

## The Business Development Team

The council's Business Development Team is the link between the borough council and the business community. The team manages approximately 300 investment projects each year from companies already based in the borough seeking to expand, and companies wishing to move into the borough. The team provides a service that is unique to the requirements of each company but can typically provide advice and guidance on subjects as diverse as the availability of grant support, development and planning issues, transportation issues and recruitment.

Acting as a single point of contact, the team helps companies to access the assistance they need from other council departments, as well as a range of external agencies. The team also provides a free commercial property finding service. The council maintains a database that details all offices, industrial and retail units and development land currently being marketed by numerous commercial property agents in Halton. The team undertakes a bespoke search to satisfy the commercial property requirements of any company, either based in the borough or wishing to move to Halton.

Other business services include:

- A one-to-one support service for all of the borough's large

(over 250 employees) and foreign-owned companies

- A Business Parks Initiative to improve business retention and environmental sustainability within a number of the borough's older business parks
- An e.Business Programme to encourage eligible local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to embrace all aspects of e-commerce
- Town Centre Management, the promotion of the borough's town centres and support of its businesses.



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## CASE STUDY

O2, a member of the Telefonica group of companies, operates four major contact centres in the UK: Glasgow, Leeds, Bury and Preston Brook, Runcorn. The Preston Brook facility in the Borough of Halton employs approximately 1,750 people but in the past has experienced a number of recruitment and retention challenges.

Halton Borough Council brought together a range of public sector organisations, including Job Centre Plus, The Northwest Development Agency, The Mersey Partnership and the local further education colleges, to work alongside O2 to develop a practical package of support to facilitate the recruitment, training and retention of staff and to address a number of access issues at Preston Brook.

The resulting 'O2 Protocol' featured a bespoke pre-employment training programme, to complement the in-house training offered to new recruits. The programme helped potential employees to develop new skills appropriate to the contact centre industry. The programme also supported potential recruits through the online application process and to prepare for a telephone interview.