

(Draft 1: 24 August 2006)

Halton Local Area Agreement:

Introduction

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is three-year agreement, based on local Community Strategies that set out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government (represented by Government Office North West - GONW) and a local area, represented by its Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) – in our case the Halton Strategic Partnership. LAAs relax central government constraints and allow better decision-making at the local level. Greater freedoms provide the opportunity to think innovatively, and develop new solutions to local priorities.

To be effective our LAA must reflect local circumstances and needs. It should act as a vehicle to:

- engage and involve local communities;
- involve active participation of all stakeholders in Halton;
- be prepared and implemented by a broad 'local strategic partnership', through which the local authority can work with other local bodies;
- be based on a proper assessment of needs and the availability of resources.

This LAA has been prepared in accordance with these principles. The Community Strategy is key, and provides an overarching framework through which the corporate, strategic and operational plans of all the partners can contribute. The LAA provides a mechanism by which key elements of the strategy can be delivered over the next three years.

Background

Halton has inherited more than its share of issues, many rooted in the area's industrial past. Making the borough a better place to live and work presents some major challenges and opportunities for us all. This LAA sets out the steps we need to take together to bring about real improvements that will change lives for the better. In particular, we need to achieve real progress on five strategic themes that are set out clearly in the Community Strategy and mirrored in this LAA:

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

These priorities have been derived from what local people feel is important, and from the facts and figures about conditions in Halton.

Halton is a largely urban area of 118,900 people. Its two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn that face each other across the River Mersey, 10 miles upstream from Liverpool. The population of Halton was decline for over

a decade, but has recently started to increase. Between 1991 and 2002 the estimated Borough population decreased by 6,500 people from 124,800 to 118,300 in 2002. However, in 2003 there was a small increase in the population and between 2003 and 2004 the estimated population increased 500 people.

As a result of its industrial legacy, particularly from the chemical industries, Halton has inherited a number of physical, environmental and social problems. The Council has been working hard to resolve these issues ever since the Borough was formed in 1974. Gaining unitary status in 1998 has helped to co-ordinate more activity over a wider front and increased the resources the Council, and its strategic partners, have been able to invest in Halton. However, there still remains much to be done.

Halton shares many of the social and economic problems more associated with its urban neighbours on Merseyside. The latest Index of Multiple of Deprivation (IMD) for 2004, not only contains some of the latest data available, but also is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators, as some 37 different indicators are used. It shows for example that overall, Halton is ranked 21st nationally (a ranking of 1 indicates that an area is the most deprived), but this is 3rd highest on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 5th highest in the North West. St Helens (36th), Wirral (48th) and Sefton (78th,) are way down the table compared to Halton.

The Index of Multiple of Deprivation for 2004 suggests that Deprivation has improved in the Borough. In 2004 the IMD ranked Halton as 21st most deprived Authority in England for rank of average score compared to a rank of 16th in the 2000 Index. The proportion of Halton's population in the top category (i.e. the top 10% of wards in 2000 and the top 20% of super output areas in 2004) has also decreased from 54% in 2000 to 50% in 2004. However, there is still room for improvement. Halton's concentration of deprivation has gone up from 38th position in 2000 to 20th worse in England in 2004. Concentration is a key way of identifying hot spots of deprivation within an area. Within Halton there are 6 super output areas in the top 975 Super Output Areas in England, i.e. within England's top 3% most deprived. The highest neighbourhood is ranked 193rd out of 32,482 and is situated in southern Widnes. Clearly there remains much to do.

- Claimant unemployment in the Borough has fallen from 5.0% in January 2000 to 3.1% in November 2005. However, Halton still had the 5th highest claimant count rate in the North West in November 2005. The claimant count rate only includes those people who are eligible for Jobseekers allowance and therefore underestimates the true number of people who are unemployed. The Annual population Survey for April 2004-March 2005 estimates that the unemployment rate in Halton was 7.3% compared to an England average of 4.7%
- The employment rate, i.e. the proportion of the potential workforce actually working at 68.5% in the 2004- 2005 Annual Population Survey Halton is in the bottom 6 of 43 Local Authority districts in the North West. The Borough rate is also significantly lower than the England average of 74.7%.
- Life expectancy in the Borough has increased in the past decade. Between 1992-1994 and 2002-2004 Female life expectancy in the Borough increased from 77.8 years to 78.1 years. Life expectancy at birth for men in Halton also increased

over the same time period from 72.7 in 1992-1994 to 74.1 in 2002-2004. However, despite the increase in Life expectancy Halton has not kept pace with other Authorities. Over a decade Halton has fallen from a rank of 382 for females to 424 out of 432 authorities with 432 being the lowest rank. For men the ranking has fallen from 352 to 397.

- Standardised Mortality Rates for all causes, all ages, ranks Halton 4th highest out of 354 English Local Authorities for 2001/02 . At 124 it is 24% above the national average.
- GCSE passes in the Borough are improving between 1997 and 2005 the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C increased by 16.5 percentage points to 49.3%. The difference with the national rate has reduced to 8%. Pupils gaining no GCSE passes (or equivalent) was 4% in 2005 compared to 2.6 % nationally. Skills among the workforce remain low, with a quarter of all workers lacking any qualifications.

Bespoke research to get a better picture of life in Halton was commissioned in 2005. The Local Futures Group produced a 'State of the Borough' Audit of economic, social and environmental conditions. This is a timely and necessary assessment of the challenges and issues that face Halton. Performance is assessed according to how well the borough scores on a range of carefully selected benchmark indicators of economic, social and environmental well-being. It provides a perspective on the state of Halton by looking at how it compares with other districts, how it rates within the North West region, and also how it performs compared to the country as a whole.

The Audit demonstrates that the borough is performing well in terms of its current economic performance and structure. However, the level of human capital and trends in economic growth may present problems for the future. This is particularly so given the district's poor performance in terms of social and environmental indicators, which may create difficulties attracting the best qualified people to the borough. Halton's performance on education and skills, and low levels of home ownership points to problems of inclusiveness, with groups of residents not sharing in the current levels of economic prosperity.

Moving Forward

This local area agreement sets out a clear vision of making changes across many issues that will make a big difference to life in Halton. It aims to give people opportunities and choice. We want to build people's aspirations and abilities so they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives. Having done so we want to ensure we provide the quality of life and opportunities locally so that people choose to live and work here. The following table sets out the strategic framework proposed for the Halton LAA:

Vision	Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more
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	attractive neighbourhood.
Priorities	<p>A Healthy Halton - To create a healthier community and work to promote well being - a positive experience of life with good health</p> <p>Halton's Urban Renewal - To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough</p> <p>Halton's Children and Young People - To ensure that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy</p> <p>Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton - To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth</p> <p>A Safer Halton - To ensure pleasant safe and secure neighbourhood environments where people can enjoy life.</p>
Approach	<p>Closing the gap between the most deprived communities in the borough and in Halton overall.</p> <p>Tackling inequality and promoting community cohesion, so that no community is disadvantaged.</p> <p>Making what we do sustainable so that our quality of life is protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.</p> <p>Investing in preventative activity that stops problems occurring rather than paying for actions to fix things that are going wrong. We need to invest more in success, rather than in failure.</p>
Principles	<p>Leadership – the Partnership's role is to give clear strategic leadership to the borough and enable people to make the necessary contribution to make a difference.</p> <p>Fair and inclusive – promoting equal access to opportunities and facilities. This includes the need to positively target activity at the most deprived geographical areas or particular groups of people.</p> <p>Good value – being economical, efficient and effective in delivering 'Best Value' for the public.</p> <p>Collaborative – this is about collective responsibility for making things better and embedding partnership approaches in everything that we do.</p> <p>Evidence-based – ensuring we learn from best practice elsewhere and make good use of research about what works in addressing the borough's priorities.</p>

This vision and approach arises directly out of the newly agreed community strategy: *Making It Happen In Halton – A Community Strategy For A Sustainable Halton*. The LAA takes this as its the starting point.

