.	If it isn't broke don't change it, what is wrong with the current method.
27	I think the Government has imposed an unfair cut on the Council. It not a cut of 10% because people of pensionable age are not included in the cut. The only thing the Council can do is spread the cut amongst the rest of the people who claim Council Tax Benefit, therefore the actual cut will be near 22%!	There is no alternative way as there is no change to anybody claiming who is of a pensionable age!
28	It is totally unfair that people on the lowest end of the benefit income scale are going to have to pay and the council won't get any money in off those on loads of benefits they will just plead poverty as usual.	
29	As per usual, people who pay taxes, etc are constantly hi for more and more, in this currently climate where incomes are frozen or reducing and everything is going up every week, what do the government want, everyone to be living in tents.	Reduce the number of council vehicles especially the ones you see in people drive ways over weekends and when they are on holiday. These vehicles could be used by other Halton employees instead of redundant during these periods.

30	It's ridiculous	Reduce costs and become more efficient - pay councillors and exec officers a lot less
31	I believe the whole system is flawed as not every case is identical. Whilst I agree that some pensioners should be protected, so should the disabled and carers. You will find that some pensioners are lot healthier and wealthier than some disabled residents and yet the disabled will be penalised with what amounts to a tax on sickness	Ensure that each individual claim is assessed and means tested fairly
32	I think it's an attack on the working classes, which along with the "bedroom tax" will totally impoverish vast swathes of ordinary people, unemployed, disabled or the working poor. The blame lies at the governments door but as local councils have to implement the policy they will receive the criticism, and will probably experience higher levels of arrears based on the fact that if people really don't have the money they can't pay it! I predict a huge rise in people going to prison for non-payment of council tax and I may be one of them!!	
33	I think that it will be very difficult for anyone on any kind of benefit to be able to pay towards their council tax given that many benefits are and have been cut. It is also fair to say that many residents have never paid towards council tax as they have always been on benefit and this will hit them really hard. Some vulnerable people will not understand why they now have to pay. I understand that something must be done and that some people would like to or continue to pay a small amount pay but the percentage is too high.	Perhaps use recycling points towards a reduction, that way more people may recycle.
34	I think this will cause extreme hardship, especially among low paid workers and their families. At a time of recession, I feel sure that there are other areas where these savings could be made.	HBC should look at reducing the number of admin staff employed as this is a very inefficient way of working. Also there are too many managers in too many departments earning way above their capability levels.
35	I really do not think there should be any change to the current situation. However, it infuriates me that certain members of the public are allowed to "get away" with not paying Council Tax and are allowed to run up unpaid Taxes.	Why not leave things as they are.
36	DONT AGREE WITH GOVERNMENT CUTS TO FUNDING TO THE COUNCIL FOR COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT	GOVERNMENT SHOULD INCREASE FUNDING

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 30th October 2012

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Policy & Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Business Planning 2013-16

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To offer a timely opportunity for Members to contribute to the development of Directorate Business Plans for the coming financial year.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board indicates priority areas for service development and improvement over the next 3 years.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Each Directorate of the Council is required to develop a medium-term business plan, in parallel with the budget, that is subject to annual review and refresh. The process of developing such plans for the period 2013-2016 is just beginning.

3.2 At this stage members are invited to identify a small number of priorities for development or improvement (possibly 3-5) that they would like to see reflected within those plans. Strategic Directors will then develop draft plans which will be available for consideration by Policy and Performance Boards early in the New Year.

3.3 Whilst providing a Directorate context each of the Directorate Business Plans will contain appendices identifying specific Departmental activities and performance measures and targets that would provide a focus for the on-going monitoring of performance throughout the year. Directorate Business Plans will be subject to annual review and refresh in order that they remain fit for purpose taking account of any future change in circumstances, including any future funding announcements that may emerge.

3.4 It is important that Members have the opportunity to provide input at this developmental stage of the planning process, particularly given the anticipated funding announcements, to ensure that limited resources may be aligned to local priorities.

