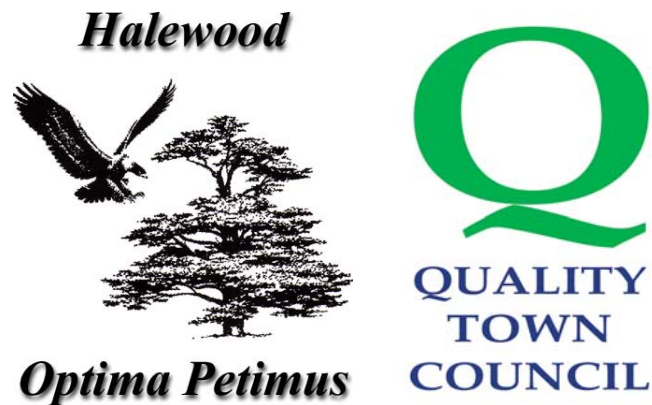


***HALEWOOD
TOWN
COUNCIL***



**EIGHTH BEST
PRACTICE
POLICY STATEMENT
2010 - 2011**

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INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Act 1999 placed a duty of Best Value on local authorities. The duty commenced on 1st April 2000. In meeting this duty a local authority is required to consult local people, review all its functions periodically, measure its performance and produce a performance plan which will be audited by an independent auditor. In short the requirements are:

- CHALLENGE – the way services are delivered
- CONSULT – users, potential users and others
- COMPETE – demonstrate the competitiveness of services delivered
- COMPARE – their own performance with similar service providers

All principal councils (county, borough and district) are subject to the duty, but the Government recognised that the application of best value to Town and Parish Councils would not be cost effective. It originally set a threshold whereby a Council with a budgeted income of less than £500,000 would be exempt from best value duties. However it was expected that all councils would abide by the principles of Best Value. Whilst not subject to the formal, separate Best Value audit regime, they will be expected to demonstrate to their auditors that they have applied the principles of the best value regime to the work and decisions of their councils.

Following a discussion with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in July 2002, it was established by this Council, that only the forty-one identified local councils at the time of the Act were subject to the production of a Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). Those Councils who have gone beyond the £0.5 million threshold since then do not have to produce a BVPP, but are subject in the following year to producing an alternative form of accounts.

Halewood Town Council has decided to produce this document in order to demonstrate their commitment to providing Best Value services.

The people of Halewood Town Council should expect to receive high quality services from the Town Council. Best Value does not necessarily mean the lowest possible cost, but should ensure value for money and cost-effectiveness in their services delivery.

In order to achieve this, the elected Members and staff of the Town Council need the help of the people of Halewood in letting us know your views on the services we provide, the services we may like to provide, and how well we are performing at present. This is the eighth Best Practice Policy Statement issued by the Town Council, (Previously named Best Value Policy Statement).

As a result of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, (expected to come into force on 1 July 2008), Section 136 of that Act amends Section 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 so that parish and town councils in England and community councils in Wales, are no longer subject to the duties of best value.

This Town Council never exceeded the threshold of a budgeted income of £500,000 to be classed as a “Best Value” council, but chose to produce a “Best Value Policy Statement” as good practice. However, the new legislation meant that commencing with the 2008-2009 document, it was re-named the “Best Practice Policy Statement”.

MISSION STATEMENT

That Halewood Town Council will:

1. *Deliver its services to the highest quality in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and economy in terms of value for money.*
2. *Conduct its business openly and democratically, and will consult with the local people.*
3. *Consider good practice from other similar sized Town Councils.*
4. *Examine and challenge through periodic reviews how a service is delivered.*
5. *Maintain its use of open and fair competition, where practicable, when considering tenders and the provision of services.*
6. *Comply with the National Code of Local Government Conduct regarding standards in public life.*
7. *Act in the best interests of local people in making appropriate representations to:*
 - a). *Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council*
 - b). *Central Government*
 - c). *Other appropriate private and public sector groups.*

Part One – Our Town Council

ABOUT HALEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

- **Number of Councillors**

The Town Council has twelve members for 2009–2010. Each member (Town Councillor) is elected to represent one of the three wards in the township and serves for a period of four years. The next Town Council elections are due to be held in May 2011.