Approach

The Halton LAA is framed around the five priorities agreed in the Community Strategy and set out above. These encompass the four blocks suggested by Government but take a wider view of what the priorities are for Halton. The urban renewal agenda is included because revitalising the physical fabric of the borough underpins our regeneration agenda.

Also relevant are the cross cutting themes that Halton has adopted which are pertinent to each of our five blocks. We want to shift our focus to prevention measures, to promoting positive lifestyles and the many excellent aspects of life in Halton, and to more timely interventions to help people at the times when they most need support. Our ways of working will focus on:

- Poverty and material deprivation
- Choice and quality in neighbourhoods and housing
- Equality of opportunity for everyone and ending discrimination.
- Policies and programmes that look forward and help to achieve sustainable development

We want to sharpen up service delivery and focus on the things that will make the most difference. The key measure of whether service delivery is transformed is how far and how fast we can narrow the gap in outcomes for the most disadvantaged in Halton, as measured by comparison with both Halton and national averages. The Halton Strategic Partnership will be accountable for achieving the outcomes set out in the agreement.

The LAA has developed out of the established partnership structure and strategic planning process. It is important that it adds value to the established landscape of partnership plans and activity. It can do this by helping to refocus current activity and drive concerted actions on key challenges, neighbourhoods and target beneficiaries. Using evidence and intelligence we intend to close the gap between the most deprived people and places and national norms.

Transformational Issues

The question that the Halton Strategic Partnership has been addressing is: What added value can be brought by an LAA to existing partnership frameworks and activity? The partnership believes that the answer lies in using the LAA to focus in on a small number of issues which, if we were successful at addressing, would make a significant improvement to the quality of life in the Borough. These transformational issues have been identified on the basis of two criteria:

- those where progress has not been as significant as we would have liked – identified from statistics, public perception and concern, areas for focus in recent LSP reviews.

- those which would have a positive impact across a range of our objectives and targets.

We want the LAA to bring a greater concerted effort to those key issues. We want the LAA to focus on our most intractable problems, and in doing so make a significant impact upon them. These issues need to be supported by the partnership and it has been agreed that the following four areas best fit the two criteria outlined above - Employment & Skills; Alcohol Harm reduction; Anti-Social Behaviour; and, Liveability

In addressing these through the LAA we will address the following questions:

- What are the barriers to progress?
- What is it we could be doing but are not?
- What does best practice elsewhere suggest we could be doing?
- What freedoms and flexibilities would we need to make greater progress?
- Are we using all our resources as effectively as we could?

We intend to use the “energy” and focus an LAA brings to make measurable progress in those intractable areas. Our intention is to use these as a means to exemplify the joined up nature of how the Halton Strategic Partnership addresses key issues which cut across all five blocks of the LAA. The following table gives a summary of the current position on the four transformational issues

<u>Alcohol Harm</u>
<i>Why is this an issue?</i>
<p>Alcohol misuse can be a source of considerable harm. The National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy identifies certain critical harms connected to alcohol misuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health – up to 22,000 premature deaths per year ○ Crime and antisocial behaviour – 1.2 million associated violent incidents per year ○ Loss of productivity and profitability – calculated at £6.4bn. per year ○ Harms to family and society – between 780,000 and 1.3 million children are affected by parental alcohol problems
<p>Halton itself suffers from more than its fair share of alcohol related issues. The table below taken from a recent study on alcohol misuse in the North West conducted by the North West Public Health Observatory, highlights Halton’s position against some of the key indicators for alcohol. On all indicator Halton ranks in the worst 5 districts (out of 43 areas)</p>
<p>During 2005 an alcohol survey of year 10 and 11 pupils in Halton was carried out. These were a few of the results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A higher than average proportion of 15-16 year olds are drinking alcohol in Halton – 92%. (North West 88% and 93% across Cheshire). ○ 40% of teenagers surveyed claim to drink in pubs. ○ 50% of teenagers surveyed claim to get their alcohol from their parents.

How will we work to address this issue across the LAA?

The cost of alcohol misuse, both social and economical provides serious cause for concern in Halton, particularly given the latest statistics. We know that if we can reduce alcohol harm across the borough we will make an impact on improving a range of associated issues. For example, these would include health, crime and community safety, employment, liveability, regeneration and educational attainment.

How will we work differently?

No single partnership or agency can act alone on such a complex issue. In order to meet the significant challenge of reducing the harm caused by alcohol the different components of the partnership structure in Halton must recognise the relevance of alcohol to their core business and must include it as a cross-cutting issue.

A multi-agency task group has been established and a comprehensive Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy developed. An Alcohol Intervention officer is about to be appointed, whose primary purpose will be to ensure the delivery and implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan.

How do we propose to deliver on this area?

In order to deliver on this area of the LAA we intend to focus on 5 key priorities, which bring together the strategic priority areas identified in Halton's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy. These are **Health, Crime and Licensing, Children and Young People, Workplace and Communities and Regeneration**. Under each area we have picked the key outcomes and targets that we feel the LAA can help us to achieve. This action plan will be monitored and delivered by the Alcohol Task Group and will sit alongside the main Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and action plan. Relevant SSPs will also need to take responsibility for outcomes relating to their priority area.

Employment & Skills

Anti-Social Behaviour

Why is this an issue?

The government has made a commitment to tackle anti-social behaviour. In March 2003, the Home Secretary announced new powers to deal with anti-social behaviour. Amongst these provisions are powers to close premises connected with drug abuse, new powers for Registered Social Landlords and Local authorities to deal with troublesome tenants, a new range of orders to address the behaviour of perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and in some cases, address parental responsibility, and extended use of the Fixed Penalty procedure for cases of anti-social behaviour including litter and graffiti.

Social responsibility, respect for others and appropriate community behaviour are fundamental requirements of a thriving and successful community. The majority of our communities recognise this and contribute positively to community life, however, a minority do not. The conduct of this minority adversely affects the ability of people to enjoy the communities and facilities where they live, work and visit. This is not acceptable. This behaviour is often termed anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour is not welcome in Halton and will not be tolerated.

How will we work to address this issue across the LAA?

The LAA mirrors the strategic priorities of the Community Strategy. These strategic

priorities were arrived at through public consultation as to what our communities consider important and the careful analysis of research data that provides an indication of prevailing conditions in the Borough. The Anti-social Behaviour Strategy, whilst perhaps centred within the strategic priority of 'Ensuring safe and attractive neighbourhoods', relies for its success on the commitment and complementary working practices of a number of partner agencies within and outside of Halton Borough Council. It is therefore an overarching strategy embracing all 5 strategic priorities in achieving the strategic vision.

