

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 1 November 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community

SUBJECT: Culture & Leisure Services – External Assessments

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To receive and comment on the Halton Regional Cultural Stakeholder Commentary and the IDeA'S validation of the self assessment framework 'Towards an Excellent Service' (TAES) of the Culture and Leisure Services Department.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- 1) The reports be received;**
- 2) The action plan included in the TAES report be endorsed; and**
- 3) Implementation of the Action Plan is monitored by the Employment, Learning and Skills PPB.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) tasked Government Offices and regional cultural agencies to complete Regional Commentaries with all upper tier Local Authorities as part of the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA).

3.2 The agencies involved were: -

- Arts Council England – North West
- Culture Northwest
- Government Office North West
- Museums Libraries and Archives North West
- Sport England North West.

3.3 The process is carried out against a standard benchmark and is intended to:

- a) Promote closer alignment of national, regional and local cultural objectives.

- b) Strengthen and extend relationships between cultural agencies and local authorities.
 - c) Achieve better, more effective cultural provision from a more unified approach to strategic and improvement planning.
- 3.4 The Regional Commentary is attached as Appendix 1. It was produced after desktop research, consideration of relevant strategies, plans, and reports and in depth meetings with relevant staff within Culture and Leisure Services and the Corporate Policy Unit.
- 3.5 In general it is a very positive Commentary. It concludes that there is a positive relationship with the regional cultural agencies and that the Council has worked in partnership with them to address local ambitions and priorities. The agencies recognised models of regional and national good practice and felt that Halton's many cultural successes should be given a higher profile both regionally and nationally. It believes that there is strong leadership, strong commitment to community consultation, effective partnership working, a strong commitment to performance management and that Halton has been successful in creating new facilities and improving existing facilities. The Commentary identifies key strengths and areas for development.
- 3.6 The Towards an Excellent Service (TAES) framework provides Culture and Leisure Services with an approach to assessing the quality of its services and is beginning to be used widely by local authorities across the country. It is likely to take the place of the CPA in 2009 when the CAA is introduced. The assessment is based on the eight themes of leadership, policy and strategy, community engagement, partnership working, use of resources, people management, standards of service and performance measurement and learning.
- 3.7 The self-assessment was carried out in January 2007, and has then been validated by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). The validation involved extensive desk research and interviews with members, staff, partners and stakeholders. From this an objective report and an Action Plan for Improvement is produced. These are attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.8 Again the report is very positive. It concludes that the Service is good, very self-aware, well led, has a committed, loyal and talented workforce and has embedded performance management well across the organisation. It was the view of the IDeA that the self-assessment process had been carried out in a well-managed, rigorous and worthwhile manner which identified a number of key opportunities and challenges to drive the service to further improvement. The action plan does identify issues that are relevant to the whole of the authority, particularly in the area of equality and

diversity.

- 3.9 Both pieces of work identified areas of good practice and improvement that they felt worthy of being shared with a wider audience. To that end the IDeA/DCMS have commissioned a case study of Halton's Culture and Leisure Services, and have asked the Operational Director, Culture and Leisure Services to sit on the DCMS's Cultural Services Improvement Project – Sounding Board.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 No issues were identified that would require a fundamental change in policy.

5.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 No actions were identified that required additional funding. All areas of improvement can be achieved using existing budgets.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Both reports recognised the contributions to the Council's priorities as itemised in the Service Plan and Community Strategy. There were no proposals for change.

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

Both reports recognised the contributions to the Council's priorities as itemised in the Service Plan and Community Strategy. There were no proposals for change.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Both reports recognised the contributions to the Council's priorities as itemised in the Service Plan and Community Strategy. There were no proposals for change.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Both reports recognised the contributions to the Council's priorities as itemised in the Service Plan and Community Strategy. There were no proposals for change.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

Both reports recognised the contributions to the Council's priorities as itemised in the Service Plan and Community Strategy. There were no proposals for change.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Failure to maintain and improve services would impact on the Council's overall performance assessment.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Recommendations for improvement are made in the Action Plan of the IDeA's report.

