HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Business Planning and Resources

SERVICE PLAN

April 2007 to March 2010

Advanced Draft 08.02.07

Contents

1.0   INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified **6 key priorities,** which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**

- **Halton's Urban Renewal**

- **Halton's Children & Young People**

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

- **A Safer Halton**

- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

The primary purpose of Service Plans is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council. They are an essential tool for making key decisions about future service provision and the level of resources required. Additionally the service plan is designed to enable the public, Elected Members and staff to monitor how well this part of the Council is performing in improving the quality of life for local people.

2.0   SERVICE PROFILE

2.1 Purpose

Business, Planning and Resources is a new Department created by the Children's Services restructure and came into existence on 1st September 2006. The aim of the Department is to provide centralised support services to the whole Directorate, and Schools, bringing together major functions that were previously spread across the former Departments. The Department consists of 3 divisions providing a range of functions and details of each Division are as follows;

Management Information and Communication Division is responsible for a wide range of statutory data returns required by the DfES; it collects, collates, processes and analyses data in support of directorate service planning and performance analysis; it supports the information and communication technology infrastructure required by the Directorate and schools to carry out their various responsibilities and implements the agreed Management Information Strategy. It also maintains the Halton Children and Young People's Database and its associated modules. This database provides a range of information including data on attainment, attendance, exclusions, ethnicity, free school meals, looked after children and post codes. As part of the directorate restructure the Division has also taken on responsibility for maintaining and developing the Carefirst Database, which stores social care client records. The Division provides schools with a Service Level Agreement to support their Information Management Software (SIMS) and is responsible for supporting the development of the Intranet and Internet sites. The Division also manages ICT purchases, the Directorates ICT and E-Governments initiatives.

Planning and Performance Division is responsible for performance analysis and quality assurance of services across the directorate to underpin continuous service improvement. It is also responsible for the commissioning function and the putting in place and monitoring contracts for commissioned services. The Division has the workforce and training function with a centralised training team for the Directorate established as part of the restructure. It is responsible for planning processes including the development and co-ordination of Service Plans and Priority Action Plans. The Division also has the lead for Equality and Diversity and the production and co-ordination of the Directorates policies and procedures. The complaints function is included within this area and an integrated system for dealing with complaints across the Directorate is being developed.

Finance and Resources Division is responsible for financial management of the Directorate and schools including the determination of the school funding formula and significant external funding for a wide range of initiatives. It provides emergency and technical services to schools and bids for, develops and manages the directorate's capital programme through the Asset Management Process. The support services provided by both the Council and externally brokered services are co-ordinated through the division. It is responsible for the provision of a co-ordinated approach to health and safety along with the management of sickness absence. The assessment and processing of free school meals entitlements, admission arrangements and transport is undertaken within the division. Administrative and support arrangements which support the directorate are delivered through the division.

2.2 Key Messages

The Department was established during the previous year so the biggest challenge for all Divisions has been to manage the process of change. This has included the integration of staff previously based in a number of different settings into centralised teams and the challenges that process has brought. A significant factor in this process has been the disaggregation of services from Health & Community with the transfer of a number of staff and associated budgets that were previously part of Policy and Support Department within Social Services.

A clearer focus is provided for all services supporting children and young people as a result of the Children Act 2004 and Every Child Matters. The integration of what was previously Education & Social Inclusion Directorate with Children's Social Care, to become the Children & Young People Directorate has enabled all services to focus upon the 5 high level outcomes identified for children:

ECM1   Being healthy
ECM2   Staying Safe
ECM3   Enjoying and achieving
ECM4   Making a positive contribution
ECM5   Achieving economic well being

Working within a coherent framework under the Director of Children's Services, it is intended that services will work better together, not only across the new Directorate, but also across the Council and all partner agencies providing services for children.

The Children and Young Peoples Plan is the multi agency plan which outlines how agencies will work together to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes. The main multi agency activities are:

- Improvement & integration of universal services (early years, schools, health services, play & recreation)
- Child-centred services e.g. extended schools, children's centres, multi-disciplinary teams
- Refocusing on early intervention to prevent escalation of problems
- Narrowing the gap between children and young people doing well and those not doing well
- Community based services delivered through Children and Young People Area Networks (CYPAN's)

9 priorities have been identified for the Directorate and agreed with the DfES, CSCI, OFSTED and GONW. These are:

Priority 1 -   Outcomes for LAC
Priority 2 -   Attendance
Priority 3 -   SEN Services
Priority 4 -   Attainment and Achievement
Priority 5 -   CAMHS Services
Priority 6 -   Teenage Pregnancy
Priority 7 -   Exclusions
Priority 8 -   14-19 Strategy
Priority 9 -   School Organisation

Business, Planning and Resources will support the work of the directorate towards all of these priorities and the some of the key functions in the Department

such as IT, Workforce and Finance will underpin work towards the priority. While by necessity all of the services within Business, Planning and Resources contribute towards all of the Priorities, strategic lead is given to the following:

Priority 9 -   School organisation with a particular focus on the reduction of surplus places, Building Schools for the Future project and the renewal of primary capital.