How will we work differently?

Survey data provides information in four key areas:-

- Misuse of Public Space
- Disregard for community / personal well-being
- Acts directed at people
- Environmental damage

These are robust categories that encompass the experiences of people living, visiting and working in Halton. The LAA will develop a rounded response to ASB through:

- Integration of the strategy into the statutory framework for joint agency co-operation set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, s17 "*It shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies, to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder.*"
- Accessing partnership resources to maximise service provision
- Seeking and ensuring commitment to a Borough-wide response to Anti-social Behaviour
- Facilitating the flow of appropriate information to enable effective interventions. The law allows for information sharing for any legitimate purpose where this has a legal basis. *Data Protection Act. 1998*
- Recommending the realignment of mainstream resources to improve multi-agency service delivery and response to Anti-social Behaviour
- Providing the structure for continuous improvement of the multi-agency response by developing common protocols and assessment pathways
- Identifying and addressing the capacity, knowledge and skill requirements of key staff

How do we propose to deliver on this area?

Prevent & Deter

- Identifying those perpetrators of A.S.B. or those at risk of becoming perpetrators of A.S.B. and intervening at an early stage to bring about behavioural change.
- Identifying appropriate routes to divert the focus of groups and individuals, towards positive pro-social activity.
- Minimising the opportunity for anti-social behaviour by addressing the factors that support it. These may be physical e.g. 'uncared for' environment, or social e.g. influenced by alcohol or substance misuse.

Protect And Punish

- Use of civil and criminal legal remedies where appropriate:
- Harassment Notices and Orders, Anti-social Behaviour Orders, Injunctions, Housing Related Measures (demoted tenancies, possession proceedings etc.), Crack House Closures. Fixed Penalty Notices for Disorder and Litter etc.
- Providing support to the vulnerable and support to the vulnerable and ensuring that complainants and witnesses are supported and informed throughout the process.

Rehabilitation

- The ASB Task Group is committed to ensuring that there are a range of activities within Halton aimed at encouraging and reinforcing positive citizenship and pro-social behaviour. These will include activities aimed at wide groups e.g. community projects and citizenship programmes within schools as well as other activities targeted at groups who are at risk of social inclusion.
- In addition it is recognised that A.S.B. is not age restricted and adult education is equally important in shifting attitudes.
- The need to take this work to the street or neighbourhood level, a factor recognised by the national 'Respect' agenda, will be crucial in making this strategy work

Liveability

Why is this an issue for Halton?

The visual quality of an area, namely the way an area looks, including levels of litter and rubbish, scruffiness of gardens and the prevalence of high rise flats or open space, is of crucial importance in determining quality of life in a local area.

A recent Mori poll which asked people what most needs improving in their own local area, found liveability issues are still top of the public priority list, well ahead of health and education. In Halton, the opinions of 2,500 local residents were surveyed in 2005. Removing rubbish, and cleaning the streets and verges was felt to be the biggest environmental improvement, which could be made. In the 2005 LSP consultation, residents thought that one of the most effective factors in improving the environment was to 'improve local parks and make them safer and tidier'.

How will we work to address the issue across the LAA?

The quality of the local environment impacts on people's health, their fear of crime, and the social and economic vibrancy of the area. Poor quality spaces are visible indicators of decline and disadvantage. Graffiti, street litter, abandoned vehicles, dog fouling drag down a local area and there is evidence that their presence signals a spiral of decline, which can undermine communities. It is only through partners working together to tackle these issues and their causes, that we are to bring about improvements in the liveability agenda and quality of life for local residents.

How will we work differently?

Working in partnership delivering joint initiatives has proven to particularly effective and this approach will be developed across partner agencies, and in particular through the Safer Halton Partnership. The recent police drug raids, were supported by other partners, who following the raids, successfully helped to deliver local environment improvements, and re-assure the local community.

Three of the more deprived areas of the Borough have been selected for the neighbourhood management pilot. A neighbourhood management board has been established and neighbourhood boards will soon follow. By tailoring services to meet the needs of local communities across the LAA, it is hoped that we can make a significant difference to their quality of life. Neighbourhood management is seen as an opportunity for partners to work more closely together and pilot new ways of working, which if successful can be rolled out across the Borough.

How do we propose to deliver on this area?

The recently revised Safer and Stronger Communities Fund Agreement, sets out a number of liveability targets across the Borough and more specific targets for the

neighbourhood management pilots areas. The SSCF Agreement will be monitored by the performance management group, of the Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) and the SHP, engagement and liveability task group, which will take the lead in delivering on the liveability agenda

Obviously, this is merely a very short summary position. At Annex G is a more considered position paper on each of these topics.

Funding

Halton partners have noted the funding arrangements for LAAs. The mandatory pooling by Government of a number of external funding streams is welcomed. It is felt that this will simplify the performance management arrangements, reduce the transaction costs of programme management and lead to efficiencies.

The Halton Strategic Partnership does not propose to pool any other funding streams within the LAA in Year 1. Some local and specific pooling of funding by partners will take place, as indeed it does now. However, we do not seek to embed these pooling arrangements within the auspices of the Agreement. Instead Partners intend to concentrate their efforts on wider moves to align appropriate budgets behind the Agreement. This position will be reviewed for Years 2 and 3 of the Agreement and we will seek to pool additional funding in years 2 and 3 of the agreement where this is helpful in achieving the outcomes agreed.

Partners are committed where appropriate to align the use of resources (including funds, personnel, buildings and land use) to support the aims of the LAA. Annex A outlines our current thinking on aligning and pooling funding in the LAA. Our approach has been mainly to align funding in this first year.

Enabling Measures

Halton takes a pragmatic view of the opportunity offered to negotiate freedoms and flexibilities. The development process has identified a number of key enabling measures, which would benefit the LAA in its operation. These potential freedoms and flexibilities are set out in Annex C of the Agreement, and will be the subject of negotiation with GONW.

Sustainability

The focus in Halton is to build a sustainable community that balances and integrates social, economic and environmental progress; that meets current expectations and prepares for future needs; and that respects the diversity of the place and people. Sustainability is about linking cohesion into the mainstream of service delivery and ensuring that our vision can be delivered over time and in the face of conflicting demands and diminishing resources. It involves more than changing plans and policies as it involves changing hearts and minds. This is one of our greatest challenges. What is important is that foundations are properly and securely laid at the outset for enabling any project or initiative to make an impact into the future. The LAA has been developed by adopting this approach.

The vision for the future is of a Halton that has sustained itself. This is a place where people want to live and work. It is somewhere that provides a high quality living environment, sensitive to a range of needs, and recognises the diversity of its residents. This Strategy is all about giving people opportunities and choice. We want to build people's aspirations and abilities so they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives. Having done so we want to ensure we provide the quality of life and opportunities locally so that people choose to live and work here.

In short, we want to build a sustainable community that balances and integrates social, economic and environmental progress; that meets current expectations and prepares for future needs; and that respects the diversity of the place and people. The Partnership has identified the following components as being crucial to success.