- **Election Details**

The Town Councillors elected in May 2007 for the period of four years are:

Halewood North

Councillor Mrs S.Powell (Labour)

Councillor T.Powell (Labour)

Councillor D.Smithson (Liberal Democrat)

Councillor Mrs S.Smithson (Liberal Democrat)

Halewood South

Councillor Mrs D.Birch (Liberal Democrat)

Councillor H.Birch (Liberal Democrat)

Councillor Mrs S.Moretta (Liberal Democrat)

Councillor Mrs S.Smith (Liberal Democrat)

Halewood West

Councillor T.Fearns (Labour)

Councillor Ms C.Harris (Labour)

Councillor N.Hogg (Labour)

Councillor R.Swann (Labour)

- **Council Structure – Mayor & Committees**

The Town Council with effect from the 2009-2010 municipal year has decided to hold one full council meeting a month, (with the exception of August), and abolish its standing committees. Therefore, there are eleven such meetings, plus two “Special” meetings, and an Annual Meeting.

The responsibility of the Council is to take policy decisions about how services are carried out, what the priorities should be and how the Council’s resources should be allocated. The current Mayor of the Town Council is Councillor Sue Smith, who was installed at the Annual Meeting in May 2010. The Liberal Democrat Party is the majority group within the Town Council, and the Leader of the Majority group on the Town Council is Councillor D.Smithson. The Leader of the opposition Labour Group is Councillor N.Hogg.

- **Public Access to Meetings**

Members of the public are welcome to attend any meeting of the Council or its Committees, although there are occasions when meetings must go into private session when dealing with matters of a confidential nature. A thirty minute Public Forum is available, by written prior arrangement with the Town Manager, at all Town Council meetings, for items appertaining to the Township. The meeting dates for the municipal year 2010-2011 are, (subject to amendment), as follows:

Town Council

3/6/2010
15/7/2010
9/9/2010
7/10/2010
18/11/2010
16/12/2010
20/1/2011
24/2/2011
17/3/2011
14/4/2011
12/5/2011

Special Meeting of the Town Council

14/4/2011

12/5/2011

Annual Town Council Meeting & Annual Parish Meeting

12/05/2011

• **Town Council Staff**

Town Manager – Mr John Green

Administration Officer – Miss Lynn Joyner

Administration Assistant – Ms Sue Edwardson

Arncliffe Centre Manager & Licensee – Mrs Veronica Furlong

Arncliffe Centre Assistant Manager – Mr Jeff Clark

Arncliffe Centre Duty Officer – Mr John Ferry

Arncliffe Centre Cleaner – Mrs Elizabeth McMahon

Arncliffe Assistant Duty Officer – Mr Lee Callister

Hollies Hall Manager (inc Multi Site & Mtce Officer) – Mr Edward Owings

Hollies Hall Cleaner/Caretaker – Mr Graham Elliott

Hollies Hall Cleaner – Vacancy

In addition the Town Council employ a number of part time casual bar staff when functions are held at either of the two centres.

• **Population/Budget of Constituency**

As at 1/12/2009, (the last available date from Democratic Services, KMBC), the electoral roll for each ward was as follows:

Halewood North (not inc Tarbock)	4,755	
Halewood West	5,075	
Halewood South	5,471	Total = 15,301

The Net Estimated Expenditure for 2010-2011 is £354,142. This covers the Town Council Administration, the Arncliffe Centre and the Hollies Hall. In addition the Town Council identified new Specific Reserves totalling £19,753.

- **Principal Council**

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council is the principal Council, and as a unitary authority serves the Borough with all major local government services. The Housing function has transferred from local authority control to an independent Housing Trust known as Knowsley Housing Trust (KHT).

- **How is the Town Council Financed?**

The net cost of the Town Council's activities in 2010-2011 is financed by levying what is known as a precept, which is added to the Council tax levy set by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. In 2010-2011 the Town Council have raised a sum of £317,141, which is a modest increase of 1% on the standstill precept.