- 3.5 It should be noted that plans can only be finalised once budget decisions have been confirmed in March and that some target information may need to be reviewed as a result of final outturn data becoming available post March 2013.
- 3.6 To assist the Board, the Strategic Director Policy and Resources will give a short presentation on the issues and challenges facing the areas that fall within the Board's remit over the period of the next plan and will circulate the outline of that presentation in advance of the meeting.
- 3.7 The timeframe for plan preparation, development and endorsement is as follows:

	Information / Purpose	Timeframe / Agenda on Deposit
<b>PPB</b>	Discussion with relevant Operational / Strategic Directors concerning emerging issues, proposed priorities etc.	<b>October/ November 2012 PPB round</b>
<b>Portfolio Holders</b>	Strategic Directors to discuss with Portfolio Holders emerging issues, proposed priorities etc.	<b>October/ November 2012</b>
<b>Directorate SMT's</b>	To receive and endorse advanced drafts of Directorate Plans	<b>SMT dates to be agreed with all Strategic Directors w/c 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec. 2012</b>
<b>Corporate Management Team</b>	To receive and comment upon / endorse advanced drafts of Directorate Plans	<b>11<sup>th</sup>December 2012</b>
<b>Portfolio Holders</b>	Strategic Directors to discuss with Portfolio Holders advanced draft plans, including relevant departmental service objectives/ milestones and performance indicators.	<b>Late December 2012/ January 2013</b>
<b>PPB's</b>	Advanced draft plans including details of relevant departmental service objectives/milestones and performance indicators	<b>January 2013 PPB Cycle</b>
<b>Executive Board</b>	To receive advanced drafts of Directorate Plans	<b>7<sup>th</sup> February 2013</b>
<b>Full Council</b>	To receive advanced drafts of Directorate Plans	<b>6<sup>th</sup> March 2012</b>

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Business Plans form a key part of the Council's policy framework. Plans also need to reflect known and anticipated legislative changes.
- 4.2 Elected member engagement would be consistent with the new "Best value guidance", announced in September 2011, to consult with the representatives of a wide range of local persons.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Directorate Plans will identify resource implications.
- 5.2 Arrangements for the provision of Quarterly Monitoring Reports to Members would continue with each Department being required to produce a report. Key Objectives/ milestones and performance indicators would then be aligned by priority, (in accordance with the new corporate performance framework introduced from 2012/13); and reported in line with the remit of each respective Policy and Performance Board. Departmental Reports would continue to be available to members via the intranet, containing all details stated within the Appendices of the Directorate Business plans.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 The business planning process is the means by which we ensure that the six corporate priorities are built into our business plans and priorities, and thence cascaded down into team plans and individual action plans.

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 The development of a Directorate Plan will allow the authority to both align its activities to the delivery of organisational and partnership priorities and to provide information to stakeholders as to the work of the Directorate over the coming year.
- 7.2 Risk Assessment will continue to form an integral element of Directorate Plan development. This report also mitigates the risk of Members not being involved in setting service delivery objectives.

#### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 Those 'high' priority actions in regards to equality and diversity are included as an Appendix within relevant Directorate Action Plans will be routinely monitored through Departmental Performance Monitoring Reports.

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

There are no relevant background documents to this report.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 30<sup>th</sup> October 2012

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Policy and Resources

**SUBJECT:** Staff Accident / Violent Incident Statistics

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To report on corporate accident statistics and identifying associated trends for the period 1st April 2012 to 1st September 2012.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report is noted and, if deemed necessary, PPB makes recommendations to the Executive Board.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The report on accidents and violent incidents for the period 1 April 2012 to 1 September 2012 is appended to this report.

3.2 The report highlights that there has been a reduction in 'over 7 day' accidents, although this could be attributed to the change to reporting from 'over 3 day' accidents.

3.3 It also highlights an increase in both significant accidents and violent incidents. Incident trends have been identified and included as actions in the recommendation contained in that report.

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The provision of a safe working environment and reduction in accidents is important in order to provide efficient and effective delivery of services (the sixth priority in the Corporate Plan).

### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Accidents which lead to lost time have financial implications for the authority (although these are always secondary to our concern for the well being of staff and customers).

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

6.1 Nil.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no particular risks attached to this report. Occupational and workplace risk assessments continue to be used to reduce the likelihood of accidents.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no direct implications for equality and diversity.

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

9.1 There are no relevant background documents.



**CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT  
CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND  
PERFORMANCE BOARD  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012**

## Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
2. UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS .....	4
3. GENERAL UPDATE.....	5
4. CORPORATE ACCIDENT STATISTICS .....	6
5. VIOLENT INCIDENTS.....	8
6. SCHOOL ACCIDENTS .....	9

## INTRODUCTION

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act clearly places responsibility on those who create the risk to manage it. The new HSE Strategy, 'Being Part of the Solution' highlights that members of the board have both collective and individual responsibility for health and safety. As such, the need is for board-level members to champion health and safety and be held accountable for its delivery.