- (a) *Respect and Enjoyment*
- (b) *Thriving Places*
- (c) *Well Planned*
- (d) *Accessibility*
- (e) *Well Served*
- (f) *Well Run*

Developing the LAA

The process to develop the LAA was important. It was vital that the process was inclusive. Many people and groups were involved so we could build a clear picture on what was important and how we should go forward. From the outset the Halton Strategic Partnership Board has been engaged in leading the development of the LAA. We have ensured wide involvement across agencies and sectors. This process of engagement with people and partners was vital. It is only if there is a shared view of the challenges that Halton faces, and a broad sense of ownership of the resulting strategy, that there will be any chance of its ambitions being realised.

Halton established a Lead Officer Group to lead the development of the LAA. This is made up of key leaders from all partners, including the VCS. This cross agency corporate steering group - has met regularly to co-ordinate the development of the LAA and ensures a consistent and holistic approach. In addition, a wide variety of organisations, teams and individuals have been involved in developing the detail for each of the blocks. This process has been actioned through the SSPs – our well-established thematic working groups. Wherever possible we have ensured that the work has been integrated into existing cross-agency structures, e.g. the Older Peoples Local Implementation Team. Within each block various methods have been used to engage people – workshops, mini-conferences etc. Regular activities have involved monthly LOG meetings to discuss the focus and content of the LAA, backed up by regular meetings with GONW to test this; thematic partnership meetings to discuss the detail, agree outcomes, map resources and relationships, and identify enabling measures; all partner seminars and workshops to develop coherence and consensus around the overall agreement; and a micro-website for as part of an overall communication effort to keep all partners in touch with progress (already set up on www.haltonpartnership.net).

Key milestones in the process include:

- An early decision to align our Community Strategy with the LAA blocks. We were also able to use the consultation that had been done on the Community Strategy to inform the LAA.

- Extensive briefing across sectors; putting in place the appropriate project management structures and disciplines; identifying lead officers and forming working groups and teams;
- Across agencies and across the 5 blocks stimulating thinking to clarify our ambitions and develop them into a cohesive statement, together with identifying the key challenges to Government and ourselves;
- 14 July – an all-partners conference at Halton Stadium to agree the ambitions and the challenges;
- July/August – cross agency teams for each block focused on developing the outcomes framework for the block; identifying appropriate indicators, and proposals for pooled funding and freedoms and flexibilities.
- September – meetings of the Halton Strategic Partnership Board and the Council’s Executive Board Cabinet to endorse the LAA.

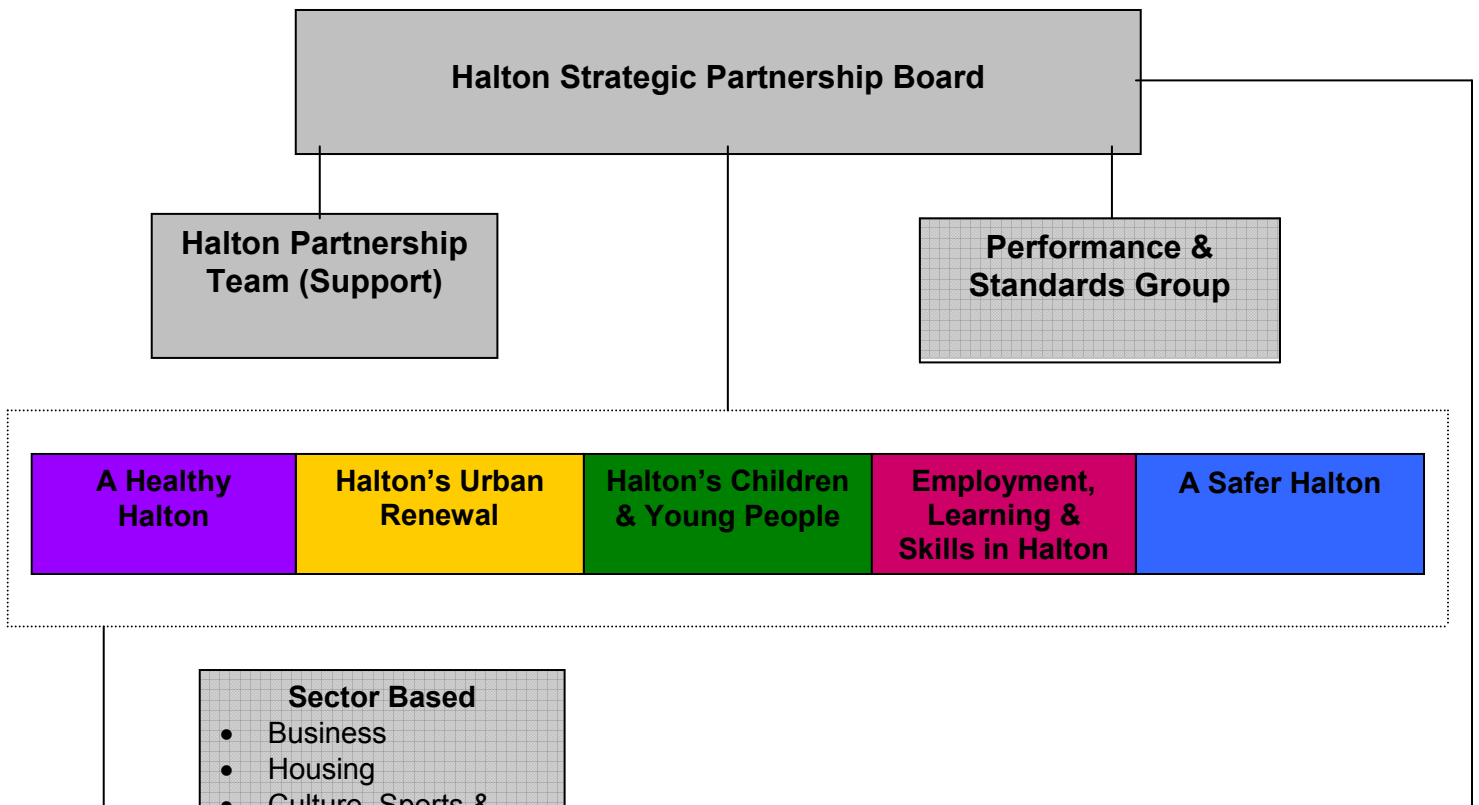
Governance

Halton already has in place well established and robust partnership arrangements. These are based on a Strategic Board supported by five thematic partnerships, a performance management group and a number of specialist subsidiary partnerships. This includes representation at all levels by all stakeholders including significant representation from the voluntary and community sectors. The structure has been recently reviewed, refreshed and rationalised through an overhaul of governance arrangements supported by Manchester Business School. The current governance structure is considered wholly fit for purpose, and can be represented as follow



Halton Strategic **PARTNERSHIP**

The Virtual Organisation



The Halton Strategic Partnership Board (HSPB) brings together representatives from all sectors of life in the borough. It is the strategic level Board and a key part of the broad-based Halton Partnership. It serves the function of a 'local strategic partnership' (LSP) for the area.

The Halton Strategic Partnership Board, the Community Strategy, and the LAA provide a common sense of direction for the community and an overarching framework within which different partnerships, organisations and groups can co-operate together, committed to common goals and dedicated to improving life for people in the Borough. Taking action is one thing, but unless it is focused on the right things it is unlikely to yield the right results. This is why the Partnership invested a good deal of time and resources sounding out public opinion and gathering the facts and figures needed to identify the overall priorities for the borough. All of this is reflected in the LAA.

