

HALTON LAA 2008 – OUTLINE STORY OF PLACE

Introduction

People want to live in pleasant and thriving places. They want good quality services, a safe and attractive physical environment, accessible transport links, access to good schools and responsive health services, a strong sense of community and for there to be opportunities for all. Whilst that is the ideal, Halton is not alone in facing the challenge of meeting these aspirations. The long standing, intractable nature of many social, economic and environmental issues does not make long lasting remedies easy to achieve in the short term. Public services have improved markedly in recent years. However, despite this increasing efficiency significant and lasting improvements are only possible if underlying issues are addressed.

Change and uncertainty are at the heart of modern existence. To respond and make sense of this, communities need strong strategic leadership that brings together local partners to build a vision of how to address an area's problems and challenges in a coordinated way. In Halton, the introduction of the Halton Strategic Partnership (the LSP) and its development of a sustainable community strategy have helped the "place-shaping" of the borough to gather momentum. The essential ingredients of a successful partnership are a common vision, shared values and mutual respect. Effective partnership also needs strategic leadership together with robust mechanisms for agreeing priorities, delivering real outcomes that actually make a difference and monitoring the impact of interventions.

Halton's Local Area Agreement will build on our work to date and provide a further tool for the Partnership to develop its strategic leadership role and to tackle some of the big crosscutting challenges that Halton faces. It provides an outcome-based approach that gives a framework for deciding what is delivered and how best to do it. It forms the delivery plan for Halton's sustainable community strategy focused on a relatively small number of priorities for improvement.

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

Halton's Story

Halton is a largely urban area of 119,500 people. Its two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn that face each other across the River Mersey, 10 miles upstream from Liverpool. The population of Halton was in decline for over a decade, but has recently started to increase. Between 1991 and 2002 the estimated Borough population decreased by 6,500 people from 124,800 to 118,300. However, in 2003 there was a small increase in the population and between 2003 and 2006 the estimated population increased by 1,100 people. This in part is due to a concerted effort to build new houses, particularly larger executive homes in Sandymoor (SE Runcorn) and Upton Rocks (NE Widnes) to try to stem population decline, to provide a more balanced housing stock, and retain wealth in the community. It is also in part due to increased inward migration.

Runcorn and Widnes have a common heritage in the chemical industry. Widnes is regarded as the birthplace of the chemical industry, and its development soon spread to Runcorn in the 19th century. Quick, and sometimes environmentally damaging development took place up to the mid 20th century. More recently, there has been a rapid contraction as the industry became more globalised. This has left a positive legacy in that high value-added specialist chemical manufacturing and scientific and research-based employers are based in the borough. This is one of the key strands of

a vibrant knowledge based economy in the borough. However, contraction brought with it a massive rise in worklessness for those with little or no skills, which lingers to this day. Investment in new Creative and Science based businesses (at Daresbury, Manor Park & The Heath) and Logistics (at 3MG) as well as the development of the Widnes Waterfront are now bringing new employment opportunities to Halton but require new skills and the upskilling of the community.

On the back of the still booming industry of the 1950s and 1960s, Runcorn was designated as a new town. Roads and a unique busway system were constructed together with a new shopping centre (Halton Lea) to serve an influx of residents from Liverpool, many of whom were accommodated in new social housing. There was less employment provision in the New Town than might have otherwise have been expected because of the projected growth in employment in the chemical sector. In the event employment growth did not materialise, in fact, the opposite happened and so the New Town legacy is of a very well landscaped environment concealing residential areas in which the housing is becoming life expired and there are successive generations of unemployed.

The number of jobs in the Borough's largely the same as it was 10 years ago but the proportion employed in manufacturing has fallen and the reliance on a small number of large employers is beginning to be reduced. The wealth of the Borough has improved overall during the last 10 years as illustrated by rising numbers of detached houses, rising car ownership, increases in professional and managerial households in parts of the borough.

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

As this picture indicates, Halton faces many similar challenges to the Merseyside conurbation and since 1998 has worked closely with its Merseyside neighbours as part of "Greater Merseyside". The Council is now firmly embedded in Merseyside both politically (through the Merseyside Leaders and Co-ordinating Committee) administratively (within the same sub-region for NW Development Agency (NWDA), LSC, Connexions, GONW Liaison etc). The Merseyside authorities have submitted a City Region Business Case to Ministers supporting the case for Halton's integration into Merseyside. The Council and its partners recognise that their ambition for Halton can only be achieved through engagement in the wider sub-region and region and so Halton plays a very active role.