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

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

Appendix 1




GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE NORTH WEST

HALTON REGIONAL CULTURAL STAKEHOLDER COMMENTARY

Date of Commentary Meeting: 2 March 2007

Date Completed: 30 March 2007



Regional Director
For the Government Office North West

For Halton Borough Council

**REGIONAL CULTURAL STAKEHOLDER COMMENTARY:
HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

DCMS has tasked Government Offices and regional cultural agencies to complete Regional Commentaries with all upper tier Local Authorities.

The Regional Commentaries process, carried out against a standard benchmark, is intended to: promote closer alignment of national, regional and local cultural objectives; strengthen and extend relationships between cultural agencies and local authorities; and achieve better, more effective cultural provision from a more unified approach to strategic and improvement planning. Regional Commentaries are not an inspection and are not scored for Audit Commission CPA purposes.

This commentary is the result of work between a team from Arts Council England NW, Culture Northwest, Government Office NW, Museums, Libraries and Archives NW, Sport England NW and Halton Borough Council.

We are very grateful to Halton for the all the work and support they gave in the production of this Commentary.

Regional Agencies Commentary Team:

Chris Chadwick – Museums Libraries and Archives North West
Clare Connor Museums Libraries and Archives North West
Kevin Cooke - Government Office North West
Jane Dawson - Culture Northwest (not at meeting)
Chris Dodd - Sport England
David Gaffney - Arts Council England (not at commentary meeting)
Janet Matthewman - Government Office North West
Anthony Preston - Arts Council England
Paul Ward – Sport England

Halton BC Commentary Team

Howard Cockcroft - Culture and Leisure Operational Director
Sue Davies – Cultural Manager
Janet Guy - Team Support Manager
John Hatton – Leisure and Community Services Manager
Sue Lowrie – Sports and Recreation Manager
Rob MacKenzie – Policy and Performance Operational Director
Paula Reilly-Cooper – Library Services Manager
Richard Rout – Performance Management Officer (Policy and Performance)

1. ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND IMPROVEMENT

1.1 Work with the regional agencies

1.1.1 Halton has a positive relationship with all three regional cultural agencies and has worked in partnership with them to address local ambitions and priorities.

1.2 Arts Council England: (ACE)

1.2.1 The main contact between ACE and Halton is through the annual partnership meeting. The principle relationships are with Halton's Cultural Director, the Cultural Manager and the Arts Education Development Manager in the Children and Young People's Directorate. The strategic funding agreement with ACE has a focus on:

- arts and creative learning with the education sector and links with the Brindley Arts Centre
- arts and health partnerships with the PCT.

1.3 Museum, Libraries, Archives North West (MLA)

1.3.1 Halton BC has had limited individual contact with MLA North West over the last year during the reorganisation. The Council would welcome stronger links in the future.

1.3.2 Good relationships have been maintained with Halton BC through the Regional Society of Chief Librarians meeting. There is also good partnership working with the Arts Development Manager within Children's Services.

1.4 Sport England (SE)

1.4.1 Halton BC welcomes the ongoing strong support and partnership from Sport England and Merseyside Sport. The Sport and Physical Activity Alliance (SPAA) is now operational. It was noted that the Alliance could have been launched sooner, but for Sport England's delay in establishing the grant aid rules for SPAAs.

1.5 Culture within key strategies

1.5.1 The Culture and Leisure Service Plan shows how the services contribute to the priorities of Halton's corporate and community plans. The plan is structured around contribution to the delivery of 6 corporate priorities:

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

- A Safer Halton
- Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency

1.5.2 The plan is well positioned in the context of regional and national strategies and priorities including Liverpool Capital of Culture and the Olympics 2012.

1.5.3 Work is ongoing on the development of individual service strategies. Processes have been put in place to develop an arts strategy for Halton and the Halton Sports Strategy has recently been produced.

1.5.4 Cultural services partnership with other internal services is strong. Cross service working is supported by a strategic group of senior managers from across the Council.

