

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

REPORT TO: Halton Strategic Partnership Board

DATE: 18 May 2005

REPORTING OFFICER: Local Authority Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Neighbourhood data

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To outline how the Board and partners could use data to identify priority neighbourhoods in Halton.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That the Board:

- discuss how to use data to identify priority neighbourhoods;
- discuss the impact of this on policy making and implementation; and
- agree to debate the issues further once the Government announces the criteria and allocations for Neighbourhood Renewal Fund spend in 2006/07 and 2007/08.

3. BACKGROUND

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has strongly encouraged local strategic partnerships to identify priority neighbourhoods, i.e. the most deprived neighbourhoods. Local strategic partnerships are expected to have measures and targets to ensure that these neighbourhoods improve more quickly than other areas.

The adoption of Super Output Areas by the Government for use in the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation provides an opportunity to examine data at a much more local level than previously possible. The attached report outlines what this tells us about Halton and how such information could be used.

The Board will also need to consider what other information is available from partners that could be used at this level, e.g. information from Halton Primary Care Trust's Equity Profile, benefit claimant information from the Department for Work and Pensions, and crime statistics from Cheshire Constabulary.

4. ISSUES

There are several major issues that discussing the identification of priority neighbourhoods raises.

Several reports on area-based regeneration programmes have raised the issue of the possible damage to community cohesion that can be inflicted by focusing on a small number of narrowly defined geographical areas. If community cohesion were to be adversely affected too greatly, the benefits of targeting particular neighbourhoods might be lost.

There is a danger of some neighbourhoods and areas not having their problems sufficiently addressed because of a focus on particular Super Output Areas. This is most likely where the criteria used to decide on the areas to focus on mean some areas do not fall into that group but still have significant issues to tackle.

The solutions to some issues faced by areas identified as priority neighbourhoods may lie outside those Super Output Areas, e.g. GCSE attainment is a key issue but there is no secondary school within the priority neighbourhoods. Measures would need to be developed with such situations to ensure that focusing on a particular geographical area did not cause problems such as this.

As well as using statistics and data as in this report, the issue of mapping the resources being used across Halton by the members of the Partnership will also need to be addressed. Resource mapping has been carried out by other local strategic partnerships, e.g. Blackburn with Darwen, to analyse the way in which public funds are spent in an area to assess whether resources are distributed equitably and to assist in the development of investment plans. It is a difficult task but could provide partners with useful information on the current use of public resources in Halton.

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

Neighbourhood level data

Neighbourhood level data

1. Background

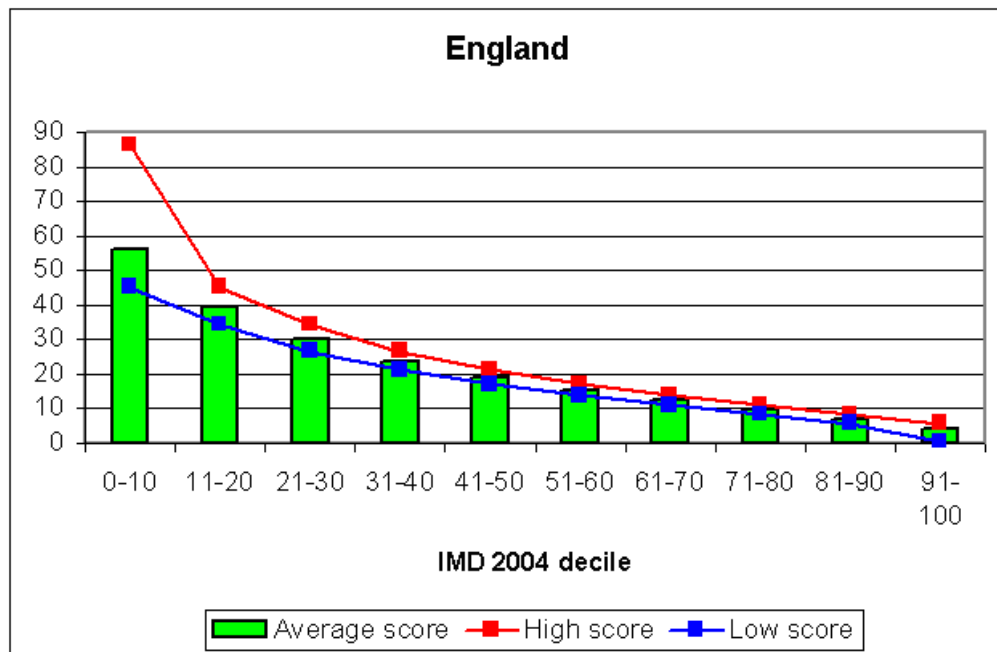
1.1 As part of the 2005 work programme for the Halton Strategic Partnership Board, it was agreed to examine the potential for analysing deprivation related information at the Super Output Area level to provide the Halton Strategic Partnership Board with information to assist in the allocation of resources.