The latest Index of Multiple of Deprivation (IMD) for 2007, not only contains some of the latest data available, but also is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators, as some 37 different indicators are used. It shows for example that overall, Halton is ranked 30th nationally (a ranking of 1 indicates that an area is the most deprived), but this is 3rd highest on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 10th highest in the North West. St Helens (47th), Wirral (60th) and Sefton (83rd) are way down the table compared to Halton.

The new IMD suggests that levels of deprivation have decreased in the borough. Now the IMD ranks Halton as 30th most deprived Authority in England for rank of average score compared to a rank of 21st in the 2004 Index. The proportion of Halton's population in the top category (i.e. the top 20% of super output areas) has also decreased from 50% in 2004 to 48.5% in 2007. Halton's concentration of deprivation has gone down from 20th position in 2004 to 27th worst in England in 2007. Concentration is a key way of identifying hot spots of deprivation within an area. However, there is still room for improvement. Within Halton there are 8 super output areas in the top 975 Super Output Areas in England, i.e. within England's top 3% most deprived, this is up from 6 in 2004. The most deprived neighbourhood is ranked 306th out of 32,482 and is situated in the Windmill Hill area of Runcorn.

Bespoke research to get a better picture of life in Halton was commissioned through the Halton Data Observatory. This is based on the Local Futures Group data platform and has generated a 'State of the Borough' Audit of economic, social and environmental conditions (January 2008). This is a timely and necessary assessment of the challenges and issues that face Halton. Performance is assessed according to how well the borough scores on a range of carefully selected benchmark indicators of economic, social and environmental well being. It provides a perspective on the state of Halton by looking at how it compares with other districts, how it rates within the North West Region, and also how it performs compared to the country as a whole.

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

This evidence shows that the gap in prosperity between the richest and poorest neighbourhoods is widening. The policy implications of this audit are that a broad based approach to regeneration is still needed to deal with the depth and breadth of challenges in Halton. However, "poverty of place" issues need to be urgently addressed in terms of narrowing the gap between areas within the borough. Also, a focus on worklessness and the low skills base as a key causal issue is more likely to generate sustainable improvements in social, economic and environmental well being than palliative investments in tackling the symptoms of distress. These are the key challenges the LAA must address.

The Forward Vision

Making Halton a better place to live and work presents some major challenges and opportunities for us all. The LAA will set out the steps we need to take together to bring about real improvements that will change lives for the better. In particular, we need to achieve real progress on five strategic themes that are set out clearly in the Community Strategy and mirrored in this LAA:

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

These priorities have been derived from what local people feel is important, and from facts and figures about conditions in Halton. The Local Area Agreement sets out a clear vision of making changes across many issues that will make a big difference to life in Halton. It aims to give people opportunities and choices. We want to build people's aspirations and abilities so they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives. Having done so we want to ensure we provide the quality of life and opportunities locally so that people choose to live and work here. This approach mirrors that set out in Halton's adopted Community Strategy.

In order to refresh this the Partnership undertook a broadly based development process to produce a "Vision Story" for Halton. A series of focus groups took place with community representatives, council members and key stakeholders in the summer of 2007. The aim of this was to explore what made life in Halton special and how would local people describe an idealised Halton in 2015. From this work arose a "story" which is far more explicit and aspirational than a pat vision statement. This is as follows:

The Halton Vision Story

The long-term vision for Halton seeks to imagine an idealised Halton in 2015. It is based around building communities that are more prosperous, healthier, cohesive and diverse. Communities that draw strength from their distinctive identity and contribution to life in Halton. Places that have a common sense of ownership and pride. Places where people feel connected to Halton because of its distinctive history and heritage and because it is a place whose future they are helping to shape.

Halton will have a thriving local economy, good transport links, access to culture and sport, an attractive and sustainable local environment, free from crime and fear of crime, where people benefit from education for all ages and enjoy healthy fulfilling lives. A place where people respect and care for each other and share a sense of responsibility and pride. Statistics are not the only measure of success. What is important is that local people experience their lives and neighbourhoods as better than they are now.

Good public services are the bedrock of life in the borough. Every year they improve in quality and responsiveness, are tailored more closely to users' needs and provide choice where appropriate. They are more joined up and easier for people to access. Users are involved in the design and delivery of services, and better communication mean people are well informed about what is going on.

The established vision statement for Halton is:

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

This is a pledge to secure a better future for the people of Halton. It is about everyone having the opportunity to fulfil their potential and pursue the sort of life that suits them. It is about equal access to opportunities and facilities, and helping ensure that no one is left behind but can access the opportunities and progress being made in Halton. This means positively targeting activity at the most deprived neighbourhoods or particular groups of people in greatest need.