The previous year's precept was:

2009-2010 £316,905

ACHIEVEMENTS 2009-2010

- The holding of the second "Halewood Culturefest" during 2009 with two weeks worth of various cultural activities including the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra concert.
- The ongoing work to establish the official twinning with the town of Ballinasloe in the Republic of Ireland.
- The continued involvement by Halewood Town Council as a partner in the Halewood Area Partnership Board.
- The partnership working with the Borough Council, and Blachere UK which enabled a further improved festive lighting programme in the Township, particularly in local shopping areas.
- The continuing success of the Town Council's "Halewood Community Chest" which has once again supported local organisations in 2009/10.

- The publication of the Town Council’s seventh “Best Value Policy Statement”.
- The continued financial assistance given to the “Halewood Community News”, to ensure that this free publication continued to be available in the Township.
- The support of the “Halewood Community Festival” in conjunction with Knowsley MBC for a fifth year running.
- The funding of four seasonal pantomimes at the Hollies Hall, Arncliffe Centre, New Hutte Neighbourhood Centre, and Reigate Club buildings.
- The provision of floral hanging baskets in the shopping areas within the township in both the summer and winter.
- The 2009 Christmas Parties for the senior citizens in the Township held at Hollies Hall, and the Arncliffe Centre, and the continued success of the weekly Luncheon Club at the Arncliffe Centre.
- The Halewood Town Council Gardening Competition, generating pride in looking after local gardens, sponsored by the Town Council for a fifth successive year.
- The continued maintenance and running of the public open spaces, play parks and Community Centres in Halewood, and especially the provision of new signage.
- The presentation of “Community Achievement Awards” Which identify the local unsung heroes who assist in their community.
- The formation of an Economic Well Being Working Group.
- The successful lobbying of KMBC to secure the purchase of land at Okell Drive and Lydiate Lane.
- The banning of dogs from Elwyn Gardens and the Junior football pitches at the Arncliffe Centre.

CURRENT INITIATIVES 2010-2011

- The plans for the third “Halewood Culturefest” due to take place in June/July 2010.
- The staging of the Halewood Town Council Gardening Competition for a sixth year running.
- The provision of festive illuminations for a fifth consecutive year in the township.
- The publication of the Town Council’s eighth Best Value Policy Statement.
- The funding of four seasonal pantomimes at different locations in the Township for the benefit of local children, for the seventh year running.
- A commitment to providing a playground in the Torrington Drive area.
- The staging of the annual RLPO concert in December 2010.
- The arrangement of Senior Citizens Parties in Hollies Hall and the Arncliffe Centre.

The majority of these initiatives will all be funded from the Specific Reserve money currently held by the Town Council.

Part Two – Services

SERVICES CURRENTLY PROVIDED

- The Arncliffe Community Centre – It serves all members of the Community from Parent and Toddler Group to Pensioners Club. Amongst its many events are Yoga, Dancing, Ju-Jitsu and Drama. It also provides accredited education courses via LINC in Computer Skills.
- Hollies Hall – which provides a recently re-furbished facility for private functions, is a popular and successful venue for private functions, but also provides a wide range of activities as Weight

- Watchers, Mother & Toddler Group, Youth Dance Groups, Majorettes, Sequence Dancing, and a Winter Indoor Bowls League.
- Public Open Spaces – The Town Council manage around 90 acres of public open space. This includes two open age football pitches at the Hollies. In addition the Town Council support the Halewood Junior Football League which uses the land at the Fredrick Lunt Playing Fields, and is soon to have a base at the new extension at the Arncliffe Centre.
 - Playgrounds – the up-keep of the current playgrounds at Hollies Road, Arncliffe Centre, Wood Road plus the proposed playground on the Torrington Drive Estate.
 - Street Furniture – The maintenance of all street furniture within the Township.
 - Civic Services – The monitoring of all planning applications applicable to areas within the Township.
 - Council Offices and Support Services – Financial and administrative services, mayoralty and civic events.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE

The net expenditure costs for each service can be shown as follows:

Summary.

