This Business Plan extract contains information in relation to the delivery of the Council's following strategic priority.

## Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency

Our overall aim is to deliver continued and positive improvement on the quality of life in the communities of Halton through the efficient use of the Council's resources.

## Key Developments

**Financial Services**

The Council was successful in setting a balanced budget for 2018/19, despite having to identify £10m of savings. However, the first two quarters of the current year have indicated that overall spending is significantly above budget. This is due in part to the reduced budget, but in particular results from continued significant spending pressures in Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care where there is increasing demand for services. The latter comes despite the Council having increased the Children's and Adults budgets significantly, to try to address these severe demand pressures. Action plans are therefore being implemented to try to mitigate the situation in Children's and Adult Social Care as far as possible.

The overall 2017/18 financial outturn position for the Council was a £1.1m overspend, the scale of which has not been experienced previously by the Council. This has also placed further pressure upon the 2018/19 budget. In addition, shortfalls in income are now being experienced across a number of Services.

The Council's 2017/18 statutory accounts were published on schedule on 31st July 2018, which was two months earlier than previously required. Once again an excellent external audit report was received from Grant Thornton which provided the Council with another "clean bill of health."

Halton's council tax collection rate remains one of the highest in the region. However, following the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in April 2013, significantly more households are now being billed and whilst the total cash collected has increased, a concern moving forward is the increasing level of accumulating council tax arrears.

There has been significant growth in business rates income generated over the past year and this is forecast to continue over the medium term. Since 1st April 2017 the Council has been part of the Liverpool City Region pilot scheme for 100% business rates retention and therefore now retains the full amount of any business rates growth. The need to make financial provision for rateable value appeals continues, although the Valuation Office Agency have introduced a three stage approach to appeals which is intended to speed up the process and avoid spurious appeals.

At a time of financial constraint and reductions in staff resources, it is particularly important to ensure that financial probity and a sound control environment is maintained throughout the Council. Work to provide assurance in this respect is led by Internal Audit, but all Divisions within the Finance Department contribute in this respect. Last year Internal Audit underwent

a Peer Review which confirmed that Halton is fully complying with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

The Department provides Direct Payments to over 700 adults and children, to assist with meeting their social care needs. The demand for Direct Payments continues to increase, particularly in respect of children and will therefore need to be managed over the coming years. In addition, the Department provides an Appointeeship and Deputyship service to over 300 vulnerable individuals, for which the service provided is cost neutral.

In July 2016 Halton was one of the first Boroughs to move onto "full service" for Universal Credit. During the past year assessments and payment of housing benefits have been provided for over 7,600 claimants. In addition, council tax support discounts have been provided to over 12,500 taxpayers and the Welfare Rights Team has advised 926 residents.

Following the opening of the Mersey Gateway Bridge in October 2017, appropriate arrangements have been put in place for banking and reconciliation of toll and grant income, along with procedures for monthly verification and payment of the Unitary charge and management fees to the bridge and tolling operators.

Collaborative procurement activity is continuing through the LCR Procurement Efficiency Workstream, which is led by Halton's Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community & Resources. The focus of the workstream is on realising cashable savings from collaborative procurement activity. 'Open Clauses' are now being incorporated in all relevant contracts across the region to allow other LCR authorities access to those contracts.


**ICT & Support Service**

The ICT & Support Service as a central service continues to support the corporate organisational and procedural change strategies as well as the business as usual service deliverables through its 34 Central Admin teams, 5 Schools Support Teams, Security and Strategy Team, Print Unit, Records Management Unit, 11 Specialist ICT Teams, Corporate & Schools GDPR and Data Management, Contact Centre and One Stop Shop's.

Year on year the demand increases for in house ICT systems and application development work, as, the use of shared accessible technologies across the authority grows through its increasing number of partners and the development of authorities Schools technology stack.

As the authority implements procedural and organisational change by developing new ways of working, the demand for new back end as well as user interface technologies builds to deal with the consolidation of services and the move toward integrated working relationships within the public services environment. The authority has maintained and invested in an in-house service to its advantage and through various regional reviews remains one of the lowest cost ICT services that still provides the full service delivery capability.

The demand for Administrative Support Services continues to grow as the authority changes and develops through its efficiency programme and consolidates key skills within many of its departments. Enabling practitioners to focus upon key services has remained a key focus all supported by the authorities generic administrative support services across 34 specialist areas. Enhanced by the services customer service teams through face to face contact with

those members of the public who do not have access to digital media and through the contact centre for those that do.

The department has achieved and developed a high level of income as well as key strategic external partnerships with Sefton MBC, Mersey Travel, The Combined Authority, Halton Schools, North West Employers and Mersey Gateway, Cheshire East & West, Youth Offending Services, AllFaiths and many more partners; supplying systems and technology services across all partner agencies as well as the in-house development of the growing number of customised Halton designed and delivered applications and systems saving a considerable revenue implication for service departments.

To support such a growth in demand whilst delivering efficiency savings from within the departments itself, new ways of supporting the authority and its clients technically through the Halton Cloud have been under constant development. Allowing the centralisation of the authorities' data assets and the constant development of secure simplified user driven interfaces back into Halton managed and partner systems. This ongoing process of developing easy to use centralised data management and desktop systems has allowed the authority to innovate in many areas of the business and will continue to support services as the demand evolves.