Part of Halton's success has been its ability to change and evolve, and its resilience in the face of adversity. This resilience is the key to the future. The vision for the future is of a Halton that has sustained itself. A place where people want to live and work. It is somewhere that provides a high quality living environment, sensitive to a range of needs, and recognises the diversity of its residents. A place where people have opportunities and choice. People have high aspirations and increasing abilities so they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives. Halton is a place that provides the quality of life and opportunities that people choose to live and work here.

In short, Halton is a place that meets current expectations, prepares for future needs' and respects the diversity of the place and people. A place that is at ease with itself and the outside world. There is the confidence and capability of taking on future challenges and opportunities. A place that is inclusive, and where we make sure that no one gets left behind. *In working towards this, we believe that*

- Everyone should feel they have a sense of belonging and pride in Halton
- Every person feels valued equally, and can play their own part in shaping Halton;

- Everyone understands that there are standards and expectations of behaviour, and will work together to enforce these collectively.
- Everyone has a right to enjoy a good quality of life;
- Everyone can play an active part in the community; it is safe and its sound, and their actions do not inconvenience others.
- Everyone should be able to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of the Borough, and be able to contribute their views as part of democratic decision-making processes;
- All agencies recognise they have a collective duty of care for the area
- Making the Borough a safe and pleasant place to live is vitally important, and this environment also needs to be protected and preserved for future generations;
- We should work towards a just society, in which there is understanding and tolerance between and within communities, so that people feel they have a voice and a stake in their community;
- The Borough can be a multi-faith, multi-cultural and multi-racial society, where this diversity is an asset not a problem;
- We will oppose prejudice and discrimination.
- There should be a sense of identity based on acceptance, not stereotypes; and, shaped less by how people see themselves as individuals with rights and expectations, but rather as part of groups and as part of communities.
- Everyone has a right to do things for themselves, to maximise their independence, while agencies ensure they have the necessary levels of support.
- Everyone has fair and easy access to services they need and barriers to participation are removed; and,
- No one is stigmatised because of who they are, or perceived to be, or because of their circumstances or poor choices in their lives.

The Strategic Framework

The Halton Strategic Partnership and the Council's Executive Board have now formally adopted the Vision Story. The strategic framework of the LAA is largely drawn from the Community Strategy and seeks to help make the vision story a reality. The agreed Partnership priorities are as follows:

- **A Healthy Halton** - *To create a healthier community and work to promote well being - a positive experience of life with good health.*
- **Halton's Urban Renewal** - *To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough.*
- **Halton's Children and Young People** - *To ensure that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy.*
- **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - *To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth.*
- **A Safer Halton** - *To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments where people can enjoy life.*

Our overall approach is based on:

- **Closing the gap** between the most deprived communities in the borough and in Halton overall.
- **Tackling inequality** and promoting community cohesion, so that no community is disadvantaged.
- **Making what we do sustainable** so that our quality of life is protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.

- **Investing in preventative activity** that stops problems occurring rather than paying for actions to fix things that are going wrong. We need to invest more in success, rather than in failure.

In doing this we will follow certain key principles:

- **Leadership** – *the Partnership’s role is to give clear strategic leadership to the borough and enable people to make the necessary contributions to make a difference.*
- **Fair and inclusive** – *promoting equal access to opportunities and facilities. This includes the need to positively target activity at the most deprived geographical areas or particular groups of people.*
- **Good value** – *being economical, efficient and effective in delivering ‘Best Value’ for the public.*
- **Collaborative** – *this is about collective responsibility for making things better and embedding partnership approaches in everything that we do.*
- **Evidence-based** – *ensuring we learn from best practice elsewhere and make good use of research about what works in addressing the borough's priorities.*

Structure

The LAA has to be read alongside Halton’s Sustainable Community Strategy. It forms the operational plan of that strategy. The structure of the LAA – its framework and delivery – is based clearly on the strategy. It is worth just summarising the current standpoint on our five priorities:

Health - is a key strategic priority with two fundamental challenges to be addressed, firstly life expectancy in Halton is considerable less than most of England, and secondly forecasts suggest that Halton’s population is ageing at a faster rate than England as a whole, which reflects a long-term demographic trend of an ageing population. On average, older people are more likely than younger people to report lifestyle-limiting illness, to live alone, live in poverty and to rely on public services and informal Carers. People are also living longer with chronic long-term conditions (respiratory, heart, and diabetic etc). Advancing age carries some increased risk of dementia and depressive illness, often linked to bereavement. This shift to an older population will have a large effect on demand for social care, health and other public services, unless outcomes are improved through effective, adequate prevention and health promotion. However ageing reflects the positive advances society has made and we also recognise that older people are also an under utilised asset to our local communities, whose contribution as carers, people with skills and knowledge and sometimes spare time needs to be recognised and further developed.