1.5.5 Halton is recognised by the agencies as a model of regional and national good practice in its work with schools. Culture features strongly in the authority's Every Child Matters Agenda

1.6 Local Area Agreement (LAA)

1.6.1 Halton were in Round 3 of Local Area Agreements. The outcomes and priorities of the cultural and leisure service strategy informed the LAA negotiations. Although there are only a limited number of specific cultural targets, the cultural sectors will contribute to the delivery of LAA outcomes.

1.6.2 Cultural targets include increased physical activity; the increased number of green flag parks; and residents' satisfaction with local parks and open spaces. There is a focus on enhancing the health and well being of vulnerable and seldom heard groups including older people, children and young people and carers.

1.6.3 The LAA includes as a reward target the percentage of adults in Halton participating in at least 30 minutes moderate exercise 3 times a week as measured by the Active People's survey.

1.7 Achievements and outcomes for the community

1.7.1 Cultural and Leisure Services in Halton can demonstrate significant outcomes and achievements for the benefit its communities. Examples include

- The new Brindley Arts Centre. Winner of 4 national awards and visitor figures exceeding targets.
- The increase in library use supported by the new Widnes Library, a refurbished Ditton library and the new mobile service.
- The library service has recorded the highest ever user satisfaction rates in the country
- Very successful reader development strategy and literature festival

- The continuing success of Norton Priory which opened a new conference centre last year and which extended public access to Halton Castle.
- The new youth activity and play facilities in Phoenix Park which include a skate park, boulder park, multi use games area, and children's play area and a new visitor centre.
- The upgrading of Leisure facilities through the contract with DC leisure which included improvements at Brookvale Leisure Centre, Kingsway Leisure Centre and Runcorn Pool.

1.7.2 It was agreed that Halton's many cultural successes should be given a higher profile both locally and within the council; and regionally and nationally. The agencies agreed to support Halton BC with this ambition and record and disseminate case studies through the North West Cultural Observatory.

1.8 Service Improvement

1.8.1 In the recently published 2006 CPA results Halton BC retained its top 4 star category with the direction of travel rated as "improving well". The Council was only one of two in the country which improved its score in the culture block from 2 to the maximum 4. This performance was all the more impressive as it bucked the national trend for a reduction in culture block scores. DCMS want to record and disseminate how Halton BC achieved this success.

1.8.2 Halton BC is committed to using service standards and benchmarking where they exist. However as recognised in the TAES self assessment the Council does not yet have a comprehensive set of service standard for culture and leisure

1.8.3 Norton Priory is a registered museum and is currently applying for accreditation.

1.8.4 Halton BC is using the Sports National Benchmarking Service to evaluate use of its leisure facilities. The survey is helping the Council to understand where progress is being made and where improvements are needed: the main area below par is the service for older adults at one leisure centre. Halton BC currently has 3 Quest awards for its facilities

2. POLITICAL AND MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

2.1 The agencies agree that the senior officers in Halton BC demonstrate strong leadership and partnership across the authority and are well linked into and influential within regional and sub regional networks. The Culture and Leisure Operational Director currently chairs the Merseyside Chief Leisure Officers Group and Halton BC also manages and chairs the Merseyside Cultural Forum which brings cultural portfolio holders and cultural directors together.

- 2.2 TAES reported that relationships between members and officers are very positive and supportive. Responsibility for culture and leisure services is shared between the Quality and Performance portfolio holder and the Environment Leisure and Sport Portfolio holder with community and cultural interests also being represented by the Community, Neighbourhood Management portfolio holder and the Deputy Leader. Halton BC see the fact that portfolio holders do not directly align with services as a real strength, as it means more of the Board have a direct understanding of cultural issues. Culture is high on the agenda in Halton BC.
- 2.3 The cultural agencies have little direct engagement with members and portfolio holders.
- 2.4 It was recommended that the north west cultural agencies should attend the Merseyside Cultural Forum on an annual basis to familiarise members with their policies and programmes and to ensure that the work is better informed by local authority concerns and priorities.
- 2.5 The Arts Council suggested that the induction lunch that they organise quarterly for new officers could also be developed to meet the needs of new portfolio holders.
- 2.6 The planned conference to increase cultural agency support and engagement with members was welcomed. This will be organised by Culture NW in the autumn.
- 2.7 Halton BC was also keen to see more regular involvement of the cultural agencies in the Merseyside Chief Leisure Officers Group. Sport England regularly attend; the Arts Council, MLA and other agencies less so. It was agreed that attendance and representation would be better co-ordinated. Scheduling issues would be resolved and agencies would represent each others interests where capacity issues restricted attendance.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1 Halton BC Culture and Leisure has a strong commitment to community consultation and uses a range of tools and methods to engage and consult with the community. These include surveys, comments and feedback forms – some of which are targeted on the needs of priority groups including carers. Children and young people have been consulted on the improvement of services through panels and for example book bars in the library service.
- 3.2 There is a high commitment to diversity and equality issues and to promoting strong and cohesive communities. The service is responding to the needs of migrant workers from Poland and from the other new communities through the use of focus groups