The Halton CRM development will continue linked to the development of the Halton Web interfaces supported by the Contact Centre having resolved approximately 116'000 calls in 2017/18 and the shops resolving over 91'000 face to face client contacts through the 2 shops.

The list of projects delivered over the 2017/18 period has exceeded over 400 deliveries of key systems, services, improvements to client process and support solutions. Major service deliveries such as the development of new and improved Transport Management Systems, Cemeteries & Crematoria Management, Social Care developments for new care homes and community care solutions – Lifeline and partner systems, The delivery and network management of the regional GovRoam services allowing all regional partners to utilise WiFi services across the region, The development of the Financial Management systems with External partners releasing a substantial income opportunity, the development of new and improved cloud services that enable the delivery of internal as well as external opportunity, the consolidation of user print services and the replacement of all scanner/print devices, new open source email filtering solution saving the authority a considerable revenue implication over the coming years, New Back-Up facilities linked across the authorities two active/active data centres.

This has shown a considerable commitment to the authority by many individuals within the teams delivering such services as they go above and beyond to allow such demanding objectives to be delivered mostly linked to aggressive and often immediate deadlines.


**Legal & Democratic Services**

The main priority of the legal department continues to be to ensure that the Council is kept up to date on legislative changes and new requirements affecting the delivery of the Council services.

The team ensures that the council decision making processes are compliant with the law and fit for purpose.

The Communications and Marketing team have played an important role in ensuring that Members, staff and the public are given the best possible information on service developments. The team have also been instrumental in the drive to promote the role of foster carers. They were also deeply involved in the detailed planning and implementation of a very successful Mersey Gateway opening event.

The operation of the new bridge has placed considerable demands on the legal team as well as communications colleagues.

The Customer Intelligence Unit continues to excel at information gathering putting the Council in the best possible position to make informed decisions. It also seeks to ensure that the Council uses social media to the best effect and has continued to make significant operational improvements to the Council's website. In addition, the small team again managed an average of more than one consultation a week. They carried out an extensive Mersey Gateway survey with around 6,000 responses which was turned around within a week, and a detailed Members survey, to inform the Council's response to the Boundary Commission review. That review has required involvement to a considerable extent by legal, democratic & CIU staff.

The Elections team successfully carried out the May local elections and a subsequent by-election. The Legal team have again been called upon to support the operation of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and its scrutiny role.

Legal staff have been involved to support the Council's compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Considerable legal input has been provided to facilitate the development of major projects.

Work has been carried out with Members to ensure that committee and decision making structures remain fit for purpose.

**Community & Environment**

The Stadium

The Stadium has for a number of years been one of the leading venues in the Wedding market within the Borough, in addition it competes very well with its competitors regarding the function and conference market.

It is a continuous challenge to ensure the facilities at the Stadium meet or better those of its competitors, great emphasis is placed on customer care and all staff are trained in this area continuously.

In addition this year the Karalius Suite has been upgraded and will offer a wider selection to a much wider cohort enabling the Stadium to keep up to date with technology.

Further efforts this year will see the Stadium compete for niche markets such as themed nights and cabaret nights utilising still further the Marquee Suite which is the largest single room offer in the Borough.

The Stadium has successfully hosted a variety of events over the past year linked to the Rugby Football League, including Representative Matches and Regional Finals, these events continue to raise the profile of the Borough and keep the Stadium firmly in the sights of the RFL for any other future events.

The refurbishment of the pitch will enhance this offer still further.

The Stadium has also hosted, for the sixth year running, the National Band Corp Championships, they have booked the event for the next three years.

The Elton John concert in June 2017 was a huge success with over 14,000 people attending, the co-promoters expressed their appreciation at the level of planning and professionalism shown by HBC.

The poor on-field performance of Widnes Vikings in 2018 resulted in less spectators attending than in previous years which had an adverse effect of the secondary spend on match days, Widnes's relegation has put tremendous pressure upon the Stadium, we will have to wait and see what effect relegation has on the Club.

*Universal Free School Meals*

The Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) will continue for the foreseeable future, this will mean that ALL children under the age of 7 will receive a free hot, balanced, nutritious school meal every day, given the levels of deprivation in Halton this is a specifically good piece of news.

By introducing school children at such an early age to a variety of healthy, well balanced food stuffs enables them to make the right decisions concerning eating habits as they move through childhood.

Halton was one of the first Authorities to introduce free fruit for the under 7's and has led the way on healthy initiatives for a number of years.

Halton has introduced a scheme that enables children to receive a free school meal whilst the Universal Credit is being processed.

**Economy, Enterprise and Property**

Property Services – Operations

**Capital Projects** - Property Services has delivered 25 projects via capital funding over the past 12 months totalling circa £4.5m.

Many of these projects relate to the schools capital programme. However, the team has also overseen the development of Unit 37 at Astmoor to provide a vocational centre for the Bridge school.

Improvements have also been made to the Widnes market, whereby a new roof has been provided together with a number of energy efficiency measures.

The team also project managed the development of the new clubhouse and changing facilities for the Linnets football club.

**New Consultancy Services Contract** - The department has worked with the Council's procurement team to procure a new consultancy services contract.

