



# Exchequer and Customer Services

## SERVICE PLAN

**April 2009 to March 2012**

**Executive Board Draft Feb 2009**

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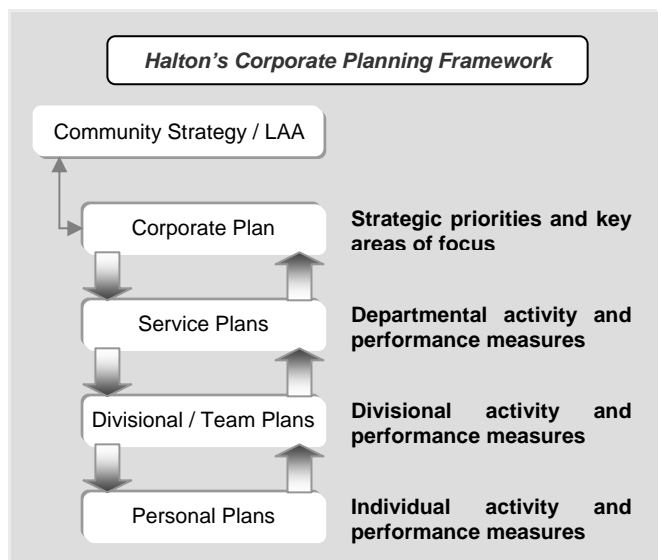
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified [6 key priorities](#), and a number of associated key Areas of Focus, which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**
- **Halton's Urban Renewal**
- **Halton's Children & Young People**
- **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**
- **A Safer Halton**
- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

Departmental Service Plans form an integral part of the authority's corporate planning framework, as illustrated within the diagram opposite.

This framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of its community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.



Departmental Service Plans are primary documents that communicate:

- The existing and future influences that have informed the shaping of service delivery in the medium term.
- The existing and projected resources that are, or may, be required to deliver services.
- Departmental Service Objectives and Key Milestones that are to be delivered over the next three years.
- Those national and local performance indicators for which the department has a responsibility to report.

Such plans, and the Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring Reports that flow from them, are an essential tool in enabling the public, Elected Members, Senior Management, and staff how well Council departments are performing and what progress is being made in relation to improving the quality of life within the borough and service provision for local people, businesses and service users.

The Strategic Priority and associated Areas of Focus that have been most influential in the development of the service plan are: -

### **Corporate Priority 6**

Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery

*Key Area of Focus 32*

*Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access.*

*Key Area of Focus 35*

*Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.*

*Key Area of Focus 38*

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

## **2.0 SERVICE PROFILE**

### **2.1 Purpose**

The Department exists to provide central support services to the Council; the delivery of the Council's customer focused services to Halton residents through Halton Direct Link and the management and administration of Council Tax and Benefits.

The Department is responsible for:

#### Revenues and Benefits

The Division is responsible for the administration and collection of Council Tax, Non-domestic Rates, Residual Poll Tax and Sundry Debtor accounts, the administration of Housing and Council Tax Benefits, the Benefit Express Project and the provision of a Welfare Rights Service.

Revenues and Benefits operations have a high public profile and consequently the services provided are critical to the effectiveness and image of the Council.

#### Customer Services

Customer Services are responsible for the provision of a customer interface that provides for community access to Council services and information through single points of contact to include One Stop Shops, a Corporate Call/Contact Centre and digital access through TV and the Council's Internet & Intranet Service.

Customer Services has a pivotal role in helping to deliver central government's 'e-Government' agenda and the Council's aim of improving access to services to meet the social shift toward a 24 hour / 7 day economy.

The provision, and future extension, of the Halton Direct Link facility allows members of the public to readily access all of the services that the Council provides from a single point of access. Additionally the efficient and effective provision of the Revenues and Benefits administration provides to those most in need the assistance to which they have a legitimate entitlement

#### E-procurement & Finance Support Services (Exchequer Services)

The division is responsible for delivering a range of both internal support and external facing services. The main focus is on e-enabled procurement across the Council, with the aim of driving down costs, and securing better value for money. We provide an advice and information service to all officers on procurement, together with the responsibility for the letting and management of a number of council wide purchasing contracts.