- 3.3 Halton BC has a very low BME population and has at times struggled to reach and consult with groups locally; sub regional consultation has proved more effective.
- 3.4 There is no Arts Council revenue funded arts organisation in Halton and the voluntary and community arts infrastructure is relatively underdeveloped. Halton has established and supports a number of groups including the RAW singers, the youth theatres, a range of writing groups for different ages including the 12 – 16 Pen and Inkers creative writing group.
- 3.5 Markmakers, Halton's contemporary arts collective has grown strongly over the last 5 years with council support and has exhibited at the Brindley and in Preston and St Helens. There is strong support for local creative professionals through artist mentoring, surgeries, training and small grants.
- 3.6 Norton Priory explicitly calls itself a community museum and has good relationships with a range of local groups and agencies. It targets disadvantaged groups and offers a free pass to residents in deprived neighbouring areas.
- 3.7 Cultural and Leisure Service staff regularly attend area panel meetings where local people can ask questions and make demands of the service.
- 3.8 The design of Phoenix Park is an excellent example of community involvement. The skate park was designed by users and the play equipment was chosen by local play groups.
- 3.9 The Halton Sports Partnership is proactive and has the active support of the Leisure Service. It will be important to harness its energies to those of the SPAA. The Halton Schools Sports Partnership is also active in ensuring that the School Sports Partnership links effectively to other services.
- 3.10 A schools competition manager is based in the Leisure Department to animate local sports competition. This is working well.
- 3.11 The Rugby League Student Games are to be held in Halton at the end of April 2007. Widnes "Vikings in the Community" does good work in schools.
- 3.12 Areas for improvement identified through the TAES self assessment and external validation include
 - More consistent capturing of effective informal community engagement to inform service improvement
 - More detailed profiling of people using the services and non users

- 3.13 The Service has identified the need to continue to improve its community marketing and communication. The public do not always know that the service, event or facility which they enjoy is provided by the Council. A marketing and media review of cultural services is included in the service plan

4. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 4.1 Halton shows a commitment to improving cultural services and opportunities for local people through effective partnership working.
- 4.2 The arts development programme at the Brindley has contributed to borough priorities and attracted substantial additional funding for arts activity through partnership with Surestart, Connexions, SPLASH, Halton's Early Years Team, Halton's Healthy Living programme and the PCT.
- 4.3 Halton BC works in partnership with Arcane Dance, which is in residence at the Brindley. The company is helping the arts centre achieve its targets for bringing dance to more young people.
- 4.4 Halton is strengthening the mechanisms by which sport and culture informs and supports the delivery of the Local Area Agreement. The new sports strategy places particular emphasis on links to the Halton Strategic Partnership and its sub groups. The Sports and Physical Activity Alliance is represented on the LSP. A cultural partnership is also being established by the Council, which in time will be managed and run by local people and which it is hoped will have a place on the LSP.
- 4.5 Halton BC has not formed a Trust for the operation of its leisure facilities but has a contract for the management of three facilities with DC Leisure. It has one dual use site – Brookvale High School. Senior councillors believe that the most efficient working arrangements can be made through internal partnership and that it would be harder to achieve the council's social objectives if the service is permanently outsourced to a Trust.
- 4.6 Halton BC has developed an innovative partnership with Newham BC the host borough of the London Olympics. The partnership will develop a youth exchange programme and use the Olympics as a catalyst to address worklessness.
- 4.7 Halton BC is recognised as outstanding in terms of its arts and education work. The authority has the highest performance in relation to arts mark in the country (57%) and the council has developed an "Arts Mark training model". Schools have a 100% reaccreditation rate and are encouraged to become part of the Arts Learning Consortium at regional level. The authority and its schools are very active in regional

arts education initiatives including the Arts Learning Consortium and the Creative Action Research Awards.