Part of this includes identifying areas for improvement in health and safety management with the intention of improving staff morale, reducing in work-related sickness absence and lowering insurance premiums. In particular having robust health and safety procedures in place provides safeguards against legal action being taken against the Authority.

In order to demonstrate how Halton Borough Council as an employer is delivering the HSE Strategy, this report is to provide Management Team with:

- Lead indicators that highlight proactive action taken and any outcomes;
- Lagging indicators that highlight all reactive action taken. These include any identified accident / incident trends and supporting information on accidents resulting in,
  - major<sup>1</sup> injuries.”
  - employees being unable to carry out their normal duties for more than 7 days following the day of the accident (over 7-day injuries<sup>2</sup>)
  - significant<sup>3</sup> accidents.
  - “near miss” incidents
  - violent incidents

Finally by responding positively to identified trends, the Authority can demonstrate compliance with the recommendations of the Health and Safety Executive's guidance HS(G)65 "Successful Health and Safety Management".

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, (RIDDOR) 1995

<sup>2</sup> As per footnote number 1. See 2.4.2 below

<sup>3</sup> Injuries other than those listed in no's 1 and 2 above, that require more than basic first aid, incur time lost or arise from a failure in health and safety management

## 1. UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS:

No.	Recommendations	I/C	Update
1	To deliver the actions identified for Waste & Environmental Improvement Services as a result of the HSE inspection. This will include the collection of bin bag collections and accident trends around sharp injuries	Operational Director, Community and Environment	Actions updated and sent to HSE who will carry out a further inspection on 19 <sup>th</sup> & 20 <sup>th</sup> September
2	To ensure that all relevant managers have received training in the management of stress within the last 3 years in order that they are able to carry out Stress Risk Assessments	Strategic Directors	Since April, 19 managers have been trained and further courses are planned
3	To ensure that noise and vibration risk assessments are carried out and, if required, review occupational risk assessments in line with results	Strategic Directors	Email sent to relevant OD's & DM's and Core Brief publicised
4	To review the current Drugs and Alcohol Policy to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007	Personnel / Health and Safety Team	'On going'
5	In light of the use of the Lone Working monitoring system, managers to review the Lone Working risk assessments and systems to ensure that they are suitable and sufficient	All	See update in 2.2 Audit of Child Care Services conducted with actions highlighted around Lone Working. Unsuccessful trial of 'i phone' – not compatible with system
6	Reablement Service to review arrangements and risk assessments for manual handling of service users	Divisional Manager Reablement Service	There have been 6 incidents since April. All staff are MH trained and risk assessments carried out and reviewed in accordance with service user needs. Health and Safety team working with service to develop corporate MH People policy including standard risk assessments.
7	Brief new Public Health team on health and safety management processes and arrangements	Health and Safety Team	'On going'
8	To ensure that there are programmes and resources for the maintenance and servicing of equipment	All	'On going'
9	<b><u>New Recommendation:</u></b> Within the Efficiency Review process where any changes are likely to create material risks to the health and safety of staff or others affected by our actions to ensure that in making the decisions there are auditable records to demonstrate that account has taken to mitigate against the health and safety risks	Management Team	Approved by Management Team on Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2012

## 2. GENERAL UPDATE

### 2.1 Health and Safety Systems

1. There has been an increase of new risk assessments from 363 risk assessments in April to 438, broken down as follows,

	Policy & Resources	Children and Enterprise	Communities
April	193	68	102
Sept	218	103	117
	(+25)	(+35)	(+15)

2. Stress Risk Assessment System based on the Intranet - to go on 'live' on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and email sent to managers.

### 2.2 Update on use of Lone Working Monitoring System 01.04.2012 to 01.09.2012:

1. At the moment there are 396 Lone Workers Registered,
  - Communities out of 210 registered, 24 used the system (last year 17);
  - Policy and Resources out of 52 registered, 21 used the system (last year 22); and
  - Children and Enterprise out of 134 registered, 13 used the system (last year 8)

This means that 58 from 396 staff are regularly using the system, which represents 12% of those registered.

2. Meeting has taken place within Children & Families Operational Services where managers have reinforced the need to use the lone working monitoring system and have identified procedures to make the system more effective, i.e. improving signals by changing SIM cards (Network providers) for staff working in Runcorn and Widnes.