The successful tenderer provides a "one stop shop" full design service for both capital and planned repairs and maintenance projects across the Council's portfolio of properties (e.g. corporate buildings, community centres, leisure facilities, schools, etc.) The "one stop shop" full design service utilises the skills of Architects, Building Surveyors, Structural, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers, Quantity Surveyors and other professionals to allow a scheme to be fully designed.

**Feasibility studies** – a number of studies totalling £2.9M have been undertaken. These include:

- Beechwood school toilet refurbishment
- Brookfields classroom extension
- Bridge School internal and external alterations and MUGA
- Belvedere Refurbishment
- Beechwood & Halton Lodge SEMH Resource base
- Oakmeadow refurbishment

**Accommodation Plan** – The first phase of the relocation of 250 staff from Kingsway House has been completed.

Using the new agile working policy, has facilitated the relocation of 70 plus staff from Rutland House to provide space for Her Majesty's Courts Service. Staff were relocated to other floors in Rutland House and also Grangeway Community Centre.

Agile hubs – Several agile working hubs at Grangeway Community Centre, Kingsway Learning Centre, and Ditton Community Centre now allow staff to work in a more agile way.

**Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency**

The divisional restructure implemented in Q4 of 2017/18 has been largely successful, enabling the division to operate at reduced cost, and refocusing the way HR services are delivered across the Council and the external SLA customer base. A range of new processes accompanied the change in staffing structures with more automation and self-service no prevalent, which has increased efficiency, audit trails, and reduced scope for error. One area where the restructure has not proved as effective as planned is Recruitment and Resourcing. This is due to an unanticipated rise in demand for recruitment (85%), which coincided with the implementation of new structure and processes, resulting in service delays. To remediate this situation analysis of future recruitment need has been undertaken in the latter half of 2018 and additional resources have been deployed into that part of the division during Q4 2018/19 to meet increased demand.

The education sector continues to face financial pressures and as this forms a large part of the divisions SLA customer base, a notable rise in restructuring and reconfiguration in schools has brought increased workload to the division. In the Employment Relations area in particular, this has necessitated an increase in SLA charges to ensure that Council costs are fully recovered, in line with the Councils Corporate Income and Charging Policy.

During the last year, the work of the Efficiency Programme has become more aligned with the Recruitment & Resourcing function. The loss of one of the Efficiency team due to staff turnover has resulted in reduced productivity, however a business decision was taken in Q3 2018/19 to re-prioritise funding and the two functions will become integrated for 2019/20, with project management and accountability remaining within the division and review work being conducted by multi-disciplinary teams made up of individuals from relevant parts of the organisation.

The Council's agency worker contract was re-procured during 2018 and has remained with Matrix SCM for a further 5 year term (to 2023). Agency worker usage remains subject to tight control, and spend continues to reduce generally, however some labour market issues have resulted in rising spend in some areas (refer to Emerging Issues below).

The division continues to progress activity related to the 2016 Organisational Development Strategy. Absence Management has been a key focus of attention, with the new policy framework introduced in 2017 becoming further embedded across the organisation, and whilst this remains work in progress, indications are that the cost of absence is demonstrating a downward trend. Workforce planning and focused skills development is now a core element of the divisions work. Leadership and Management development is being taken forward as a specific initiative, in collaboration with providers who can be funded via the apprenticeship levy. The newly formed Organisational Development Service has adopted the 'Towards Maturity' model of organisational development (https://towardsmaturity.org/), which is moving the way that the division offers learning and development across a broader range of platforms, enabling a tailored response to a wider range of scenarios across the organisation.

The Government Equalities Office has introduced mandatory Gender Pay Gap reporting for large public sector organisations (at least 250 employees) in March 2018. Data captured at April 2017 and published on 31st March 2018 showed the Council to have a mean (average) Gender Pay Gap of 10.09%, which is significantly lower than the national whole economy figure of 17.4%. The Council uses this data to reporting to direct organisational development as far as it is able, however the prevailing financial climate does not allow for significant reconfiguration of the gender make-up of the workforce, particularly given that the general trend is a reduction in total employee numbers. The formal report for the Council can be accessed at:

https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/EandD/genderpaygap.pdf

The Apprenticeship policy framework has now been in place since 2017, bringing a structured approach to recruiting and supporting apprentices through a training programme / employment experience. In line with the Organisational Development Strategy, focus for some placements has been on 'hard-to-recruit' areas where labour market supply of regular recruits has diminished or is unstable. At the end of Q3 2018/19, the Council has established 17 apprenticeships under the 'Levy' arrangements introduced in April 2017. In addition 43 existing employees have commenced apprenticeships to enable up-skilling across a range of

Council services, all of which will result in more effective service provision, business resilience and succession planning.

The Partnerships function within the division has provided considerable support to the Councils commitment to the Syrian Refugee resettlement programme in the UK, facilitating partnership activity and interventions to enable the effective resettlement of 112 Syrian refugees into the Borough. This work continues with a further 60 individuals due to arrive in Q1 2019/20.

Significant legislative change was expected during the year, however this was largely delayed within government and as a result features in the Emerging Issues section below, requiring adoption and management in the coming financial year.

## Emerging Issues

**Financial Services**

A further £21m of budget savings are forecast to be required to deliver balanced budgets for the next three years, based upon indicative reductions in grant funding, increasing costs and increasing demand for Council services. This will prove extremely challenging given the significant reductions made over previous years. Therefore, the Council will need to give early consideration to how it might address further budget reductions on this scale.