- 4.8 Both Norton Priory and the Catalyst Museums are members of the Cheshire Museums Forum. Both are involved in hosting teachers as part of the MLA Strategic Commissioning (Learning Links) programmes
- 4.9 Norton has a strong partnership with the Halton Conservation Project, a group of adults with learning difficulties who have day care facilities based at Norton and who do a range of voluntary work
- 4.10 Libraries are involved in a joint purchasing consortium with Cheshire and participated in the development of Merseyside Libraries joint web site.
- 4.11 Halton BC is committed to supporting the successful delivery of Capital of Culture and maximising the benefits for its residents. The Halton commentary team felt that the opportunities to present a Merseyside offer through Capital of Culture had not been fully exploited e.g. the opportunities offered by the World Student Games in Halton April 07. It was felt that community sport had a low profile in the Creative Communities programme and the focus of the community sports post was primarily on Liverpool. The cultural agencies agreed that they would work to secure a greater engagement of the Merseyside local authorities in the Capital of Culture programme and to ensure that the sports post is supporting work across Merseyside.

5. RESOURCE GENERATION AND INWARD INVESTMENT

- 5.1 Halton has been successful in creating new facilities and improving facilities through lottery funding.
- 5.2 Over the last year Victoria Park has been redeveloped through a Heritage lottery grant. Norton Priory opened an eco friendly conference centre and opened up more of Halton Castle to the Public with a grant from HLF. Catalyst received a grant of £650,000 from the Millennium Commission to create a new sub-regional science centre. Big Lottery Funding was used to open 2 artificial turf pitches and other sports facilities linked with schools.
- 5.3 In the service plan Halton identifies the impact of lottery funding being “rapidly non existent as a source of capital funding” as a major issue which will curtail sport and cultural development.
- 5.4 The Brindley Arts Centre received arts lottery capital investment. ACE gave revenue support to The Brindley during its first year of operation. Halton is disappointed that revenue support is not available on a long term basis.

- 5.5 Halton receives a very small number of grants for the arts compared with other authorities. Only 2 applications were received from Halton groups last year. Support for capacity building to local organisations and assistance with grant applications would be worthwhile.
- 5.6 There are a large number of culture and leisure posts dependent on external funding. The future of the posts will be dependent on the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the future of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. 20 posts in the Kingsway Learning Centre and Widnes Library will be affected. 75% of sports development posts are externally funded. The authority is commissioning impact evaluation to inform its strategy on the basis of a 25% reduction in NRF. Budgeting will have to make provision for redundancy payments post NRF
- 5.7 Halton BC has made savings through efficiency saving and through increasing charges above inflation, however to increase access charges have been scrapped or reduced in some areas including libraries charges for young people and sports pitches hire. The Halton Show was not staged in 2006 to save funds
- 5.8 Halton is drawing investment into sports and culture through partnership with the private sector. The leisure centres are operated through private contractors and have brought in around £500,000 investment. This is expected to increase this year.
- 5.9 Urban Splash will be redeveloping the whole of the canal corridor and it is intended that a new library will be built as a planning gain from the development.

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 Halton has a strong commitment to performance management, the impact of which is demonstrated in the service achievements and demonstrable improvements.
- 6.2 The service plans identifies objectives and key milestones, and uses local and national performance indicators. There is quarterly monitoring against the key objectives and milestones, key performance indicators, and LPSA. A red, amber, green traffic light assessment is used and reporting is by exception. Budgets, income generation and sales targets are also effectively monitored.
- 6.3 Halton has undertaken a TAES culture self assessment and external validation. The assessment was “good”. A lack of recorded evidence prevented a number of the scores being excellent. Halton will now develop an improvement plan
- 6.4 Halton will be developing a physical activity action plan following the results of the active people survey. The council was 29th out of 43 in

the NW. The figure adjusted for deprivation was 24.76% , 8th out of 19 upper tier authorities. The volunteer score of 5.7% was well above the regional average when adjusted for deprivation.

