

# Minutes

For Presentation to the Council  
At the meeting to be held on

**Wednesday, 23 October  
2024**

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**COUNCIL**

*At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 10 July 2024 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Ball, Begg, Bevan, Carlin, Dennett, Davidson, Dourley, Fry, Garner, Gilligan, Goodall, Harris, Hutchinson, Jones, Leck, M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, C. Loftus, K. Loftus, Logan, A. Lowe, McDermott, Nelson, L. Nolan, P. Nolan, Philbin, Polhill, N. Plumpton Walsh, Ratcliffe, Stockton, Stretch, Thompson, Thornton, Wainwright, Wall, Wallace, Wharton, Woolfall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Abbott, Baker, Bramwell, S. Hill, V. Hill, A. McInerney, T. McInerney, C. Plumpton Walsh, Rowe, Ryan, Skinner and Teeling

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, S. Young, G. Ferguson and W. Rourke

Also in attendance: None

*Action***COU16 COUNCIL MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 17 May 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**COU17 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor announced that the Council had received an award at the Halton Chamber of Commerce Business Awards – Celebrating 50 Years of the Borough of Halton.

**COU18 LEADER'S REPORT**

The Leader in his report to Council:

- Commented on last week's General Election result and the successful new Labour Government;
- Provided an update on the Council's finances and the budget pressures it is facing;
- reported that the full Ofsted Inspection of the Council's Children Services was completed, and a report would be published on Friday;

- expressed his congratulations to Brindley Theatre on the Tripadvisor traveller feedback which had identified the venue as one of the top 10% of things to do worldwide; and
- passed on the Council's congratulations to Riverside and Cronton College on their Outstanding Ofsted inspection result, which made them one of only two such institutions across the North West.

#### COU19 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board meetings on 14 March, 18 April, 14 May and 13 June 2024.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

#### COU20 MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 17 January 2024.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

#### COU21 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8

It was noted that no questions had been submitted under Standing Order No. 8.

#### COU22 MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARDS AND THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE BOARD

The Council considered the reports of the following Boards in the period since the meeting of Council on 17 May 2024:-

- Employment, Learning and Skills and Community;
- Health;
- Safer;
- Environment and Urban Renewal;
- Corporate Services; and
- Audit and Governance.

#### COU23 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports of the following Committees in the period since the meeting of Council on 17 May 2024:-

- Development Management;

- Appointments;
- Taxi Licensing Sub Committee; and
- Regulatory Sub Committee,

COU24 APPOINTMENT TO POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD AND OUTSIDE BODY

Council was requested to agree appointments to Corporate Services and Safer Policy and Performance Boards and an Outside Body.

RESOLVED: That Council approve the following appointments detailed below:

- Corporate Policy and Performance Board – Councillor V. Hill
- Safer Policy and Performance Board – Councillor A. McInerney
- Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Health Scrutiny – Councillor Goodall.

*Meeting ended at 6.55 p.m.*

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**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 11 July 2024 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building*

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Ball, Harris, M. Lloyd Jones, Nelson, P. Nolan, Thompson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Dennett and T. McInerney

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, J. Middleton, S. Young, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, W. Rourke and S. Riley

Also in attendance: None

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

	<i>Action</i>
EXB12 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
<p><b>LEADER'S PORTFOLIO</b></p>	
EXB13 URGENT DECISIONS	
<p>The Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided information on urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Board.</p>	
<p>It was noted that the Council's Constitution gave authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decisions, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Operational Director Finance and/or the Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.</p>	
<p>Three urgent decisions had been made since the last meeting of the Board and full details were published on the Council's website.</p>	
<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.</p>	

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORFOLIO**

**EXB14 DELIVERY OF MANAGED DETECTION RESPONSE - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Director ICT and Support Services, which sought approval of a key project that would adopt/deliver innovative security technologies to address the evolving cyber threat landscape, reducing cyber risk and detection time, the primary aim of which would be to improve the security footprint of the Authority.

Following approval of the Halton Digital Strategy by Executive Board in April 2024, the IT Security Team had evaluated eight security offers and three had been chosen for final evaluation. Detailed evaluation had taken place and it was agreed that MDR offered the price point, level of service and had the in house resource to manage and maintain an essential key technology solution.

Reason(s) for Decision

The security of the authority, compliance with the DHLUC Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF)

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Following approval of the Halton Digital Strategy by Management Team and Executive Board in March and April 2024, the IT Security Team have evaluated eight security offerings within the marketplace this was narrowed down to three Tier 1 solutions, the offerings in question are cloud based remote management services primarily for threat detection, response and remediation.

Implementation Date

It is intended to initiate a 20 day proof of concept installation 24 June 2024 prior to any go live, this would also comply with additional cyber security requirement prior to the general election.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the procurement of a MDR (Managed Detection Response) System for a single payment of £638,001, delivering over a five-year contracted term be approved; and

Director ICT and Support Services



- 2) the investment strategy be approved.

#### EXB15 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME BOARD

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director – Chief Executive’s Delivery Unit, which outlined a proposed model for a Transformation Programme Board, using Working Party principles. The Council’s Transformation Programme started on 1 April 2023, and it had grown in both scope and complexity. The Programme would be in place until 31 March 2026.

It was proposed that given the operation of the Transformation Programme would require more intensive governance between now and March 2026, a dedicated Transformation Programme Board would need to be established. The Board would:

- consist of the ten Executive Members of the Council, appointed as a Working Party;
- make recommendations to Executive Board as and when necessary; and
- receive recommendations from Policy and Performance Board Topic Groups as part of the Council’s scrutiny arrangements pertaining to Re-imagine Halton Transformation projects.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report is noted;
- 2) the establishment of a Transformation Programme Board be approved;
- 3) a Working Party consisting of the ten Executive Members be appointed to form the Transformation Programme Board, and make recommendations to the Executive Board, as required; and
- 4) the Board agrees to request and evaluate progress update reports from other Council Boards and Committees, on current and planned policy development work related to transformation project activity.

Corporate  
Director - Chief  
Executive's  
Delivery Unit

#### EXB16 PRODUCTIVITY PLAN

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director – Chief Executive’s Delivery Unit which outlined the requirement for a Productivity Plan to be submitted to the

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. A copy of a letter from the Minister for Local Government and the Productivity Plan were attached as appendices to the report.

Corporate  
Director - Chief  
Executive's  
Delivery Unit

RESOLVED: That the Board endorses the Productivity Plan for submission to DLUHC

EXB17 2024/25 TO 2026/27 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Board considered a report of the Director of Finance, on the Council's total planned capital programme expenditure and associated funding over the next three years.

The 2024/27 Capital Strategy Statement was approved by Council on 6 March 2024. Subsequently, new capital grant allocations had been received and slippage to capital projects for 2023/24 had been rolled forward to 2024/25. The report brought all the separate elements together and outlined the planned capital programme expenditure and funding for the next three years.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the updated capital programme for 2024-27, including forecast spend and funding, as set out in Table 1 and Table 2.

Director of  
Finance

**DEPUTY LEADER/CLIMATE CHANGE PORTFOLIOS**

EXB18 KINGSWAY QUARTER, WIDNES TOWN CENTRE - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which sought agreement to progress delivery of Kingsway Quarter development. This included capital funding to undertake the demolition of Kingsway Leisure Centre, following its relocation to the new Halton Leisure Centre in 2025.

The Kingsway Quarter was identified as a priority development and a map of the site with an approximate site boundary was attached as Appendix A to the report. Architects had been commissioned to undertake a feasibility study and engage with Planning and Highways, and a series of technical survey and viability appraisals were also being undertaken. It was noted that this predevelopment work had been jointly funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and would be used to inform site marketing and disposal and prepare a 'Development Framework'.

In order to expediate the site's redevelopment, it was proposed that delegated responsibility should be delegated to the Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and the Climate Change Portfolio holder, for site marketing and disposal on the basis of residential led development.

Reason(s) for Decision

The demolition work will result in significant expenditure by the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

For the demolition and site clearance to proceed as soon as the site is vacated, to ensure that the risk of ASB is minimised, the work needed to be commissioned now. A key requirement is a bat survey which can only be carried out at specific times of the year when bats are active between May and September but ideally completed by end of August. Any delay risks Anti-Social Behaviour in the building following its decommissioning and ultimately a delay in the site being offered to market.

Implementation Date

A bat survey work needed to be commissioned mid-July to ensure timescales were met.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) recommend Council adjust the Capital Programme for the sum of £750,000.00 to enable demolition of Kingsway Leisure Centre and associated preparation works to aid formal land disposal;
- 2) endorse the vision for Kingsway Quarter site for residential led development, as set out in para 3.6 of the report and in accordance with the wider Widnes Town Centre Strategy;
- 3) approves delegated authority to Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property, in consultation with Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, for site marketing and disposal; and
- 4) authorises the Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property to arrange for all required documentation for the transactions to be completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

**CLIMATE CHANGE PORTFOLIO**

**EXB19 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION STRATEGIC PLACE PARTNERSHIP**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, that provided an update on the work of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Homes England, to create a Strategic Place Partnership for the City Region. The new partnership model would provide improved governance arrangements to prioritise and coordinate support and investment for residential-led development and housing renewal projects across the Liverpool City Region. The report sought approval to take the necessary steps to contribute to formation of the new Partnership.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Homes England are working with local authority partners to create a Strategic Place Partnership for the Liverpool City Region;
- 2) approves entering into a Strategic Place Partnership Memorandum of Understanding with partners, leading to production of a Business Plan and new governance arrangements to be established; and
- 3) provides delegated authority to the Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change to agree details for the formation of the Strategic Place Partnership.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

**EXB20 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

The Board considered:

- 1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered,

exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and

- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **DEPUTY LEADER'S PORTFOLIO**

##### **EXB21 RUNCORN HEALTH AND EDUCATION HUB**

The Board considered a report which sought approval for the refurbishment of the current Runcorn Library building into an NHS Health and Education Hub, with a subsequent lease of the building to the NHS, whilst re-locating the library service temporarily before integration in the extended Brindley Theatre.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the refurbishment of the asset and subsequent lease to NHS on the terms reported in section 3.4;
- 2) authorises the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, to arrange for all required documentation for the construction works and lease to the satisfaction of the Director Legal and Democratic, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services; and
- 3) authorises the Executive Director, Children and Young People, to arrange for all required documentation for a Collaboration Agreement with

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

the NHS to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

**ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO**

**EXB22 REPLACEMENT CREMATOR WIDNES CREMATORIUM - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report which sought approval for the procurement and installation of a new cremator at Widnes Crematorium.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) delegated authority be granted to Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal, to procure a replacement cremator and associated installation, service and maintenance contract; and
- 2) Council be recommended to include £308,000, in the 2024/25 Capital Programme for the scheme, as outlined in section 5.0 of the report.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

**MINUTES ISSUED: 16 July 2024**

**CALL-IN: 23 July 2024 at 5.00 pm.**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 23 July 2024.**

*Meeting ended at 2.32 p.m.*

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 12 September 2024 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building*

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Ball, Dennett, Harris, M. Lloyd Jones, T. McInerney, Nelson, P. Nolan, Thompson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner, G. Ferguson, W. Rourke and H. Hamlett

Also in attendance: None

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

EXB23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

EXB24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

The Board considered a report from the Director – Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Annual Report 2023-24

The report updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

Information was provided on the economic outlook, interest rate forecast, borrowing and investments, budget monitoring, new long-term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. The Council's approved Treasury and Prudential Indicators for 2023-24 were set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and was attached as Appendix one.

*Action*

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB25 2024/25 SPENDING AS AT 31 JULY 2024 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST

The Board received a report from the Director – Finance, which reported the Council’s overall revenue net spending position as of 31 July 2024, together with a 2024/25 forecast outturn position. The report also included an update on the Council’s medium term financial forecast over the four years to 2028/29 (Appendix 5).

A summary of spending against the operational revenue budget position as at 31 July was presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and these provided detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms net spending as at 31 July 2024 was £6.561m over budget. The outturn forecast for the year estimated that net spend would be over the approved budget by £19.777m. It was noted that the forecast position is of great concern and without action the Council would not be in a position to provide a balanced budget by financial year-end.

The report detailed a review of the Council General Reserve as at 31 July 2024. The current balance of reserves is £11.581m and this was well below that required to help provide a balanced budget position.