The division has led the way in identifying and implementing the use of IT methodology within the Purchase to Pay Process. We undertake purchasing and invoice processing on behalf of the Corporate & Policy Directorate. We deliver a central service for the effective management and discharge of all creditor and other internal and external payments, including VAT. There are strong links to the Payroll Services, through the management of mileage claims, car loans and expenses claims.

Insurance protection, advice and claims handling for the council are undertaken and the Council's statutory responsibilities for Concessionary Travel are managed here.

By providing both central support and directly accessible public services the Division aims to benefit all that live work or visit the Borough, by the effective discharge of its functions.

## **2.2 Key Messages**

### Customer Services

As more and more Councils see Customer Services as the main gateway for the public to contact the Council, Halton has always taken a lead role and 2008/09 has seen the council once more in the forefront of introducing the new National Indicator (NI 14) to measure the 'avoidable contact' and to put in place working practices to try and reduce the number of unnecessary calls.

As part of a Cabinet Office initiative all government funded and local authority contact centres are being urged to become accredited under the 'Customer Service Excellence' standard. Halton has decided that it will aim for the whole council to become accredited under the scheme. HDL will therefore take a lead role in this initiative working along side colleagues from across the Council. HDL will also continue to work closely with service areas of the council to extend service provision through One Stop Shops and the Contact Centre, enabling greater access to services on a 24/7 basis. The Contact Centre, working closely with all Directorates plans to examine the feasibility of dealing with paper mail through HDL and introducing workflow management across the Council. HDL will also be looking at further opportunities to introduce outbound call campaigns, which can for example promote services, improve take up and collect revenue.

### Revenues & Benefits

2008 saw the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance, which is part of the government's agenda for modernising the welfare state. In addition, Incapacity Benefit was replaced by the new Employment Support Allowance for new claimants.

Both required major changes to the IT system and extensive training of staff. The full implications of both these reforms have still to be assessed.

Two new national indicators were introduced for Benefits. One measuring the number of changes, the other measuring the speed of process. As they are new indicators, and there have been problems nationally gathering the information, no meaningful comparisons can be made until the end of 2008/2009.

Although the Benefits Service again achieved top quartile performance in 2007/2008 the methodology for assessing performance has dramatically changed in 2008. The Benefit Fraud Inspectorate has been replaced by the Audit Commission for service inspections. The new regime carries out assessments under a completely different set of criteria. Early indications are that Authorities who previously scored an excellent rating of 4 are now being assessed, at best, at level 2. Assessments against the new Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry will be undertaken during 2009 – 10 to establish Halton's position and identify any improvement opportunities that may need to be addressed.

The Business Rates Section has seen two major changes in 2008 which were the introduction of an Empty Property Rate and the introduction of Business Improvement Districts.

Opportunities for collaborative working are continually explored. 2008 saw the Division offering training for several authorities across the County with regard to the IRRV professional qualification and also the first staff attaining this qualification. The scheme has been rolled out again for 2009, with several Local Authorities being assessed by Halton. The Division remains at the forefront of Homeworking, which has been rolled out to more staff in 2008. Finally, collaborative working with the Job Center Plus, saw the joint working pilot extended to both Runcorn and Widnes offices.

#### E-procurement & Finance Support Services (Exchequer Services)

Halton continues to build on its successful implementation of E Procurement methods. We are open to electronic end to end trading incorporating e-marketplace, purchase cards, and have recently introduced our first electronic invoice supplier. However we remain in a position to trade with those suppliers who are not e-enabled. Document imaging and electronic workflow for all purchase orders & creditor invoices is well established, and is recognised as the standard processing route during 2009-10 reducing manual input into the approval & payment process.

We have enhanced the availability of management information in relation to purchase arrangements to identify areas of collaborative buying within the Council e.g. agency staff, PPE, and corporate travel to deliver cashable savings.

We have helped to identify and have promoted collaborative purchasing with other public bodies, and in particular developed strong links with the

Merseyside Sub Region to access value for money framework agreements and work together on new arrangements.