Key strengths and areas for development

Theme	Strengths	Areas for development
Achievement of objectives and improvement	<p>Strong partnership across council services</p> <p>Exemplary work with schools</p> <p>Very significant cultural achievements</p> <p>Halton BC only one of two councils in country to increase culture block score from 2 to a maximum for in 2006.</p> <p>Use of service standards and benchmarking to drive improvement</p>	<p>Halton BC looking for stronger future links with MLA</p> <p>Develop an arts strategy</p> <p>Develop and record the contribution of culture to the delivery of LAA outcomes</p> <p>Give higher profile to cultural achievements locally regionally and nationally with support from the NDPBs through dissemination of case studies.</p> <p>At request of DCMS record and disseminate nationally the ways that Halton BC achieved this improvement.</p>
Political and managerial leadership	<p>Strong leadership by senior officers</p> <p>Positive and supportive relationships between members and senior officers</p> <p>Culture high on the agenda in Halton BC</p>	<p>Greater engagement and support to portfolio holders and members by the cultural agencies</p> <p>NW Conference for Members to be organised by Culture NW in the Autumn</p> <p>Better coordination of attendance by agencies at Merseyside Chief Leisure Officers Group</p>
Community Engagement	<p>Strong commitment to community consultation</p> <p>Strong community engagement by the Brindley and Norton Priory</p>	<p>Continue to improve community marketing and communication</p> <p>More consistent capturing of informal community engagement impacts (TAES recommendation</p>

Theme	Strengths	Areas for development
	Proactive Sports Partnership	
Partnership working	<p>Sport and Physical activity alliance represented on the LSP</p> <p>Innovative partnership with Newham BC and London Olympics 2012</p> <p>Outstanding arts and education work. Highest number of arts marks in the country</p> <p>Working with Liverpool and the other Merseyside authorities to deliver and maximise benefits from Liverpool Capital of Culture</p>	<p>Develop cultural partnership and its contribution to the LSP and LAA</p> <p>Development of a joint strategic commissioning pot with the other Merseyside authorities.</p>
Resource generation and inward investment	<p>Successful in creating new facilities and improving facilities through lottery funding</p> <p>Operation of leisure centres through DC leisure</p> <p>Maximising planning gain from the Urban Splash canal corridor development</p>	Support capacity building to increase number of applications to Grants for the Arts in Halton.
Performance Management	Strong commitment to performance management	<p>Develop improvement plan following TAES</p> <p>Develop physical activity action plan</p>

Areas of good practice

Work with schools

Brindley Arts Centre

Reader development strategy and literature festival

Community consultation

Phoenix Park and community consultation

CPA culture score improvement

Arcane dance education programme in schools

Improvement priorities

Develop and record the contribution of culture to the delivery of LAA outcomes

Give higher profile to cultural achievements locally regionally and nationally with support from the NDPBs through dissemination of case studies.

Appendix 2

1. Policy and Performance

Key Aim: To deliver improvements to the way in which Cultural and Leisure Services plans and evaluates the services it delivers

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or Partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>1.1 Establish and implement a communications and marketing plan for Cultural and Leisure Services by December 2007</p>	<p>Increase awareness of Cultural and Leisure services and activities in Halton and within the Council.</p> <p>To celebrate success in performance.</p>	<p>C&L Operational Director In association with: - HBC communication and marketing Manager</p>	<p>Existing staff resources.</p> <p>Creation of joint marketing budget by top slicing individual service budgets.</p>	<p>Establish a project brief 7th Sept 2007</p> <p>Assemble team from Culture & Leisure and Communications & Marketing 21st Sept 2007</p>
<p>1.2 Produce an Arts Strategy for Halton by March 2008</p>	<p>Medium term strategic plan of the arts across the public, private and voluntary sectors.</p> <p>To deliver an improved service relevant to local needs and to maximise the use of resources.</p>	<p>Cultural Services Manager In partnership with: - Community stakeholder groups Professional artists</p>	<p>HBC staff time commitment.</p> <p>£15,000 budget for research, consultation, publication and consultancy fees.</p>	<p>Consult Arts Council England. 31st July 2007</p> <p>Draw up draft consultancy specification 1st September 2007</p> <p>Establish steering group</p>