Priority Actions Plans exist for each of the new areas identified and the original objectives are incorporated within this Service Plan.   Appropriately and importantly, each of the priorities support the broader Council's priorities.
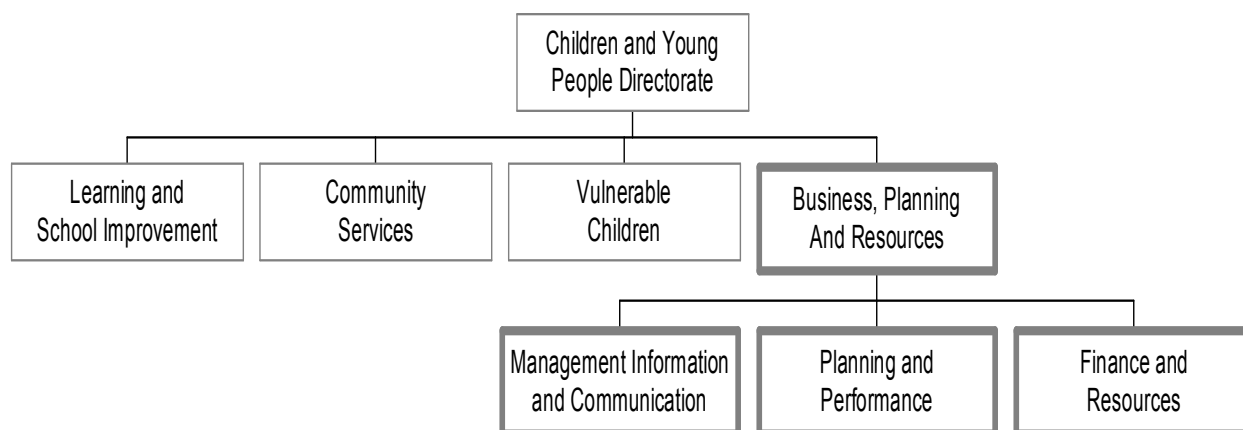
The Annual Performance Assessment judgements for Children's Services are on a scale of 1 to 4 ranging from 1 'a service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users (Inadequate) to 4 'a service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users (Excellent/Outstanding).   Halton's 2006 APA Judgements were as follows;

Area for Judgement	Grade Awarded
The contribution of the local authority's children's services in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	3
The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people	3
The contribution of the local authority's social care services in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	4

In addition the contribution of services to achieving the five outcomes was rated as excellent for Staying Safe and good for the other four outcomes. Key strengths were identified under each of the five outcomes and the following strengths related to the work of the Department were identified;

• Strategic planning and allocation of resources
• Partnership working
• Data analysis and progress monitoring

2.3 Organisation Structure

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                          ┌──────────────────┐
                          │ Children and Young│
                          │ People Directorate│
                          └──────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────┬───────────┴──────────┬──────────────────┐
┌───────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│ Learning and  │ │ Community    │ │ Vulnerable   │ │ Business, Planning│
│School Improvement│ │ Services   │ │ Children     │ │ And Resources    │
└───────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────────┘
                            ┌──────────────┬──────┴───────┬──────────────┐
                   ┌───────────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
                   │Management Information│ │ Planning and │ │ Finance and  │
                   │ and Communication  │ │ Performance  │ │ Resources    │
                   └───────────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
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Staffing

	Management Information & Communication		Planning & Performance		Finance and Resources	
	F.T.E	Headcount	F.T.E	Headcount	F.T.E	Headcount
Managerial	3	3	3	3	2	2
Professional/ Technical	21	22	16	16	9	9
Administrative/ Clerical	0	0	10	12	18	19
Front Line	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total	24	25	29	31	31	32

3.0 AIMS OF THE SERVICE

The Council has identified six key strategic priorities that are detailed within the introduction to this plan. Whilst the majority of Council services will contribute in some way to each of these priorities those that are most relevant to the Business, Planning and Resources Department, and the Service Aims associated with them are: -

Corporate Priority 3:   **Halton's Children and Young People**

Area of Focus 15:   To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources

Service Aims:

SA 1:   To ensure children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and to achieve highly (KJ 3.4)
Service Objective BPR 1

Corporate Priority 6:   **Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency**

Area of Focus 31:   Working with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.

Service Aims:

SA 2:   To ensure performance management is used to drive improvements in outcomes (KJ 6.4c)
Service Objective BPR 6

Area of Focus 32:   Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access

Service Aims:

SA 3:   To ensure directorate is implementing appropriate equality schemes including impact assessments (KJ 6.1b)
Service Objective BPR 9

SA 4:   To ensure the needs of individual children, young people and families are effectively identified, recorded and communicated (KJ 6.3c)
Service Objective BPR 10

Area of Focus 34:   Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders.

Service Aims:

SA 5: To ensure capacity is used efficiently and effectively to deliver ambitions, priorities and value for money (KJ 6.3b)
Service Objective BPR 2

Area of Focus 35: Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.

Service Aims:

SA 5: To ensure capacity is used efficiently and effectively to deliver ambitions, priorities and value for money (KJ 6.3b)
Service Objective BPR 7

Area of Focus 38: Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.

Service Aims:

SA 2: To ensure performance management is used to drive improvements in outcomes (KJ 6.4c)
Service Objectives BPR 4 and BPR 8

Area of Focus 39: Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information

Service Aims:

SA 5: To ensure capacity is used efficiently and effectively to deliver ambitions, priorities and value for money (KJ 6.3b)
Service Objective BPR 3

Area of Focus 40: Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.