Beyond 2019/20 there is great uncertainty regarding the funding of Local Government and implications will have to be considered as the year progresses. This will involve the Financial Management team understanding, reporting and responding to various consultations, working with partners across the Liverpool City Region, Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities (SIGOMA) and the Local Government Association (LGA). Regular updates of financial forecasts will be undertaken and consideration given to changes to retention of business rates. Funding changes will include:

- Fair Funding Review – Review of local authority needs, resources, service pressures and cost drivers
- Business Rate Retention – Proposed change to 75% business rates retention, reset of business rate baselines and future funding of appeals within the business rate system
- 2019 Public Spending Review
- Pension Triennial Review
- Social Care Green Paper

The operation of "full service" Universal Credit in Halton will continue to be monitored, in order to manage the increasing workload generated in respect of housing benefits, council tax support, council tax arrears, the discretionary support scheme and welfare rights. Latest information from Government indicates that the "managed migration" of Universal Credit which was meant to start in January 2019 will be delayed, with a small number of claimants being migrated via pilots later in 2019. Large scale managed migration will not now begin until November 2020 and is expected to be completed by the beginning of 2024.

From 1st April 2019 councils will no longer be asked by the DWP to provide Universal Support, which is a service comprising Personal Budgeting Support and Assisted Digital Support for new Universal Credit claimants.  This has been provided by councils under contract to the DWP for the past three years. However, from 1st April 2019 the DWP have commissioned the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide this service.

The Local Government Association recently published a National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England 2018 entitled 'Delivering the ambition'.  The Strategy builds upon the previous national strategy and has three key themes relating to 'Achieving Community Benefits', 'Showing Leadership' and 'Behaving Commercially'.  The Procurement Team will be reviewing the Strategy and associated toolkit and assessing the Council's maturity in each of the key areas.  This assessment will then be used to inform an update of the Council's own Procurement Strategy and to agree objectives and set local goals.  The implementation of the Strategy continues to ensure that value for money is achieved in the

use of resources and that correct and robust procurement practices are followed across the Council.

The Financial Management team have completed an initial benchmarking exercise of the Council's costs using a software tool called CFO Insights. This will be developed further examining service cost & performance and comparing this to authorities who share similar demographics and size to Halton although this can be expanded to all Council's across the country. The aim will be to utilise the tool so it can be used to promote ideas for efficiencies to be put forward in helping to balance the Council's budget from 2020/21 onwards.

**ICT & Support Services**

The ICT, Customer & Administrative Support Service through 2018/2019 will continue to support the considerable demand for Administrative, Front line customer support, Data Governance and Technical support solutions.

Developments such as the centralisation of postal services are being co-ordinated through the Records Management Unit (RMU), staying with data governance and management detailed analysis is underway to re-analyse and reduce further printing costs across the authority by systematically targeting the largest print users based upon MFD usage reports. Exploring volumes can be reduced by electronic working internally as well externally for service clients or through hybrid mail services. The development of the RMU will continue as the unit digitises more of the authorities' paper based records and links them to the in-house developments of associated SharePoint systems made available to internal and external users.

The service will implement a new online Free School Meals (FSM) application system to replace the current paper based system. This will build upon the existing online (Parent Portal) school admissions system and will allow parents to apply for FSM when applying for a school place or independently at any time of the year. Each Parent application will get an instant response to show their current entitlement as the portal is linked directly to DfE's ECS service (Eligibility checking service: Interface between DfE and DWP to provide entitlement checks). We envisage that the simple online nature of the new process will encourage more parents already receiving Universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) to apply for FSM, which in turn will lead to schools receiving the "Pupil Premium" funding which should lead to better outcomes for these children.

The new Data Protection Officer linked to the SLA offered to schools to ensure Halton schools are GDPR compliant has now been purchased by almost 50% of primary schools and is also being considered by two Halton secondary schools with uptake growing on a monthly basis – the service is also being offered to Academies and those schools outside of the Halton Boundaries.

The development of the Halton Cloud Service is moving from strength to strength and will continue with the incremental roll out of the new desktop facilities to all officers with plans to start a roll out across the School's curriculum network by mid-2018 and centralise all data services as well as desktop provision reducing the associated hardware spend for schools. The Schools administrative environment is currently being upgraded into the new Halton Cloud & MyApps facility from the existing MyDesk virtual desktop provision.

The authorities' systems development programme will continue to manage and develop new integrated solutions releasing further savings as many of the systems over the last 36 months have been in-house developments reducing third party implementation costs, extensive revenue charges and procurement costs.

New system developments will include the extensive and complex replacement of the existing Care Management Systems for both Adults and Children's Services, the replacement of the learning and libraries networks and associated systems, key web based developments will take place for the integration of new DWP and associated customer portals for the delivery of client driven access to Revenues and Benefits data and services.

The drive to develop external income opportunity will continue as the Financial Management Systems programme develops as other authorities show interest in joining the collaboration, together with the authorities' offerings to Schools and external agencies. This will link to Halton's new status as a BACS bureau now facilitating and delivering BACS for other local authorities and partners. All linked to a growing and considerable business as usual portfolio of projects for the coming year.