	2008/9 actual £	2009/10 actual £	2010/11 estimate £
Arncliffe (inc Annexe)	72,293	70,717	92,319
Hollies	30,358	35,619	37,858
TC Admin	178,661	202,850	223,965
Total	£ 281,312	£ 309,186	£ 354,142

Actual 2009-2010 are subject to external audit.

Appendix One gives a breakdown for 2009-2010 of the following:

1. Where the Money Comes From
2. Income from Centres
3. Where the Money Goes – Net Costs

Part Three – Performance Indicators and Targets

A). The Hollies Hall Community Centre

		<u>Target</u> <u>2009-2010</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>2009-2010</u>	<u>Target</u> <u>2010-2011</u>
<u>Cost</u>				
	Income from all lettings	£ 8,300	£11,039	£10,750
	Income from Bar Sales	£ 36,500	£38,895	£42840
	No of free lettings granted	2	7	2
	No of concessionary lettings granted	2	2	2
<u>Efficiency</u>				
	Income from lettings as a % of gross operating cost	9.60%	12.9%	11.75%
	Bar purchases as a % of Bar Takings	49.31%	46.60%	49.01%
	Net operating cost of centre per elector*	£2.54	£2.29	£2.47
<u>Quality</u>				
	% of satisfied users – ease of booking	90%	96.6%	90%
	% of satisfied users – cleanliness of building	90%	100%	90%
	% of satisfied users – quality of staff service	90%	100%	90%
	% of satisfied users – bar facilities	90%	96.6%	90%
	% of satisfied users – overall value for money	90%	100%	90%
<u>Access</u>				
	% of random survey aware of facility for hire	85%	85.96%	85%
	% of random survey having used the facility	50%	50.88%	50%

***N.B.** Electoral role for Halewood Parish only of 15,499 used for comparison purposes in target and actuals for 2009-2010. New electoral role figure of 15,301, (1/12/09), used for 2010-11 targets.

B). The Arncliffe Centre

		<u>Target 2009-2010</u>	<u>Actual 2009-2010</u>	<u>Target 2010-2011</u>
Cost				
	Income from all lettings (inc Synthetic Hire)	£14,500	£25,202	£22,000
	Income from Bar Sales	£38,000	£38,224	£37,500
	No of free lettings granted	3	5	3
	No of concessionary lettings granted	2	3	2
Efficiency				
	Income from lettings as a % of gross operating costs	9.42%	18.77%	14.48%
	Bar purchases as a % of Bar Takings	47.37%	46.78%	53.33%
	Net operating cost of centre per elector*	£6.53	£4.56	£6.03
Quality				
	% of satisfied users – ease of booking	90%	100%	90%
	% of satisfied users – cleanliness of building	90%	100%	90%
	% of satisfied users – quality of staff service	90%	89.65%	90%
	% of satisfied users – bar facilities	90%	93.10%	90%
	% of satisfied users – overall value for money	90%	96.55%	90%
Access				
	% of random survey aware of facility for hire	85%	85.96%	85%
	% of random survey having used the facility	50%	50.88%	50%

***N.B.** Electoral role for Halewood Parish only of 15,499 used for comparison purposes in target and actuals for 2009-2010. New electoral role figure of 15,301, (1/12/09), used for 2010-11 targets.

C). Administration

		<u>Target 2009-2010</u>	<u>Actual 2009-2010</u>	<u>Target 2010-2011</u>
Community Satisfaction				
	% of citizens randomly surveyed satisfied with overall performance of the Town Council	79%	77.59%	77%
	No of complaints received classified as mal-administration	0	0	0
	No of complaints received classified as service implementation	0	0	0
Management of Resources				
	% of invoices paid within 30 days of invoice date	90%	344 out of 364 (94.5%)	90%
	% of correspondence acknowledged within 5 working days	80%	100%	80%
	Average No of "hits" per quarter on the Town Council's web site for calendar year 2009.	9,500	11,909	10,000
Staff Development				
	No of staff taking career development courses	2	0	2
	% of working days lost to sickness absence (Average over all staff hours)	5%	4.57%	5%

N.B

(a). Invoices - 2008-2009 actual was 92.03% (358 out of 389).