In 2005 the State of Halton report was researched and published, highlighting a range of challenges and opportunities facing Halton. Its findings have been checked and challenged by the Partnership and tested against public opinion. This led to the identification of a number of priorities for the borough over the medium term which, in combination, addresses the overall aim of making it a better place to live and work.

The Partnership also works to improve the quality of life at a neighbourhood level. It does this by working through the seven geographical Area Forums established by the Council and supported by the partners. A Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy has been produced for each area, highlighting the concerns of local people and outlining actions to be taken to tackle issues at a local level. Many of those actions build on and link with the five Specialist Strategic Partnerships' plans, while others

are unique to their particular area. Each plan has devolved resources to draw on to help deliver these actions.

Halton is enthusiastic about extending neighbourhood management as a means to engage and empower local communities. This will address problems in deprived neighbourhoods by managing and co-ordinating resources and services to achieve a greater combined impact. A sound neighbourhood approach will lay the foundations for delivery of improvements to liveability and public services, transforming neighbourhoods and empowering local people. Halton already has many front line services organised on a neighbourhood basis. Community Support Officers, policing, community development workers, housing management, street-scene teams and youth workers are organised on an area basis. Children's Centres will also co-ordinate service delivery at a local level. A neighbourhood focus will provide management and co-ordination mechanisms for joining these, and other services such as health and social care up on a local basis. This Community Strategy provides a framework through which these arrangements can be brokered.

Strategic Priorities

The vision for Halton as set out in the Community Strategy, and mirrored in this LAA is:

Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhood.

The key challenge is how best to frame the response to the challenges that Halton faces through the LAA. To do this challenges have been grouped into the five key themes, which are in the Community Strategy itself: These are

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

We intend to focus heavily on these key issues and through the LAA to channel extra resources year on year into efforts to achieve challenging targets in each chosen priority area. If we succeed in this enterprise, we will realise our Vision for Halton. It is worth restating our overall aspirations for each of these five blocks of activity.

A HEALTHY HALTON

Our overall aim

To create a healthier community and work to promote well being - a positive experience of life with good health (not simply an absence of disease), and offer opportunities for people to take responsibility for their health with the necessary support available.

Why health?

Statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country and single it out as the aspect of life in the borough in most urgent need of improvement. The population is ageing which could put even greater demands on the health and social care services. At the same time lifestyle choices in the borough, especially among the young, in terms of diet, smoking, alcohol, exercise and other factors continue to give cause for concern for the future.

Key Objectives

- A To understand fully the causes of ill health in Halton and act together to improve the overall health and well-being of local people**
- B To lay firm foundations for a healthy start in life and support those most in need in the community by maximising and promoting autonomy.**
- C To promote a healthy living environment and lifestyles to protect the health of the public, sustain individual good health and well-being, and help prevent and efficiently manage illness**
- D To reduce the burden of disease in Halton by concentrating on lowering the rates of cancer and heart disease, mental ill health and diabetes and addressing the health needs of older people**
- E To remove the barriers that disable people and contribute to poor health through ensuring that people have ready access to a wide range of social, community and housing services, and cultural and sporting activities that enhance their quality of life**

HALTON'S URBAN RENEWAL

Our overall aim

To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough that makes Halton a place where people are proud to live and see a promising future for themselves and their families.

Why urban renewal?

Modern day Halton has inherited an exceptional legacy of obsolete and poor quality land, buildings and physical infrastructure that undermine the development potential and attractiveness of the area. Putting this right is a key to greater prosperity and boosting the image of the borough.

Key Objectives

- A To create and sustain a twenty first century business environment with the required variety and quality of sites, premises and infrastructure that**

can support high levels of investment and economic growth and increase Halton's competitiveness

- B To revitalise the town centres to create dynamic, well-designed high quality commercial areas that can continue to meet the needs of local people, investors, businesses and visitors**
- C To support and sustain thriving neighbourhoods and open spaces that meet peoples expectations and add to their enjoyment of life**
- D To ensure Halton designs in and maintains high levels of accessibility to places and spaces so that opportunity and need are matched, and provides excellent connectivity to the wider world through transport and ICT links.**
- E To enhance, promote and celebrate the quality of the built and natural environment in Halton, including tackling the legacy of contamination and dereliction, to further improve the borough's image**

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE IN HALTON

Our overall aim

To ensure that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy, and receive their entitlement of high quality services that are sensitive to need, inclusive and accessible to all.

Why children and young people?

Children and young people are the future of Halton. In time they will become the adults that take responsibility for all aspects of life in the borough. Therefore, it is vital that we should invest in Halton's future by investing in them. This will make sure they have the best possible start in life, have places to go and things to do that are positive and life enhancing, and the opportunity to fulfill their potential and succeed.

Key Objectives

- A. To ensure all children and young people in Halton enjoy a healthy lifestyle that helps them to achieve physical and emotional well being**
- B. To ensure all children and young people in Halton grow up and thrive in safe environments, communities, homes and families**
- C. To ensure all children and young people in Halton participate and enjoy, learning to develop socially and achieving their full potential**
- D. To ensure all children and young people in Halton engage in enterprising behaviour, are confident and make positive decisions about their lives and their communities**
- E. To ensure all children and young people in Halton have positive futures after school by embracing life long learning, employment opportunities and enjoying a positive standard of living**

EMPLOYMENT LEARNING & SKILLS IN HALTON

Our overall aim

To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth, and improves the education, skills and employment prospects of our residents and workforce so they can share in the all the opportunities Halton affords.

Why employment, learning and skills?

A strong economy provides the key foundation for any prosperous and successful place. It provides jobs, opportunities, wealth and aspirations for local people. There is a sustained mismatch between the needs of local business and the skills of local people. This means that opportunity and need are out of balance and contribute to the widespread deprivation in Halton. Sustainable economic growth and prosperity requires a commitment to encourage and support a vibrant business sector and a commitment to employment, learning and skills to satisfy all stakeholders in Halton.

Key Objectives

- A To foster a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship and make Halton an ideal place to start and grow economic activity**
- B To develop a culture where learning is valued and raise skill levels throughout the adult population and in the local workforce**
- C To promote and increase the employability of local people and remove any barriers to employment to get more people into work**
- D To develop a strong, diverse, competitive and sustainable knowledge-based local economy**

A SAFER HALTON

Our overall aim

To ensure pleasant safe and secure neighbourhood environments, with attractive, safe surroundings, good quality local amenities, and the ability of people to enjoy life where they live.

Why a Safer Halton?

Crime and the fear of crime affect everybody's lives. It is a major concern according to every survey of Halton residents. These surveys also show that cleaner, tidier neighbourhoods would make the biggest difference to improving life for people in their local area. We want Halton to be a clean, green, safe and attractive place to live. People should tolerate, value and respect each other, their property and the places where they live.