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or Partners	Resources	Key milestones
				30 th Sept 2007 PPB report 10 th March 2008 Adoption by Executive Board 10 th April 2008
1.3 Produce a Parks Strategy for Halton by December 2007	Medium term strategic plan for the operation and management of open space in Halton. To deliver an improved service relevant to local needs and to maximise the use of resources.	Parks and Countryside Manager. In partnership with: - Community stakeholder groups. Environmental organisations. HBC Parks and Landscape sections.	HBC staff time. £2,500 consultation and publication costs	Assemble project team including stakeholders 30 th Sept 2007 Research existing consultation and local/national guidance 31 st Oct 2007 PPB report 10 th March 2008 Adoption by Executive Board 10 th April 2008
1.4 Identify existing user/customer profile by	Establish a clear picture of who uses Cultural and Leisure services.	HBC Research and Intelligence Unit.	HBC staff time. HBC research and	Analyse and collate existing data on service user profiles.

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or Partners	Resources	Key milestones
April 2008	Information gained to help shape services to be more inclusive.	In conjunction with Service Managers from:- Libraries Cultural Services Leisure and Community.	intelligence unit. Merseyside information service. Existing data and surveys in Cultural and Leisure Services	31 st October 2007 Identify deficiencies in current data and identify Service specific data collection requirements and methods. 30 th Nov 2007 Undertake data collection/research 28 th Feb 2008
1.5 Improve comparison and benchmarking data by April 2008	Improved performance data. Inform future planning priorities.	C&L service managers in: - Libraries, Cultural Services and Leisure and Community. HBC Performance Management. APSE. NBS. Local PI,s established through local/regional networks.	Subscription to benchmarking organisations. HBC staff time.	Identify potential networks/comparator organisations. 1 st Sept 2007 APSE/other relevant data to be used in service planning 30 th Nov 2007 Annual performance monitoring by PPB 10 th March 2008

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or Partners	Resources	Key milestones
1.6 Evaluate the effectiveness and benefits of established Partnerships by December 2007	Determine the relevance and need for established partnerships. Develop an improved performance management framework for partnerships.	Operational Director, Cultural and Leisure Services in conjunction with the Chairs of identified Partnerships and in consultation with:- Community stakeholder groups. Other statutory agencies. HBC Policy and Partnerships dept.	Staff time	Establish project team 7 th Sept 2007 Identify Partnerships subject to evaluation 14 th Sept 2007 Assess current information and data 26 th Oct 2007 Report to Directorate senior management team 14 th Nov 2007
1.7 Integrate Outcome measures, determined locally and by The Community Strategy into Annual Service Plans.	Develop an improved performance management framework.	Operational Director, Cultural and Leisure Services.	Staff time	Identify outcome measures to be used 1 st Feb 2008 Production of draft service plan 7 th March 2008

2. Equality and Diversity

Key Aim : To address equality and diversity issues and to ensure that these issues are central to the planning and practices of Cultural and Leisure Services.

To contribute to the Equality Standards for Local Government to achieve level 3.