Analysis locally demonstrates that the health problems of Halton will only be addressed by a more discriminating approach in how services are delivered. We need to reflect changes in societal expectations of speedier, higher quality and flexible services, but also that these will not need to be simply more intensive, but also closer to peoples homes and more timely. There is a historical legacy of investment in acute and reactive services, and nowhere is that more so than in services for people in mental distress. So services need to be focussed on preventing people who are becoming unwell or in need getting to the point they need more intensive intervention. It is clearly better to prevent than treat. We need to better concentrate on the wider determinants of health, such as quality of housing, having employment, sufficient income and feeling safe, as well as looking to influence the choices people make about their lives. In particular issues around sexual health, teenage pregnancy, smoking, alcohol, exercise and poor diet will all be targeted as part of the LAA in order to radically improve long-term health outcomes. As part of this we also need to target specific initiatives both geographically and demographically, especially recognising the needs of an increasingly ageing population. The future lies in working collaboratively to support access to the right level of health, social care, support and more universal services (such as benefits, housing advice and so) at the right time.

Our approach to health and well being includes developing a much more shared approach to performance management so we can demonstrate we are having the impact we plan. So the LAA and Delivery Plan for Health (PID) has shared outcomes, performance measures, inspection regimes, aligned budget cycles, increased joint and lead commissioning, and integrated workforce planning. Our Commissioning Strategy has identified changing patterns of need and expectations and, an overall aging population in Halton. The health outcomes in the LAA will include a range of targets shared across the system. Targets will be specifically focused on those people most at risk of using higher-level services - or at risk of exclusion from mainstream services. Initially, key indicators suggested are:

Designated Indicators

NI 8 - Adult participation in sport

NI 120 - All-age all cause mortality

NI 123 - 16+ current smoking rate prevalence

NI 124 - People with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition

NI 139 - People over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently

NI 142 - Number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living

NI 150 - Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment

Non-Designated targets

Children & Young People - The multi-agency Children and Young People's Alliance Board functions as the Children's Trust Board. It holds responsibility for developing joint measures and local performance indicators for improving outcomes for children and young people, delivering against the Children and Young People's Plan, driving the development of children's mini-trusts and the joint commissioning of services from pooled and aligned budgets. Four task groups, plus the Safeguarding Children Board and, the Children and Young People's Commissioning Partnership support the Alliance Board.

All children's services priorities agreed with Government inspectors will be included in the LAA. Those targets identified in the Community Strategy and Children and Young People's Plan, which are not included in the LAA, will continue to be addressed by the Children and Young People's Alliance Board using the "Halton Ziggurat" performance management framework. This has been established to bring together national and local outcomes, outputs, targets and funding streams. The system is used for performance self-assessment and review, both within the Alliance Board structure and commissioned services. In addition, they are managed via robust action plans. Performance against the priorities will be reported via priorities conversations and the Annual Performance Assessment. Initially, key indicators suggested (over and above those in the mandatory DCSF set) are:

Designated Indicators

Statutory Indicators

NI 72 - Early Years Foundation Stage Attainment

NI 76 - Proportion achieving L4+ at KS2 in both English and Maths

NI 77 - Proportion achieving L5+ at KS3 in both English and Maths

NI 78 - Proportion achieving 5 A*-C GCSE including English and Maths

NI 83 - Proportion achieving L5+ at KS3 in Science

NI 87 - Secondary School persistent absence rate

NI 92 - Achievement Gap at Early Years Foundation Stage

NI 93 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS2 in English
NI 94 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS2 in Maths
NI 95 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS3 in English
NI 96 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS3 in Maths
NI 97 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS4 in English
NI 98 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS4 in Maths
NI 99 - Proportion of CiC achieving Level 4 at KS2 in English
NI 100 - Proportion of CiC achieving Level 4 at KS2 in Maths
NI 101 - Proportion of CiC achieving 5 A*-C GCSE

Other Designated

NI 53 - Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks from birth
NI 56 - Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6
NI 63 - Stability of placements of looked after children
NI 80 - Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19
NI 111 - First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17
NI 112 - Under 18 conception rate
NI 115 - Substance misuse by young people
NI 116 - Proportion of children in poverty
NI 117 - 16-18 year old not in education, training or employment