(b). In 2009/2010 long term sickness for two member of staff accounted for 28.85% (525 hours), and 6.92% (126 hours), respectively. The average absence for all Town Council staff was 712.80 hours absence out of 15,600 available (4.57%).

N.B The figures above in (b) relate to all staff including those at the Centres.

Public Consultation

As this is the eighth attempt by Halewood Town Council to produce a Best Value Policy Statement, it can only be suggested how public consultation will take place over the next twelve months. The following methods are now suggested:

1. Council Meetings – The DETR have acknowledged that the Annual Town & Parish Meeting is a useful forum for consulting with the community. The public do already have the opportunity for questions at this annual forum. In addition the Town Council have the availability of a thirty minute Public Forum at the beginning of each Town Council meeting. It is preferable that the topic(s) for discussion must have been submitted in advance, in writing, to the Town Manager to be included on the agenda. However the Town Council now allow Members of the public present a maximum of ten minutes each, (up to a half hour in total) to speak on an issue.
2. Publications – The annual report generates interest from the community, and although early days, the new web site is expected to generate interest from the electorate in the Township. A monthly single page newsletter, (increased to a double page every quarter), is issued in conjunction with the Halewood Community News, and is a valuable vehicle for imparting information.
3. Surveys – These are planned to include all users of the community centres, and a random survey of the electorate. In addition, existing staff will be offered the chance to comment on matters appertaining to their service.
4. Councillors Surgeries – This avenue for consultation is already advertised and attended by the public. These surgeries are operated by Knowsley MBC Councillors who also hold the position of a Town Councillor.
5. Partnership with the Principal Authority – The opportunity to carry out joint consultation exercises where appropriate, such as with the grass cutting, playgrounds etc.
6. Direct Access – Often members of the public do not know where to raise issues, and who to speak to. Included as appendix two to this document is a list of contact details for the Town Council.

Appendix One

(ALL FIGURES FOR 2009/10 ARE ACTUAL OUT-TURN AND ARE SUBJECT TO FINAL AUDIT)

EXPENDITURE AND INCOME SURVEY

	<u>2009/2010</u>		
	Expenditure	Income	Net Cost
	£	£	£
Community Centres	219,800	113,464	106,336
Administration/Environment	<u>203,738</u>	<u>888</u>	<u>202,850</u>
	<u>423,538</u>	<u>114,352</u>	<u>309,186</u>

To enable a comparison to be made, the final figures for 2008/9 are included below:

	<u>2008/2009</u>		
	Expenditure	Income	Net Cost
	£	£	£
Community Centres	218,773	116,122	102,651
Administration/Environment	<u>192,249</u>	<u>13,588</u>	<u>178,661</u>
	<u>411,022</u>	<u>129,710</u>	<u>281,312</u>

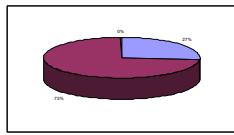
In addition to the above figures, considerable capital expenditure was incurred on asset improvements. The net cost of the Town Council's activities in 2009/10 was financed by levying a charge (known as a precept) which is added to the Council Tax levy set by Knowsley Borough Council.

(All figures are based upon the 2009/10 actual out-turn and are subject to final audit)

The figures below show in broad terms where the Town Council's money comes from and how it is utilised in the provision of services.

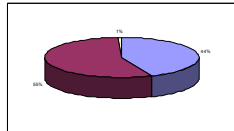
Where the Money Comes From - Based upon the Town Council's total out-turn of £423,538 (subject to audit).

Income from Centres	£ 113,464.00	27%
Precept and Balances	£ 309,186.00	72%
Other Income	£ 888.00	1%
	£ 423,538.00	100%



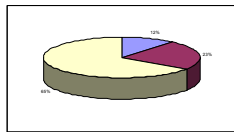
Income From The Centres - Based upon the Town Council's total out-turn income of £114,352 (subject to audit).