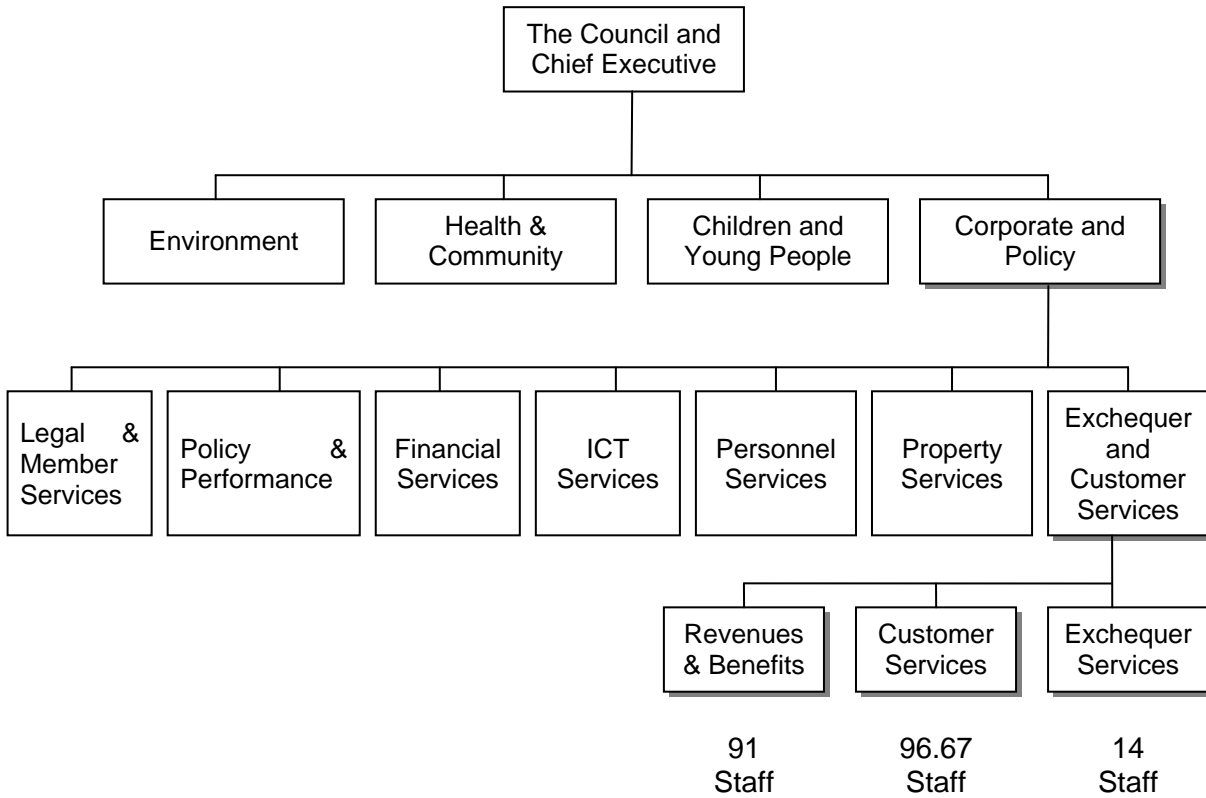
We are active participants in both regional and sub regional procurement initiatives and work groups to ensure we remain in the forefront of developments in the field.

Planning for the implementation of a central electronic tendering and contract management system is underway. This will enable the Council to extend trade opportunities both to the local and wider supply market and effectively monitor our contracts in terms of the expanding role of promoting sustainability, equality & diversity in our supply chain.

We continue to use the Councils Internet, Intranet and periodical procurement newsletter to promote current activities and developments and run four training courses a year for those new to procurement activities.



## 2.3 Organisation Structure



## **3.0 FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE**

### **3.1 External Factors**

There are a number of external factors that will have implications for the department during the lifetime of this plan which are summarised below.

#### **Political**

Introduction of a new National Indicator Data set from April 2008.

This will require the Council to further develop its approach to the recording of 'avoidable contacts' in order to meet nationally prescribed definitions. This will require collaboration of all departments across the Council.

#### **Economic**

##### *Budget pressures/ Efficiency Review*

Expectation by Government for all authorities to continue to make efficiency savings will be an ongoing consideration

##### *Economic Downturn*

The economic downturn has and will continue to have an effect, both in the increase in Benefit claimants and the impact on collection of both Council Tax and Business Rates. In order to mitigate against any negative affect upon outstanding debt the department will further develop and deploy appropriate positive intervention arrangements.