2. National picture

2.1 Super Output Areas are a new geographical area introduced by the Government as part of the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. They are made up of several Output Areas from the 2001 Census and have a population of about 1,500 people living in each.

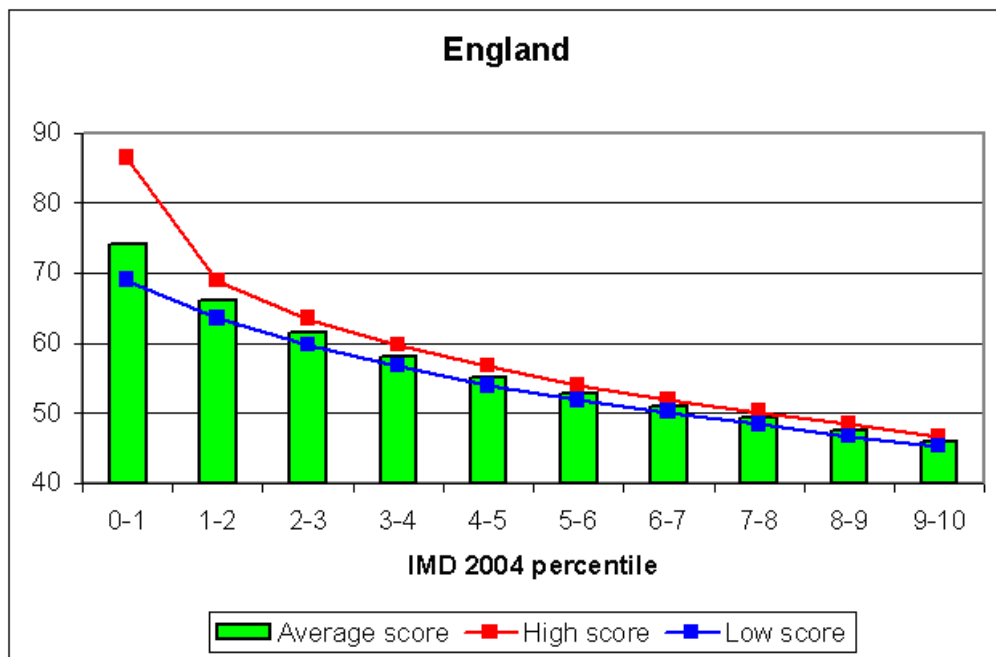
2.2 Analysis of the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that the most deprived Super Output Areas are substantially more deprived than the rest. Each Super Output Area is given an overall score made up of a series of indicators and, as Figure 1 below shows, the worst 10% of Super Output Areas in England have considerably higher scores than the other 90%.

Figure 1



2.3 This same picture also applies to the percentiles within the worst 10%, i.e. the worst 1% have considerably higher scores than the other 9 – see Figure 2 below.