Following the success of the initial Lean Six Sigma Green belt training and accreditation programme delivered by the service, the service will continue to develop the training programme to a wider corporate and partner audience.

Finally to maintain a relevant skills profile as the service evolves along with the authorities digital requirements both ICT and Administrative support Services will undergo a further restructure within the fourth quarter/1st Quarter 2018 as the Halton Cloud centralises technologies and changes the support profile for the user base, with a view to enhancing customer contact and simplifying issue resolution.

**Legal & Democratic Services**

The Liverpool City Region devolution arrangements will continue to place considerable demands on the Legal and Democratic Services teams. Scrutiny support has been provided during the preceding financial year and will continue. Governance issues are expected to remain a major focal point.

The next phase of the review of the Council's arrangements by the Boundary Commission will continue to place demands on staff in all areas of the Department.

**Economy, Enterprise and Property**

Property Services – Operations

*Mersey Gateway Handback*

Temporary Use Areas (TUA's)  - Property Services will be working with the Mersey Crossings Board over the next few months dealing with the handback process of all TUA's. These areas will require ongoing management once they are returned to the Council.

*Facilities Management*

Pressures on maintenance and repairs budget is ongoing which will undoubtedly present more challenges when finalising the planned programme of works for 19/20.

*Accommodation*

Relocate all staff remaining in Kingsway House, approx 200, to empty Kingsway House by summer 2019, which will allow dilapidations to be carried over the summer and then handed back by October 2019 when the lease runs out, leading to significant savings associated with the running costs of Kingsway House.

Refurbishment of Karalius Suite needs to be completed before the Stadium will release the Halton Suite for refurbishment works to make into office accommodation, and then the gym. Delay of completion of Karalius Suite will have knock on effect for the eventual emptying of Kingsway House.

*Health and Social Care Accommodation*

As and when appropriate accommodation for older residents has been acquired, resources will need to be set aside to cover ongoing maintenance costs. We are currently looking to develop our existing accommodation at both Oakmeadow and Belvedere to create additional bed spaces over the coming months.

*Markets*

Following on from the restructure which created a Markets and Technical Support team the focus from October 2018 onwards will be:-

- To create a robust marketing and advertising plan which will hopefully increase the customers shopping in the market, and also increase new traders to the market with a good commodity mix.
- Keep the stall occupancy at 83%, or even increase.
- Revise and reissue the Market Protocols to traders with some key changes regarding encroachment, traders behaviour, and payment by direct debit.
- Inform Traders of new system in sundry debtors where they will be charged interest on any unpaid invoices after 31 days plus an admin fee – system to be brought in early next year, date t.b.c.
- Rebrand the new Market Attendants team with new uniforms and provide training to all attendants for the various machines and health and safety issues, i.e. ladder training.

*Capital Works*

High Profile companies going into receivership is having an impact on the Council's ability to drive down price. The framework delivery route is an option that we will be investigating over the coming months as this may be an appropriate way of managing costs.

*Cleaning Services*

Schools wishing to move to external providers are restricted from doing so as staff who are part of the Cheshire Pension Scheme are too expensive to be TUPE'D across. In such instances, we are encouraging the schools to employ the staff direct. We are hoping to help

address this as one of our key developments. Staff recruitment is an issue with both schools and corporate sites, which causes problems with delivery at times.

## Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency

*Resourcing issues*

General labour market conditions continue to create challenges in the resourcing of some service areas, notably technical professional (e.g. Highways engineering), care services, children's social care, and leisure services where the workforce across the industry is particularly transient. Regional and national intelligence suggests that these issues are common across local government. This results in repeated recruitment, as it is often unsuccessful in the first instance. The activities of the Recruitment and Resourcing / Efficiency functions are therefore being targeted to project-based recruitment exercises involving closer collaboration with affected service areas and more intensive engagement with the labour market through multi-channel interventions facilitated by colleagues in Marketing and Communications. This approach will continue to be monitored and assessed for effectiveness.

*Apprenticeship Levy*

As a large employer, the Council has been obliged to pay the 'Apprenticeship Levy' to government since April 2017. This equates to something in the region of £300,000 per annum. The levy is held on account for two years to fund apprentice training, but cannot be used to fund wages or salaries. The levy is being continually drawn down to fund training of the (current) 17 new apprentices and 43 existing staff in new apprenticeship training placements, however a risk exists that some levy contribution will be clawed back by government when it has been sat on account for the two year period. The Council is working collaboratively with other authorities and partners to explore ways to maximise the return on investment from the Levy paid, developing the opportunities to create an up-skilled workforce and providing development opportunities and career progression for the existing and future public sector workforce.

*Public Sector Exit Payment Cap and Recovery of Exit Payments*

The relevant sections of the Enterprise Act 2016 / Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 which bring these requirements into force are not yet enacted.
Upon introduction, this legislation will provide the framework for a restriction on public sector exit payments by allowing Regulations to be made that place a cap on the total amount of exit payments made to a person in respect of a relevant public sector exit. The legislation currently envisages this cap to be set at £95,000 although the regulations may prescribe a different amount.