Key Objectives

- A To investigate and tackle the underlying causes of crime and disorder and respond effectively to public concern by reducing crime levels**
- B To improve the understanding of alcohol and drug/substance misuse problems, their impact in Halton, and reduce the harm they cause**
- C To create and sustain better neighbourhoods that are well designed, well built, well maintained, safe and valued by the people who live in them, reflecting the priorities of residents**
- D To understand and tackle the problem of domestic abuse in all its forms**

Cross Cutting Issues

This LAA is concerned with addressing social exclusion. This is about what happens when people face a multitude of problems such as poor housing, high crime, poor health, worklessness, discrimination and poor relationships. These problems link and reinforce each other creating a vicious circle for people. Often they are clustered in specific neighbourhoods. However, this strategy tries to take a positive view of the future. Past approaches have very much concentrated on dealing with Halton's failings and problems. Significant change is unlikely if we continue to focus in this way. It will be better to shift our focus to prevention measures, to promoting positive lifestyles and the many excellent aspects of life in Halton, and to more timely interventions to help people at the times when they most need support.

Overall poverty, unemployment and material deprivation are diminishing in crude terms. However, Halton continues to display high rates of benefit dependency. At the same time many people are still not claiming their full entitlements which would allow them to enjoy a minimum standard of living. Therefore, information, advice, guidance and advocacy are crucial in allowing people to access the help they need to navigate an extraordinarily complicated benefits system. This is not only beneficial for the

recipients themselves but also for the local economy as research shows that most transfer payments are spent locally. High levels of personal debt also characterise Halton, with up to 10% of households struggling to support debt levels. This in turn impacts on people's health and well being and the positive contribution they can make to the local economy. Therefore, debt advice and innovative community finance initiatives are a continuing need.

Whilst the population of Halton has stabilised in recent years, its most prominent future feature will be the rate at which it ages. The next ten years will see a reduction in teenagers by 20% and a dramatic rise in the over 60s (27%) and over 75s (19%). This presents new risks for social exclusion and shifting demands for services. Single person households will rise, and single parenthood will become even more common. One result is likely to be a marked increase in social isolation which will have profound effects on people's health and involvement in their communities.

There is already growing pressure on housing in Halton. The underpinning reasons for homelessness – including family breakdown and mental health problems – are still with us. Choice and quality in housing will be key across all tenures and in all parts of Halton. This is essential if we are to mitigate the housing element of social exclusion and concentrate on preventing homelessness and the damage it does, especially to children.

Halton is committed to equality of opportunity for disabled people and to ending discrimination. The passing of the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995 has given a new focus to our commitment to disabled people. Underlying this Community Strategy is a commitment to turn policy into practice. We want to identify and support all family carers and cared for people with disabilities in Halton by striving to improve their quality of life and life chances. We want disabled people living and working in Halton to be able to realise their full potential. We will make progress towards this by removing barriers and changing the attitudes which prevent disabled people from gaining access to employment and to the services provided by partners. Disability is a social issue and impairment becomes a disability because of the social and physical barriers that the individual faces. . For example using a wheel chair only becomes disabling if the bus cannot accommodate a wheelchair or kerbs are too high. Our efforts will be focussed on removing these barriers

The Halton Strategic Partnership want to develop policies and programmes which leave a lasting and positive effect on future generations of people in Halton. We also want to look forward and help to achieve sustainable development both locally and more widely to promote regional, national and global aims.

Given its dependence on the chemical industry, Halton has always been sensitive to the need to improve and protect the environment. Halton's ambitious Local Agenda 21 was one of the most comprehensive in the UK. It sets out Halton's contribution to meeting national and international commitments, and to tackling worldwide environmental issues such as climate change. It looks at ways we can manage our resources better, and avoid the many local problems that adversely affect our quality of life. It also considers practical ways in which we can all contribute to making Halton more sustainable. This Community Strategy sets out clearly our ambitions for a sustainable future for Halton. Underpinning all of the proposed actions is the belief that changes in our behaviour are needed to make a significant impact on long term sustainability.

The people of Halton, and a focus on responding to their full range of needs, is the key cross cutting theme that underpins this strategy. The needs analysis allows us to

anticipate likely changes and plan accordingly. We want to sustain progress and increasingly provide a much greater range of opportunities, and the ability to take advantage of them. We want to sharpen up service delivery and focus on the things that will make the most difference. The key measure of whether service delivery is transformed is how far and how fast we can narrow the gap in outcomes for the most disadvantaged in Halton, as measured by comparison with both Halton and national averages.

Resources Management

All the objectives and targets outlined here are achievable. How well and how quickly this happens depends crucially on the availability of resources and how smartly they are used. That means money, people, physical resources, proper intelligence and information, allied with the strength of will to use them in the best way. A key purpose of this Strategy is to ensure that the resources available are targeted and used effectively to bring about improvements in the borough. This means:

- Being clear and agreeing about what we need to achieve so we are all pulling in the same direction
- Maximising the funding we can generate or draw in to benefit Halton and developing our own resources and the capacity to help ourselves
- Co-operating to be more effective, cutting out duplication and waste, and pooling the budgets, knowledge and efforts of different organisations and groups where this makes sense
- Listening and responding to what matters most to people locally
- Targeting what we do to where it can make most difference
- Doing the kind of things that experience has shown will really work and be successful
- Checking on progress, letting people know how we are doing, and adjusting where necessary to keep on track

Without the tools and the will to do the job, the improvements set out in this Strategy will not happen.

The LAA runs for three years. It is an important step, but only a step, in a much longer journey to build a better future for people in Halton. If we succeed in achieving our targets they will translate into real improvements for local people. This is why it is important to know how we are doing and what progress we are making in meeting the improvement targets we have set ourselves. By monitoring progress closely we can identify and build on successes, provide necessary assistance or support where progress has not met expectations, and adjust our efforts and resources to adapt to changing circumstances.

The forward programme of the Partnership in pursuit of the LAA will be reviewed and updated to ensure it responds to changing circumstances. As well as the high level scorecard, each Specialist Strategic Partnership will have a more detailed action plan. This will contain a richer hierarchy of outcomes, outputs, targets and milestones. Each Partnership will be accountable for its own performance and the Board will seek qualitative monitoring reports on how work is progressing. One of the key features of the LAA is the understanding of how each of the themes are linked and impact on each other. The LAA establishes the importance of a number of key crosscutting themes – especially the transformational issues - that are common across all Partnership activity. A Performance and Standards Group reporting directly

to the Board has been established. This group takes responsibility for all aspects of performance management and ensure proper oversight, scrutiny and accountability of all activities that take place under the auspices of the Partnership and this LAA.

Without proper information, and making it easily accessible to people, we are working in the dark in trying to bring about improvement in Halton. This covers information about local needs and conditions, and what people think is most important for their communities. It is about the information we need to understand what is likely to work well in achieving our targets for Halton. It's about keeping people – local people and partner organisations – in the picture about the progress we are making together.

The Partnership has made a big commitment to improving the way information is gathered, used and shared. Of particular note are:

- a) A data observatory has been set up to hold key statistical information on all aspects of living conditions in Halton. This will keep data at a variety of spatial levels – super output area, ward, neighbourhood and district level – and allow for comparison with our neighbours and regional and national averages. It will greatly help people to understand the geography and nature of disadvantage in Halton. It will be especially useful in informing the spatial targeting of activity under this LAA.
- b) The Partnership is setting up a database of consultation and community engagement in Halton. This will enable people to access a rich source of attitudinal data on a range of issues. It will also help people to plan and execute better community engagement in the borough. This is a key underpinning of this LAA.