#### **Technological**

##### *Government Connect*

Govt Connect project will have a major impact on Revenues & Benefits for accessing information from the DWP. From September 2009 this will be the only secure electronic connection between Local Authority and the Dept. for Work and Pensions. It will be used to transfer data and PI information but also will be the only way in which the LA will receive information from DWP. If connection is not up and running by September 2009 the Benefits Section will lose access to customers DWP records which will impact severely on performance and turnaround times. The Code of Connection requirements of Government Connect affect all areas.

##### *In and Out of Work pilot*

During 2008/09 there will be a role out of this pilot which involves DWP carrying out a telephone interview with working age customers claiming Job seekers Allowance, Income Support, ESA. DWP will, at the same time, gather the information to process the HB CTB claim and pass this information to the LA.

This will mean a change to working practices, re-education of the claimant about when and how to claim to avoid duplication of applications. There is also a necessity for us to have successfully implemented Government Connect in order for the applications made via DWP to be transferred electronically.

#### *Electronic and Telephone Benefit applications*

Good practice and Key Lines of Enquiry recommendations are that customers should be able to access the service electronically, including being able to claim/ report changes in circumstances on line. The cost and implications to working practices of such arrangements are to be considered during the coming year.

### **Legislative**

#### *Employment Support Allowance*

From October 2008 this new allowance replaced Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support. This has led to changes to IT software, application form & stationery, as well as changes to the way these are claims are dealt with.

#### *Changes to Empty Property Rate Relief legislation*

Although introduced in April 2008, there continues to be a significant impact on recovery.

#### *Changes to the way in which Pension Credit claimants claim and are reviewed*

From October 2008 Pension Credit customers will be claiming HB CTB over the phone with the Pension Service who will then forward the information. There is a risk of some claims not being received or received with missing information which would impact on performance times. Reduction in need to report changes in circumstances to Pension Service could lead to customer confusion and a drop in the changes reported to the Benefits Office

#### *Electronic receipt of Pension Credit applications*

From April 2009, the applications made via Pension Service will be forwarded to the LA electronically. The risk of electronic failures and changes to working practices could lead to drop in performance in turnaround times.

### *Customer Service Excellence and E-Service Delivery*

HDL is required to become accredited for the Customer Service Excellence standard which has implications for corporate operations.

There will also be a need during the life of this plan for the department to work closely with ICT and individual directorates to develop appropriate electronic service delivery solutions.

### *Replacement Telephone system*

The current telephone system has been in use for some 18 years and is now nearing the end of its economic life. During 2009 – 10 a project group will be established to examine the options and make recommendations regarding an appropriate replacement for the existing system.

## **Environmental**

Awareness of Climate Change is growing and the Council is committed to taking a lead and setting an example in tackling the associated problems. A corporate Climate Change Action Plan is being prepared, but each department can make its own contribution.

Consideration will be given throughout the life of the Service Plan to ways in which support can be given to the action plan and to identify and implement opportunities to reduce any contribution to Climate Change and to promote best practice in the reduction of carbon emissions.

The Council joined up to the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme in the early part of 2007/08. The programme will guide the Council through a systematic analysis of its carbon footprint, outline opportunities to help manage carbon emissions, develop Action Plans for realising carbon and financial savings; and embed carbon management into the authority's day-to-day business.

As part of the programme the Council has developed a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. Through the Strategy and Implementation Plan, Council services will need to encourage closer examination of their policies around procurement, transport and the use of renewable energy.

## **3.2 Service Developments**

The Benefit Fraud Inspectorate has been replaced by the Audit Commission for the purposes of assessing Benefit services nationally. The new regime uses a completely new set of criteria for assessment. Early indications are that Authorities who had previously scored a rating of 4 - Excellent, are now achieving, at best, a score of 2. Work is underway within the Division to look at the impact of the new Key Lines of Enquiry to see what additional work is required to meet the new standards.

### **3.3 Efficiency Improvements**

#### Customer Services

The Customer Service Excellence standard accreditation and the introduction of NI 14 will lead to efficiency improvements across the Council as well as HDL. The continuing business process analysis work stream will in conjunction with ICT & KPMG will identify further efficiency gains in customer service delivery.