Figure 2



2.4 This analysis is supported by a recently published report from the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit:

"There are 500 Super Output Areas that are substantially more deprived than other areas, representing 1.5% of the total number of Super Output Areas in England. The top 5% Super Output Areas on the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (about 1,624 areas) are also identifiable as disproportionately more deprived than those further down the index, although not as severely deprived as the top 500." **(Improving the prospects of people living in areas of multiple deprivation in England, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, January 2005)**

2.5 This report is already being used by Government to argue that these areas require special attention, e.g. the consultation paper on the allocation of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for 2006/07 and 2007/08 makes it clear that the Government is seriously considering using the distribution of these very worst areas as the basis for allocating Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

2.6 This situation is further reinforced if the scores for some of the individual Super Output Areas in England are analysed. For example, the worst Super Output Area has a score of 86.36, nearly twice that of the last Super Output Area in the worst 10%, which has a score of 45.23, and more than four times the median Super Output Area, which has a score of 17.02.

3. Local picture

3.1 Figures 3 and 4 show that the national picture is mirrored in Halton, with the Super Output Areas in Halton that are in the worst 10% in England having considerably higher scores than those in the remaining 90%.

Figure 3

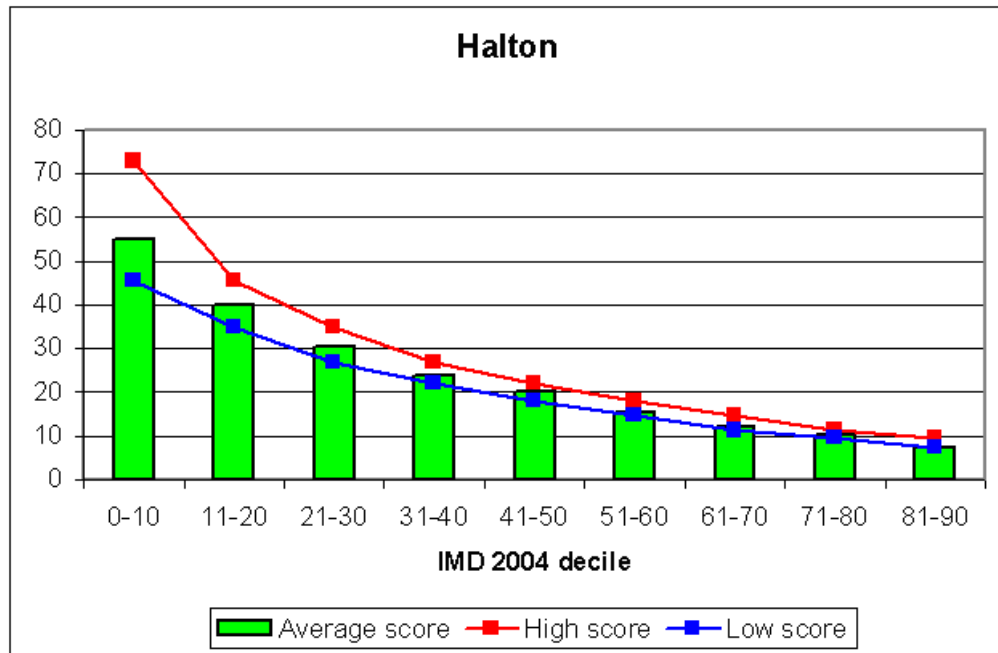
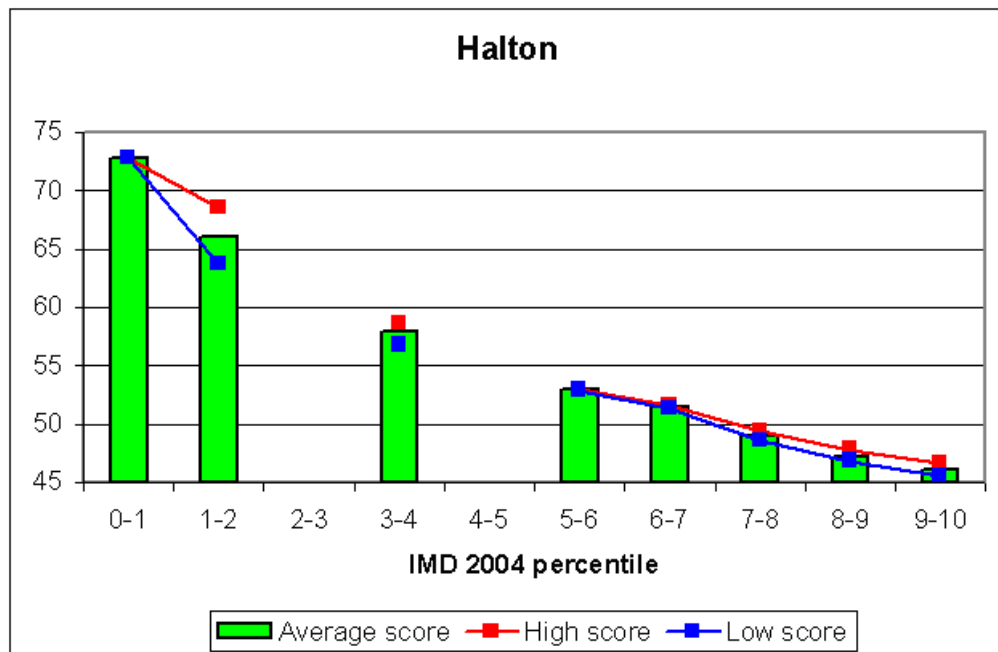
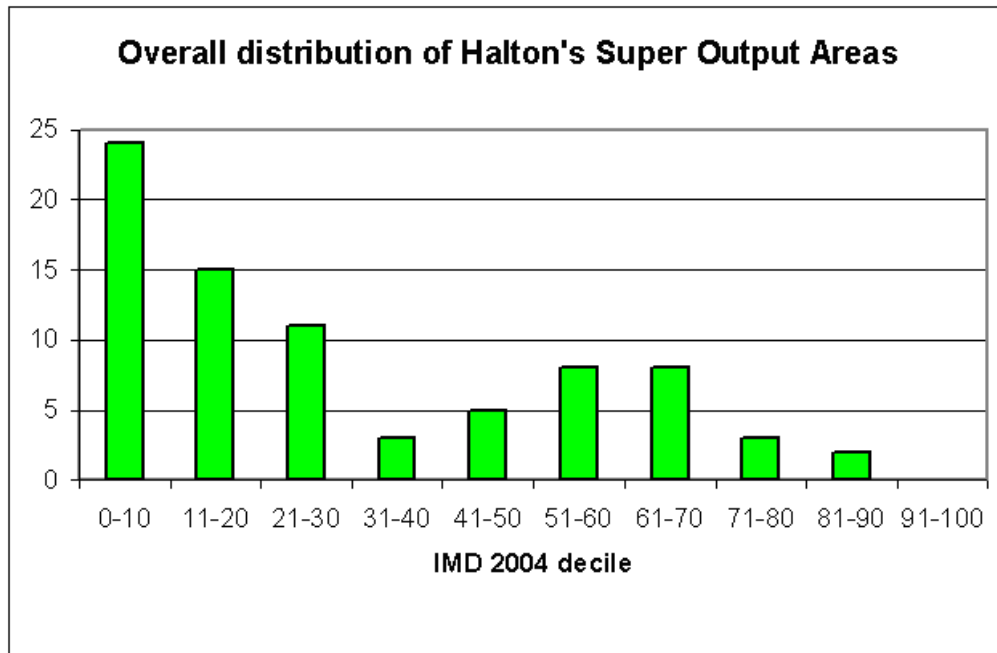