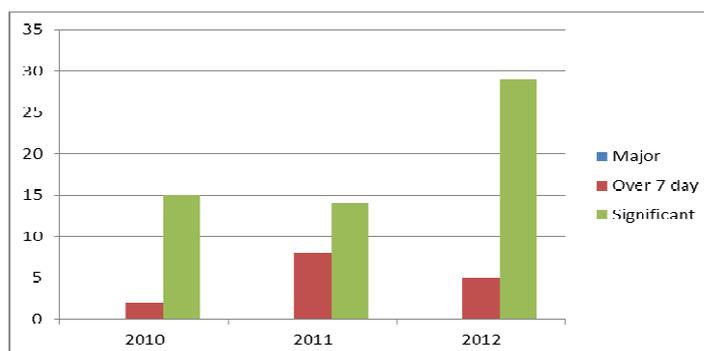
### 2.3 Further Information:

1. From the 8<sup>th</sup> October the HSE will be implementing a charging fee, Fees for Intervention, in the event of an inspector having to provide written advice on a "material breach" of safety law or serves an enforcement notice;
2. As a result of the Legionella incidents in Edinburgh and Stoke, Core Brief and In Touch articles have been publicised highlighting safe procedures;
3. To date there have been three companies prosecuted for Corporate Manslaughter. The most recent was Lion Steel Equipment LTD from Manchester who were prosecuted when an employee fell through a fragile roof panel. They received the largest fine yet of £480,000 (£600,000 discounted by 20% for a guilty plea) plus £84,000 prosecution costs. It has been recorded in the media that this potentially will have a severe impact on the Company and its 142 employees; and
4. In response to one of the recommendations from the HSE report to Waste & Environmental Improvement Services, a Health and Safety Contracts policy has been prepared.

### 3. CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT STATISTICS 1<sup>st</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012

#### 3.1 Accident Statistics by Directorate:

Directorate	Major	+ 7-Day	Significant
Policy and Resources	0	0	7
Children and Enterprise	0	0	7
Communities	0	5	15
<b>TOTAL YTD 2012</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>TOTAL YTD 2011</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>14</b>
<b>TOTAL YTD 2010</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>15</b>



#### Further Information

3.1.1 There has been a decrease in the number of accidents reported to the HSE involving injuries. This may be due to the change this year from 'over 3 day' to 'over 7 day' injuries;

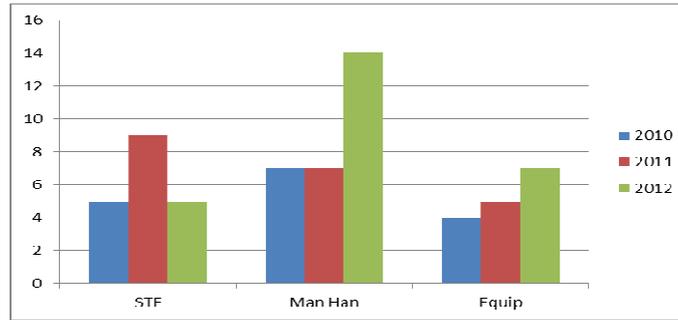
3.1.2 Total days lost for 'over 7 day' injuries is 173; and

3.1.3 A comparison of the categories of accidents is as follows,

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	
STF	5	9	5	(-4)
Man Han	7	7	14	(+7)
Equipment	4	5	7	(+2)
See below chart				

<sup>4</sup> Over 3 day

<sup>5</sup> Over 3 day



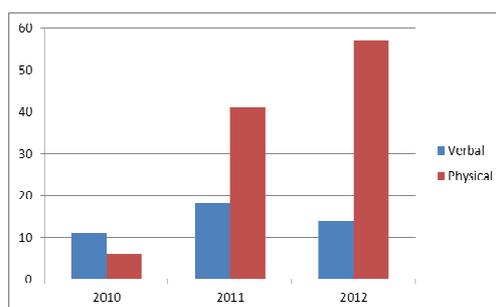
- 3.1.4 Manual Handling incidents involving Reablement Services staff predominantly account for the increase with no incidents for the same period last year; and
- 3.1.5 The main causes of accidents involving equipment are due to faulty office and work equipment.