In addition, the proposed legislation provides H.M. Treasury with the power to make regulations that require a public sector worker in receipt of an exit payments to return that payment, or a proportion of it, in cases where that person returns to work in any part of the public sector. Draft Regulations have been produced however no secondary legislation has actually been subsequently brought into force. It is envisaged that the 'minimum salary' of public sector workers to which the recovery provisions will apply will be set at £80,000 per annum.

It was anticipated that implementation would have occurred by now, however due to a lack of parliamentary time it has not and the position relating to the calculation of redundancy payments, funding of 'pension strain' where redundancies occur in the interests of business efficiency, and the way this legislation will interface with other employment law and public sector pension regulations remains unclear. In any event, its complexity is likely to require new processes across multiple organisations and a significant resource requirement to put in place and manage.  It remains the case that an implementation date is awaited.

*UK exit from the European Union (Brexit)*

Although much UK employment law is derived from EU law, the UK's withdrawal from the EU is highly unlikely to have an impact on UK employment law in the short-term, as most EU Directives are implemented in the UK by regulations or Acts of Parliament. For example, even if the UK is no longer required to comply with the EU equality Directives, the Equality Act 2010 will remain in place. It will be for Parliament to decide whether to retain, amend or repeal domestic legislation, and this is an ongoing subject for debate in many business disciplines including HR.

Commentators have identified the harmonisation of contracts after a TUPE transfer; the calculation of holiday pay; agency workers' rights; and the introduction of a cap on compensation in discrimination claims as examples of areas, currently governed by EU law, where changes could be made in the future by a Government looking to roll back employment regulation.

It is possible that the UK will be required to continue to implement elements of EU legislation as a condition of any negotiated trade deal between the UK and EU.

From a policy and HR perspective, the division will monitor reputable commentary and information from professional bodies and networks, and plan for resulting changes in process and practice as any revised regulations emerge.

*Equality & Diversity policy*

The Council's Single Equality Scheme is due for review and work is in place to review and update the Council's equality objectives within the scheme, along with associated plans and actions. Within 2019/20, the scheme will be updated and submitted for approval and adoption, ensuring ongoing compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and taking into account any changing demographics in the wider community (notably the resettlement of Syrian refugees, and EU national settlement) is accurately reflected.

*Key partnership activity*

Two additional themes emerging at the time of development of this plan are the adoption of 'Housing First' by the Liverpool City Region Mayor – an initiative designed to prevent homelessness by ensuring that a partnership approach is taken to maintaining a home for everyone, before any other considerations. Additionally, the prevention of Modern Slavery agenda is gaining recognition across the Cheshire geographical footprint, with partnership working developing across a range of organisations to foster and promote multi-agency awareness and effective prevention. The Council will have an involvement in both of these agendas, with the Partnerships function in the division providing relevant facilitation and coordination support.

*Appendix 1*

# Objectives, Milestones and Measures

| Service Objective: FS 01 | Set the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Recommend Council Tax. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | <ul><li>Report 2020-23 Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board - **November 2019.**</li><li>Report 2020/21 revenue budget, capital programme and council tax to Council - **March 2020**.</li></ul> | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Operational Director, Finance | **Linked Indicators:** | Corporate Effectiveness and Efficiency |

| Service Objective: FS 02 | To effect financial prudence by assisting managers to control their budgets by monitoring spending and providing timely and accurate financial reports. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | <ul><li>Provide **monthly** financial reports to budget holders **within 8 days of month end**.</li><li>Provide **quarterly** financial monitoring reports to Operational Directors for inclusion in Performance Monitoring Reports. Provide **quarterly** monitoring and forecasting reports on the overall budget to Executive Board.</li></ul> | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Operational Director, Finance | **Linked Indicators:** | Corporate Effectiveness and Efficiency |

| Service Objective: FS 03 | Provide for public accountability by reporting the Council's stewardship of public funds and its financial performance in the use of resources by preparing the statutory Statement of Accounts in accordance with the latest accounting standards. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | <ul><li>Publish the Statement of Accounts following external audit **by 31st July 2019**.</li></ul> | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Operational Director, Finance | **Linked Indicators:** | Corporate Effectiveness and Efficiency |

| Service Objective: FS 04 | Make best use of cash resources available to the Council and meet its statutory responsibility by setting, implementing and monitoring the Treasury Management Policy. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | <ul><li>Establish Treasury Management Policy and report to Council - **March 2019**.</li><li>Provide monitoring reports to Executive Board **on a bi-annual basis**.</li></ul> | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Operational Director, Finance | **Linked Indicators:** | Corporate Effectiveness and Efficiency |

| Service Objective: FS 05 | Ensure that the Capital Programme is affordable, prudent, and sustainable by setting and monitoring prudential borrowing indicators. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | ▪ Establish and report prudential indicators to Council - **March 2019.**<br>▪ Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board **on a bi-annual basis**. | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Operational Director, Finance | **Linked Indicators:** | Corporate Effectiveness and Efficiency |

| Service Objective: ICT 01 | Constantly evaluate and improve the usability, resilience, control and flexibility of the Council's Data Communications Network, Hardware and Software Infrastructure. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | ▪ Continued Enhancement of the virtualization platform to enhanced or new technologies - **March 2020**.<br>▪ Further development of Cloud Services Platform - **March 2020**.<br>▪ SharePoint and Records Management enhancements **- March 2020**.<br>▪ Interactive Web Services Enhancement and further SharePoint Integration **- March 2020**.<br>▪ Further development of commercial ICT opportunity within desktop, hosting and DR provision - **March 2020**. | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Operational Director ICT & Support Services | **Linked Indicators:** | Operational Director ICT & Support Services |