Service Aims:

SA 5: To ensure capacity is used efficiently and effectively to deliver ambitions, priorities and value for money (KJ 6.3b)
Service Objective BPR 5

4.0 FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE

4.1 External Factors

4.1.1 Political

Every Child Matters: Change for Children Agenda introduced a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:
- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

The Agenda promotes early intervention and co-ordinated service provision delivered through stronger partnership working and children's trusts.

Halton Community Strategy 2006-2011 identifies 5 priorities, which for the first time includes children and young people as a specific theme. The Children and Young People's Commissioning Partnership was established following this decision, and functions as the Specialist Strategic Partnership for Children and Young People. The Partnership also holds responsibility for implementing the practical arrangements needed to implement a Children's Trust, functions as a forum for the Alliance Board Task Group Chairs and for driving the joint commissioning agenda.

Children & Young People's Alliance Board functions as the Children's Trust, and is responsible for strategic planning of services to children and young people, including developing and implementing the Children and Young People's Plan and Children's Trust arrangements. The work of the Alliance Board is underpinned by the Halton Multi-Agency Compact, which sets out the responsibilities of Halton Borough Council and its Partner agencies on the Board.

Directorate Restructure: The management structure of the Children and Young People's Directorate was re-engineered in September 2006 to address the challenging agenda presented by Every Child Matters and ensure the Directorate is fit to deliver a modern and improved service to children and young people.

Halton Safeguarding Children Board was established in April 2006 in line with the requirements of the Children Act 2004, and links into the Halton Children & Young People's Strategic Planning arrangements and the Halton Children & Young Peoples Plan. The Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

Joint Area Reviews: New arrangements for inspection of children's services at local authority area level were introduced by the Children Act 2004. Joint Area Reviews will look at how services are working together locally to improve outcomes. They evaluate the collective contributions made to each outcome by relevant services and examine the involvement of children, young people and their parents in service planning structures. Halton's Joint Area Review is planned for March 2008.

4.1.2 Economic Climate

Deprivation: The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for 2004 suggests that deprivation has improved in the Borough. In 2004 the IMD ranked Halton as 21st most deprived Authority in England compared to 16th in the 2000 Index. However, it still ranks as one of the most deprived districts in England. Although located in Cheshire, Halton shares many of the social and economic problems more associated with its urban neighbours on Merseyside. Halton is ranked in the IMD as the 3rd highest authority in terms of deprivation on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 5th highest in the North West. Neighbouring authorities St Helens (36th), Wirral (48th) and Sefton (78th,) are way down the table compared to Halton.

Halton has some of the most deprived wards in the country in terms of child poverty. Several parts of Halton are amongst the poorest in the country. In Widnes, the most deprived areas are Kingsway, Riverside and Appleton. In Runcorn, the most deprived areas are Castlefields, Halton Lea and Windmill Hill. However, there are many affluent areas of the borough as well. These are located mainly on the outskirts of both towns and comprise of several new housing estates.

Employment: Claimant unemployment in the Borough fell from 5.0% in January 2000 to 3.1% in November 2005. However, Halton still had the 5th highest claimant rate in the North West in November 2005. Research shows that the skill base of the local area is relatively poor compared to the United Kingdom as a whole and surrounding local economies. Halton has a low percentage of adults with further education qualifications and low rates of numeracy and literacy. All told, there is a mismatch between skills in the local workforce and jobs available in the borough, and it is anticipated that in the future over 95% of new jobs will need qualifications of at least NVQ 2 level and over 70% at NVQ 3 and above.

4.1.3 Social Factors

Demographic changes: The mid-2005 population of Halton stood at 118,800 (rounded up to the nearest 100 people). This is down from the mid-2004 population of 118,900. Halton has a larger number of people in the 5-24 age categories than across England as a whole. This is partly down to the influence of Runcorn New Town where a lot of younger people live.

The birth rate in Halton is declining, and this is already being seen in the falling numbers on roll in the district's primary schools. In January 2003 pupil numbers in Halton's Primary schools were over 1000 fewer than their net capacity. This will, naturally work its way through the system and result in reducing pupil numbers in secondary education and FE. This could lead to the problem of surplus Secondary school places across the borough in the near future.

The next ten years will see a reduction in teenagers by 20%. 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.

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.

4.1.4 Technological Developments

Integrated Children's System: There have been delays in progressing the implementation of ICS although full implementation is now on target for March 2007. This reflects the national situation, with a recent DfES review finding that only a minority of local authorities would achieve full implementation by the DfES deadline of January 2007. ICS will provided an electronic recording system for social care through the development of web based E-Forms that integrate directly with the client database, Carefirst.

Electronic Social Care Record is now scheduled for introduction during 2007-08. Phase 2 development, which will incorporate legislative and practice changes and address connectivity issues, has been postponed by the DfES and further guidance is awaited.

Child Index: The Index will be a secure electronic tool that will enable authorised practitioners working with the same child or young person to find one another quickly and easily so they can provide more effective support to them and their families. Halton has been designated as an early adopter authority. The first user live date for Halton is January 2008, and the Index has a national implementation date of April 2008.

Electronic Common Assessment Framework: Halton has established a multi-agency group to oversee the development of an electronic CAF system (eCAF). The system has been built on the Children and Young People's Database, and will be piloted with practitioners from a range of voluntary and statutory agencies between January and June 2007.

4.1.5 Legislative

Children Act 2004 provides the legislative spine for the Every Child Matters agenda. It aims to minimize the risks and improve outcomes for children and young people by transforming the way children's services are organised and improving joint working between agencies. The Children Act is supported by a wide range of guidance regarding strategic planning, safeguarding, service delivery and local engagement.