Non-Designated targets

Safer Halton - The Safer Halton Partnership has a wide-ranging remit focused on two major concerns of Halton people. Crime and the local environment have consistently been two areas the public have raised as high priorities in successive consultations over the last few years. We want to make Halton a great place to live with an attractive quality of life and excellent local environment. However, this is very much dependent on reducing current levels of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and improving the local environment in our neighbourhoods. Recent years have seen reductions in total recorded crime and for key crimes such as burglary and car crime. However, this remains the most pressing problem for most people in Halton, and fear of crime remains at unacceptable levels and impacts upon too many lives. At the same time, whilst general satisfaction levels are rising with Halton as a place to live, it is the condition of the local environment, which is of most concern to residents.

Therefore, the LAA aims to increase the confidence of communities in their neighbourhoods. This is about improving local conditions and encouraging people to get involved in helping to shape what happens in their local area. We want to encourage active citizenship, volunteering and community activism. Tackling the causes as well as the symptoms of neighbourhood distress is a responsibility shared by all partners. Increasingly, we will look to better co-ordinate activity through neighbourhood management arrangements for greater impact. This will increase the effectiveness of work that can prevent and intervene early in the conditions that lead to dissatisfaction.

A strategic needs assessment is currently being prepared which will inform the new community safety strategy. However, initially the key indicators suggested for the LAA are:

Designated Targets

NI 15 - Serious violent crime rate
NI 17 - Perceptions of anti-social behaviour
NI 30 - Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders
NI 32 - Repeat incidents of domestic violence
NI 33 - Arson incidents
NI 39 - Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates

Non-Designated targets

Employment & Skills - Despite a range of Government and Halton's own initiatives, the borough is still characterised by widespread deprivation. Skills and employment are key factors. Educational attainment at school and the acquisition of important, employable skills are key determinants of individuals' lives and employment chances. They have a major effect on the ability of people to get a job, on the income they earn, on their aspirations, behaviour, health and longevity, and on the range of positive choices they are able to make in life. The creation of a strong, knowledge-based economy able to compete in the increasingly global market can only be achieved by investment in skills, a vibrant employment market and a robust culture of entrepreneurship.

High economic inactivity rates across the borough, with particular pockets of high deprivation and social exclusion are endemic in the local economy. In response to this, the Halton Employment Charter has been developed to engage local businesses through interview preference schemes in order to give disadvantaged groups the best opportunity to find employment. The Charter, together with the Economic Forum and other business engagement groups, gives employers a real voice in developing the employability programmes and wider economic programmes. Halton is also working with Merseyside colleagues to deliver a City Employment Strategy. The Halton economy is heavily reliant on a narrow range of industry sectors and is susceptible to global pressures, which could have a negative effect. There is a lack of an enterprise culture in Halton, with generally low levels of business start-up, survival and growth. However, Halton has the basis of a thriving knowledge economy and key sectoral opportunities especially around its science and environmental technologies offer. These form the basis of the issues which the LAA seeks to address, which are captured in the following suggested indicators:

Designated Indicators

- NI 153 - Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
- NI 163 - Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher
- NI 171 - VAT registration rate
- NI 173 - People falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits
- NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling

Non-Designated targets

Urban Renewal – Whilst much has been done in recent years to improve the quality of the urban fabric and quality of life, the job is far from complete. The creation and maintenance of high quality places and spaces that support a twenty-first century economy and lifestyles, and are accessible and well connected is a pre-requisite of the Community Strategy. Failure to address the challenges that Halton faces, which are often concentrated in particular locations, will seriously damage the economic regeneration effort. A thriving and prosperous economy supporting dynamic urban living is the foundation of the Halton approach. Integral to that is the attraction of new jobs in order to increase the supply of employment opportunities, particularly for those in disadvantaged priority areas, which can be helped to secure employment through targeted job brokerage services. This is one of the underlying root causes of the more obvious signs of social distress, which define the continuing deprivation of Halton, such as poverty, crime or poor health outcomes.

The new Mersey Gateway Bridge will offer new employment opportunities and improve accessibility across Halton and beyond.