Members were advised that Council had previously approved the Capital Programme for 2024/25 at its meeting on 6 March 2024. Since then, the Capital Programme had been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles and funding as schemes had been developed. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 31 July 2024. Appendix 4 outlined the saving measures against the budget for the two year period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 together with information on action to date to achieve the target saving.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) Executive Directors continue the urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year, or additional funding secured;
- 3) Council be requested to approve the Capital

Director of Finance



Programme as set out in paragraph 3.21; and

- 4) the updated Medium Term Financial Forecast included at Appendix 5 is noted.

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB26 HIGH NEEDS PROVISION CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS – PROPOSED EXPANSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY PROVISION: STATUTORY CONSULTATION - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Children’s Services, which advised that in March 2024 the Council had been notified by the Department of Education that it would receive a further allocation of £2.1m High Needs Provision Capital funding over a two-year period to support the provision of new places and/or to expand existing provision for pupils and students with high needs.

The Council had previously consulted with schools on the opportunity to expand their existing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) offer or offer new SEND provision. The report sought approval to commence a statutory consultation to expand the number of SEND places available at Ashley School in Widnes through the provision of four additional classrooms to meet need for children and young people with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), taking the total number of places available at the school site from 112 to 152.

#### Reason(s) for Decision

The Council is required to demonstrate appropriate identification of need against spend from the High Needs Capital Allocation Grant. To deliver and implement the High Needs Provision Capital Funding Programme.

#### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

#### Implementation Date

It is intended that the additional provision, if approved, could be offered from September 2026.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) approval be given for the commencement of a

statutory consultation process for the expansion of Ashley School in Widnes for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder to become a 152 place school; and

Executive Director  
of Children's  
Services

- 2) a further report is brought to the Board in December 2024 detailing the outcome of the statutory consultation and next steps.

EXB27 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2024-27

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Children’s Services, which presented the Youth Justice Plan for Cheshire for 2024-27, for recommendation to Council at its meeting on 23 October 2024. This was in compliance with the Youth Justice Board Guidance (Ministry of Justice) and Regulation 4 of the ‘Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000’.

RESOLVED: That

Executive Director  
of Children's  
Services

- 1) the 2024-27 Youth Justice Plan be recommended for approval by the next full Council; and
- 2) authority be delegated to the Executive Director – Children’s Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Families, to approve and submit an annual refresh of the Youth Justice Plan in 2025 prior to formal approval by Council next year.

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIOS**

EXB28 HALTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS)

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval of the proposed update to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) (attached as Appendix A). The LDS set out the timetable for the production of the Local Plan and also identified and described the Planning Policy documents that the Council intend to prepare and gave target dates for key stages in their production.

RESOLVED: That

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

- 1) the report be noted;

- 2) the Strategy be approved;
- 3) the Halton Borough Council Local Development Scheme 2024 Revision (Appendix A) be formally adopted and shall have effect from September 2024; and
- 4) authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Transport, in consultation with the Executive Board Members for Environment and Urban Renewal and Climate Change, to approve any minor changes to the wording and/or timelines of the production of documents in the Local Development Scheme as required.

EXB29 DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, that provided information on the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and presented the potential implications for Halton. The Government consultation would close on 24 September.

It was noted that Halton's current Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) was adopted in 2022 and the guidance in the NPPF remained that Local Plans should be reviewed every 5 years. The resource implications for a review of the Local Plan for the Planning Team were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Members consider the proposed reforms and potential implications for Halton; and
- 2) approval be given to the Director of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the portfolio holders for Climate Change and Environment and Urban Renewal, to prepare a response to government.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

EXB30 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- 1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during

consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and

- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **DEPUTY LEADER'S PORTFOLIO**

##### **EXB31 FREEPORT: PORT OF WESTON**

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on progress relating to Halton's Freeport.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) approval is given to allow officers to continue with due diligence with a view to preparing a formal offer to purchase the Port of Weston using Freeport Seed Funding;
- 2) Officers provide update reports to Members, as appropriate, as the project progresses;
- 3) Officers work with the Combined Authority and the Freeport Board, to seek approval from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to reallocate remaining Freeport Seed Funds for the planning and construction of an access

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

road onto Port of Weston and to purchase the Port of Weston and fund remediation works, contingency and negotiate above the initial purchase offer; and

- 4) delegated authority is given to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration and the Director Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to draw up a collaborative agreement with prospective stakeholders as outlined in section 3.12 of the report.

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**EXB32 CARPENTER ADDITIVE**

The Board considered a report which sought approval for the assigning of the lease for Carpenters Inc on Dennis Road, Widnes.

RESOLVED: That the Board authorises the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, to arrange for all required documentation for the assignment to be completed to the satisfaction of the Director Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

Executive Director of Children's Services

**EXB33 TERM MAINTENANCE AND MINOR WORKS CONTRACTS**

The Board considered a report which sought approval for the award of the term maintenance and minor works contracts for mechanical, electrical and building elements for use across the Borough following a procurement exercise undertaken via the Chest.

RESOLVED: That the term maintenance and minor works contracts be awarded to the successful contractors as detailed in paragraph 3.4-3.6 of the report.

Executive Director Environment & Regeneration

**EXB34 STAFF LEAVE**

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director, Chief Executives Delivery Unit, which outlined a proposal to reintroduce the four days unpaid leave arrangement for staff during the Christmas period.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and

Corporate Director - Chief Executive's Delivery Unit

- 2) the Board approves the commencement of the formal process to consult with the workforce regarding the re-introduction of four days unpaid leave during Christmas period.

**MINUTES ISSUED: 17 September 2024**

**CALL-IN: 24 September 2024 at 5.00 pm.**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 24 September 2024.**

*Meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.*

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board on Wednesday, 10 July 2024 at the Bridge Suite, Halton Security Stadium*

- Present:
- Councillor Wright (Chair)
  - Councillor Ball
  - Councillor Woolfall
  - S. Burrows, Public Protection, Halton Borough Council
  - M. Hancock, Public Health
  - L. Hughes, Healthwatch Halton
  - A. Leo, Integrated Commissioning Board
  - W. Longshaw, Mersey & West Lancashire NHS Trust
  - D. Moore, Warrington & Halton Hospitals
  - L. Naidu, Public Protection, Halton Borough Council
  - T. McPhee, Mersey Care NHS Trust
  - L. Olsen, Halton Housing Trust
  - I. Onyia, Public Health, Halton Borough Council
  - H. Patel, Halton Citizens Advice Bureau
  - S. Patel, Local Pharmacy Committee
  - S. Scott, Halton Housing Trust
  - F. Watson, Halton Borough Council
  - S. Yeoman, Halton & St. Helens VCA
- Apologies: Councillor T. McInerney, D. Bowman (Cheshire Fire) and C. Jones (Cheshire Constabulary)

Also in attendance: None

	<i>Action</i>
<p>HWB1 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2024 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>HWB2 PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2024</p> <p>The Board received a report and presentation from the Director of Public Health, on the Public Health Annual Report (PHAR) for 2023-24, Healthy Start, Healthy Future.</p> <p>The 2023-24 Public Health Annual Report focussed on the impact of empowered young people who had embraced key messages from the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum and who had been inspired to promote change within their school community. The young people were supported to make these changes through the work of the Healthy Schools Team in collaboration with schools and other partners.</p>	

The report highlighted some of the key health challenges as well as some of the ways that the Healthy Schools Programme tackled these. The report also highlighted several school and educational setting approaches to vaping on school grounds; peer-led health messages; role modelling to parents around health food and physical activity; five ways to wellbeing and an intergenerational approach to reducing loneliness.

The Director of Public Health circulated a copy of the Annual Plan to each Board Member present.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) support the recommendations.

### HWB3 HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS AND HEALTH IN HALTON

The Board received a report and presentation which was delivered by the Chief Executive of Halton Housing Trust. The presentation provided an overview of the scale and context of social housing activity across Halton, with a particular focus on links with health outcomes for residents.

The presentation provided a focus on:

- Health and Safety;
- Key housing and health issues in Halton;
- Poor housing – the cost to the NHS; and
- Improving living conditions and opportunities to collaborate.

Case studies were also included, which outlined how the work of housing associations in Halton had improved the health and wellbeing of its tenants.

The Board discussed the information presented to them and agreed that organisations needed to jointly identify an integrated approach to prevent duplication of work. It was agreed that this should be discussed further and progressed via the One Halton Group.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the contents of the presentation.

### HWB4 WARRINGTON AND HALTON INTEGRATION PROGRAMME



The Board received a presentation from the Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Warrington and Halton Hospitals on the Warrington and Halton Integration Programme.

In order to make improvements for both patients and staff working at the front line, opportunities had been identified via a programme of work. This would deliver integrated and collaborative models of care between Warrington and Halton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Bridgewater Community NHS Foundation Trust.

The presentation provided information on the following:

- Work undertaken to date;
- Local Governance;
- Proposed Programme Workstreams;
- Financial opportunities; and
- Communications and engagement to date and immediate next steps.

It was noted that the first meeting of the Joint Committee would take place in September 2024 and it was proposed that milestone targets and delivery expectations for the eight programmes and overarching objectives would be identified and agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the contents of the presentation.

#### HWB5 TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Director of Public Health, which provided an update on some of the work of the Trading Standards Service and the contribution this work had made in protecting public health, children and vulnerable adults from harm.

It was noted that the Trading Standards team provided a wide range of statutory services to protect consumers and legitimate businesses from unfair, misleading or unsafe trading practices. Amongst others, these services included weights and measures, product safety, restricted sales, explosives, scams awareness, fair trading, doorstep crime, counterfeit and illicit goods – including tobacco and vapes. The team also provided an enhanced consumer advice service to help consumers enforce their own civil consumer rights.

The report focussed on the following services which contributed to protecting public health and safeguarding children and adults:

- scams awareness;
- doorstep crime;
- illegal money laundering;
- tobacco and vapes;
- age restricted sales;
- consumer advice and the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline; and
- iCAN consumer alert network.

The report also provided case studies for each of the services, which the Board noted.

Following discussions, some additional information was noted and agreed:

- Stop Loan Sharks was operated by Birmingham City Council on behalf of Local Authorities throughout the country;
- It was acknowledged that more promotional work needed to be undertaken on the referral process; and
- It was suggested that there were opportunities for joint working and this would be discussed at a future housing partnership meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the report;
- 2) endorse the approach to doorstep crime and illegal money lending;
- 3) endorse the multi-faceted approach to both prosecute and disrupt illegal activity by seizing illegal an illicit products to remove them from the market; and
- 4) encourage partners to sign up to and share the iCan alert system.

#### HWB6 PHARMACEUTICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Director of Public Health, presented a report which provided members of the Board with a briefing on the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) which included risks associated with it and proposed local governance arrangements.

Every Health and Wellbeing Board in England had a statutory responsibility to publish and keep an up-to-date statement of needs for pharmaceutical services of its local population. This was referred to as a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) and included dispensing services as well as public health and other services that pharmacies may be commissioned to provide.

The report set out the commissioning arrangements; proposed arrangements for producing Halton's next PNA; and the resources required.

The report also outlined the next steps which would be undertaken by a steering group. It was noted that once a final draft document had been completed, a 60 day statutory consultation would be undertaken and the results would be reported to the Board before its publication on 1 October 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the contents of the report;
- 2) agreed that the Director of Public Health be the lead; and
- 3) agreed that the PNA be managed by a local steering group, led by Public Health.

#### HWB7 WIDER DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: RESPONDING TO POVERTY & TACKLING THE DRIVERS OF HEALTH INEQUALITIES

The Board received a report from the Director of Public Health, which outlined the effects of the cost of living crisis on those living in poverty in Halton.

The report outlined the Halton and multi-agency approach and the support offered during the cost of living crisis. Local Councils received Government funding to help programs supporting residents and some of the main food and fuel services funded were as follows:

- food support for families;
- fresh food at social supermarkets;
- foodbanks; and
- energy payments.

The Board was advised that some research had also been undertaken which looked into housing conditions and

how the effects of damp and mould have on the health of residents. Some of this work was done in collaboration with Bridgewater and Halton Housing Trust who were able to provide additional data on health and home conditions.