| Service Objective: ICT 02 | The implementation of a range of new corporate wide facilities including Web services, records & document management, business process workflow, corporate desktop portal and GDPR process. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | ▪ Continuing improvements, enhancements and commercial use of Cloud system - **March 2020**.<br>▪ Continuing workflow implementation - **March 2020**.<br>▪ Improvement and enhancement of all web based customer interfaces - **March 2020**.<br>▪ Continued development of document management and distribution services - **March 2020.** | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Operational Director ICT & Support Services | **Linked Indicators:** | |

| Service Objective: ICT 03 | The implementation of a range of new corporate wide facilities including Web services, records & document management, business process workflow, corporate desktop portal. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | ▪ Continual development of the I Want Admin/Finance/HR Portals - **March 2020**.<br>▪ Develop and enhance operational Records management Unit Services - **March 2020**. | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Operational Director ICT & Support Services | **Responsible Officer:** | |

| Service Objective: LD 01 | To ensure that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information and are kept informed of changing legislation and responsibilities. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | ▪ Review constitution - **May 2019**. | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Mark Reaney | **Linked Indicators:** | |

| Service Objective: LD 02 | To provide efficient and effective Democratic Support Services that provides Elected Members, as key decision makers, with the necessary information, support and training opportunities to fulfil their individual potential and management and governance role effectively. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | ▪ To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting where desired.<br>▪ To induct all new members **by October 2019**. | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Mark Reaney | **Linked Indicators:** | |

| Service Objective: CE 01 | Increase the number of Pupils having a school lunch, to raise awareness and increase levels of healthy eating. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | ▪ Deliver a promotion and educational campaign - **September 2018** and **January 2019**. | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Schools Catering Manager | **Linked Indicators:** | CE LI 01, 02, 03, 04 |

| Service Objective: EEP 07 | To provide a comprehensive property service | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | ▪ Complete the handback process for all the Mersey Gateway Temporary Use Areas (TUA's) by **December 2019**<br>▪ Vacate Kingsway House, and relocate all staff to other Council buildings by **October 2019**<br>▪ Deliver all programmed maintenance projects on the 2019/10 programme by **March 2020**<br>▪ Deliver SEMH projects at Halton Lodge & Brookvale Primary schools by **September 2019**<br>▪ Deliver Crow Wood Park pavilion by **June 2019** | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | John Hughes | **Linked Indicators:** | |

| Service Objective: PPPE 01 | To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of corporate training opportunities through the design and implementation of appropriate learning interventions, to include the development of bespoke Learning & Development offerings to individual service areas. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | ▪ Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy  **May 2019**<br>▪ Review and refresh annual training calendar **September 2019**.<br>▪ Regular engagement with service managers to identify areas of challenge and develop appropriate bespoke solutions **April, September, December 2019, and March 2020.**<br>▪ Full implementation of Leadership and Management Development Programme **September 2019.** | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Brian Hilton | **Linked Indicators:** | PPPE LI 03 |

| Service Objective: PPPE 02 | Implement the Apprenticeship Policy to support the establishment of apprenticeships across the Council, and optimise return on the Apprenticeship Levy. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | <ul><li>Establish 10 new apprentice placements within Council services, compliant with the requirements of apprenticeship legislation **March 2020**</li><li>Establish 20 new existing employee apprenticeships to enable up-skilling in a range of business areas, compliant with the requirements of apprenticeship legislation **March 2020**</li></ul> | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Richard Rout | **Linked Indicators:** | PPPE LI 09 |

| Service Objective: PPPE 03 | Continue implementation revised Attendance Policy to promote appropriate wellbeing support and secure reductions in the incidence and cost of staff absence. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | <ul><li>Monitor impact of new policy at three monthly intervals – support with financial and data analysis **June, September, December 2019 and March 2020.**</li><li>Demonstrate improved wellbeing, cost reduction and productivity enhancement over the financial year 2019/20, through review data and engagement with managers / employees. **March 2020**</li></ul> | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Richard Rout | **Linked Indicators:** | PPPE LI 01 |

| Service Objective: PPPE 04 | Optimise the use of the Agency Worker contract across Council services, to secure ongoing reductions in the incidence and cost of agency usage, and to ensure that correct and appropriate resourcing solutions are being deployed across Council services. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | <ul><li>Review and consider most appropriate resourcing mix in collaboration with service management in areas of highest agency usage **September 2019.**</li><li>Implement resourcing plans with service management in appropriate areas **September 2019.**</li><li>Ongoing monitoring of agency usage and spend **April, September, December 2019, and March 2020.**</li></ul> | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Richard Rout | **Linked Indicators:** | PPPE LI 02c / 02d |

| Service Objective: PPPE 05 | Work with high demand service areas to develop and implement effective recruitment programmes, optimising labour market engagement to attract high quality candidates. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key Milestone(s) (19 / 20) | <ul><li>Identify service areas with highest consistent recruitment demand, turnover, and low attraction rates **September 2019.**</li><li>Implement project based recruitment plans with service management in appropriate areas **September 2019.**</li><li>Corroborate out-turns of linked KPI's to assess effectiveness of approach to resourcing **June, September, December 2019, and March 2020.**</li></ul> | | |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Richard Rout | **Linked Indicators:** | PPPE LI 02c / 02d |