#### Revenues & Benefits

The Revenues & Benefits Division continues to look at innovative ways of working. Home working has been extended and will continue to be rolled out in 2009.

To comply with the KLOE standards new methods of working will need to be considered including Voice Risk Analysis, telephone claiming and Telly Talk. However, there are financial implications to be considered with each of these.

A pilot is underway to consider the advantages of LoCTA. This enables the pursuit of Council Tax arrears and HB overpayments for people who have moved away from the Borough.

#### Exchequer Services

Better procurement has resulted in savings in Insurance, the Council's Stationary and Furniture Contracts. Savings have also resulted from the introducing Procurement Cards for Catering. Reviews of various corporate contracts will result in savings from better procured Advertising, Postal Services, Office Equipment, Travel and recruitment of Agency staff. Directorates are looking to utilise existing framework agreements where possible to achieve contract savings

Savings in productive time have resulted from improved working practices in processing of job vacancy details and the processing of invoices.

### **3.4 National Regional and Sub-regional Focus**

Regionally the Council is an active member of the North West Improvement & Efficiency Partnership, a collaboration of local authorities in the North West looking at introducing best practice and collaborative working across the region to achieve better procurement of goods and services. Within the Sub Region we are active members of Merseyside Project Collaboration Program Board & Merseyside Authorities Procurement Group and associated work Groups.

The Revenues and Benefits Division was granted IRRV Centre of Accreditation status. This enabled the service to offer in house training to staff to enable them to achieve a professional qualification.

This service has now offered to other Local Authorities in Cheshire. Several Authorities have taken advantage of this and send staff to Halton for formal training each month.

### **3.5 Equality and Diversity**

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

This commitment is encapsulated in the equal opportunities policy that the Council has adopted. The policy sets out the Council's approach to promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity and encouraging fairness and justice; and providing equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation. The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help to identify and overcome discriminatory barriers that may exist.

Each year Departments undertake Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all of their policies, procedures and practices. As a result an Equality Action Plan is developed to identify those issues that demand attention. This forms a contribution to the overall Corporate Equalities Plan.

As a result of such assessments any high priority actions that have been identified, that fall within the life of this plan, are detailed in section 5.

### 3.6 Risk Management

Risk Management, which forms a key element of the strategic management and performance management processes of the Council, is a business discipline that is used to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the organisation in achieving its objectives.

Risk assessments are the process by which departments identify those issues that are, or may be, likely to impede the delivery of service objectives. Such risks are categorised and rated in terms of both their probability, i.e. the extent to which they are likely to happen, and their severity i.e. the potential extent of their impact should they occur.

Against each key objective the overall initial and residual risk assessment (before and after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown. The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. Such numbers are then translated into a Low, Medium or High category.

<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>Overall Level of Risk</b>
1 – 4	LOW
5 – 10	MEDIUM
11 – 16	HIGH

Following such assessments a series of risk treatment measures are identified that will mitigate against such risks having an adverse impact upon the delivery of the departmental objectives.

Mitigation measures for those risks that were initially assessed as high have been included as an Appendix within this plan. As such their implementation will be monitored through the Quarterly Departmental Service Plan Monitoring Report process.

### 3.7 Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those significant developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report 'by exception' to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen developments occur.

Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of any unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

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



## 4.0 Resources

### 4.1 Budget Summary and Service Costs

#### **INFORMATION TO FOLLOW**

### 4.2 Human Resource Requirements

The table below identifies the staffing levels within the department. It is not envisaged at this stage that there will be any additional human resource requirements within the Department for the period to 2012.

Year	Revenues & Benefits	Customer Services	Exchequer Services	Total
2007 - 08	91	96.67	14	<b>201.67</b>
2008 - 09	91	<b>96.67</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>201.67</b>
2009 - 10	91	<b>96.67</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>201.67</b>

### 4.3 ICT Requirements

It is not envisaged at the time of writing this plan that the department will require any additional ICT resources during the plan period.

### 4.4 Accommodation and Property Requirements

It is not envisaged at the time of writing this plan that the department will require any additional accommodation and property resources during the plan period.

## 5.0 Service Performance

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and / or its statutory responsibilities. The service utilises a variety of measures and targets to enable performance against the service plan to be tracked, monitored, and reported. Details of these measures and targets are given below.