There were different reasons why residents required support e.g. financial, behavioural and structural. For those struggling to heat their homes, fuel vouchers had been offered. Energy Project Plus offered home visits, as part of their Warmth for Health Scheme, which advised residents on causes of mould and how to ventilate their homes properly. For homes that needed structural improvements, the Eco Flex Scheme offered grants for improvements such as wall and loft insulation and over the Winter period, 40 successful applications had been granted.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) endorse the work taking place in Halton;
- 2) note the importance of multi-agency approaches to tackling inequalities and collective work;
- 3) note the requirement for a long-term focus on prevention to combat the drivers of poverty and health inequalities; and
- 4) discuss how to sustain support for interventions to ensure they remain open and available to all.

HWB8 BETTER CARE FUND 2023/24 - END OF YEAR RETURN

The Board received a report from the Executive Director of Adult Social Services, which provided an update on the Better Care Fund 2023-24 Year-End return, following its submission on 21 May 2024. The update provided the Board with information on the four national conditions which had been met, progress on the four national metrics, income and expenditure actual, year-end feedback and adult social care fee rates.

RESOLVED: The Better Care Fund Year-End return for 2023-24 be noted for information.

HWB9 BETTER CARE FUND PLAN 2024/25

The Board received a report from the Executive Director of Adult Social Services, which provided an update on the Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan 2024-25, following its submission on 4 June 2024.

The aim of the BCF Plans was to support people to live healthy, independent and dignified lives through joining up health, social care and housing services.

The Board noted that in order to support the BCF Plan 2024-25, the current Joint Working Agreement was reviewed and updated to reflect recent changes in governance arrangements and to include 2024-25 pooled budget financial details.

Following discussions, the Board noted the request from Mersey Care NHS Trust to join the Better Care Commissioning Advisory Group.

RESOLVED: That the Better Care Fund Plan 2024-25 be noted for information.

*Meeting ended at 3.25 p.m.*

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**CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 15 July 2024 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), Begg, Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, Ratcliffe and Ryan

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Baker, Goodall, McDermott and Skinner

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, A. Jones, B. Holmes, C. Finch and K. Appleton

Also in attendance: Councillor T. McInerney, in accordance with Standing Order number 33

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

		<i>Action</i>
CYP1	MINUTES  The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CYP2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME  The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CYP3	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES  The minutes relating to the Children, Young People and Families Portfolio taken from Executive Board meetings held since the last meeting of this Board, were attached at Appendix 1 for information.	
CYP4	TOPIC GROUP UPDATE - VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR  Councillor Logan, the Chair of the Board, gave colleagues an update on the topic group he was participating in, in relation to the transformation of Children's Services.	

The Delivery Plan Topic Group had met three times so far and Councillors Logan, Jones, Ryan and P. Lloyd Jones were participating together with the Portfolio Holder Councillor T. McInerney. It was commented that plans had been made to address all of the existing issues identified so far and solutions had been found. Councillor Logan and the Topic Group were confident with the progress made so far.

RESOLVED: That the update be received.

#### CYP5 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2024

The Board received a presentation on the development of Halton's new Children and Young People's Plan 2024-2027.

Initially three principle questions were asked – what is life like for this child for young person; what can I do to make it better; and would this be good enough for my child. Three priorities were identified as a result of these:

- Working well in partnership;
- Developing the workforce; and
- Raising our aspirations.

The presentation gave information on what would be done to address each of these priorities and how the identified 12 priority issues would go into these.

In conclusion it was noted that the PPB would monitor progress made against the 12 priority issues of the Plan, as these would be reflected in the quarterly monitoring reports and be used to plan for the 2024-25 academic year.

Following Members' questions and discussions the following information was provided:

- Individual consultation had taken place with young people from various organisations such as schools, colleges and the Youth Council where a wide range of views had been received;
- Regarding the 'numbers of children in need of additional help to keep them safe' – it was commented that every step was taken by all agencies to prevent them from entering the care system. This cohort, numbering 1,295 (at the time of the agenda publication), were looked after by the 'edge of care' team;
- Many children with SEND were presenting with more complex issues, including health issues. It was felt



that the NHS should be approached to assist with funding and other support for these children and work in partnership with the Council. Examples were given of the challenges faced due to timeframes and the availability of places in special schools becoming available. Also, due to competition from neighbouring authorities, a decision on placing a child requiring SEND must be made very quickly, or the place would be offered to another local authority, so there was very little time to consult with the NHS;

- Having said the above, it was reported that there were a number of children who did receive NHS funding (joint packages of care) from the ICB – Members stated that the extent of this support was not clear and requested more information. It was noted that the new Children and Young People’s Plan would be used to record these outcomes;
- It was recognised that a formal agreement was needed with the ICB regarding the sharing of funding, so that there was accountability between all partners;
- The rate of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) requests in Halton was rising year on year and was above the regional and national average;
- Headteachers had been consulted on the Plan which had been positively received by them. They would also see the final Plan before it was published;
- Public Health were responsible for the recording of children’s height and weight and this was done by the Schools Health Improvement Team; and
- Clarity was provided over the use of and credentials of the consultant employed to help develop the Plan. He had worked with another local authority with very similar demographics to Halton. The cost of the exercise would be sought as it was not at hand.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the report and presentation; and
- 2) approves the Children and Young People’s Plan 2024.

Executive Director  
of Children's  
Services

#### CYP6 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director of Children’s Services, which provided an update on the progress of improvements being made within Children’s Social Care Services.

In November 2023, Halton appointed a permanent

Director of Children's Services (DCS) and in January 2024, a permanent Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help was appointed. This had led to a re-focus for Children's Social Care and a request for corporate support to significantly improve services. The last 6 months had seen significant changes being implemented around culture and practice. It was recognised however, that there was still a significant journey of improvement required.

The report outlined some key areas of focus within the improvements as follows: recruitment and retention of staff; training, development and CPD; stabilisation of the management team; a service re-design project; children in care and care leavers; and local area partnerships and accountability.

Following discussions, the following responses were provided to Members questions:

- Examples were given of the not-for-profit organisations used in Halton for children's residential care and it was noted that these organisations charged less, as they did not profiteer from children's trauma;
- Conversations were currently taking place on how the Local Authority could invest and benefit from more use of these types of organisations;
- The recruitment of Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW's) was discussed and the steps being taken to support them as they started their careers. The Social Workers Academy was involved in the development of NQSW's in conjunction with the line manager;
- It was recognised by the Department for Education (DfE) that an inexperienced workforce could add pressure to the system, with supervision for example. It was commented that Halton was not alone in having a new workforce in the social work area and as mentioned earlier, support had been added that was not there previously. NQSW's also have the opportunity to work with experienced social workers within the teams;
- It was commented that not all NQSW's were youngsters as some had previous health, childcare and community worker experience to add to their roles;
- Further to the Ofsted inspection and critique regarding instances of neglect not being identified, it was reported that the legal processes had been strengthened in this area; and

- The Portfolio Holder invited the Board to visit the ASYE (Assisted and Supported Year in Employment) Programme, to see the value of the role they played.

Overall Members felt that the culture had changed positively since the establishment of the new senior management team and they were optimistic about the future. Officers' would provide this feedback to all the staff.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

Executive Director  
of Children's  
Services

#### CYP7 SEND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Executive Director of Children's Services, which outlined (1) the progress made against the targets set out in the Area Priority Action Plan, following the SEND Area Inspection in November 2023; and (2) provided an update of progress in improvement work following receipt of the Delivering Better Values (DBV) grant.

It was reported that the Area Priority Action Plan was developed in partnership with stakeholders from across the area, and was subsequently approved by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. The Inspectorate identified 5 priority areas for improvement. The Board received updates on the progress being made against all 5 areas of the Priority Action Plan; the current risks to delivery; and the control measures in place to mitigate the risks.

In relation to the DBV programme, the report outlined the process of the grant application and bid and the subsequent successful award of a £1m grant for Halton.

The report presented how the grant would be split into two workstreams (1) Behaviour Support Change programme; and (2) Inclusion Framework, and described the objectives of each.

In response to Members questions, the following information was provided:

- Some areas of the Priority Action Plan were yet to start, as they involved working with other stakeholders – these generally related to strategy and policy work, so would not affect children in any way;
- Under the DBV Programme 'Thrive' would be implemented under workstream 2. This was discussed and it was clarified that schools

themselves become the practitioners via staff online training, but the child receives a face to face service;

- The list of participating schools that have taken up the Thrive Licensed Childhood Practitioner Training had grown since the publication of the agenda report; and
- One Member queried the status of the previous Nurture Programme – this had done its job and was now considered as embedded practice, so schools continue this to date.

It was recognised that the aim was to get as much value as possible from the £1m funding, which was a one off grant payment.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

#### CYP8 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 3 2023/24

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 3 of 2023-24 (1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023).

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2023-24 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan for the following Departments:

- Education, Inclusion and Provision Services; and
- Children and Families Services.

The reports detailed progress made against objectives, milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period. Members were requested to consider the progress and performance information and highlight any areas of interest and/or concern, where further information could be reported at a future meeting of the Board.

The Mockingbird Programme for Fostering and Family Hubs were discussed and update reports would be submitted to the Board at future meetings.

RESOLVED: That the quarter 3 2023-24 performance management reports be received.

CYP9 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR  
QUARTER 4 2023/24

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 4 of 2023-24 (1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024).

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2023-24 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan for the following Departments:

- Education, Inclusion and Provision Services; and
- Children and Families Services.

The reports detailed progress made against objectives, milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period. Members were requested to consider the progress and performance information and highlight any areas of interest and/or concern, where further information could be reported at a future meeting of the Board.

The increases in the numbers of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEETS) in Halton was highlighted and discussed. This was higher than in neighbouring authorities and the possible reasons for this was being looked into. It was noted that the Council had a legal obligation to monitor this group of young people.

RESOLVED: That the quarter 4 2023-24 performance management reports be received.

*Meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.*

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**CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 9 September 2024 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), Baker, Begg, Goodall, Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, McDermott and Ryan

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Ratcliffe and Skinner

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, B. Holmes and K. Appleton

Also in attendance: Councillor T. McInerney, in accordance with Standing Order number 33

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

*Action*

CYP10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

CYP12 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The minutes relating to the Children, Young People and Families Portfolio, taken from the Executive Board meetings held since the last meeting of this Board, were attached at Appendix one for information.

CYP13 ANNUAL REPORT - 2023-24

The Chair presented the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2023-24. The Board met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out during the Municipal Year April 2023 to March 2024.

RESOLVED: That the 2023-24 Annual Report be received and noted.

#### CYP14 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE UPDATE

The Board received a presentation on the progress made in the areas identified by OFSTED as areas for improvement, including workforce stability.

The Board was advised of the Council's strengths and responses to these, and the key findings and action taken to date.

Members scrutinised the responses given and offered challenge on areas where progress measures and financial implications were identified and the following information was provided:

- Previously, embedding a systemic model of social work practice had been hindered by previous staff instability and high rates of agency staff. Some staff who had been trained on systemic models had moved on to other local authorities. Halton would have this practice in place in the future;
- Agency staff numbers were at 41% so were slowly reducing. Recruitment challenges were still being faced with competition from neighbouring authorities;
- Despite the number of agency workers, a reduction in costs was being made due to having a fixed pay rate, which was not the case previously;
- Following challenge, assurance was given and an explanation provided on the processes and procedures in place for supervision of children placed out of Borough, including the Post 16 cohort and care leavers;
- Detail and explanation was provided on the creation of a new 'Edge of Care' Service, and the rationale behind this decision. This included benefits to families and children, as well as cost saving through prevention of children coming into care;
- Following the establishment of an additional post, the new Principal Social Worker would be starting in September. They would support practice improvements further. This role brought with it the opportunity to be part of the social workers network which Halton has not had before;
- Some specific social worker posts in Halton were fixed term contracts; and
- The new *Connect2Halton* recruitment service would be used going forward to recruit temporary staff when



required. In the long term, this would reduce costs for the Council.

Officers provided updates and statistical information on the use of the Family Hubs in Halton since they opened. A further update would be provided at a future meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the presentation is noted.

#### CYP15 SEND IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND PARENT SURVEY

The Board received a presentation on the progress made against the SEND Improvement Plan and the findings of a recent parent survey.

The Delivering Better Values (DBV) Programme was outlined, which aimed to support local authorities and their partners in improving the delivery of SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities) services for children and young people. The DVB Programme focussed on financial sustainability whilst ensuring good outcomes for children with SEND.