Negative perceptions about Halton still prevail. Environmental improvements and better quality open spaces, in addition to a better quality built environment, are vital as steps to promote Halton's

assets. An important step forward is the emphasis placed on sustainable construction methods and design codes in bringing forward physical development. A positive image is a key requirement if we are to boost the confidence and aspirations of local people and business. Initially, key indicators suggested are:

Designated Indicators

NI154 Net additional homes provided

Non Designated Indicators

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

As set out earlier, the overall vision is for a Halton as a place that meets current expectations, prepares for future needs' and respects the diversity of the place and people. A place that is at ease with itself and the outside world. It is important that the LAA tries to capture measures, which demonstrate progress on building a more cohesive and sustainable community. Hence, the following indicators are suggested in the first instance:

Designated Indicators

NI 5 - Overall satisfaction with the area

NI 7 - Environment for a thriving third sector

Non Designated Indicators

Strategic & Geographic Focus

The Halton Strategic partnership is concerned with addressing social exclusion. This is about what happens when people face a multitude of problems such as poor housing, high crime, poor health, worklessness, discrimination and poor relationships. Our ways of working will focus on:

- Poverty and material deprivation.
- Choice and quality in neighbourhoods and housing.
- Equality of opportunity for everyone and ending discrimination.
- Responding to the needs of older people as the population ages.
- Policies and programmes that look forward and help to achieve sustainable development.

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

The Halton Strategic Partnership exists to meet the needs of all of Halton. However, we recognise that a successful Halton depends on the vibrancy of both Greater Merseyside and the North West Region overall. Many of the partners involved in Halton, and many of the issues we deal with, have a remit beyond the borough. Part of the task is to narrow the gap between Halton and its neighbours, and indeed with national averages. Therefore, the Halton Strategic Partnership works adeptly to contribute to sub-regional and regional arrangements, and ensure the commitment of others to helping to address Halton issues. However, the LAA will act as a mechanism to focus on two key transformational issues – place and worklessness.

Poverty Of Place

In addition a key focus is to narrow disparities in outcomes between neighbourhoods in Halton. In order to focus on “closing the gaps” we needed to identify a coherent set of priority geographic areas. In the past, available analysis has largely been at ward level. We now have excellent information available at the ward level of around 25,000 people and are developing information at the “Super Output Area” level of around 3,000 people.

The Community Strategy sets a framework to allow Halton to address two overriding issues. Firstly it is to raise the quality of life in the borough, as demonstrated by narrowing the gap between Halton and national averages on a range of measures. Secondly, it is make sure that disadvantaged people and neighbourhoods do not get left behind. So it is important that we can demonstrate that we are closing the gap in prosperity between neighbourhoods within Halton. As the most recent IMD has shown these two aims are not necessarily co-terminus. Whilst Halton overall has moved up the overall deprivation ranking in a positive way (from 21st most deprived nationally to 30th), inequality within Halton – measured by the difference in ranking places between the most and least deprived SOAs – is higher than 3 years ago. It is also higher than in England as a whole (109 against the national benchmark of 100).

This suggests that whilst the Partnership can celebrate partial success, despite best effort in recent years relative poverty within certain geographic areas has worsened. There is a poverty of place in certain areas that must be addressed. The following wards have already been identified as those for which “closing the gap” targets across the LAA need to be set and monitored. The wards were identified on the basis of census and IMD data and are:

- Castlefields
- Windmill Hill
- Halton Lea
- Grange
- Riverside
- Kingsway
- Appleton

Progress in outcomes will be monitored to evidence “closing the gap” between these wards and Halton average outcomes. These wards have amongst the highest Multiple Deprivation Index scores in Halton and in England. All seven wards have unemployment rates above the Halton average of 3.0%. All priority wards have instances of long term limiting illnesses above the national rates.

Detailed maps of the key target outcomes across Halton, down to “Super Output Area” level, have been developed as part of the Halton Data Observatory. They enable very targeted approaches to achieving improvements in these outcomes. Some of our neighbourhoods face particularly widespread and deep difficulties.

Worklessness

As set out above, the key challenge is how best to frame the response to the major issues that Halton faces through the LAA. To do this we intend to focus heavily on key challenges around worklessness in its widest context. Changes in the nature, organisation and allocation of work have led to increased uncertainty, fluidity and insecurity in labour markets. These are characterised by a greater degree of segmentation and inequality, both socially and spatially. High levels of unemployment and inactivity have become entrenched amongst certain groups and in certain areas. There is an increasing focus on the mismatch between high levels of worklessness in deprived neighbourhoods and employment growth. There is a significant degree of variation between deprived neighbourhoods in terms of the incidence of unemployment and inactivity, poor qualifications and skills, ill-health and disability, the composition of groups vulnerable to worklessness, the local context, and wider labour market context.

Since the mid 1990's the number of people employed in the United Kingdom has risen. However, for some areas of the country such as Halton, this masks the stubbornness of the rates of economic inactivity that have largely stayed the same. Despite a concentration on residents who are unemployed, there is a much larger group of working age people that are economically inactive, many of whom want to work. In October 31% of the Halton population were economically inactive.