### ***Objectives and Key Milestones.***

These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2009–12, such as the launch of new initiatives progress on major projects or the delivery of business critical activity. Objectives and Milestones are clearly linked to the appropriate Key Areas of Focus in the Corporate Plan 2006-11.

### ***National Performance Indicators.***

This is a national set of 198 indicators that have been prescribed by Central Government that are intended to measure the extent to which authorities are operating effectively and efficiently and are delivering upon both national and local priorities.

### ***Local Performance Indicators.***

These are indicators that have been developed by the Council and any relevant non-statutory indicators that have been adopted from national or other sources.

### ***Local Area Agreement Targets.***

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement based on Halton's Community Strategy. The second round LAA commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council and its partners will contribute.

The LAA contains 86 key targets addressing all of the priority issues identified in both the Community Strategy, and the Council's Corporate Plan. Of the 86 key targets, 34 are mandatory and also included are the 12 LPSA targets to which the Council signed up.

Many of the objectives contained within the current service plans are designed to support the achievement of LAA targets. A full version of Halton's LAA can be viewed on the Halton Strategic Partnership Website at [http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa\\_final\\_\(march\\_2007\).pdf](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa_final_(march_2007).pdf)

## 5.1 Service Objectives –

(NB Other than by exception those service objectives and/or Key Milestones shown in *italics* will only be reported at half-year and year-end.

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	<b>Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency</b>
<i>Key Area Of Focus: 33</i>	<i>Ensuring that we are properly structured and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.</i>

<b>Service Objective: ECS O1</b>	<b>Ensure continuing service delivery remains effective through the Implementation of new working arrangements in response to central government initiatives.</b>					
Key Milestone(s) 09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information to follow</li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information to follow</li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information to follow</li> </ul>					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial	TBA	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	TBA	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	
	Residual	TBA				

<i>Key Area Of Focus: 38</i>	<i>Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.</i>					
<b>Service Objective: ECS O2</b>	<b>Ensure business continuity and effective service delivery through the updating benefits IT systems.</b>					
Key Milestone(s) 09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install and test software version 5.14 [date to be inserted]</li> <li>Install 10g and new server hardware [date to be inserted]</li> <li>Evaluate system for functionality and speed and report findings to Operational Director <b>October 2009</b></li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial	TBA	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Head of Revenues &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	
	Residual	TBA				

<i>Key Area Of Focus:</i>	<b>TBA</b>
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<b>Service Objective: ECS O3</b>	<b>Ensure compliance with new national performance framework by recording and reporting nationally prescribed performance indicators in line with required timeframe and continue to develop and improve service delivery mechanisms in line with the modernisation agenda.</b>					
Key Milestone(s) 09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide DWP with data <b>Each Month</b></li> <li>• Undertake regular performance monitoring and report [date to be inserted]</li> <li>• Carry out self assessment using Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry [date to be inserted]</li> <li>• HDL &amp; Revenues and Benefits gain accreditation for Customer Service Excellence Standard <b>Sept 2009</b></li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake performance benchmarking activity and report findings [date to be inserted]</li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Head of Revenues &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	
	Residual	<b>TBA</b>				

<i>Key Area Of Focus: 35</i>	<i>Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.</i>
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<b>Service Objective: ECS O4</b>	<b>Continue to identify and exploit the potential for further efficiency gains by enhancing the authority's approach to the procurement of goods and services.</b>					
Key Milestone(s) 09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake an analysis of spend and identify areas of potential savings [date to be inserted]</li> <li>• Adopt and integrate the Framework for Collaborative Procurement [date to be inserted]</li> <li>• Develop and introduce a corporate Tendering and Contract Management Tool [date to be inserted]</li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Head of Procurement</b>	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	
	Residual	<b>TBA</b>				

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	<b>Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency</b>
<i>Key Area Of Focus: 38</i>	<i>Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.</i>

<b>Service Objective: ECS 05</b>	<b>Continue to investigate and develop sustainable and appropriate e-solutions to further enhance the delivery of services to the local residential and business communities.</b>					
Key Milestone(s) 09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake review of service options and report findings <b>March 2010</b></li> <li>Continue to investigate opportunities for service remapping <b>March 2010</b></li> <li>Rollout invoice scanning <b>March 2010</b></li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to introduce further service delivery arrangements through Halton Direct Link facility <b>March 2011.</b></li> <li>Develop in-house CSD system for use across the Council [date to be inserted]</li> </ul>					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	
	Residual	<b>TBA</b>				