| Ref | Description | 17/18 Actual | 18/19 Target | 18/19 Actual | 19/20 Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FS LI 01 | Receive an unqualified external audit opinion on the accounts. | Yes | Yes | TBC | Yes |
| FS LI 02 | Receive positive comment (annually) from the External Auditor relating to the financial standing of the Council and the systems of internal financial control. | Yes | Yes | TBC | Yes |
| FS LI 03 | Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected | 94.62% | 94.50% | TBC | 94.25% |
| FS LI 04 | The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received | 98.21% | 97.00% | TBC | 97.50% |
| FS LI 05 | Average time for processing new claims (Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction) | 19.94 (Days) | 20 (Days) | TBC | 20 (Days) |
| FS LI 06 | Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances | 2.96 (Days) | 9.0 (Days) | TBC | 9.0 (Days) |
| ICT LI 01 | Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%). | 99.00% | 99.00% | TBC | 99.00% |
| ICT LI 02 | Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%). | 99.00% | 99.00% | TBC | 99.00% |
| ICT LI 03 | School Support SLA:  % of calls responded to within agreed target*: | | | | |
| | ▪ Priority 1 | 100.00% | 85.00% | TBC | 85.00% |
| | ▪ Priority 2 | 100.00% | 90.00% | TBC | 90.00% |
| | ▪ Priority 3 | 100.00% | 95.00% | TBC | 95.00% |
| | ▪ Priority 4 | 100.00% | 100.00% | TBC | 95.00% |
| ICT LI 04 | Average working days from delivery to completion of a new PC. | 8 | 10 | TBC | TBC |
| LD LI 01 | No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total). | 54 (96.00%) | 56 (100.00%) | TBC | TBC |
| LD LI 02 | Percentage of Members attending at least one organised Training Event. | 86.00% | 100.00% | TBC | TBC |

| Ref | Description | 17/18 Actual | 18/19 Target | 18/19 Actual | 19/20 Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LD LI 03 | Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days). | 10 | 10 | TBC | TBC |
| LD LI 04 | Average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department (working days). | 1 | 3 | TBC | TBC |
| LD LI 05 | Members of Public attending Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums) – For information. | 131 | N / A | TBC | TBC |
| LD LI 06 | No. Of Questions asked by Members of the Public at Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums) – For information | 20 | N / A | TBC | TBC |
| LD LI 07 | % of Executive Board, Executive Board Sub-Committee and Mersey Gateway Executive Board minutes published within 5 working days after the meeting. | 100.00% | 100.00% | TBC | TBC |
| LD LI 08 | % Of those eligible casting a vote in local elections. – For information purposes only. | N / A | N / A | TBC | TBC |
| LD LI 09 | % Of completed form A's (register of voters) returned. | N / A | 90.00% | TBC | TBC |
| CE LI 01 | % Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Primary Schools. | 86.00% | 87.00% | TBC | 80% |
| CE LI 02 | % Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Secondary Schools. | 77.80% | 77.50% | TBC | 80% |
| CE LI 03 | Take up of school lunches (%) – primary schools. | 63.00% | 65.00% | TBC | 60% |
| CE LI 04 | Take up of school lunches (%) – secondary schools. | 55.4.% | 57.00% | TBC | 55% |
| EEP LI 01 | Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions indicator (Tonnes $CO_2e$). | 14,811 tonnes $CO_2e$ (actual 17/18) | 14,663 tonnes $CO_2e$ (target 18/19) | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 01 | The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate) | | | | |
| PPPE LI 02 | Average Cost of Employee (FTE) Absenteeism | | | | |

| Ref | Description | 17/18 Actual | 18/19 Target | 18/19 Actual | 19/20 Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PPPE LI 03 | Percentage of Employees (FTE) without sickness | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 04 | Total Full Time Equivalent Staffing Establishment | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 05 | Total Staff (head count) (indicator for information only) | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 06 | Total Agency Worker Usage (number of placements – year to date) | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 07 | Number of apprenticeship placements established in the Council. (Cumulative – year to date) | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 08 | Total Agency Worker Cost (cumulative cost – year to date) | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 09 | % of training delegates attending as proportion of places reserved | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 10 | The percentage of top 5% of earners that are: [1] | | | TBC | TBC |
| | a) Women | | | TBC | TBC |
| | b) from BME communities | | | TBC | TBC |
| | c) with a disability | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 11 | No of staff declaring that they meet the definition of disability within the Equality Act 2010 as a % of the total workforce. | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 12 | Minority Ethnic Community staff as % of total workforce. | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 13 | Average time to recruit (ATS System reported figure) | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 14 | Staff turnover rate (Permanent & temporary staff. Excludes casual) | | | TBC | TBC |
| PPPE LI 15 | First Year Turnover rate (The number of staff leaving the authority within 1 year of joining) | | | TBC | TBC |

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[1] Performance targets for these measures take account of local demographic profiles

| Ref | Description | 17/18 Actual | 18/19 Target | 18/19 Actual | 19/20 Target |
|-----|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|     |             |              |              |              |              |