The Every Child Matters agenda arising out of the Children Act provides the framework for the development of integrated service delivery for children and moves towards Children's Trusts. The act also established the key strategic roles of Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services. It also introduced a single Children & Young People's plan covering all services to children to focus strategic planning.

Adoption and Children Act 2002 became operational from December 2005, introducing comprehensive changes to adoption services. The Act makes the child's welfare the paramount consideration in all the decisions by courts and introduces the use of the 'welfare checklist' into adoption work. It also highlights the need to prevent delay in planning for permanence and adoption and places a

duty on local authorities to ensure that the support and financial assistance needed is available to people affected by adoption. The Adoption and Fostering Service has been restructured in order to ensure services are delivered in accordance with the new legislation.

Childcare Act 2006: The new Childcare Act aims to transform childcare and early years services in England, taking forward some of the key commitments from the Ten Year Childcare Strategy, published in December 2004. The Act will require authorities to improve the five Every Child Matters outcomes for all pre-school children and reduce inequalities in these outcomes, secure sufficient childcare for working parents and provide a better parental information service. The Act also reforms and simplifies early years regulation and inspection arrangements. It is anticipated that the main provisions of the Act will come into effect in 2008.

Local Government White Paper Strong and Prosperous Communities: The White Paper promotes community and neighbourhood engagement, and will strengthen the council's role in leading community-wide improvements . It develops the role of overview and scrutiny in relation to external bodies, and provides new requirements on service providers to engage with Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements. There are changed requirements for council constitutions, and announced changes to the performance management and inspection regimes.

"Care Matters : Transforming the Lives of Children in Care:" The Green Paper, was launched for consultation in October 2006 and sets out a radical package of proposals for transforming the lives of children in care, and will have major resource implications. Proposals are made regarding better support for those on the edge of the care system; making sure there is a more consistent adult in each child's life to fulfil the state's responsibilities as corporate parent; provision of stable, high quality placements; a place in a good school and support for further education; support for all aspects of children's lives outside schools; supporting children to make the transition into adult life and clear and strong accountability to make the whole system focus on the needs of children in care.

Education and Inspections Act 2006: In autumn 2005 the Government published *Higher Standards, Better Schools For All,* the Schools White Paper. The White Paper contained proposals aimed at ensuring that every child in every school in every community gets the education they need to enable them to fulfil their potential. The White Paper received Royal Assent on 8 November 2006 and became the Education and Inspections Act 2006. As well as giving legal force to many of the proposals in the White Paper, the Act contains some additional measures that were not in the original document, including a duty on governing bodies to promote well-being and community cohesion, and to take the Children and Young People's Plan into consideration when undertaking this duty.

Extended Schools Prospectus 2005: The prospectus sets the agenda for all schools and children and families to be able to access a core of extended services which are developed through multi-agency partnership. Extended services can include childcare, adult education, parenting support programmes, community-based health and social care services, multi-agency behaviour support teams and after-school activities.

14-19 strategy aims to develop a coherent 14-19 phase of education where young people are committed to continuing learning whether in school, college or the workplace. The Strategy aims to encourage more young people to stay in school beyond 16 by increasing curriculum flexibility and choice, extending the program of studies for learners in the16-19 age group and improve the vocational offer.

4.1.6 Environmental

There are no environmental factors likely to impact on this service area during the period covered by this plan.

4.2 Service Developments

Children and Young People's Plan: In line with the Children Act 2004, the Halton Children and Young People's Plan brings together all agencies and services within Halton, not just those delivered by the Council, and sets out joint priorities and joint activities to improve outcomes for children and young people. All Council Directorates, local Health Trusts, Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire Probation Service, The Youth Offending Team, Connexions, Learning and Skills Council, Education Business Partnership and a range of voluntary sector services contributed to the Plan. Most importantly, it takes into account consultations held with children, young people and their parents and carers across Halton and reflects their aspirations and views.

Consultation Activity: A participation strategy was produced in 2004 in order to ensure that children, young people and their families are given the opportunity to be fully engaged in strategic planning and shaping services. In line with the strategy, a process of consultation has been undertaken in respect of the changes to the design and delivery of children's services.

A major piece of consultation regarding the planning of services for children and young people was undertaken between November 2005 and February 2006, to inform the Children and Young People's Plan. A questionnaire was published on the Halton Website and in the Halton Borough Council magazine which is delivered to every household in Halton. The questionnaire was also circulated to primary and secondary schools and distributed through partner agencies. Almost 400 responses were received from young people and over 100 from adults. In addition to the above survey, 115 staff from across all partner agencies attended consultation/ briefings and were able to feed into the planning process by giving their views about priorities areas for action. The findings these consultations were taken into account in developing the Halton Children and Young People's Plan, including identifying priorities and setting performance targets.

In addition to this specific consultation exercise, the strategic management structure was designed to ensure that the engagement of children and young people and their carers is central to all processes. There is a high level of participation of Looked After Children in reviews and service planning using child friendly processes and consultation methods. A parent and carers forum was established, and has a parent/carer representative on the Alliance Board and each of the Task Groups. The Board facilitated a comprehensive process to elect the Borough-wide Youth Forum and Member of Youth Parliament. 123 young people from a variety of backgrounds attended area based residential events where they learned about the democratic process. This formed the basis for the selection process for the youth

forum and the MYP. All 11 – 18 year olds received a National Democracy Week information pack and 5228 eligible young people voted.