Workstreams one and two were explained, which included work around *Thrive* and *Team Teach* training, and the plans for *Emotional Based School Non-Attendance* training.

The outcomes of the Children and Young People and Parent/Carer Surveys were presented. These had identified 5 priorities, below, details of which were given in the report:

1. Strategic Oversight and Governance;
2. Cohesive communication / joined up systems;
3. Joint Commissioning;
4. Early identification of need and access; and
5. Education Health and Care Plans.

Overall the parents / carers expressed dissatisfaction with the process and communication from both Education and Health professionals, although there was greater satisfaction with social care services. Further details of these areas of dissatisfaction were presented.

The following responses were provided to Members' questions:

- Although 73% of schools had signed up to *Thrive*, 27% had not. The main reasons were because they

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had already done something similar at their schools or, there were capacity issues. So they either plan to access the training in the future, or already had equivalent training embedded;

- Discussions regarding the business models of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) in relation to excluding pupils with SEND – officers had met with CEO's of 90% of all MATs in Halton to discuss working together to improve school attendance, including the impact of suspensions. Meetings would be held with the dioceses' as well in the coming months to discuss the same;
- Data was being collected regarding exclusions of children with SEND, which would be presented when available;
- Two senior quality assurance officers had been recruited to work with schools around the Local Authority's statutory duties, including attendance, inclusion and alternative provision;
- Academy schools were required to engage with local authorities on statutory matters/duties;
- A list of schools with resource bases within them would be provided to the Board for information;
- Raise Academy was now open and Members were invited to contact the Head Teacher if they wished to visit. An open day was being arranged for the Schools' neighbours; and
- The Board requested further information and reporting on the number of children for whom there was an open search for an independent special school, due to no suitable provision in Borough being identified. The Board noted the financial implications, including transport costs associated with this placement, as well as the impact upon the child in accessing education outside of the Borough.

It was noted that the complete survey's Q and A would be sent to the Board for information.

RESOLVED: That the Plan and comments made be noted.

#### CYP16 SUPPORTING FAMILIES UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director of Children's Services, which provided an update of the Supporting Families Programme.

It was noted that the Programme had been transferred to the Department of Education (DfE) from the

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Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in April 2024. This would enable the Education Secretary to deliver a coordinated, whole system of support for children and families, as well as ensuring services were sustainable for local government.

The report described the revised Supporting Families Outcomes Framework and the ten headline outcomes set out within this. Below these outcomes sat descriptors of family needs that made up the eligibility criteria for the Supporting Families Programme, as well as suggested data sources for identifying families with these needs.

The report outlined details of the refreshed Early Help System guide published in March 2024 and Halton's position within this. This included feedback on the progress of 2022 priorities which helped confirm Halton's 2023 priorities; these were presented in the report.

Further, information on performance, funding and commissioned services was provided, as well as a case study example, showing how one family had engaged positively with the Programme.

Members noted that the Programme was 100% grant funded and there was no expectation that this would continue beyond March 2025. In response to questions, it was confirmed that there would be no direct impact on children 'on the edge of care' once it was ended.

It was commented that as the Programme offered key services, cessation of these would impact on other services, so much so, that the Local Authority may have to fund them. Officers would return to the Board with further details on the financial implications of this and more details around how this would affect supporting families.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CYP17 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 2024/25

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarter 1 of 2024-25 (1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024).

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2024-25 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan for the various function areas reporting to the Board as follows:

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- Education, Inclusion and Provision Services; and
- Children and Families Services.

The reports detailed progress made against objectives, milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period. Members were requested to consider the progress and performance information and highlight any areas of interest and/or concern, where further information could be reported at a future meeting of the Board.

Members requested that the financial implications for services in both areas be considered and included in future reports. Examples given were providing the details of the three most expensive packages of children in care and school placements (anonymised). Details such as these would help to give a better understanding of the impact on budgets.

In response to questions relating to unaccompanied asylum seeking children and the expectation that requests for accommodation would be made from Government in the coming weeks, it was reported that so far this had not happened. It was confirmed that two of these children were in care at the moment, one in foster care and one in residential care.

One Member suggested, following her conversations with constituents from the Syrian community, that they be approached to assist with fostering children from the same country, as they seemed open to this. This would be passed onto the Fostering Board to consider.

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management reports for quarter 1 of 2024-25 be received.

Executive Director  
of Children's  
Services

*Meeting ended at 8.35 p.m.*

**EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 16 September 2024 in The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), Abbott, Connolly, Garner, Hutchinson, McDonough, Rowe, Ryan and Stretch

Apologies for Absence: Councillor S. Hill

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, S. Saunders, D. Cooke and L. Carr

Also in attendance: None

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

ELS8 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 17 June 2024, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS9 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

ELS10 HALTON CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE

The Board welcomed Nicola Donoghue, Operations Manager for Halton Cancer Support Centre, who gave an overview about the Centre and the services offered in the Borough.

The Centre provided therapeutic support for people who were affected by cancer. They offered a professional, quality service with warmth and compassion, responding to the needs of local people.

A total of 851 clients were currently registered at the Centre; 400 of those had a cancer diagnosis and the rest

*Action*

were a mix of carers and the bereaved. The Centre offered a range of services to these clients such as: counselling, peer support (eg. men's group); online support; therapies, respite breaks; a children and young people's service; and workshops (eg. sleep, wellness).

It was noted that last year the Centre was core funded by the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership and Halton Borough Council. The remainder of the Centre's costs were covered by one off grants and from fundraising events, such as the Park Run.

It was announced that the Charity has supported the local community for 29 years and next May 2025 would be its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Additional information was given following Members questions:

- The Centre did not have any joint projects with Halton Haven at the moment but they did refer clients to each other's services at times;
- The Centre's running costs amounted to £133k last year;
- Bereavement counselling helped reduce a persons need for other services, which takes pressure off them;
- The Centre employed an outreach worker who visits hospitals and GP practices to raise awareness of the Centre;
- Runcorn clients amounted to about 20% as they had the Delamere Centre at the Hospital;
- Core funding for local charities was being cut and it was felt that they should be supported more than they were, for the benefit of local people;
- The Centre was restricted to the size it currently is due to the accommodation; if they wanted to expand they would need another building;
- The Centre owned a caravan in North Wales and this was available for hire by clients for respite care; and
- The young people's service was used by schools who referred children who had parents with a cancer diagnosis (with parents' consent).

Referring to the accommodation issue, it was suggested by one Member that the Council's voided properties could be looked at, to see if any were suitable for the use of the Cancer Support Centre in the future. This would be looked into.

Executive Director

RESOLVED: That the presentation and comments made be noted.

Environment &  
Regeneration

ELS11 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) Employment and Skills matters.

The report outlined a range of topics being worked through by the LCR and Officers as follows:

- Proposition for Employment and Skills – as part of the preparations for the new Government a proposition was being developed setting out what could be delivered by the area and which reflected the Metro Mayor’s manifesto;
- A Long Term Skills Plan – the 10 year plan would set out the long term skills for the LCR and would be used as a basis to commission future work around skills and employment;
- Early Years Sector Workforce and Provision – to support the Early Years and Childcare sectors to sustain, develop and scale up;
- Construction Sector Priorities – to support the delivery of 80,000 new homes through a local workforce in the sector;
- Department for Work and Pensions Updates – a new national jobs and careers service would be created; and
- Economies for Healthy Lives – one of only four programmes in the UK to be approved for funding from the Health Foundation.

The following was discussed after the presentation:

- Young people training to work in the construction industry and the fact that the numbers moving to work in the sector were declining. Some who started a construction training programme often did not finish or chose not to go into employment in this sector afterwards;
- Some schemes had been successful in terms of creating apprenticeship opportunities in the construction sector and this included The Mersey Gateway construction project;
- The ‘social value’ of projects and large contracts, in relation to jobs for local people and businesses and

was this element incorporated in the Council's procurement stage as a condition of bidding;

- The Employment, Learning and Skills team did work with contractors during construction of the Mersey Gateway. Sometimes however, they were not aware of other large contracts going to tender, so it was felt that the team needed to be included in the notice of these;
- From a planning perspective, were conditions being implemented to ensure that S106 agreements included social value elements in an application;
- It was felt that it was important that developers understood they must contribute to the communities of Halton if they want to build houses here for example; and
- Server farms – one Member gave an example of these being installed by a Council in the South of England; could this be looked into by Halton.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

#### ELS12 SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME WORK BASED STUDY

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, that provided an update on the Supported Internship (SI) Programme.

In April 2021 Halton Borough Council was commissioned to deliver the SI Programme which was a structured, work-based study programme for young people aged 16-24 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who had an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

The SI Programme is delivered by HBC's Employment, Learning and Skills division and is jointly delivered by Halton People into Jobs and Halton Adult Learning. The Programme was contracted to deliver 11 supported internships each academic year.

The report outlined the four key principles of the voluntary Programme and how this supported young people with an EHCP to gain paid employment. Performance data was provided, as well as information on key successes and challenges faced. The Board was presented with case studies of three young people who had successfully completed the Programme and were now working in part time paid employment.



The Board welcomed the news contained within the report and confirmed their continued support to the Programme.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

#### ELS13 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS Q1 2024/25

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 1 of 2024-25 (1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2024-25 were agreed by Members and for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

- Enterprise, Employment and Skills; and
- Community and Environment.

The report detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period. Members were invited to highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be provided to a future meeting of the Board.

The following matters were raised:

- The new Leisure Centre would be opened in January 2025 but it was believed there was uncertainty over contracts for casual workers;
- The variety of acts at The Brindley and that there seemed to be more tribute type acts than those of a cultural nature;
- There was no signage in The Brindley car park to show the way to the Theatre, which was difficult for people visiting for the first time;
- What was the difference between milestones EEP 9 and EEP 10 as they looked the same with the same commentary;
- It was thought that a public consultation that took place recently in the Old Police Station regarding Runcorn's Town Centre regeneration should be shared with all Members;
- More details were requested on the overspend on agency costs for the next performance management report;
- NI contributions / IR35 for agency workers, were

these included in the fees.

Feedback would be sought to those questions and the Chair requested an update on The Brindley for the next meeting's agenda.

RESOLVED: That the performance management reports for quarter one be received.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

*Meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.*

## HEALTH POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Health Policy and Performance Board held on Tuesday, 25 June 2024 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Dourley (Chair), Baker (Vice-Chair), Begg, Davidson, Fry, Garner, Goodall, C. Loftus, L. Nolan, Stretch and Thornton

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: S. Salaman, A. Jones, D. Nolan and A. Lewis

Also in attendance: Four members of the public

### ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
HEA1	MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2024 were signed as a correct record.	
HEA2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The following public questions had been received:	
	<b><u>Question 1</u></b>	
	Please see below that I would like to submit for public question time for the 25th June meeting in relation to the Council's Care Prevention Strategy.	
	According to reports there are 7 care providers in Halton of which HBC operates 5 care homes totalling 27% of beds in the Borough.	
	The CQC rated 4 out of the 5 care homes run by HBC as requiring improving in order to be led well and safe during their last inspections.	
	If a local resident was unfortunate enough to have to be placed into one these 4 care homes that require	

improvement they are 100% likely to be entering an environment that needs improvement on how it is led and improve it to be safe.

Breaches were found in relation to record keeping and quality assurance during the last inspection at St Luke's in 2023.

The CQC requested an action plan to understand how this would improve.

**What outcomes have this PPB found when scrutinising the improvement required by the quality assurance team / HBC run care homes and what recommendations have been made to Executive Board?**

### **Question 2**

I have a question to put forward to the Health Policy and Performance Board scheduled to take place on Tuesday 25th June 2024.

Page 5 of the Adult Social Care Prevention Policy 2023-2027 states that the Council aims to safeguard residents and improve outcomes for residents whilst ensuring the services meet the best value for the Council.

**How has this Board and its Members ensured that policies are implemented within care homes and by the Council to improve outcomes for residents in relation to falls risk assessments being in place and implemented since November 2022?**

### **Question 3**

The priority based report has a milestone (PH06) on page 12 to contribute towards reduction of falls in people ages 65 and over.

Data shows that between 2017-2024 that neglect and acts of omission (of which falls come into this category) are still rising. The CQC in 2017 picked up on the local system review report for health and wellbeing. The Health Policy and Performance Board priority based report page 16 PH Data (2021/2022 2676) (2022/2023 2663) 2022/2023 2279) , data doesn't correspond, with Public Health figures and NHS Digital?