Figure 4



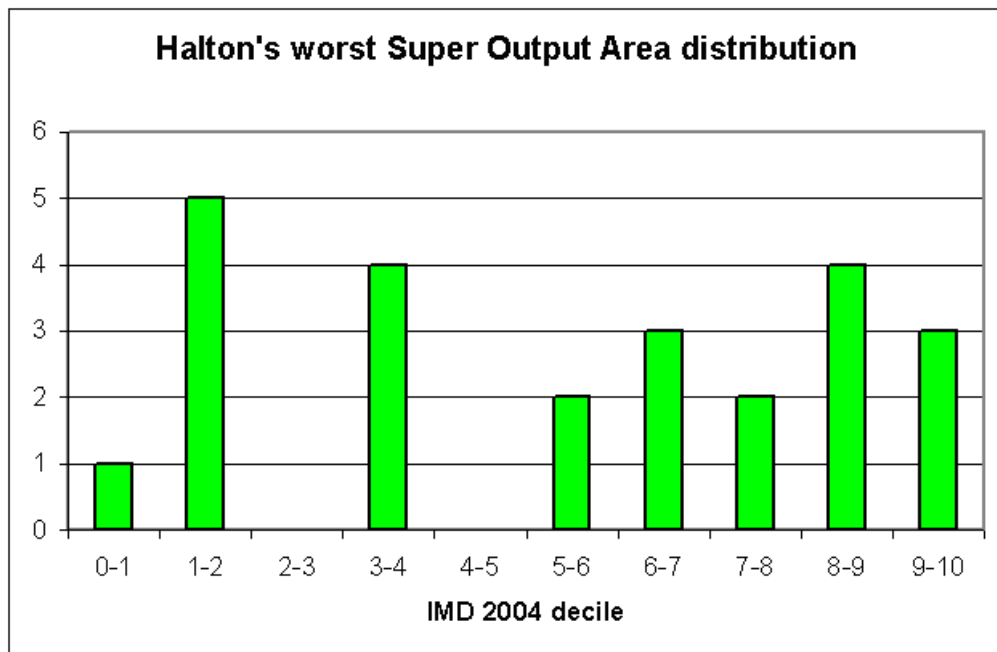
3.2 Figure 5 illustrates how the 79 Super Output Areas in Halton are distributed throughout the overall 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Figure 5



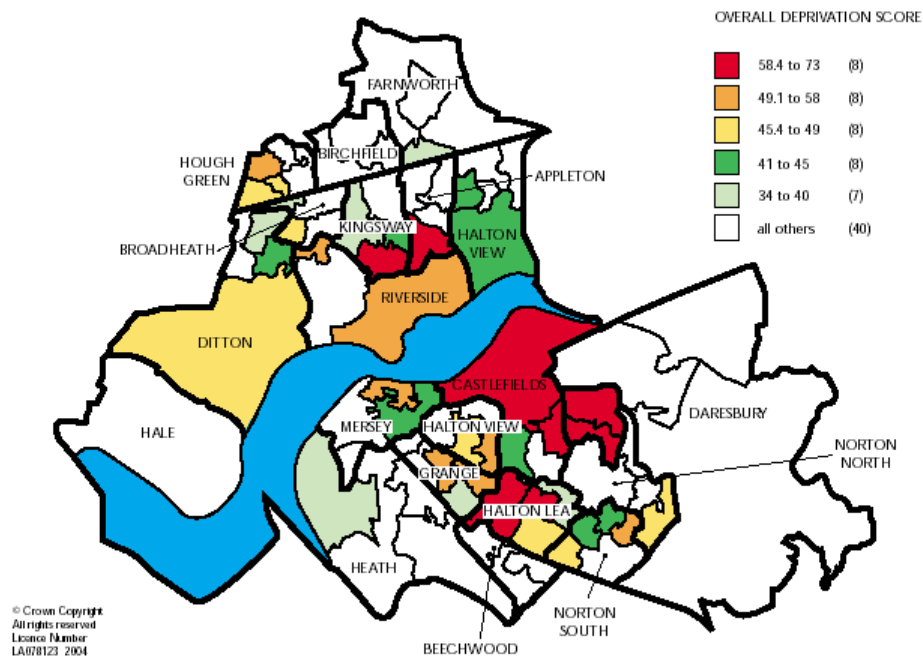
3.3 It shows that 24 of the Super Output Areas fall within the worst 10% nationally and that more than half of all the Super Output Areas in Halton fall within the worst 20% nationally. Those that fall within the worst 10% nationally are distributed as shown in Figure 6 below – this shows that 10 of them fall within the worst 5% nationally.