Annual Performance Assessment: The 2006 annual performance assessment of services for children and young people found that Halton consistently delivers above minimum requirements for children and young people, and that the contribution of services to outcomes is excellent in the area of staying safe and good in the remaining areas. Areas for development, to be focused on in future APAs and the Joint Area Review, are:

- Testing out the impact of a comprehensive CAMHS.
- The effectiveness of measures to reduce the rate of reprimands, final warnings and convictions amongst looked after children in Halton's care.
- Young people's attainment of qualifications at Key Stage 4 and post-16 and unauthorised absence and exclusion rates in secondary schools.

A review of the funding formula for special schools commenced in 2006/2007 and will be completed and implemented in 2008/2009.   The outcome of this review will be to ensure that the current funding formula is revised to reflect the re-designation of each of the four special schools, promote inclusive practice and effectively target resources to need. Development of the special schools funding formula is being undertaken in collaboration with Stockport, Salford and Oldham Local Authorities.

Work continued in 2006/2007 on re-aligning nursery, primary and secondary schools funding allocations, reviewing the funding of special needs and the allocation methodology for deprivation for Halton schools. Consultation will be undertaken in 2007/2008 for implementation in 2008/2009.

A Scrutiny Review on Out of borough Pupils was undertaken in 2006/2007 with the intention of identifying the number of pupils educated outside the borough, the reason for this choice and the impact on the boroughs budget and performance.

Halton Parent and Carer Forum has been established and the database currently holds the names of 44 parents across the borough whom are willing to be involved in the consultation on children and young people service planning and delivery. Direct communication links between the Forum and Halton Children and Young People Alliance Board. Halton Youth Service has conducted consultation with the forum on their service delivery plan and plans are in place to consult in the every near future on the authorities Anti bullying policy.

4.3   Efficiency Improvements

A range of efficiency gains have been identified within the Directorate which represent both cashable and non-cashable efficiencies.   Cashable efficiencies have been identified in a number of key budget areas such as out of borough placements, agency provision, supplies and services and staffing.

Through the re-designation of Halton Special Schools and the more effective use of the Key Stage 4 PRU along with the review of other special needs provision it is estimated that the numbers of pupils with special needs educated out of borough can be reduced. This is currently a key budget pressure for the directorate.

Opportunities have been taken to realign funding to meet the Directorates priorities through the cessation of a number of posts where these roles are no longer required or can be delivered in a more costs effective fashion.

Non-cashable savings will be produced through a range of initiatives such as the improvement in the percentage of statements processed within the 18 weeks period using the existing staffing resource.

4.4   National, Regional & Sub-Regional Focus

All service areas actively participate in regional and national groups relating to their work.   Representatives are involved in the following groups:

Learn Together Partnership
Regional Workforce Development Group
Social Services Research Group
North West Commissioning Group
North West IS Index group (Halton is an 'Early Adopter')
North West ICS Group
North West Training Group
North West Complaints Officers Group

4.5   Equal Opportunities

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and combating discrimination and victimisation within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and framework documents that underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services it delivers.

The Council fully supports the broad principles of social justice and will oppose any form of discrimination and oppression. Council policy will apply to all of those who come into contact with it, i.e. those who presently use directly provided services of services provided on the Council's behalf; potential users of services; other agencies and professional; employees and job applicants; and the general public.

During the course of 2006 – 07 all Council Services conducted Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all policies, procedures and practices within their area.

As a result this department developed an Equalities Action Plan, which is subject to an annual review, that identified a number of low / medium priority areas for action that will be taken during the lifetime of this plan (refer section 6.3).

4.6   Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon

as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report 'by exception' to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen developments occur. Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of the unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

All reports to the Policy and Performance Boards with the exception of Part II items, are publicly available documents and can be accessed through the Council's website at http://www2.halton.gov.uk/

5.0 RESOURCES

5.1 Budget Summary and Service Costs

To be added when Budget for 2007-08 is finalised

5.2 Future Staffing Requirements

Year	Managerial	Professional/ Technical	Administrative/ Clerical	Front Line
2007/08	No Change*	No Change*	No Change*	No Change*
2008/09	No Change*	No Change*	No Change*	No Change*

*It is difficult at this stage to project or anticipate future staffing requirements. Work is currently being undertaken, under in conjunction with consultants from Manchester University, to develop a Halton Children's Workforce Development strategy. Steps are currently being taken to secure improved efficiencies through pooling of budgets and reconfiguration of service delivery. Future grant funding streams and budget constraints will also inform future staffing levels.

5.3 Future ICT Requirements

The ICT Development Plan looks forward to developments over 3 years 2006-2009. The most significant developments centre around the continuing developments to the Halton Children and Young People's Database and the Social Care system – Care First and the Integrated Children System (ICS) and the increasing amount of tracking data and the need to provide comprehensive analysis and reports. This will be further impacted upon with the demands for development / introduction of these major projects –

IS – Information Sharing Child Index: NW authorities were invited to become early adopters of the Child Index and Halton has agreed to become an early adopter authority. As part of the required development of the national Child Index it is vital that access to the current CYP database can be undertaken on the web by all relevant practitioners in Halton. All LA's need to develop a content management CYP local directory. The system needs to be web based to allow all practitioners to report on their involvement with the child/young person. The system will then via XML reports link to update the National IS Index. In order to do this we need to purchase Synergy gateway from Tribal Software Solutions – this is a fully integrated web portal to the CYP database designed to underpin multi agency collaboration.