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	<b>Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency</b>
<i>Key Area Of Focus: n/a</i>	<b>Not applicable</b>

<b>Service Objective: ECS 06</b>	<b>Maintain the continuity of service delivery by ensuring that the Council's telephony services are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the Council and its stakeholders.</b>					
Key Milestone(s) 09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish working group and investigate and report upon future options <b>September 2009</b></li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procure and implement new systems / working arrangements by September <b>2010</b></li> </ul>					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Initial	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	
	Residual	<b>TBA</b>				

## 5.2 Performance Indicators and Targets (Statutory & Local Indicators)<sup>1</sup>:

Ref <sup>2</sup>	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2007 / 08 Quartiles <sup>3</sup> (All England)			Halton 2008 / 9 Target	Halton 2008 / 9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09 / 10	10 / 11	11 / 12

### Corporate Health

<b><u>ECSLI 01</u></b> <b>(BVPI 8)</b>	The percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days	CP 6	97.08	97.00	95.00	91.00	97.00	TBA	98.00	99.00	TBA
<b><u>ECSLI 02</u></b> <b>(BVPI 9)</b>	Proportion of Council Tax collected	CP 6	96.41	98.48	97.67	96.49	96.85	TBA	96.00	96.00	TBA
<b><u>ECSLI 03</u></b> <b>(BVPI 10)</b>	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received	CP 6	99.93	99.30	98.97	98.43	98.85	TBA	97.75	97.75	TBA
<b><u>NI 14</u></b>	Average number of customer contacts per received customer request.	CP 6	New for 2008				New for 2008	New for 2008	TBA	TBA	TBA
<b><u>NI 180</u></b>	Number of changes in circumstances which affect customers HB CTB entitlement within the year						New for 2008	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
<b><u>NI 181</u></b>	Time taken to process HB CTB new claims and change events						New for 2008	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

<sup>1</sup> BVPI's are replaced by the National Indicator Data Set (NIS) from April 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type**.

<sup>3</sup> No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

Ref	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007 / 8 Actual	2007 / 08 Quartiles (All England)			Halton 2008 / 9 Target	Halton 2008 / 9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09 / 10	10 / 11	11/12

<b>Quality</b>
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ECSLI 04	% Of fairer charging assessments completed within 10 days of referral	CP 1 AOF 6	96%				98.00	TBA	98.00	98.00	TBA
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<b>Service Delivery</b>
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<b>ECSLI 05</b> (BVPI 78a)	Average time for processing new claims (Housing & Council Tax Benefit)	CP 6	17.08 Days				22 Days	21 days	20 Days	20 Days	TBA
<b>ECSLI 06</b> (BVPI 78b)	Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances	CP 6	4.1 Days				5.5 Days	5.5 Days	5.5 Days	5.5 Days	TBA

## 5.3 Data Quality

Good quality data provides the foundation for managing and improving services, determining and acting upon shared priorities, and accounting for performance to inspecting bodies and the local community.

In recognising this, the Council has developed a Corporate Data Quality Strategy that will provide a mechanism by which the authority can be assured that the quality of its data remains robust and fit for purpose. This strategy, which will remain subject to periodic review, establishes the key dimensions of good quality data and identifies five Key Corporate Objectives namely;

### Objective 1

To provide assurance to all stakeholders that the quality of data used in decision making and in accounting for and reporting the performance of the authority, either directly or through partnership arrangements, is wholly fit for purpose.

### Objective 2

That, through a rigorous process of monitoring, review and refinement, the authority's arrangements for securing data quality remain relevant, reliable and robust and that exemplary arrangements for securing data quality are achieved within the medium term

### Objective 3

That arrangements for securing data quality are widely shared, communicated and understood by all of those with data quality responsibility and that relevant staff are provided with timely and appropriate guidance and support.

### Objective 4

That all departments, partners and agencies that deliver services on behalf of the Council use complete, accurate and verifiable data which is collected and communicated in an effective and timely manner.