### 3.1. Near Misses:

Division	Cause	Detail
Waste & Environmental Improvement Services	Road Traffic Collision	<b>Near miss</b> – A Refuse Collection vehicle nearly collided with a mechanical shovel at a Landfill site. <b>Site managers informed and have reinforced need to maintain a safe working distance</b>

#### 4. VIOLENT INCIDENT REPORTS BY DIRECTORATE 1<sup>st</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012

Directorate	Verbal	Physical
Policy and Resources	1	0
Children and Enterprise	2	7
Communities	8	50
<b>TOTAL 2012</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>TOTAL 2011</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>TOTAL 2010</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>

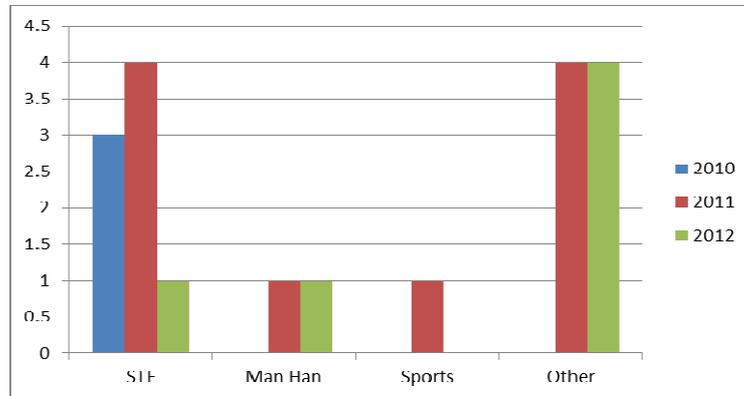


#### 4.1. Further Information:

- 4.1.1 There has been a significant increase in reported violent incidents compared with the last two years;
- 4.1.2 The majority of incidents involve Communities staff with 8 verbal and 57 physical incidents this year compared to 11 verbal and 37 physical last year;
- 4.1.3 This is mainly due to three service users who are responsible for 46 physical incidents (broken down individually - 32, 9 and 5). As a result the risk assessments have been reviewed and updated, stress risk assessments undertaken, additional personal safety training organised and support provided for staff involved; and
- 4.1.4 Within Children and Enterprise there has been an increase in reported incidents involving Child Care Services staff.

## 5 SCHOOL ACCIDENTS

### 5.1 Accidents involving Teachers:-

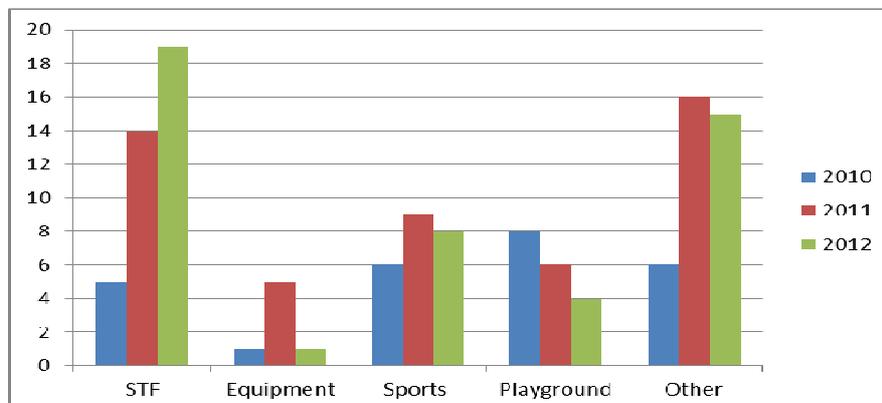


Category	Minor	Significant	> 7 Day	Major	Total
STF	0	1	0	0	1
Man Handling	0	1	0	0	1
Sport	0	0	0	0	0
Other	3	1	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>

### Further Information:

- 5.1.1 There has been a decrease in the number of slips and trips accidents in classrooms when there were 3 last year and none this year; and
- 5.1.2 This year there have been 1 verbal and 5 physical violent incidents on teachers compared to 5 verbal and 4 physical incidents reported last year. These mainly involved teachers dealing with unruly pupil behaviour and being kicked.

### 5.2 Accidents involving Pupils: -



<b>Category</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Significant</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Totals</b>
STF	18	0	1	<b>19</b>
Equipment	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Sporting	5	0	3	<b>8</b>
Playground	4	0	0	<b>4</b>
Other	12	2	1	<b>15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>47</b>

### **Further Information:**

- 5.2.1 There has been a decrease in the number of accidents particularly involving Major Injuries when there were 10 last year and 5 this year; and
- 5.2.2 Last year there were 3 incidents where children trapped their fingers in doors and none this year.