OLM Carefirst 6 Software – this will include the incorporation of the developments required Integrated Children System (ICS) together with the Electronic Social Care Record. To enable the project to be implemented post April 2007 the following is essential – OLM Consultancy and Project Management Issues. Additional IT infrastructure / servers are also required , There is a statutory requirement on the authority to store electronically all letters/reports etc. relating to Children Social Care records. This will involve all current, archived and future records. The process will require new IT infrastructure, scanning and new working arrangements to be introduced – in particular a new content

management   process   will   be   need
to be adopted. Resources will be required to work on all current and historical
records.

Building Schools for the Future: Key to the success of BSF is the integration of
learning and teaching, physical environment/buildings, infrastructure and
technologies.   None can be considered in isolation. Information and
communications technology (ICT) is a core part of the programme with specified
funding provision. Our vision is for an ICT enabled learning community, building
on our current ICT strategy. Through BSF, ICT will transform the way that
education is delivered in Halton. The BSF ICT strategy opens the way to a new
pedagogy, making it easier for teachers to plan and access high quality materials,
help pupils and their parents to explore their subjects they are studying. The use
of new technology will energise learners and practitioners. ICT will enable
practitioners to personalise learning. We aim to develop and exploit ICT as part of
our overall programme to raise standards. Building Schools for the Future will
deliver the following:

Increased maintenance and increased costs for the Halton Children and Young
People's Database and Carefirst 6i and their associated modules will impact on
resources and growth items will be required. The relatively small amount of
capacity within the directorate for these tasks suggests that growth will be
required unless central support services are able to widen their support or that
additional   resources   can   be   made   available   within   the   directorate.

The directorate has a significant number of PCs that are out of warranty or will
shortly be out of warranty. A capital bid ahs been submitted to enable the
replacement PCs/laptops that will be coming out of warranty in the 2007/08
financial year – 3 years for laptops and 5 years for desktops.

An investment of capital resources at least at current levels is necessary to tackle
effectively our duty to promote effective learning environments in our schools,
which include keeping pace with technological advances. In addition, there are
issues related to condition, suitability, accessibility and security which demand an
ongoing prioritised programme if learners' interests are to be adequately
safeguarded and promoted.

5.4   Future Accommodation/Property Requirements

In order to participate in the Building Schools for the Future initiative and access
Primary Capital Funding the borough will need to commence a reorganisation of
its school provision to establish the best community solution to learning provision
for the 21st Century. The outcome of the review of nursery, primary, secondary
and special provision will be the provision of facilities that are inclusive, improve
the learning environment, are accessible, provide choice to young people and
their families and are considered major community resource. Both BSF and
Primary Capital provide Halton with a once in a lifetime opportunity to modernise
the physical and learning environment and transform learning outcomes for
children and young people.

The second phase of the development of Children' Centres will be complete by
March 2008 providing flexible, multi-agency services to meet the needs of
children, young people and their families.

The opportunity for the more effective organisation and deployment of CYPD Staff to ensure the most appropriate location for service delivery will be provided following the re-location of the Permanence Team and the Adoption and Fostering Teams from Grosvenor House to Midwood House in 2007. A more comprehensive assessment of the Directorates accommodation requirements will then be undertaken in 2008 following the transfer of the Housing and Community Directorate staff from Grosvenor House to Runcorn Town Hall.

6.0 SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Plans are no use if they do not produce real results. We need to set targets and measure our performance to know if we are achieving the improvements intended. Various types of indicator are used here to do this:

- **Objectives and Key Milestones. These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2007–10, such as the launch of new initiatives, production of key plans and strategies and progress on major projects†**

- **Performance Indicator Targets. These show performance on indicators that are prescribed by central Government as part of their drive to ensure that councils deliver best value in serving their local communities.**

- **Local Performance Indicators. These show performance on indicators that the Department or the Council has adopted locally themselves and those adopted from national and other sources.**

- **Local Public Service Agreement Targets. Such targets are the result of an agreement between the local authority and the Government. This agreement sets out the authority's commitment to deliver specific improvements in performance and the Governments commitment to reward these improvements.**

- **National Floor Targets. These are targets that set a minimum standard for disadvantaged groups or areas or a narrowing of the gap between such areas and the rest of the country.**

- **Local Area Agreement**
  Standard corporate text to be added.

† Against each key objective the overall initial and residual risk assessment (before and after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown. The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. This is represented by a number with the associated level of assessed risk.

Risk Score	Overall Level of Risk
1 – 4	LOW
5 – 10	MEDIUM
11 – 16	HIGH

The following tables identify the objectives and/or any national and local indicators for the service. Each individual objective/indicator has been referenced to the Corporate Plan Priority to which it relates.