Managing Risk

The Partnership recognises the scale of its ambition and is realistic in its expectations of what can be achieved given the scale of resources being deployed. It also recognises that risk management must be an integral part of the performance management framework and business planning process. This will increase the probability of success (and reduce the likelihood of failure) by identifying, evaluating and controlling the risks associated with the achievement of its objectives.

The risk management process focuses attention and resources on critical areas, provides more robust action plans and better informed decision-making. It also fosters a culture where uncertainty does not slow progress or stifle innovation and ensures the commitment and resources of the Partnership to produce positive outcomes.

As part of implementing this LAA the Partnership will use its agreed Risk Management Strategy and establish a Strategic Risk Register. This will set out the risk management objectives, the role and responsibilities for risk management of the Board and individual SSPs, and will the categorise risks and the approach to risk management action plans.

The risk management objectives include the;

- Adoption of Risk Management as a key part of the LAA
- Identification, evaluation and economic control of strategic and operational risks

- Promotion of ownership through increased levels of awareness and skills development

The Partnership's risks can be broadly categorised as either "strategic" or "operational". Strategic risks cover those threats or opportunities which could impact upon the achievement of medium and long-term goals. The review of strategic risks will be carried out in October/November 2006 when the LAA has been adopted. This will be followed up by an assessment of operational risks through each of the SSPs as part of their Action Planning of the LAA implementation process.

Equality & Diversity

The Partnership is determined to deliver its vision of a better future for Halton's people. We are committed to equality for everyone regardless of age, sex, caring responsibilities, race, religion, sexuality, or disability. We are leaders of the community and will not accept discrimination, victimisation or harassment. This commitment to equity and social justice is clearly stated in the adopted equal opportunities policy of the Partnership. This states that the Partnership:

- is committed to promoting equal opportunities in Halton
- values diversity and encourages fairness and justice
- wants equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation
- will combat discrimination and will use its position of influence in the borough, wherever possible, to help overcome discriminatory barriers

As well as accepting our legal responsibilities, we are committed to broad principles of social justice. The Partnership is opposed to any form of discrimination and oppression. Our policies will apply to all of those who come into contact with us. This includes current users of directly provided services, users of services provided on our behalf, potential users of services, other agencies and professionals, employees and job applicants, and the general public.

The Partnership wants to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued. Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability, age or any other unjustifiable reason will not be tolerated. As a Partnership we are committed to a programme of action to make this policy fully effective.

Partners will work collaboratively to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination and to share good practice. They will ensure that all services are provided fairly and without discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be made so that services are accessible to everyone who needs them. People's cultural and language needs will be recognised and services will be provided which are appropriate to these needs. Partners will monitor the take up of services from different sections of the population. The information collected will be used to inform service planning and delivery. Equality Impact Assessments will also be carried out on Partnership policies and services to assess how policies and services impact on different sections of the community. The results of the Equality Impact Assessments will highlight areas for improvement, which will be dealt with through the Partnership Improvement Plan.

Involving the Voluntary and Community Sector

The voluntary and community sector (VCS) are an integral part of the structure and activities of the Halton Strategic Partnership, and have been since its inception. A Compact governing relationships between the public sector and VCS has been in place for several years. A protocol governing these relationships within the LSP structure was agreed in 2005. In addition, the Partnership has spent a considerable time over the last year in developing a radical new approach to community engagement in the borough. The VCS plays a powerful role in developing the LAA, and will do so in its implementation. The HSP Board has already agreed that compact-plus principles will underpin the governance and operation of the LAA. HVA Together (the CEN) has taken the responsibility of working with partners to develop the Statement of Community Involvement that maps out the principles of this relationship in the LAA.

To develop our ambitions and priorities we have drawn on the consultation for the Community Strategy and analysis of all consultation exercises over the last year. Over the last 12 months the Halton Strategic Partnership has developed and agreed its Protocol with the voluntary sector. This build on the previous work to develop and implement Compact arrangement in Halton. We have worked closely with HVA Together (our Community Empowerment Network) to involve the voluntary and community sectors in the development of the LAA. At the outset there were briefings with the Halton Together Executive. In September, Halton Together organised a series of Forum meetings which focused on developing the LAA and the involvement of groups and individuals. Representatives of groups and networks have been involved both in the Lead Officers Group and the SSPs developing each block.

In response to developing the LAA and the subsequent challenge to deliver and achieve the outcomes, Halton Together has established its forums, corresponding to the blocks. This enables it to select its nominees to the SSPs and also provides a forum for them to debate issues and give feedback.

Within the agreement we have outcomes and indicators to show the growth and vibrancy of the sector and its capacity to contribute to the delivery of the LAA. Extensive consultation and engagement has taken place with the Voluntary and Community Sector on this. Annex E includes our Compulsory Statement of Community Involvement, and contains the detailed descriptions of the following:

- The governance arrangements for involving the Voluntary and Community Sector in the development of the Local Area Agreement;
- Summaries of the key issues arising from feedback from four major consultation events carried out on a Block-by-Block basis with the Voluntary and Community Sector;
- An explanation of how Voluntary and Community Sector will be critical to the delivery of the Agreement, together with key examples of Key Innovations and targets which demonstrate how community engagement is embedded within the Agreement

Priority Areas

In order to focus on “closing the gaps” we needed to identify a coherent set of priority geographic areas. In the past, available analysis has largely been at ward level. We now have excellent information available at the ward level of around 25,000 people

and are developing information at the “Super Output Area” level of around 3,000 people

The following wards have been selected as those for which “closing the gap” targets across the LAA will be monitored. The wards were identified on the basis of census and IMD data:

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F

Progress in outcomes will be monitored to evidence “closing the gap” between these wards and Halton average outcomes. These wards have amongst the highest Multiple Deprivation Index scores in Halton and in England. In all of the priority wards, over xx% of the ward population are in Super Output Areas (SOA’s) that are amongst the 10% most deprived in England. All six wards have unemployment rates above the Halton average of 3.5%. All priority wards have Long Term Limiting Illness rates above the national.

For some targets, there are additional parts of Halton with poor outcomes in particular areas. In these cases the individual target specifies which additional areas are involved. During the first year of the Agreement, we will refine this analysis to look at smaller Super Output Areas to identify patches of poor outcomes within wards across Halton, and looking at neighbourhoods which “make sense” to local people.

Detailed maps of the key target outcomes across Halton, down to “Super Output Area” level, are being developed as part of the Halton Data Observatory development. These will enable very targeted approaches to achieving improvements in these outcomes. Some of our neighbourhoods face particularly widespread and deep difficulties. Areas of Halton have already benefited from local initiatives such as SRB. We will use a new government grant (the Neighbourhood Element) to co-ordinate local services and support community engagement, starting in neighbourhoods in the six eligible LAA priority wards. It will employ innovative neighbourhood management practices and models to deliver sustainable change. This will include the reconfiguration of local public services so that they better meet the needs of local people, and thereby help to close the gap by reducing a number of deprivation differentials, which exist between the area and more affluent parts of Halton.