### Objective 5

That all data used in the calculation of nationally prescribed performance indicators is definition compliant and verifiable and that no such indicators will be amended or qualified as a result of work undertaken by inspecting bodies.



In supporting the delivery of the corporate strategy the department will ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place to secure the quality of its data and that such systems are subject to periodic and risk based review. In so doing the department will pay particular attention to the six key dimensions of good quality data i.e. that data is

- **Accurate** For its intended purpose;
- **Valid** By being consistently recorded and used in compliance with predetermined definitions and rules;
- **Reliable** By reflecting stable and consistent data collection processes;
- **Timely** By being made available as soon as possible after the activity or event and in line with organisational requirements;
- **Relevant** For the purpose intended;
- **Complete** In that the monitoring of incomplete, missing or invalid data is avoided.

**Such systems include, for example**

## **6.0 Performance Reporting**

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and or delivering it's statutory responsibilities.

It is imperative that the Council and interested members of the public can keep track of how the Council and its Departments are progressing against objectives and targets, and that mechanisms are in place to enable councillors and managers to see whether the service is performing as planned.

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

- **The day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**
- **Provision of Quarterly progress reports to Corporate and Directorate Management Teams;**

- **The inclusion of Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**
- **Publication of Quarterly Service Plan monitoring reports on the Councils intranet site.**

In demonstrating its commitment to exploiting the potential of Information and Communications Technology to improve the accessibility of its services and related information an extensive range of documentation, including this plan and its associated quarterly monitoring reports, are available via the Council's website at

<http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansandstrategies>

Additionally information and assistance can be accessed through any of the Council's Halton Direct Link facilities (HDL) or the Council's libraries.

## **7.0 Statutory and Non-statutory Plans**

INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

## Appendix 1

### Halton Corporate Plan (2006 – 2011) – Council Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.

#### A Healthy Halton

1	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.
2	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles.
3	Delivering programmes of education to improve the health of Halton residents.
4	Helping people to manage the effects of ill health, disability and disadvantage.
5	Actively managing the environmental factors that are detrimental to good health.
6	Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community.
7	Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

#### Halton's Urban Renewal

8	Exploiting the benefits of inward investment opportunities by creating a physical environment that is both attractive and responsive to the needs of existing and potential business.
9	Maintaining and developing local transport networks that meet the needs of resident's, businesses and visitors to Halton.
10	Revitalising the economy by sustaining and developing an environment that compliments the core brand values of existing and potential investors.
11	Maintaining levels of affordable housing provision within Halton that provides for quality and choice and meets the needs and aspirations of existing and potential residents.
12	Providing opportunities for recreation and fostering conservation by developing attractive and accessible parks and open spaces.

## Children & Young People in Halton

13	Improving the educational attainment of pupils in Halton, by providing effective teaching and school support
14	To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.
15	To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources
16	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of children & young people in Halton accessing education and training.
17	Provide an effective transition for young people from school to employment, through opportunities for work related learning, and post 16 education, voluntary and community work.
18	To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18 by providing awareness, education and relevant support
19	To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect

## Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

20	To increase self-confidence and social inclusion by providing opportunities to adults to engage in basic skills learning.
21	To improve access to employment by providing opportunities to enhance employability skills and knowledge
22	Working with employers to identify and secure opportunities for the unemployed.
23	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of those people in Halton accessing employment and training.
24	To sustain current employment levels by providing practical and financial advice and assistance to those from disadvantaged groups
25	To increase employment opportunities and business start ups in Halton, by developing an enterprise culture

## A Safer Halton

26	Actively encouraging socially responsible behaviour by engaging with Halton's young people and by providing opportunities for them to access and take part in affordable leisure time activities.
27	Reducing the physical effects of anti-social and criminal behaviour
28	Providing and maintaining a highways and footpath network that is safe, accessible, and meets the needs and expectations of those living, working or visiting in Halton.
29	Improving the quality of community life by enhancing the visual amenity of Halton's neighbourhoods.
30	Improving the social and physical well-being of those groups most at risk within the community

## Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

31	Working with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.
32	Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access.
33	Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.
34	Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders
35	Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.
36	Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed efficiently
37	Ensuring that Council buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and comply with legislative requirements
38	Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
39	Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
40	Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.