Figure 6



- 3.4 These figures are given added impact when the numbers of people this affects are considered. With each Super Output Area containing approximately 1,500 people, Halton has approximately 36,000 people (30% of the population) living in areas ranked amongst the worst 10% in England and approximately 15,000 people (13% of the population) living in areas ranked amongst the worst 5% in England.
- 3.5 The distribution of Super Output Areas can also be displayed using maps to illustrate the geographical distribution of the areas in a particular category. Map 1 shows the geographical distribution of the Super Output Areas in Halton that fall in the top 20%.

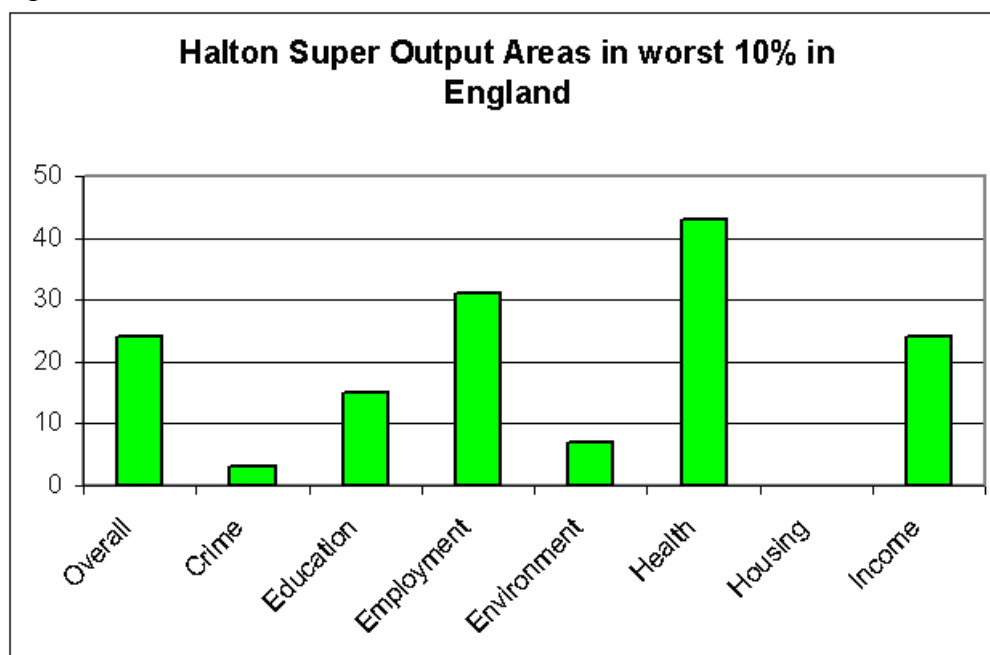
Map 1



- 3.6 These overall figures only tell part of the story about deprivation in Halton. The overall scores for each Super Output Area are made up of indicators in the following areas:
- crime
 - education
 - employment
 - living environment
 - health
 - barriers to housing and services
 - income
- 3.7 An analysis of these individual indicators provides more detailed information on Halton's position in the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation and on the particular problems in certain Super Output Areas.

3.8 Figure 7 below shows how many Super Output Areas are in the worst 10% of areas in England in each category.

Figure 7



3.9 A total of 45 individual Super Output Areas are ranked in the worst 10% of areas nationally in at least one of the categories. This covers 57% of the population of Halton.