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>2.1 Identify under represented groups (through analysis of data in 1.4 above). Develop new methods for supporting hard to reach groups to participate in consultation and engagement by April 2008</p>	<p>Reduce number of people and groups suffering exclusion. Modify services to be more inclusive.</p>	<p>HBC policy and partnership dept. jointly with Community involvement dept. And in association with: - Policy and performance dept. Research and Intelligence dept. Directorate Equalities Group</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Consult with Hard to Reach groups in collaboration with Cheshire Racial Equality Council who have established contacts and Halton networks on the take up and barriers to cultural services Feb 28th 2008 PPB community cohesion monitoring 10th March 2008</p>

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>2.2 Establish an equal opportunities policy for C&L by December 2007</p>	<p>a. Effective equality impact assessments are conducted</p> <p>b. Staff are trained in diversity and equality</p> <p>c. Services take into account cultural differences.</p> <p>d. Physical environment meets the needs of the disabled.</p> <p>e. Information produced is appropriate and accessible.</p> <p>f. Disabled and BME groups are involved in service planning.</p> <p>g. Monitor the use of services by disabled and BME users.</p>	<p>Operational Director, C & L In conjunction with: -</p> <p>HBC policy and Partnerships dept.</p> <p>Health and Community Directorate, Commissioning and Planning Division.</p> <p>Key stakeholder disability and BME groups.</p> <p>Cheshire Race Equality Council.</p> <p>Health and Community Directorate Senior Management Team</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Establish project team 30th Sept 2007</p> <p>Cohesion indicators from Audit Commission to be included in equality impact assessments 1st April 2008</p>

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>2.3 Incorporate equality targets/ objectives & cohesion indicators into C&L service and Divisional plans by February 2008</p>	<p>Targets and objectives will provide data and indicators from which progress can be monitored.</p>	<p>Operational Director Cultural and Leisure Services.</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Revise plan format and include Equality targets as standard 28th Feb 2008</p> <p>Adoption of plans by the council and monitoring by PPB's. 10th March 2008</p>

3. Staff Management**Key Aim :** To improve staff communication, training and consultation.

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
3.1 Improve staff communication and ongoing consultation by September 2007.	Staff are aware of customer feedback, performance against targets, are aware of the role of partnerships etc. Staff are heard have a voice in the organisation and are consulted on service development.	HBC marketing manager In collaboration with: - C&L service managers	HBC staff time. Directorate and corporate newsletters. Information bulletins. Staff feedback resources.	C&L Directorate wide briefing sessions to fit in with service planning timetable 30 Nov 2007 Agenda item for team meetings on service development opportunities 31 st July 2007 Monitoring by periodic staff survey (and further self assessment). Sept 2007 and Sept 09
3.2 Improve link between training identification and training delivery.	Staff receive training promptly and remain up to date.	C&L Service Managers. Health and Community training division. Corporate training.	Existing training budgets.	Review Personal Action through the employee development review process in line with IIP 31 ST Oct 2007

4. Service Standards

Key Aim : To establish a set of service standards for Cultural and Leisure Services which improve the delivery of services to the public.

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>4.1 Involve staff, stakeholders and customers in setting service standards by December 2007</p>	<p>Standards are focused on primary areas and standards which will improve customer service</p>	<p>Op Director C & L in consultation with: - Stakeholders. Performance management Staff Customers</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Set up staff team to draft service standards 30th Sept 2007 Consult staff, stakeholders and customers on draft standards 30th November 2007 Monitoring by PPB 16th Jan 2008</p>
<p>4.2 Account fully for equality and diversity in setting service standards</p>	<p>Standards set are inclusive and appropriate and help promote the use of services.</p>	<p>Op Director C & L in consultation with: - Disability and BME stakeholders. HBC Policy and Partnerships dept.</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Consult stakeholder groups and representative organisations on draft standards 30th November 2007</p>

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>4.3 Establish a customer feedback process by December 2007</p>	<p>Customer feedback on the service will help shape the service and drive up standards</p>	<p>Op Director C & L in collaboration with: - C&L service managers.</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Audit existing systems which monitor/facilitate feedback 31st October 2007</p> <p>Standardise and augment systems across C&L as required 30th November 2007</p> <p>Document outlining process to be published – December 2007</p>
<p>4.4 Publish service standards and customer feedback by January 2008</p>	<p>Customer awareness and feedback will increase customer understanding and involvement.</p>	<p>HBC Communications and marketing dept.</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Promote public knowledge of the standards and feed back systems. December 2007</p> <p>Document outlining process to be published – December 2007</p> <p>Monitoring by PPB Ongoing annually</p>