6.1.1 Key Service Objectives

Key Objective BPR1

Corporate Priority:	Halton's Children and Young People
Key Area Of Focus:	15 - To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Enjoy and Achieve

Service Objective:	BPR1: To enable the process of School Re-organisation including the development of the BSF programme				
Key Milestone(s) (07/08)	• Review progress in the light of new pupil number data by February 2008 • Implement second phase of secondary rationalisation programme by March 2008				
Key Milestone(s) (08/09)	• Review progress in the light of new pupil numbers and rationalisation measures undertaken by February 2009				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Review progress in the light of new pupil numbers and rationalisation measures undertaken by February 2010				
Risk Assessment	Initial	TBC	Responsible Officer	OD Business, Planning & Resources	Linked Indicators	TBC
	Residual	TBC				

Key Objective BPR2

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus:	34 - Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Service Management

Service Objective:	BPR2: To deploy resources effectively and efficiently				
Key Milestone(s) (07/08)	• Review arrangement for staffing, funded through grant by January 2008 • Review Special Schools and SEN funding formula by March 2008 • Implement Year 3 Gershon Efficiency targets from Apr 2007				
Key Milestone(s) (08/09)	• Complete Review of Services provided to schools by January 2009 • Review School funding formula in light of the national review by March 2009 • Implement revised Gershon Efficiency Targets from April 2008				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Implement outcome of review of services by January 2010				
Risk Assessment	Initial	TBC	Responsible Officer	DM Finance & Resources	Linked Indicators	TBC
	Residual	TBC				

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Key Objective BPR5

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus:	40 - Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Service Management

Service Objective:	BPR5: To recruit and retain a fully staffed, trained and motivated workforce					
Key Milestone(s) (07/08)	• Reduce the level of staff turnover by March 2008 • Provide training to meet requirements highlighted in Personal Action Plans					
Key Milestone(s) (08/09)	• Reduce the level of staff turnover by March 2009 • Provide training to meet requirements highlighted in Personal Action Plans					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Reduce the level of staff turnover by March 2010 • Provide training to meet requirements highlighted in Personal Action Plans					
Risk Assessment	Initial	TBC	Responsible Officer	DM Planning & Performance	Linked Indicators	TBC
	Residual	TBC				

Key Objective BPR7

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus:	35 - Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Service Management

Service Objective:	BPR7: To develop the commissioning function to efficiently and effectively commission and contract services					
Key Milestone(s) (07/08)	• Implementation of new joint commissioning framework by Sept 2007					
Key Milestone(s) (08/09)	• Develop a multi agency joint commissioning function to underpin move to Children's Trust by March 2009					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Review commissioning function to ensure it is meeting the requirements of the Children's Trusts by March 2010					
Risk Assessment	Initial	TBC	Responsible Officer	DM Planning & Performance	Linked Indicators	TBC
	Residual	TBC				

Key Objective BPR8

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus:	38 - Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Service Management

Service Objective:	BPR8: To meet new ICT requirements and lead new projects				
Key Milestone(s) (07/08)	• Lead the IS index project and ensure DfES timescales are met				
Key Milestone(s) (08/09)	• Implementation of Carefirst 6i, Carestore & Care Assess by Sept 2008.				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Implement Electronic Social Care Record by Sept 2009 • Full implementation of IS index by Sept 2009.				
Risk Assessment	Initial	TBC	Responsible Officer	DM Management Information & Communication	Linked Indicators	TBC
	Residual	TBC				

Key Objective BPR10

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus:	32 - Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Service Management

Service Objective:	BPR10: To develop a communication strategy for the Directorate				
Key Milestone(s) (07/08)	• Complete implementation of Parent Direct by Sept 2007 • Directorate Communication Strategy developed by Sept 2007				
Key Milestone(s) (08/09)	• Four Children's Centres to have a CIS Kiosk by March 2009				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• All Children's Centres to have a CIS Kiosk by March 2009				
Risk Assessment	Initial	TBC	Responsible Officer	DM Management Information & Communication	Linked Indicators	TBC
	Residual	TBC				

6.1.2 Other Service Objectives

Other Objective BPR3

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus:	39 - Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Enjoy and Achieve

Service Objective:	BPR3: To establish consistent sickness monitoring process across the directorate		
Key Milestone(s) (06/07)	• Sickness monitoring process in place covering the whole directorate from April 2007 • Reduce level of Sickness absence by March 2008		
Key Milestone(s) (08/09)	• To increase the % of staff working in appropriate office accommodation by March 2009 • Reduce level of Sickness absence by March 2009		
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• To increase the % of staff working in appropriate office accommodation by March 2010 • Reduce level of Sickness absence by March 2010		
Responsible Officer	DM Finance and Resources	Linked Indicators	TBC

Other Objective BPR4

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus:	38 - Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Service Management

Service Objective:	BPR4: To develop the Children & Young People database to meet the Every Child Matters agenda		
Key Milestone(s) (06/07)	• To include Early Years and 14-19 data within the CYP database by January 2008		
Key Milestone(s) (08/09)	• To fully populate the CYP database by January 2009 with full details of CYP vulnerabilities		
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• To develop the database to meet the requirements of Children's Trusts arrangements by March 2010		
Responsible Officer	DM Management Information and Communication	Linked Indicators	TBC

Other Objective BPR6

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus:	31 - Working with partners and the community , to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Service Management

Service Objective:	BPR6: To develop and integrate performance management systems within the Directorate	
Key Milestone(s) (06/07)	• To develop a complete set of integrated outcome based local measures by March 2008	
Key Milestone(s) (08/09)	• To review local measures and establish systems to meet new national requirements of 'Strong & Prosperous Communities' White Paper by March 2009	
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• To implement a reviewed performance management framework meeting the requirements of 'Strong & Prosperous Communities' White Paper by March 2010	
Responsible Officer	DM Planning and Performance	**Linked Indicators** TBC