**How do members scrutinise this milestone across Council owned and none Council owned care homes in Halton?**

**Response**

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

A written response to each of the above questions would follow. As all questions were received the afternoon of the day before the meeting, it was explained that more time was needed to provide answers in the detail required.

HEA3 HEALTH AND WELLBEING MINUTES

The minutes from the Health and Wellbeing Board's meeting held on 17 January 2024, were submitted to the Board for information.

HEA4 HEALTH PPB ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

The Chair presented the Health Policy and Performance Board's (PPB) Annual Report for April 2023 to March 2024.

During this period the Health PPB examined in detail many of Halton's Health and Social Care priorities. Details of the work undertaken by the Board was outlined in the Annual Report.

One Member highlighted the *Care Workers Petition* which was received by the Board during the year. He praised the care workforce as they did a difficult job under difficult circumstances. He considered care workers to be undervalued and that all caring roles should be given profession status'.

The Chair thanked his Board Member colleagues and Officers for their input and support throughout the year.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be received.

HEA5 ADULT SOCIAL CARE PREVENTION STRATEGY

The Board received a report from the Executive Director of Adult Services, which presented the *Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy 2023-2027*.

The Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy set out the vision and focus for Adult Social Care's role in Prevention in Halton over a four year period. It was closely aligned to the Council's Adult Social Care Vision of improving the health

and wellbeing of local people, so that they lived longer, healthier and happy lives.

The report outlined how the Strategy was intended to help support this vision; how the Strategy had been developed; and how it was supported by a Delivery Plan.

Members welcomed the new Strategy and considered it to be an improvement on the previous one.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

HEA6 SCRUTINY TOPIC BRIEF 2024 2025

The Board considered a report which presented the topic brief for the Health Policy and Performance Board's 2024-25 scrutiny review.

It was noted that at the February meeting it was agreed that '*Community NHS Health (non-GP) Services*', would be the focus of the 2024-25 scrutiny review.

Appendix A gave a description of the proposed scrutiny topic, its scope, and the rationale for why it was chosen. It also listed the key outputs and outcomes that would be sought.

It was confirmed that the first meeting of the topic group would now take place on 10 July and then on a monthly basis. The Chair invited all Members of the Board to participate.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board approves the topic brief as outlined in Appendix A.

HEA7 HEALTH BASED PRIORITY PERFORMANCE REPORTS QUARTER 4 2023 24

The Board received the Performance Management Reports for quarter four of 2023/24.

Members were advised that the report introduced, through the submission of a structured thematic performance report, the progress of key performance indicators, milestones and targets relating to Health in quarter three of 2023-24. This included a description of

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

factors, which were affecting the service.

The Board was requested to consider the progress and performance information; raise any questions or points for clarification; and highlight any areas of interest or concern for reporting at future meetings of the Board.

Officers highlighted the milestones relating to Adult Social Care and Public Health and some of the performance indicators were discussed. It was noted that the new Corporate Plan 2024-27 would come into effect next month and the quarterly monitoring reports would be amended to reflect this.

One Member requested to know which partner organisations were worked with, as stated in PH01 on page 76 – this would be sent after the meeting, as the information was not at hand.

Following a query on the Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) service for Halton patients in Warrington / Whiston Hospitals, it was reported that those patients who needed support would receive support, regardless of being placed in a Hospital out of Borough, so that there would be continuity of service for Halton residents.

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management report for quarter four of 2023/24 be received.

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

*Meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.*

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**HEALTH POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Health Policy and Performance Board held on Tuesday, 24 September 2024 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Dourley (Chair), Baker (Vice-Chair), Begg, C. Loftus, L. Nolan and Thornton and D. Wilson, Healthwatch Co-optee

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Davidson, Fry, Garner, Goodall and Stretch

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: S. Wallace-Bonner, S. Salaman, A. Jones, L Wilson, P. Preston and J. Rosser

Also in attendance: T. Knight – NHS Cheshire & Merseyside, T. Leo and K. Hanson – Halton Place and Councillor Wright (in accordance with Standing Order number 33)

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

		<i>Action</i>
HEA8	MINUTES  Subject to noting that David Wilson was in attendance, the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2024 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.	
HEA9	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME  It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
HEA10	HEALTH AND WELLBEING MINUTES  The minutes from the Health and Wellbeing Board's meeting held on 20 March 2024, were submitted to the Board for information.	
HEA11	DENTAL SERVICES UPDATE  Members welcomed Mr Tom Knight from NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, who presented to the Board a report which updated them on dental services in Halton; the	

local dental improvement plan progress; and the publication of the national dental recovery plan.

It was reported that access to dental care remained one of NHS Cheshire and Merseyside's key priorities. However, access to NHS dental services was impacting negatively on patients on a local, regional and national level. Many performers on NHS contracts had switched from providing NHS care to private care, resulting in national workforce challenges. This was due to the NHS contract no longer being an attractive option both professionally and financially.

The report described how the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Dental Improvement Plan 2023-34 facilitated an increase in access from 2023-24 and led to a number of providers offering urgent care and urgent care plus. Additionally, a pathway was created for looked after children and vulnerable patients such as those receiving cancer treatment.

The Cheshire and Merseyside Dental Improvement Plan 2024-26 was presented to the Board. The local plan would focus on five key pathways which focussed on routine access for all; these were explained in detail. It was reported that under the *New Patient Premium* and *Golden Hello* incentives within the *National Dental Recovery Plan*, Halton had 4 practices and one practice respectively, opting into the schemes.

Member's questions were taken and the following additional information was provided:

- Under the New Patient Premium scheme patients would be seen as they usually were, so based on their individual health needs. Some patients attended every 6 months, some every 12 months;
- One Member shared the experience of one of her constituents with a child who was turned away from a dentist in an emergency – further information would be provided to Mr Knight following the meeting;
- The NHS had no jurisdiction over private practice;
- The dentists in Halton who were included in the above schemes must advertise on their websites when space becomes available for new patients;
- The numbers of NHS dentists lost across Cheshire and Merseyside was considered alarming; Mr Knight would check the numbers lost in Halton since his last visit to the Board;
- As mentioned above two of the main challenges were

the numbers of dentists leaving the profession and the unattractiveness of NHS contracts; and

- The Cheshire and Merseyside Dental Improvement Plan 2024-26 included looking at different types of contracts for dentists and also other staff such as hygienists and nurses.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

## HEA12 PROPERTY POOL PLUS (PPP) - POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director, Adults, which provided recommendations for several amendments to be made to the Property Pool Plus (PPP) Policy, and provided some background and rationale for the recommended policy changes.

The Board was advised that in 2020 the PPP partner scheme local authorities (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool City, Sefton and Wirral) undertook a review of the jointly administered PPP housing allocations policy, which resulted in the approval and implementation of a revised PPP policy and upgraded IT system. The revised policy was implemented in January 2024.

The report outlined the recommended changes and rationale for these (two in particular); changes to qualification criteria; corrections and minor changes; and amendments to the discretion criteria.

It was reported that to further ensure that the Policy was compliant with new legislation and to seek views on the recommendations, a 12 week formal consultation process would begin.

One Member raised concerns over what he felt was a poor relationship between the Registered Providers and the Council and he was disappointed with the PPP partner scheme. He gave examples of some complaints he had received from residents regarding the poor condition of some properties on Castlefields. After receiving complaints from people on the waiting list, he felt the allocations of properties was flawed in some way.

With regards to those clients without online access, it was explained that housing officers were available to help customers to register. There were also drop in sessions for customers and in some cases home visits were made.

RESOLVED: That

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

- 1) the Board notes the report and Policy; and
- 2) the majority of the Board endorse the consultation process.

#### HEA13 PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT

The Board welcomed the Director of Public Health (DPH), who presented the Public Health Annual Report (PHAR) for 2023-24 – Healthy Start, Healthy Future.

The PHAR was an important vehicle by which a DPH could identify key issues, flag problems, report progress and therefore, serve their local populations. It is also a key resource to inform local inter agency action and remained a key means by which the DPH was accountable to the population they served.

For the year 2023-24 the PHAR focussed the impact of empowered young people who had embraced key messages from the Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) curriculum, who were inspired to promote change within their school community. The children and young people were supported to make this change through the work of the Healthy School's Team in collaboration with schools and their partners. The Public Health Team's Healthy Schools Program worked with schools and colleges to help create a healthy school environment that built lifelong health enhancing habits.

This culminated in an event where the different programmes that they had developed were shared and their contributions celebrated.

The PHAR highlighted some of the key health challenges as well as some of the ways that the healthy schools programme tackled these. Members were referred to the case studies presented with some of Halton's schools and the different areas of focus such as obesity, vaping, intergenerational initiatives (care homes), young health champions and wellbeing.

The challenges being faced with children and young people taking up vaping were discussed. The dangers of vaping were still unknown but concerns were raised around the 'normalisation' of using vapes and that they were considered to be a safe alternative to cigarettes. Their misuse, by non-smokers, was on the increase by children and young people, which was a concern for all.

One Member suggested that a video be made by young people, aimed at young people (peers) warning of the dangers of vaping, as a way of communicating this message, which could be played in schools.

The Board welcomed the Annual Report and supported the recommendations made.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the contents of the report; and
- 2) supports the Public Health Annual Report's recommendations.

#### HEA14 UTILISATION OF MENTAL HEALTH BEDS FOR HALTON RESIDENTS

The Board received a report and presentation from the Director – Halton Place, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, on the utilisation of mental health beds for Halton residents.

The presentation gave details on:

- the type and number of adult mental health inpatient commissioned beds for Halton residents;
- utilisation of commissioned beds and any out of area placements;
- services commissioned to support patients to safely remain in the community, reducing avoidable admissions, providing better quality and outcomes for local people; and
- the challenges faced in ensuring local people were able to access inpatient mental health beds locally, when they needed them.

To provide some context to the total number of adult bed days, numbering 14,890, this was equivalent to a total of 40 beds available in Halton each day. The Board was provided with information on the numbers of adult mental health bed days utilised in Halton, in comparison to other Mersey Care locations. The same was provided for older adult bed days.

It was commented that the Council's Mental Health Teams struggled to access these beds at times; this would be discussed at the next ICB meeting.

For its next steps, it was reported that NHS Cheshire and Merseyside was implementing a Mental Health System

Flow Programme in 2024-25. This was intended to reduce the numbers of patients waiting in a community setting for admission to a hospital bed; to reduce the numbers of patients waiting in acute hospital emergency departments for discharge into the community or to a mental health inpatient bed; and to reduce the number of patients who were clinically ready for discharge in mental health in-patient settings.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the contents of the report and presentation.

#### HEA15 JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY PROTOCOL

The Board received a report from the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, which introduced proposed revisions to the Joint Health Scrutiny Arrangements, which were in operation across Cheshire and Merseyside.

The revised draft was attached at Appendix one, with the proposed changes highlighted in yellow. The Board was requested to endorse the revised arrangements and recommend it to Council for approval.

Following one query, the Board was advised that no notifications had been received from the new Government regarding any further revisions to the arrangements.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the report and Appendix; and
- 2) endorses the revised Joint Health Scrutiny Arrangements and recommends it to Council for approval.

Director, Legal  
and Democratic  
Services

#### HEA16 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS - QUARTER 1 OF 2024-25

The Board received the Performance Management Reports for quarter one of 2024/25.

Members were advised that the report introduced, through the submission of a structured thematic performance report, the progress of key performance indicators, milestones and targets relating to Health in quarter one of 2024-25. This included a description of factors, which were affecting the service.

The Board was requested to consider the progress

and performance information; raise any questions or points for clarification; and highlight any areas of interest or concern for reporting at future meetings of the Board.

Key developments within the report were welcomed. It was noted that some of the data was incomplete as it was only available up to the end of May due to the transfer from the Carefirst reporting system to the Eclipse reporting system and some data would not be available until October.

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management report for quarter one of 2024/25 be received.

*Meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.*

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**SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 10 September 2024 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors N. Plumpton Walsh (Chair), Carlin (Vice-Chair), Baker, Bevan, Bramwell, Goodall, A. Lowe, Skinner and Wallace

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Ratcliffe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: S. Burrows, K. Butler, R. Moore and W. Rourke

Also in attendance: None

**ITEM DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

	<i>Action</i>
SAF7 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	
There were no Chair's announcements.	
SAF8 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF9 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
It was reported that no public questions had been received.	
SAF10 TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE UPDATE	
The Board received a report from the Director of Public Health, which provided an update on some of the work of the Trading Standards Service and the contribution this work had made in protecting public health, children and vulnerable adults from harm.	
It was noted that the Trading Standards team provided a wide range of statutory services to protect consumers and legitimate businesses from unfair,	

misleading or unsafe trading practices. Amongst others, these services included weights and measures, product safety, restricted sales, explosives, scams awareness, fair trading, doorstep crime, counterfeit and illicit goods – including tobacco and vapes. The team also provided an enhanced consumer advice service to help consumers enforce their own civil consumer rights.

The report focussed on the following services which contributed to protecting public health and safeguarding children and adults:

- scams awareness;
- doorstep crime;
- illegal money laundering;
- tobacco and vapes;
- age restricted sales;
- consumer advice and the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline; and
- iCAN consumer alert network.

The report also provided case studies for each of the services, which the Board noted.

Following discussions and arising questions from Members, some additional information was noted:

- Despite several warnings about selling counterfeit tobacco and illicit vapes, Trading Standards successfully obtained a Closure Order to shut down the News Rack in Widnes Town Centre. This was initially for 3 months which then was extended for a further 3 months. They were then prosecuted. It was confirmed that Closure Orders had a bigger impact on premises operating criminal activity as fines usually did not reflect the crime;
- A Member of the Board gave an example about how a school was dealing with vapes, as these were considered to be a safeguarding concern for children. It was suggested that the Trading Standards Team consider routes of prosecution for the selling of vapes which were targeted at children/young people. It was confirmed that the Early Years Team and the Public Health Team were involved in this area of work but it was agreed that discussion would be fed back to the team; and
- Stop Loan Sharks was operated by Birmingham City Council on behalf of Local Authorities throughout the

country via delegated powers. It was noted that there was no exchange of money; Birmingham received funding directly from central Government.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the report;
- 2) endorse the approach to doorstep crime and illegal money lending;
- 3) endorse the multi-faceted approach to both prosecute and disrupt illegal activity by seizing illegal and illicit products to remove them from the market; and
- 4) encourage partners to sign up to and share the iCan alert system.

#### SAF11 COMMUNITY, SAFETY & PROTECTION DIVISION UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the progress in the Community Safety and Protection Division.

The report provided an update on:

- Domestic Abuse Services;
- Enforcement and CCTV;
- Emergency Planning;
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees; and
- Safer Halton Partnership.

Following discussions and arising questions from Members, some additional information was noted:

- Members raised the issue of parking problems in the Borough and the fact that the powers for traffic/parking enforcements sat with Cheshire Police. It was suggested that the Chief Inspectors for Widnes and Runcorn be invited to a future meeting to discuss the issues. Councillor Angela McInerney informed other Board Members that she received some advice from Cheshire Police who recommended that anyone who witnessed a parking issue, should take a photograph and email it to the Police. They also confirmed that these issues were being investigated and hotspots would be targeted, including Farnworth and Widnes Town Centre;

- Through the Chair, Councillor Bevan requested an item on the next agenda regarding housing for Asylum Seekers and Refugees. It was noted that a report on this matter was being scrutinised by the Health PPB; and
- An update on the White Ribbon status was also requested.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.*

**ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 18 September 2024 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), P. Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chair), Hughes, Hutchinson, K. Loftus, L. Nolan, Ryan, Stockton and Wall

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Skinner and Thornton

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, G. Ferguson, T. Gibbs, D. Cooke, A. Plant and S. Burrows

Also in attendance: Councillors Begg, Bevan, Bramwell, Garner, C. Loftus, Lowe, M. Lloyd Jones, Thompson, Wallace and Wharton. Two members of the public

**ITEM DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

	<i>Action</i>
EUR1 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.	
EUR2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
EUR3 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board relevant to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.	
RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.	
EUR4 ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24	
The Board considered a copy of the Annual Report from the Chair of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board for 2023/24. The Board had	

met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out during the Municipal Year April 2023 to March 2024.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be endorsed.

#### EUR5 REGENERATION IN HALTON

Members of the Board received a presentation on regeneration in Halton which provided an update on the Runcorn Town Plan, the seven projects contained within it and details on the emerging proposals for the Runcorn long-term plan funding, which had been announced earlier in the year.

The presentation also provided an update on the key regeneration sites in Widnes, which included:

- Widnes Town Centre, including the Kingsway Quarter;
- Widnes Waterfront;
- Foundry Lane, Gorsey Point Business Park and University of Liverpool partnership with Carpenters;
- the Multi Model Gateway 3MG;
- Liberty Park – potential development opportunity; and
- HBC Field, including the recently designated Freeport.

The following matters were raised:

- The Town Deal funding is focused on a particular area in Runcorn are there proposals for other areas in Runcorn? It was noted that information on potential projects in other areas of Runcorn would be presented to a future meeting;
- A Runcorn Town Deal Board had been established and Members can email Councillor Thompson with any potential project ideas;
- Clarification was sought on the work at the Camden Buildings and an outline of the development was provided;
- Consideration should be given to exploring the use of water taxis on the canal;
- 'Unlock Runcorn' the canal project and the opportunities it could bring was discussed;
- Members were encouraged to attend stakeholder events. A link would be sent to members to enable them to provide feedback; and
- The possible progression of the development of a Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan for West Bank

was discussed.

RESOLVED: Members to note the presentation.

#### EUR6 TOWN DEAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

Members of the Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the delivery and monitoring of the Town Deal (Reconnecting Runcorn) Programme.

The report provided an overview of the Programme, funding allocation and period, spend and progress to date on each of the following projects:

- Reconnecting Runcorn Programme;
- Runcorn Station Quarter Enterprise Hub (Elite House);
- Unlock Runcorn – landscaping and visitor centre and canal boat trip experience;
- Brindley Theatre Enhancements – extended café, new library and outdoor performance area;
- Creative and Digital Skills Centre;
- Town Centre New Homes – High Street and Rutland Street.
- Health and Education Hub; and
- High Street Connectivity.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the content of the report.

#### EUR7 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION AND THE PRIVATE RENTAL SECTOR - UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration and the Director of Public Health, which provided a progress update on the Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Action Plan which had been endorsed by the Board in February 2023. The report also updated Members on the development of policy relating to the wider private rental sector.

The report set out the key findings which included:

- Tenure type and changes over time;
- Property standards;
- Energy performance;
- Complaint volumes and nuisance; and
- Houses in multiple occupation.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the progress made to date on the HMO Action Plan; and
- 2) endorse the proposal that further policy to control and maintain standards in HMO's and the wider private rental sector is taken forward and considered during development of the Borough-wide Housing Strategy.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

#### EUR8 STRAY DOG COLLECTION AND KENNELLING SERVICE

The Board received a report from the Director of Public Health which outlined the changes to the stray dog collection and kennelling service, and the approach to procuring this service.

Halton had been part of a consortium of Local Authorities for the past ten years which had provided a kennelling service. However, in February 2024 the provider indicated that they no longer intended to bid for the contract which was due to expire on 31 May 2024. Due to this notice being less than 12 weeks, the Council was unable to procure a new contract under the usual tender process, which included scrutiny and approval via the Policy and Performance Board and Executive Board. Therefore, Acorn Kennels, based in Shropshire, was identified as a potential provider. The report outlined further information about this provider and explained the steps that were taken to ensure that it would offer a suitable service.

It was noted that approximately 60 stray dogs were collected in Halton each year and only 14 of those were reclaimed. The number had significantly reduced since the introduction of compulsory microchipping in 2016. If any dog cannot be returned to its owner, it would be taken to the licensed dog kennels in Whitchurch, Shropshire, which had been issued a 5 star rating by the Local Authority. It was acknowledged that the kennels are some distance from Halton and therefore, some changes had to be made to the fees charged in an attempt to reduce the number of dogs that need to be taken to the kennels.

Members were advised that previously, there was a £125 fee for dogs to be returned to the owners at their home address, by the contractor. Going forward, owners would now have the option to collect their dog from the kennels in Whitchurch, or for a fee of £20, the contractor will transport the dog back to the owners home.



It was noted that, by law, an owner must reclaim their dog within 7 days. After that period, the Council was allowed to gift the dog to an organisation that would be able to look after the dog. Acorn Kennels operate a re-homing service and therefore any unclaimed dogs would be gifted to them after 7 days, with the expectation that as many dogs as possible would be found a new home.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EUR9 CONTROL OF FLY POSTING AND BANNER ADVERTISEMENTS

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, regarding its available powers under the Section 224 and 225 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to control fly posting and banner advertisements.

Members were advised that Officers had been notified that there had been a proliferation of banner advertisements being fixed to highway furniture which could potentially cause highway safety issues and effect the amenity of the area.

The report outlined the available powers, their purposes and implications, in the event of them being exercised.

It was noted that the use of the power to remove advertisements could have a beneficial impact on the look and appearance of the Borough. However, due to limited resources, Officers would focus on being proactive in areas where a number of signs had been erected and were affecting the amenity of the area. Officers would work with colleagues in other departments e.g. Highways, Environment and Community Safety to carry out this work and at least 14 hours a month would be allocated to tackle this problem and take enforcement action.

RESOLVED: That the resource/priority implications of the approach and priority areas for action be identified and considered.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

EUR10 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 4 OF 2023/24

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Reports for Quarter 4 of 2023/24.

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2023/24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as detailed below:

- Development and Investment Services;
- Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services; and
- Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services.

The reports detailed progress against service objectives and milestones, and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

RESOLVED: That quarter 4 performance management reports be received and noted.

EUR11 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2024/25

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Report for Quarter 1 of 2024/25.

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2024/25 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as detailed below:

- Development and Investment Services;
- Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services; and
- Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services.

The reports detailed progress against service objectives and milestones, and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

The Board discussed the number of vacancies within the Planning Department and were advised that steps were being taken to address the situation.

RESOLVED: That the quarter 1 performance management report be received and noted.

*Meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.*

**CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 3 September 2024 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chair), Philbin (Vice-Chair), Davidson, V. Hill, Hutchinson, Leck, A. Lowe, McDonough, N. Plumpton Walsh and Thornton

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Logan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Butler, L. Coombes, E. Dawson, M. Reaney and S. Wilson

Also in attendance: None

**ITEM DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

		<i>Action</i>
CS9	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 4 June 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>Members requested an update on whether the Council's Direct Link now had access to contact emergency services.</p>	<p>Corporate Director - Chief Executive's Delivery Unit</p>
CS10	<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
CS11	<p>EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES</p> <p>The Board was presented with the Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board.</p> <p>One Member questioned why there was no electric vehicle charging point at Runcorn Town Hall. Officers agreed to confirm an answer in due course.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.</p>	<p>Executive Director Environment &amp; Regeneration</p>

CS12 PROGRAMMES OFFICE UPDATE

The Board received a report on the work of the Programmes Office in securing external funding resources into Halton. This included an update on the key activities and priorities, as well as emerging issues in external funding and funding statistics for 2023-24.

The report outlined the following key priorities for 2023-24 had been:

- embedding the new Programme's Office function, including strategic work to develop a pipeline of regeneration projects and a system to support its delivery;
- supporting the delivery of the Government's levelling up agenda, including Towns Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF);
- the development of a funding plan to support the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan;
- delivering a "Destination Marketing Programme" which was part of a Liverpool City Region funded scheme to promote Halton's visitor economy and cultural assets; and
- support the development of the Council's Cultural Strategy and Heritage Open Days programme.

The report also described a number of key projects that the Programme's Office were being delivered/monitored:

- Destination Halton Marketing Programme;
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme; and
- Reconnecting Runcorn – Towns Fund Programme.

It was noted that Halton was the highest achieving Local Authority in the Programme and had received positive feedback from the LCR Programme Leads.

A Member of the Board raised a number of questions relating to external funding and it was agreed that these would be answered in due course.

Another Member asked if there was any available external funding that could be used to help bring back Halton's Vintage Car Rally and officers agreed to explore opportunities.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the report.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

*Councillor Thornton declared a disclosable pecuniary interest for the following item due to her employment at CHI Community Café.*

*Councillor Hutchinson declared an other registrable interest for the following item as he is a Trustee of Unlock Runcorn.*

CS13 WIDNES MARKET UPDATE REPORT

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on Widnes Market, following the implementation of the Business Plan, which had been endorsed by the Board in November 2022. The report also informed the Board of a change in the management structure at the market, with effect from June 2024.