The analysis of the spatial concentration of economically inactive people in Halton shows that 6 wards have inactivity rates at or in excess of 25% - Castlefields, Windmill Hill, Halton Lea, Kingsway, Riverside and Grange. If Appleton ward is added, there are seven wards with rates significantly above the Halton average. As set out above, these seven wards, which also cover Halton's neighbourhood management areas, will form the priority areas for geographical targeting of initiatives.

The structure of Government funding often prevents pooling as national organisations lack freedom due to the existence of nationally delivered schemes. This is an area for further consideration within the context of this Local Area Agreement. However, it is fair to say that much local progress has already been made in alignment of activity and this will be further enhanced through the City Employment Strategy. It is evident that there is a need to achieve a step change in employment-related work if the level of worklessness in Halton is to be significantly reduced. The key elements in achieving this should include:

- A formal recognition that worklessness and not just JSA claimants should be the focus.
- Targeting will be necessary to achieve step change – both in terms of groupings and geography.
- To be effective, interventions will need to be holistic and personalised to individual people's needs – this must involve a full range of partners all working together.
- Enterprise must be put at the heart of addressing worklessness.
- Connectivity with jobs must be improved.
- More work needs to be done to address the basic skills gaps.
- There is substantial scope for the voluntary sector to be developed in employment-related activity, particularly social enterprises.
- Stronger links need to be made between urban renewal lead job creation investments and local labour markets through more effective use of outreach job brokerage working with developers and investing companies.
- Stronger links need to be made between investment opportunities and local labour markets.

Existing labour market policies and programmes, while broadly successful in overall terms in reducing worklessness, have been less effective in helping the most disadvantaged groups and in reducing worklessness in deprived neighbourhoods. There is a need to improve the targeting of effective help on these groups and areas. Whilst Halton has made great strides in the creation of new jobs and the general reduction in unemployment the gap between individuals and the labour market in some instances has not improved as much for certain groups. It is our intention to specifically target certain key groups and tailor interventions to their needs:

- Over 50's
- Economically inactive women
- Lone parents with dependent children
- Young long-term unemployed
- Sick and Disabled

There is clear evidence that the more general borough-wide approach towards unemployment has produced real progress. However, there is now a need to focus on those areas where unemployment and worklessness remain stubbornly high and where levels of worklessness are way above the borough average. We have a broad-based strategic approach that looks to tackle employability, workforce development and the creation of enterprise. At the same time we want to ensure equity in the economy i.e. that the wealth that is created in the borough is better shared around Halton.

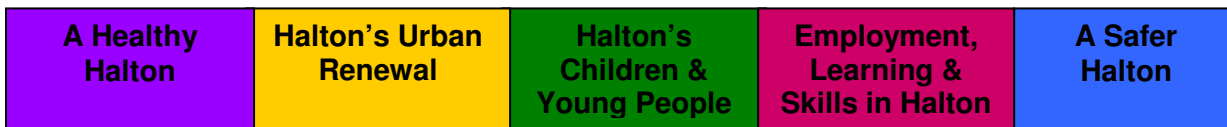
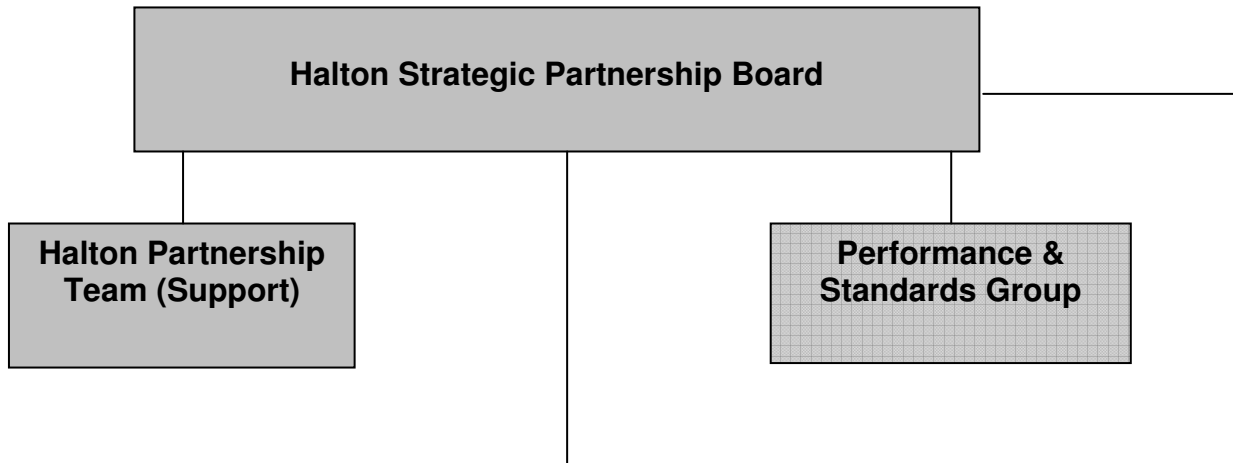
Governance