Other Objective BPR9

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus:	32 - Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of accesss
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Service Management

Service Objective:	BPR9: To ensure equality and diversity issues are incorporated within all policy and procedures	
Key Milestone(s) (06/07)	• Equality Impact Assessments to be carried out on all policies and service areas by September 2007 • To develop a Directorate equality plan by July 2007	
Key Milestone(s) (08/09)	• To ensure all actions identified by Equality Impact Assessments are completed within agreed timescales	
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• To review Directorate Equality Plan and implement amendments by March 2010	
Responsible Officer	DM Planning and Performance	**Linked Indicators** TBC

6.2 Performance Indicators and Targets (Statutory & Local Indicators):

Ref[1]	Description	Corp Plan Priority / CYP Plan Priority	Halton 2005/6 Actual	2005/06 Quartiles[2] (All England)			Halton 2006/7 Target	Halton 2006/7 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			07/08	08/09	09/10
Service Delivery											
BPR LPI 1	% of key milestones from IS project plan achieved	TBC	New Indicator	N/A			100%		100%	100%	100%
BPR LPI 2	Number of people accessing the CIS Kiosks at Children's Centres	TBC	New Indicator	N/A			N/A	Baseline To Be Established	TBA	TBA	TBA
BPR LPI 3	% of Complaints responded to within agreed timescales	TBC	New Indicator	N/A			100%		100%	100%	100%
BPR LPI 4	% of Statutory Returns completed within set timescales	TBC	New Indicator	N/A			100%		100%	100%	100%
Quality											
BPR LPI 5	Number of 'positive' news stories published in local media about the Directorate	TBC	New Indicator	N/A			N/A	Baseline To Be Established	TBA	TBA	TBA
BPR LPI 6	% of training evaluation forms rating courses as good or better	TBC	New Indicator	N/A			N/A	Baseline To Be Established	TBA	TBA	TBA
BPR LPI 7	% of contract reviews with external providers routinely monitored using the PMF	TBC	New Indicator	N/A			N/A	Baseline To Be Established	100%	100%	100%
Fair Access											
BPR LPI 8	% of Service Areas subject to Equality Impact Assessments	TBC	New Indicator	N/A			N/A	Baseline To Be Established	TBA	TBA	TBA

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[1] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[2] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

Ref[1]	Description	Corp Plan Priority / CYP Plan Priority	Halton 2005/6 Actual	2005/06 Quartiles[2] (All England)			Halton 2006/7 Target	Halton 2006/7 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			07/08	08/09	09/10
Cost & Efficiency											
BPR LPI 9	% of Primary Schools with more than 25% surplus places	TBC	25%	N/A			25%		12%	12%	12%
BPR LPI 10	% of Secondary Schools with more than 25% surplus places	TBC	25%	N/A			25%		12.5%	12.5%	12.5%
BPR LPI 11	% of Gershon Efficiency Targets identified meeting national guidance and requirements	TBC	2.5%	N/A			2.5%		2.5%	3%	3%
BPR LPI 12	% of days lost to sickness absence	TBC	New Indicator	N/A			N/A	Baseline To Be Established	TBA	TBA	TBA
Corporate											
There are no indicators of this type for this service											

6.3 Equality Action Plan

To be completed

The Department carried out an Equality Impact Assessment during 2006 and a number of actions that needed to be taken were identified. Those yet to be completed that are considered to be high priority are detailed in the table below.

Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/ None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	

6.4 Local Public Service Agreement

The service is not directly responsible for any LPSA, however the service contributes to the LPSA targets in the Vulnerable Children's and Learning and School Improvement service plans.

6.5 National Floor Targets

The service is not directly responsible for any National Floor Targets, however the service contributes to the targets in the Vulnerable Children's and Learning and School Improvement service plans.

6.6 Local Area Agreement

To be confirmed

7.0 PERFORMANCE REPORTING

One of the main purposes of having a Service Plan is to enable the Council and interested members of the public to keep track of how the Council and its Departments are doing and to help councilors and managers see whether the service is performing as planned and achieving its targets.

Progress will be monitored through:

- **Day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**
- **Quarterly progress reports to the Management Team;**
- **The inclusion of quarterly service plan monitoring reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**

Policy and Performance Board agenda are public documents and can be accessed free using Internet access at any library where assistance with the technology is available if needed.

8.0 STATUTORY & NON-STATUTORY PLANS

The following plans and strategy documents are relevant to this service plan:

Community Strategy
Halton Best Value Performance Plan 2006/07
Halton Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009
Halton Corporate Plan 2006-2011
Halton Community Strategy 2006-2011
Youth Justice Plan
Halton Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan
Preventative Services Partnership Board Business Plan
Common Processes Task Group Business Plan
Specialist/Targeted Task Group business Plan
Universal Task Group Business Plan
Building Bridges Strategy for Children and Young People with Disabilities
Looked After Children Strategy
14-19 Strategy Plan
Emotional Health and Well-being Strategy
Children in Need Strategy
Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
Young Person's Substance Misuse Plan

Risk Assessment for Key Service Objectives Initially assessed as 'High' Risk

To be completed when risk assessment of key objectives has taken place.

Key Objective Ref	Initial Risks identified	Risk Treatment Measures

A commentary will be included in the quarterly service plan monitoring report at quarter 2 and quarter 4 to indicate the progress against risk treatment measures.