Performance management arrangements

The LAA sets out clear targets for outcomes in the five thematic block areas and on key cross-cutting transformational issues. The Halton Strategic Partnership Board (HSPB) has delegated responsibility for developing and monitoring delivery of the annual LAA Action plan to the Performance and Standards Group (PSG). The PSG will review delivery of the LAA targets and operational plan actions on a six-monthly basis, with lighter-touch intermediate quarterly reviews of financial performance. The HSPB and PSG are supported by a dedicated performance management capacity from the Halton Strategic Partnership Team. They will continue to be supported by the Council’s Corporate Policy and Performance Team. The existing performance

management framework of the Partnership has been updated and revised to take account of the needs of LAA management. This is attached at Annex D.

The performance management framework will be comprehensive, strategic and operational. It will test the vision and approach of the LAA, including its preventative, sustainable and targeted aspects, and the priorities. This will include taking account of existing and emerging borough wide, regional and national frameworks and initiatives that provide useful information and intelligence about the performance of Halton. It is designed to plan, monitor and review in a timely manner and will include targeted and LAA-wide evaluations. During the first year of LAA we will develop an annual trajectory for each of the three years of the Agreement, building on the trajectory analysis produced for the LSP review in 2006.

Our thematic partnerships – the SSPs - will be responsible for the delivery of the relevant “block” outcomes of the LAA. SSPs will review their arrangements to ensure these are “fit for purpose” to ensure delivery of the LAA. Responsibility for individual targets in the LAA will be clearly designated in the action plan to be developed before the spring, with particular lead partners with named lead officers. Each partner’s normal accountability and corporate governance procedures apply to the initiatives they take responsibility for.

The role of the PSG is to:

- Prepare an annual LAA action plan for Board approval
- Review, and where necessary challenge, the annual action plans prepared by thematic partnerships (SSPs) and recommend their approval to the BSP Board
- Monitor performance against LAA targets twice a year and monitor financial performance quarterly
- Ensure effective arrangements are in place to collect and analyse information to support the development, monitoring and delivery of the LAA
- Undertake performance management action as outlined below

The Halton Partnership team supports the PSG. It is advising on the development and maintenance of information systems and analysis to support the LAA and its implementation. The Team will help join-up the performance management arrangements across all partnerships and help to ensure that action is effectively coordinated

The SSPs - thematic partnerships - are responsible for the overall delivery of the relevant block outcomes. They are primarily accountable for delivery against the LAA. Their role is to:

- Prepare an annual action plan for the block for submission to the PSG
- Monitor performance against LAA targets twice a year and monitor financial performance quarterly
- Undertake performance management action as outlined below.

SSPs are reviewing their arrangements to ensure that they are adequate for managing delivery of the relevant LAA outcomes. They will agree how responsibility for individual targets in the LAA is allocated to a lead partner and named lead officer. All agencies contributing to the delivery of a target will be expected, as part of their normal accountability and governance arrangements, to ensure:

- Appropriate delivery plans are in place

- Robust data on performance against target is collected and reported in accordance with overall arrangements for monitoring the LAA
- Under-performance against agreed targets and outcomes can be promptly addressed.

All action plans will include appropriate tracking of performance at six-monthly or more frequent interval (except where outcome data is only available annually – for example, for school examination results). A "monitoring level" will also be set for targets: this will be the level that triggers performance management action. The PSG will agree all targets and "monitoring levels" through its oversight of annual action plans.

Ladder of intervention

Our annual planning cycle is designed to fit with the established budgetary and project management cycles of partners in Halton. In summary, the planning cycle for the LAA is as follows:

Timing	Activity	Outputs
July- Sept	Annual review of progress against LAA outcome targets and delivery of previous year's action plan	Report to HSP Board Annual report. Financial report.
Aug – Oct	Draft action plans submitted by SSPs (covering proposed activities, outcomes and funding arrangements). PSG to challenge prioritization and plausibility.	Feedback to SSPs. Report to HSP Board on draft plans, including recommendations for changes. Financial report.
Nov	Mid-year (Apr-Sept) update on spending and activities (against action plan) from SSPs.	Exception / summary report to HSP Board. Performance report. GONW Monitoring Meeting
Dec	Finalised action plans submitted by SSPs. PSG challenge as appropriate.	Final proposed operational plan to HSP Board. Financial report.
Feb/March	Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec) update on spending and activities (against action plan) from SSPs	Exception / summary report to HSP Board. Financial report.
May	End of year update on spending and activities (against action plan) from SSPs	Exception / summary report to HSP Board. Performance report.

Tackling under-performance will be the greatest challenge for the performance management regime in the wider LAA context. A three-stage process is proposed for

the LAA. This ladder of intervention will be reviewed over time. However, from the outset we intend to put in place systems which provide clear monitoring and reporting and make available a mutually accountable and supportive approach to enable partners to improve performance. This reporting would result in a clear picture of performance against the LAA in our annual report and then provides the basis for future planning as LAA implementation rolls forward.

For specific funding streams, performance management action could be triggered when performance against a particular target fails to achieve the agreed "monitoring level".

- Stage 1 If a six monthly monitoring report shows that performance against the action plan or a particular target has failed to achieve the agreed "monitoring level", the lead partner will be expected to take appropriate action, working as appropriate with other agencies. It will be asked to report on progress to the relevant SSP within three months.
- Stage 2. If a six monthly monitoring report shows that performance against the action plan or target has failed to achieve the agreed monitoring level for two consecutive six monthly periods, the SSP will be expected to agree with the relevant agencies a plan to tackle the under-performance. It will be asked to report on progress to the PSG within three months.
- Stage 3. If performance continues to fall below expected levels despite action by the SSP, the PSG will nominate one of its members to agree a revised plan to tackle under-performance, details of which will be reported to the PSG within three months.

The PSG will retain the right, in consultation with the relevant SSP, to trigger performance management action at either Stage 1, 2 or 3 in other circumstances where there is evidence of under-performance against target. The PSG will report every six months to the Board on all performance management actions at Stages 2 and 3. These arrangements will be implemented and tested during the first year of the LAA 2006/7.

Partnership Strategies and Plans

Delivering on the LAA also means ensuring that all our strategies and plans together. The main strategies and plans which underpin our priorities are:

- Local Development Framework.
- Integrated Equality & Diversity Policies.
- Economic Development & Tourism Strategy.
- Town Centre Strategies.
- Local Transport Plan.
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Plan
- Education Development Plan.
- Children & Young People's Plan.
- Health Strategy.
- Sport Strategy.
- Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People.
- Air Quality Action Plan.
- Climate Protection and Sustainable Energy Strategy.

- Household Waste Management Strategy.
- Halton Community Strategy.
- Crime and Drugs Strategy.
- Housing Strategy.
- The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services
- Healthy Schools Standards and Plan
- Local Safeguarding Children Board Plan
- Looked After Children Strategy
- Building Bridges Strategy for Children with Disabilities
- Halton and Warrington Youth Justice Plan
- The Local Delivery Plans of the Health Trusts
- Cheshire Fire Service Plan
- Cheshire Constabulary Plan
- Cheshire Probation Plan
- Cheshire Criminal Justice Board Plan
- Safer Halton Partnership Plan

The LAA is linked to this whole range of other plans, strategies and reports. These fit together as a system designed to achieve progress on Halton's key strategic priorities and to deliver improvement for local people.