3.10 Of the 21 Super Output Areas that do not fall into the worst 10% on the overall index, 14 of them still fall into the top 10% in two or more categories.

3.11 Figure 7 shows there are three areas of particular concern in Halton – health, employment, and income. Education is of some concern, but crime, the living environment, and barriers to housing and services are shown to be lesser concerns. It is important to note that this is in the context of Halton, i.e. one of serious deprivation, and that the problems in these categories are still often markedly worse than the national average.

3.12 The number of people that this affects again highlights the problems facing Halton in these particular areas, for example, 54% of Halton's population live in a Super Output Area in the worst 10% nationally for health and 39% live in a Super Output Area in the worst 10% nationally for employment.

3.13 Table 1 below refines this information, showing how many Super Output Areas fall into the worst 5% areas nationally in the four categories of most concern.

Table 1

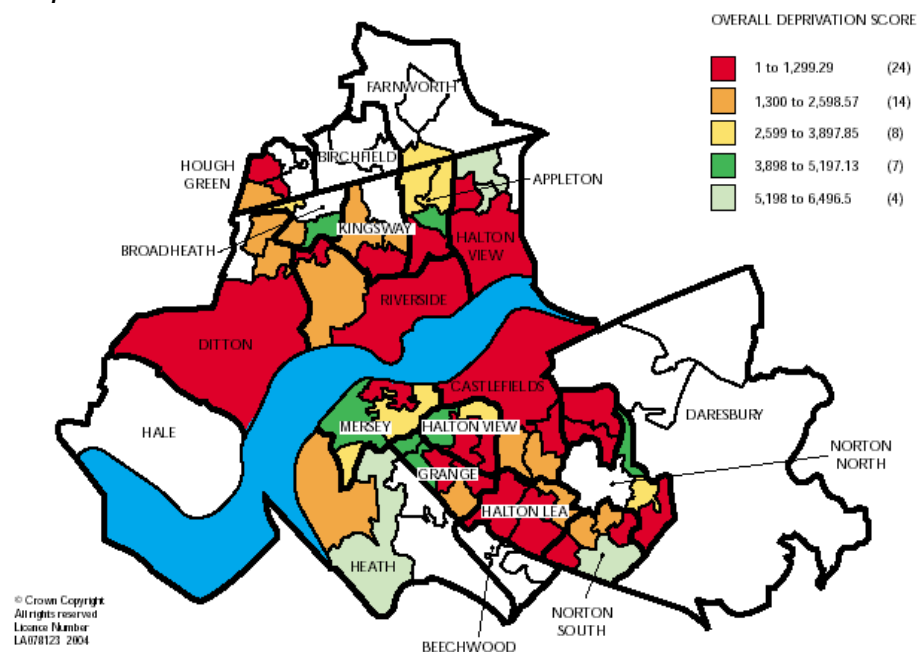
	Education	Employment	Health	Income
0%-1%	0	3	9	4
1%-2%	0	4	6	2
2%-3%	0	2	5	1
3%-4%	1	3	4	4
4%-5%	0	2	5	2
Total	1	14	29	13

3.14 While the situation in relation to the other three categories is less severe, there are still important issues highlighted by the Super Output Area data. For example, more than half of Halton's Super Output Areas are in the worst 50% of areas nationally in relation to crime and the living environment, and nearly 25% of Halton's Super Output Areas are in the worst 50% of areas nationally in relation to barriers to housing and services.