Members were reminded that the Business Plan identified the priorities and actions to be undertaken by the Market Management Team to ensure the market remained a successful trading environment for the future. It included five main themes and the report provided an update on how these had progressed.

Members also noted that with effect from June 2024, the management and responsibilities of Widnes Market had transferred to the Communities and Greenspace Department. It had previously sat within the Economy, Enterprise and Property Department.

The following information was provided following discussions and arising questions from Members:

- The market had seen a slight decline in footfall following the introduction of car parking charges;
- Although opportunities had been explored to hold an Artisan market, there had been little interest from companies; and
- Officers agreed to explore WiFi opportunities for public spaces.

RESOLVED: that the Board note:

- 1) the progress on Widnes Market; and
- 2) the change in the management structure at Widnes Market.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

CS14 SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE – SERVICE CLOSURE

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration which provided an update on the current status on the cessation of the schools meals service provided by the Council.

In February 2023, the Council agreed to remove the provision of the schools meals service. Schools were allowed up to two financial years to either procure an alternative provider or opt to offer an in-house provision.

The report outlined the support that had been offered to schools. An open day was held in April 2024, which allowed providers who had expressed an interest, an opportunity to showcase their services. Schools were invited to attend DfE training sessions to assist them with a catering procurement package. To date, several schools had engaged with the DfE.

The Board was advised that to date, the Council's School Meals Service was still providing catering for 27 of the 47 schools. 14 schools had given notice to terminate their contract before 1 January 2025. 13 schools were still to confirm their new catering arrangements by 31 March 2025. Members of the Board to be provided with a list of these schools, for information.

Of those schools that had progressed alternative arrangements, 15 school had chosen Orian Solutions, 5 had chosen Edsentials Catering Services and 2 had chosen Mellors Catering Solutions.

Members were reassured that the School Meals Management Team would work with the 13 outstanding schools and contact them again early in the Autumn Term to establish their intentions. Any school that did not provide a transfer date by 1 October 2024 would be issued with a termination letter with effect from 31 March 2025.

Following discussions and arising questions from Board Members, it was confirmed that:

- Any school that did not make any necessary arrangements by the deadline, would have to employ in-house catering staff; and
- Schools and their Governing Bodies were responsible for ensuring that school meals were provided for their pupils.

RESOLVED: The Board noted:

- 1) the current position regarding the withdrawal from the provision of school meals; and
- 2) the actions required to achieve the deadline of 31 March 2025.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

CS15 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2024/25

The Board received the Performance Management Report for Quarter 1 of 2024/25. The reports related to the following functional areas which reported to the Board and detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets, and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period:

- Finance;
- Operational HR Division, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit;
- ICT and Administrative Support;
- Legal and Democracy;
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services; and
- Property Services.

Members of the Board reported that they had received a rising number of enquiries/complaints in relation to housing matters but they found it difficult to contact Registered Social Landlords (RSL). It was the view that Councillors felt a disconnect as many RSL's now have "Arms Length Companies" operating on their behalf. It was noted that housing association regulators had advised that Local Authority nominated representatives were no longer required as Board Members. Therefore, there were concerns that the Council would lose their seats on the Halton Housing Trust Board and therefore, no longer be involved in any decision making. However, a Halton Housing Seminar was scheduled to take place on 4 October 2024 and Members had been invited to attend.

Following discussions, it was noted that:

- Two members of staff had recently been appointed in the Debtors Team to help with recovery of arrears;
- Members requested a breakdown of reasons why people are ringing the Contact Centre;
- A Member of the Board requested that any reports regarding the approval to vacate the Municipal

- Building, be brought to Full Council;
- £0.240m had been generated in additional business rates income; and
  - Members requested some additional information on how the recruitment of agency staff had led to an increase in commercial rental income.

RESOLVED: That the Quarter 1 Performance Management report be noted.

Corporate  
Director - Chief  
Executive's  
Delivery Unit

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

*Meeting ended at 7.50 p.m.*



**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Audit and Governance Board held on Wednesday, 26 June 2024 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chair), Abbott, Begg, Connolly, Dourley, McDermott, N. Plumpton Walsh and Ratcliffe

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Wall, Gilligan and Wallace

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Murphy, S. Baker, G. Ferguson and C. Hill

Also in attendance: M. Green and L. Luddington – Grant Thornton UK Ltd

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

	<i>Action</i>
<p>AGB1 MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2024, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>AGB2 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REVIEW, MAY 2024</p> <p>The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director – Chief Executive’s Delivery Unit, on the annual update of the Corporate Risk Register for 2023/24.</p> <p>The Board was advised that the Council recognised its responsibility to manage both internal and external risks as a key component of good corporate governance. The Risk Control Measures had been reviewed and updated in line with current charges within the Authority and as proposed by managers and internal stakeholders.</p> <p>It was reported that the risks had been re-prioritised so that people, (the community and staff), took priority. These were set out in the report.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That</p> <p>1) the review of risks mitigating actions be noted; and</p>	

- 2) the robustness of the Corporate Risk Register and the adequacy of the associated risk management arrangements be noted.

AGB3 EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN – 2023/24 YEAR-END

The Board considered a report of the Director - Finance, which set out the 2023/24 year-end Audit Plan, presented by the External Auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP.

The Board was advised that the External Audit Plan was attached to the report and set out details of risks identified, their approach to the value for money conclusion and audit fees.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the External Audit Plan for 2023/24 year-end be noted.

AGB4 INFORMING THE EXTERNAL AUDIT RISK ASSESSMENT

The Board considered a report by the Director - Finance, which presented for information the draft response provided to the annual letter to the Board from Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors, regarding their year-end audit of accounts work.

The Appendix to the report outlined the draft responses provided to a number of questions contained in a letter from Grant Thornton, which it was proposed to provide to them in order to assist with their year-end audit of accounts.

Following on from the discussion around Mersey Gateway income, it was agreed that prior to an Audit and Governance meeting, a training briefing delivered by Mersey Gateway representatives could be provided for the Board.

RESOLVED: That the draft responses shown in the Appendix be provided to the Council's external auditors.

AGB5 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND OPINION – 2023/24

The Board considered a report of the Head of Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance, which summarised the work completed by Internal Audit during 2023/24. It also included the overall assurance opinion on the Council's risk management, control and governance processes.

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS)

required the Head of Internal Audit to deliver an annual audit opinion and report that could be used to inform the Annual Governance Statement (the *Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24* was appended to the report).

It was noted that it was the view of the Head of Internal Audit that sufficient audit work was completed during the year to be able to form an overall opinion.

A Councillor commented that the financial challenges faced by the Council were due to underfunding from Central Government and not from poor management and it was agreed that this would be noted in the minutes of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Board receives and notes the other report as a source of independent assurance regarding the Council's risk management control and governance processes operating across the Council during 2023/24.

#### AGB6 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023-24

The Board considered a report of the Director - Finance, which sought approval of the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement (AGS). A copy of the draft Statement was appended to the report.

The AGS provided an overview .

Once approved the AGS would be signed by the Council Leader and Chief Executive and published on the Council's website.

Members made the following comments:

- The Council's new Corporate Plan priorities would need to be incorporated in future statements; and
- Would there be a cost to provide the new Corporate Complaints Procedure and the CIPFA Financial Code which were included in the action plan? Officers advised that it was expected that these would be provided through existing resources.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 be approved.

#### AGB7 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO

INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- 1) whether members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

AGB8 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Board received a report from the Divisional Manager – Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance, updating them on the internal audit activity since the last progress report to the Board on 20 March 2024. It also highlighted any matters that were relevant to the Board's responsibilities as the Council's Audit Committee.

Members were referred to Appendix One, which listed all the planned work for the year and its current status. The schedule of audits had been updated to reflect the progress made in completing audits since the last update to the Board. By the end of May 2024, 198 days of audit work had been completed, which represented just over 17% of the total planned days for the year. The team was making good

progress finalising prior year work and progressing planned work for 2024/25.

Appended to the report were the executive summaries of the reports issued numbering 2 to 13, as listed in the report.

Arising from the discussion, Members asked for their concerns around the social supermarkets to be forwarded to the relevant officer and if further information on the plans for the Kingsway Quarter could be circulated to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the Internal Audit Progress Report and comments made be noted.

*Meeting ended at 7.25 p.m.*

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**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Audit and Governance Board held on Wednesday, 25 September 2024 at The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chair), Wall (Vice-Chair), Abbott, Begg, Connolly, Dourley, Gilligan, McDermott and Wallace

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Ratcliffe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: E. Dawson, M. Murphy, K. Keane, A. Jones, S. Baker and M. Guest

Also in attendance: None

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

	<i>Action</i>
AGB9 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2024, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
AGB10 INTERNAL AUDIT PEER REVIEW	
<p>The Board considered a report from the Head of Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance, which presented the Internal Audit Peer Review.</p>	
<p>It was a requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) that an external assessment of the Council's internal audit arrangements should be carried out every 5 years. To fulfil this requirement, an independent peer review of the Council's internal audit arrangements was conducted in February 2024 by senior internal audit representatives from other North West authorities. <i>The Halton Borough Council Peer Review of Internal Audit Service Against the UK Public Internal Audit Standards</i> was appended to the report. It was noted that the purpose of the external assessment was to help improve delivery of the audit service and to establish whether governance requirements relating to the provision of the service were embedded.</p>	

The approach taken, findings and agreed actions from this review were set out within the report, which concluded that the Council's internal audit arrangements confirmed to the PSIAS. It was noted that many positive observations and good practices were identified by the review team and any recommendations made were intended to add value by strengthening the existing arrangements further. Officers advised that all recommendations were agreed and would be implemented.

RESOLVED: That Members note the outcome of the external assessment of the Council's Integral Audit function against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

#### AGB11 EXTERNAL AUDIT FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY LETTER

The Board considered a letter received by the Council from the External Auditor (Grant Thornton UK LLP) regarding the Council's financial sustainability. The letter raised the External Auditor's concerns regarding significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements for securing value for money.

It was noted that the Chief Executive and Director of Finance had met with the External Auditor to discuss the issues raised within the letter. The Council was aware of its financial position and ongoing financial challenges and was taking various steps to address them as a matter of urgency, whilst also continuing a dialogue with Government.

The comments made by Members regarding the timing of the letter were noted. It was confirmed that this would be taken to the Labour Group meeting on 1 October.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the letter from Grant Thornton UK LLP shown in the appendix be noted.

#### AGB12 ANTI FRAUD AND CORRUPTION UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which provided an annual update on developments in regard to the Council's anti-fraud and anti-corruption activity.

It was reported that the Board was responsible for the monitoring and reviewing the adequacy of the Council's anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements, which was a key aspect of the Council's risk management, control and governance framework.



The Board considered information relating to the following activities:

- The fraud risk landscape;
- Reported fraud investigations from 2023/24;
- HR related investigations from 2023/24;
- Whistleblowing complaints received and action taken;
- An update on the National Fraud Initiative;
- Details of fraud investigation related information reported under the Transparency Code;
- Details of ongoing and planned anti-fraud work; and
- Details of the Council's suite of anti-fraud and anti-corruption related policies.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the annual update report on anti-fraud and corruption related activity be noted;
- 2) the counter fraud work being undertaken be supported; and
- 3) the minor change made to the Whistleblowing Policy be noted.

AGB13 2023/24 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Due to the unforeseen absence of the External Auditor, this item was deferred to the November meeting.

AGB14 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023-24

Due to the unforeseen absence of the External Auditor, this item was deferred to the November meeting.

AGB15 2023/24 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS, AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT AND LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

Due to the unforeseen absence of the External Auditor, this item was deferred to the November meeting.

AGB16 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- 1) whether members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following items of business in

accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and

- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### AGB17 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Board received a report from the Head of Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance, updating Members on the internal audit activity since the last progress report to the Board on 26 June 2024. It also highlighted any matters that were relevant to the Board's responsibilities as the Council's Audit Committee.

Members were referred to appendix one, which listed all the planned work for the year and its current status. The schedule of audits had been updated to reflect the progress made in completing audits since the last update to the Board. By the end of August 2024, 429 days of audit work had been completed, which represented 37% of the total planned days for the year.