Hollies	£ 49,934.00	44%
Arncliffe	£ 63,530.00	55%
Town Council Admin	£ 888.00	1%
	£ 114,352.00	100%



Where the Money Goes - Net Costs – Based upon the Town Council's total out-turn net operating costs of £309,186 (subject to audit).

Hollies	£ 35,619.00	11%
Arncliffe	£ 70,717.00	23%
Town Council Admin	£ 202,850.00	66%
	£ 309,186.00	100%



Appendix Two

Contact Details

Halewood Town Council
Council Offices
The Halewood Centre
Roseheath Drive
Halewood
Knowsley
Merseyside
L26 9UH

Web Site address: www.halewoodtowncouncil.gov.uk

E-mail: Town Manager: john.green@halewoodtowncouncil.gov.uk

E-mail: Administrative Officer: lynn.joyner@halewoodtowncouncil.gov.uk

E-mail Administrator: sue.edwardson@halewoodtowncouncil.gov.uk

Telephone Number: 0151-443-2063

Facsimile Number: 0151-443-2064

KMBC Councillors may be contacted at their surgeries (details from the Town Council offices), or e-mailed using the Councillors contact page on the Town Council web site.

Appendix Three

HALEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
RANDOM CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2010/11

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are endeavouring to maintain and, where possible, improve our service to you. It is important that we know how we are performing. To help us achieve this, we have randomly selected a number of households in the Township, and would be grateful if you could complete and return the attached form. It will only take a few minutes, and your views are important to us. Unless you wish otherwise, your views can remain anonymous.

.....

Please delete whatever is not applicable for your answer to each question.

1. Are you aware of the existence of the Arncliffe Community Centre and Hollies Road Community Centre, and the function suites within them which are available for private hire ?

Yes/No

2. Have you or any member of your household ever used the facilities in one of these Centres, (either the planned activities that take place, or as a private function) ?

Yes/No

3. Did you know that the Town Council now have a web-site, which provides a host of information about it's services and events ? (www.halewoodtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Yes/No

4. Given the services that are provided by the Town Council, do you think that it provides value for money ? (In 2009/10 a Band "A" property contributed a little over a £0.67p per week via the Council Tax precept, and this year 2010/11 it will be slightly over 0.68p.

Yes/No

All your comments will be treated as confidential.

Should you wish to add any further comments, please do so in the space below. Alternatively you may contact the Town Manager at the Council Offices.

.....
.....

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Optional Details (Only complete if you wish to be contacted)

Name.....

Address

.....
.....
.....

Contact Telephone Number.....

.....

Please return this form in the pre-paid envelope provided, or hand deliver to the Council Offices at The Halewood Centre, Roseheath Drive, Halewood, L26 9UH.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

John Green
Town Manager

Appendix Four

HALEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

ARNCLIFFE COMMUNITY CENTRE/HOLLIES HALL
COMMUNITY CENTRE

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2010/11

Following the recent hire of one of our function suites for your private party, we would be grateful if you would take a little time to complete the following survey.

We are endeavouring to maintain and, where possible, improve our service to you. Your feedback is appreciated in order to help us achieve this. Please complete the form and return it in a sealed envelope to the Town Council Offices at The Halewood Centre, Roseheath Drive, Halewood, L26 9UH.

Name of Building Used:

Please delete whatever is not applicable for each question.

1. Were you satisfied with the ease of booking the function room ?

Satisfied/Not Satisfied

2. Were you satisfied with the cleanliness of the building ?

Satisfied/Not Satisfied

3. Were you satisfied with the quality of staff service overall ?

Satisfied/Not Satisfied

4. Were you satisfied with the bar facilities at the function ?

Satisfied/Not Satisfied

5. Were you satisfied with the overall value for money ?

Satisfied/Not Satisfied

6. Finally on a scale of 1-5, please indicate your satisfaction with the service you have received from the Town Council for this function, where 1 = poor, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = excellent.....