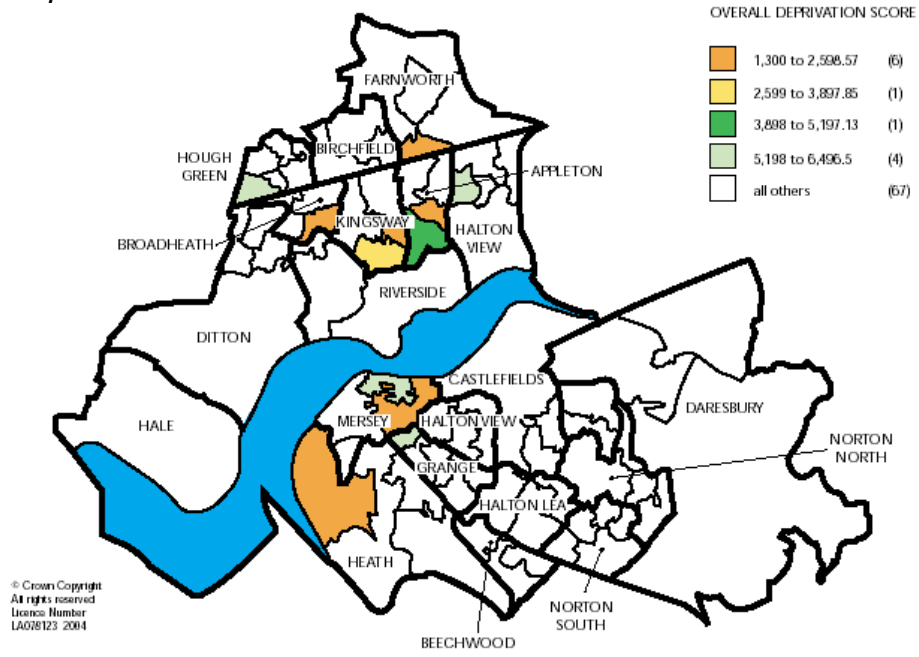
3.15 Where the picture is less clear, there is a need to carry out further research to identify the causes of the rankings. Some of these are already known, for example, one of the areas scoring highly on barriers to housing and services is in the Daresbury area of Halton where housing is less affordable, there are fewer locally based services, and public transport is poor.

3.16 As with the overall ranking information, maps can be used to see how the deprivation in each category is distributed. Map 2 shows the geographical distribution of Super Output Areas in Halton that fall in the top 20% nationally for health deprivation. Map 3 shows the geographical distribution of Super Output Areas in Halton that fall in the top 20% nationally for living environment deprivation.

Map 2



Map 3



4. *Conclusions*

- 4.1 Once the data has been analysed and the picture presented to decision makers, there are still hard choices to be made.
- 4.2 The data provides much useful information that can be used to identify:
- themes of most concern
 - geographical areas of most concern
- 4.3 However, the use of the data from the Index of Multiple Deprivation has is limited by several factors:
- selective data, i.e. the Government may have used datasets not particularly relevant to Halton and not used some which are more relevant
 - time lag, i.e. the Index of Multiple Deprivation was published in 2004 but much of the data is two or three years old, with the consequence that areas or data in the margins may have changed
 - in some areas the households and individuals could be concentrated in a particular part of the Super Output Area so very small pockets of deprivation could still be missed
- 4.4 It is also limited by the difficulties posed by such tight geographical targeting, i.e. the perception that some areas are 'missing out'. The consequences of choosing to use neighbourhood level information will need to be carefully considered in relation to community cohesion. If this were to be adversely affected too greatly, the benefits of targeting particular neighbourhoods might be lost.
- 4.5 Some of these limitations could be tackled, for example:
- partners in Halton could develop their own neighbourhood level data to cover policy areas and datasets not covered by the Index of Multiple Deprivation – this would solve two of the limitations (selective data and time lag)
 - in the categories where the problems are extremely widespread, e.g. health, borough-wide programmes could continue to be implemented to ensure that community cohesion issues are addressed and the issue is still tackle
- 4.6 There is a case for focusing special attention on these very small areas because of the severity of the problems they are experiencing. These areas have a disproportionate number of deprived people living in them, but targeting interventions at them will only reach a very small percentage of the whole number of deprived people. It can also reduce the capacity for dealing with problems that arise at a larger area level, e.g. structural economic change. It may also be necessary to establish separate delivery systems according to Super Output Area boundaries if funds were focused in these areas.