Halton already has in place well established and robust partnership arrangements. These are based on a Strategic Board supported by five thematic partnerships, a performance management group and a number of specialist subsidiary partnerships. This includes representation at all levels by all stakeholders including significant representation from the voluntary and community sectors.



Halton Strategic **PARTNERSHIP**

The Virtual Organisation



- Sector Based Partnerships**
- Business
 - Neighbourhood Mgt.
 - Equalities Partnership
 - Housing
 - Culture, Sports & Leisure
 - Voluntary & Community
 - Faith

Area Forum 1	Area Forum 2	Area Forum 3	Area Forum 4	Area Forum 4	Area Forum 6	Area Forum 7
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All the priorities, indicators (designated and non-designated) and local targets are set out in the Framework, attached at Appendix 1. How well and how quickly progress happens depends crucially on the availability of resources and how smartly they are used. That means money, people, physical resources, proper intelligence and information, allied with the strength of will to use them in the best

way. A key purpose of the LAA is to ensure that all resources available are pooled or aligned, targeted and used effectively to bring about improvements in the borough. This means:

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

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

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

Sustainability

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

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

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

Halton already has a number of key strategies that commit to sustainability. However, the Partnership believes that this is not enough. It recognises that there is growing scientific consensus

about the environmental reality of climate change. Therefore, it has produced a bespoke climate change strategy. This looks to encompass the sustainability implications of everything the Partnership does. This will include the actions to take forward the LAA and the operational management of Partner organisations themselves.

Managing Risk

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

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

The Partnership has already established a Strategic Risk Register looking at all aspects of delivery of LAA objectives. This sets out the risk management objectives, the role and responsibilities for risk management of the Board and individual SSPs, and categorises the risks and the approach to risk management action plans. The Halton Strategic Partnership Board adopted this in November 2007.

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

Equality & Diversity

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

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

Partners are working collaboratively to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination and to share good practice. Reasonable adjustments are being made so that services are accessible to everyone who needs them. People's cultural and language needs are recognised and services provided which are appropriate to these needs. Partners monitor the take up of services from different sections of the population, and use the information collected to inform service planning and delivery. Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on Partnership policies and services to assess how policies and services impact on different sections of the community. The results of the Equality Impact Assessments highlight areas for improvement to be dealt with through the Partnership Improvement Plan.

As an example of good practice the Council and its partners have invested a considerable amount of effort and resources into the gypsy and traveller community. There is already a long standing Council run caravan site in Widnes supporting over 100 people and a temporary transit site was established in 2006 and following the success of this scheme the Council and its partners intend investing approximately £1M in a new permanent transit site.

In order to stress the importance of this area a Halton Equalities Partnership has been created reporting directly to the Board. A key focus of its work is to ensure mainstream service delivery is adequately meeting the needs of the diverse communities of Halton. Equity and accessibility are the two key drivers of how we do things. Work is complete on examining the full range of community cohesion issues in Halton. As part of this a dataset of cohesion indicators has been developed, based on the Home Office model. They have been baselined and form part of the datasets held by the Halton Data Observatory. This gives us a mechanism to track changes over the life of this LAA and beyond.

Performance Management Arrangements

The LAA is about what is most important for Halton and about working together to improve the quality of life for all who live and work in the Borough. It sets out key priorities and shows the direction we need to progress in together. It sets challenging improvement targets. It provides the framework for the activities of all partners in Halton. An annual delivery plan and a whole range of more specific plans and initiatives will underpin the LAA. These will translate the broad aims and objectives of the LAA into action on the ground.

We recognise that to make real progress we need to pool ideas and resources and work even more closely and effectively together. All the objectives and targets outlined in the LAA are achievable. A key purpose of the LAA is to ensure that the resources available are targeted and used effectively to bring about improvements in the Borough. This means:

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

The LAA sets out clear targets for focusing partner efforts and resources towards meeting the most pressing local needs. Our thematic partnerships – the SSPs - will be responsible for the delivery of the LAA. Responsibility for individual targets will be clearly designated in their action plans, with designated lead partners and named lead officers.