Appended to the report were the executive summaries of the reports issued numbering 2 to 12, as listed in the report. The Board expressed concerns at the findings relating to the audit of Children's Services Commissioning and agreed that a further audit of the area be carried out as part of the 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Internal Audit Progress Report  
and comments made be noted.

Head of Audit,  
Procurement &  
Operational  
Finance

*Meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.*

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**DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

*At a meeting of the Development Management Committee on Monday, 5 August 2024 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors S. Hill (Chair), Leck (Vice-Chair), Bevan, Carlin, C. Loftus, Philbin, C. Plumpton Walsh, Polhill, Rowe, Thompson and Woolfall

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, T. Gibbs, A. Evans, A. Strickland, G. Henry, I. Dignall and L. Crampton

Also in attendance: None

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE**

	<i>Action</i>
DEV56 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2024, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
DEV57 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE	
<p>The Committee considered the following applications for planning permission and, in accordance with its powers and duties, made the decisions described below.</p>	
DEV58 24/00097/FUL - ERECTION OF TWO DRIVE THROUGH UNITS WITH 'DRIVE THRU' FACILITIES TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING, SERVICING AND LANDSCAPED AREAS AT GREEN OAKS CENTRE, GREEN OAKS WAY, WIDNES	
<p>The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.</p>	
<p>The Committee was reminded that this application was being considered by the Development Management</p>	

Committee following a request received from Ward Councillor Teeling, which was agreed by the Chair.

The Committee was advised that two additional conditions would be required relating to a customer litter bin plan and final details of the extraction systems to be used. The outstanding objection from Public Health was noted however, it was not considered that a refusal on health and air quality grounds would be sustained.

The Committee was addressed by Mr Wiseman, the Agent for the Applicant. He stated the following *inter alia*:

- There would be no adverse impacts on traffic at any time of the day;
- Parking provision for the restaurants was sufficient for all hours of operation;
- Servicing areas would be designed in accordance with the operators of the site to accommodate their vehicles;
- The scheme and uses of both units complied with town centre policies in the Local Plan; and
- There were no statutory reasons for refusal of the application.

Officers clarified that Condition number 7 on page 27 would be superseded by the another, to include a restriction on the length of the service vehicles to less than 11.32 metres.

Members queried the delegated status of this application and the outline application before it, which was approved under delegated authority. They raised concerns over the loss of 207 parking spaces and felt this would be detrimental to Widnes town centre and local businesses, who would see a reduced footfall. They also queried how the timings of service vehicles visiting the site, could be guaranteed.

The Highways Officer confirmed that they had no objections to the application and explained the policies in support of this. He added that there were customer parking spaces within the plans of both drive through restaurants.

One Member proposed that the application be deferred so that a site visit could be made by the Committee as a whole, with the Highways Officer and Planning Officers. This was moved and seconded and the Committee voted to defer the application so that the site visit could take place.

RESOLVED: That a decision on the application be deferred to a future meeting, to allow time for the Committee to make a site visit.

DEV59 MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

The following appeals had been received / were in progress:

**23/00136/FUL**

Proposed pair of semi-detached dwellings at 132 Halton Road, Runcorn.

**23/00200/FUL**

Proposed removal of existing conservatory and construction of single storey rear extension at Sexton Cottage, Daresbury.

**24/00053/ADV**

Advertisement consent for 1 no. internally lit LED digital display at 85-87 Victoria Road, Widnes.

The following appeals had been determined:

**23/00166/FUL**

Proposed new dwelling on land adjacent to 19 Lilac Crescent, Runcorn – Dismissed.

**23/00289/FUL**

Proposed two storey rear extension at 31 Cypress Avenue, Widnes – Allowed.

**23/00066/FUL**

Proposed first floor side extension at 17 Woodland Avenue, Widnes – Allowed.

**22/00157/FUL**

Proposed phase two extension to approved planning application 20/00607/FUL, comprising an additional 10 mixed-use light industrial units (totalling 1180sqm), 24 parking spaces, associated refuse and cycle storage, and landscaping with access to site via existing crossover at land to the east of Canalside Court, Runcorn – Dismissed.

**23/00351/FUL**

Proposed part single and part two storey side extension at 288 Liverpool Road, Widnes – Dismissed.

*Meeting ended at 7.05 p.m.*

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**DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

*At a meeting of the Development Management Committee on Monday, 2 September 2024 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors S. Hill (Chair), Leck (Vice-Chair), Carlin, C. Loftus, Philbin, C. Plumpton Walsh, Polhill, Thompson and Woolfall

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Bevan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, T. Gibbs, A. Plant, A. Evans, A. Strickland, I. Dignall, L. Crampton and C. Sturdy

Also in attendance: Councillors Ryan, Teeling and P. Lloyd Jones, one member of the press and 8 members of the public

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE**

	<i>Action</i>
DEV60 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 August 2024, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
DEV61 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE	
The Committee considered the following applications for planning permission and, in accordance with its powers and duties, made the decisions described below.	
DEV62 24/00007/FUL - PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH ASSOCIATED OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPING AND INFRASTRUCTURE WITH NEW ACCESSES ON LAND OF SOUTH LANE, WIDNES, WA8 3UB	
The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.	

The Case Officer advised that since the publication of the report, the LLFA (Lead Local Flood Authority) Engineer had responded to the consultation exercise to confirm a position of no objection, subject to the use of the following conditions:

- Conformity with flood risk assessment submitted with the application;
- Planning drainage levels;
- Detailed drainage plans;
- Hydraulic modelling study;
- Surface water drainage calculations;
- Provision of as built drainage plans;
- Drainage system, validation report;
- UU adoption details;
- Flood conveyance rate; and
- Watercourse diversion consent details.

Further to the publication of the AB Update List, it was noted that the Council's Ecology Advisor recommended that a landscape and ecological management plan be attached to the planning permission, which the applicant has agreed to. Also, several points of clarification were made to the published report – as listed in the AB Update List.

The Committee was addressed by Mr Tiwana, a representative of the Applicant. He commented *inter alia* that:

- The site was a strategic housing location and would comprise high quality starter homes, 20% of which are affordable;
- The site would provide housing choices for local people;
- A cycle path and walking routes would be included as well as natural features such as trees and grassed areas;
- Boundary treatments are in place;
- An area of offsite open space was included in the proposal; and
- No objections had been raised from statutory consultees.

Members were referred to the plans showing the open space and it was noted that the area of open space provided on site was deficient, but the Applicant has agreed to an offsite contribution to mitigate this shortfall. This would be secured by way of a S106 agreement. The Applicant has also agreed to fund mitigation regarding off site recreational

pressure on ecological sensitive sites.

Members raised concerns on the demand of local services such as schools and GP's due to the development – page 26 of the report outlined the impacts on these. In response to queries on active travel corridors, it was reported that two cycle paths and one footpath were included in the plans. Officers also explained the alternative approach being taken to the open space referred to above and how this made effective and efficient use of S106 contributions.

The Committee voted to approve the application, subject to the conditions listed below, and the additional ones recommended by the LLFA and the Ecology Advisor.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to the following:

- a) Section 106 Agreement that secures the terms set out in the Legal Agreement section of this report;
- b) Schedule of conditions set out below, with any additional conditions recommended through the resolution of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) compliance issue to be added to this list; and
- c) That if the S106 Agreement or alternative arrangement is not executed within a reasonable period of time, authority be delegated to the Director – Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Committee to refuse the application.

### **Conditions**

1. Time limit;
2. Approved plans;
3. Submission of existing and proposed site levels (GR1);
4. Existing tree protection measures (HE5);
5. Submission of bird box scheme (CS(R)20 and HE1);
6. Bat box scheme (CS(R)20 and HE1);
7. Protection of mammals during construction (CS(R)20 and HE1);
8. Common amphibian avoidance strategy (CS(R)20 and HE1);
9. Reasonable avoidance measures strategy or priority species (CS(R)20 and HE1);
10. Biodiversity enhancement scheme (CS(R)20 and

HE1);

11. Soft tree felling strategy (CS(R)20 and HE1);
12. Ground contamination (CS23 and HE8);
13. Waste management plan (WM8);
14. Construction management plan (C1);
15. Limited construction hours (GR2);
16. Detail hard standing agreed (C2 and HE9);
17. Access constructed prior to occupation (C1);
18. Landscaping (GR1, GR3 and HE5);
19. Hedgerows retained or mitigation (CS(R)20 and HE1);
20. Acoustic mitigation (GR2);
21. Contaminated land in accordance with approved scheme (HE7):
22. Contaminated land validation report (HE7);
23. Acoustic measure to be implemented in accordance with approved details (HE7 and GR2).
24. Dust mitigation measures to be implemented in accordance with approved details (HE7);
25. Off site highway improvements (C1);
26. Estate traffic calming details (C1); and
27. Energy statement compliance (CS19).

DEV63 24/00097/FUL - ERECTION OF TWO DRIVE THROUGH UNITS WITH 'DRIVE-THRU' FACILITIES TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING, SERVICING AND LANDSCAPED AREAS AT GREEN OAKS CENTRE, GREEN OAKS WAY, WIDNES

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.

The planning application was previously considered at the August 2024 Development Management Committee meeting. A decision on the proposal was deferred following a motion approved by Members that sought to undertake a site visit, to understand the scheme's potential impacts upon the existing town centre parking provision at the application site. The site visit had been completed.

Members noted the technical note that was submitted by the Applicant and published with the AB Update List. Further, an update on the number of car parking spaces that would be available after the development of the site was presented.

The Committee was addressed by local Ward Councillor Teeling, who objected to the proposals and presented the following arguments, *inter alia*:

- There were mistakes made during the consultation period as local businesses and members of the public were not informed; they first heard about the development in the local newspaper;
- Due to the above it was too late for people to submit their objections:
- There was no need for food outlets of this nature in the area;
- If these businesses failed in the future the buildings would be a blight on the area;
- The increased volume of traffic and highway safety would be an issue;
- There would be an increase in traffic at the small roundabout near Tesco and the retail park that was already congested;
- There were 4 schools and one nursery in close proximity to the site;
- There will be a loss of parking spaces;
- There will be an increase in delivery vehicles;
- There would be no benefit to the economy – the operators paid minimum wage and would not offer apprenticeships, for example;
- Weight should be given to the viability of the Town Centre – footfall may reduce there;
- Would the operators comply with environmental policies to prevent air pollution from extra cars and smells from the outlets – this area was already a hot spot for air pollution;
- Littering would be a problem;
- The proposals would be detrimental to the health of children and there was already a Public Health obesity crisis amongst school children; and
- The Council's priority on Climate Change was referred to.

The Committee was then addressed by Mr Wiseman, a representative of the Applicant. He stated:

- The site already had outline planning permission for one drive through;
- Clarity on highways and parking matters – there would be a net loss of 124 spaces, with 690 spaces remaining on the car park;
- A detailed assessment of ANPR information was undertaken which showed that there would still be significant capacity in the car park and this would remain post development;
- A transport assessment was also undertaken where it was found that there would be no impact on the

- highway network as a result of the development;
- The outlets would be serviced as the existing ones were and there were no incidents reported; and
- There were no objections from the statutory consultees.

Members raised concerns on the following:

- Highway congestion at certain times and access to the site – the fact that there was one way in and out of the site and the addition of two more would only add to the traffic volume, which raised highway safety concerns;
- The loss of car parking spaces;
- The alleged lack of consultation with local businesses in the area;
- The initial objections to the proposals from the Highways Department;
- The effect the development would have on existing businesses in the area;
- Obesity and public health concerns amongst the population; and
- There was confusion over the free parking area and the chargeable area as there was no barrier or signage on the plan.

In response, Officers advised that the Highways Department has now removed its objections and was satisfied following receipt of further ANPR assessments referred to above regarding car parking capacity, and the addition of a condition restricting the size of the delivery vehicles. Officers advised that the Council has discharged its statutory requirements on public consultation – 211 letters were sent out and site notices were displayed in the market. Regarding Public Health concerns, page 60 of the report described the outcome of the consultation in detail. Also, it was confirmed that parking charges were not a material consideration in determining the application.

One Member moved a refusal of the application due to highway safety and site access concerns; this was seconded. The Committee voted on the motion and a refusal was agreed by majority.

**RESOLVED:** That the application be refused as the proposed access arrangements for the site would cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety, particularly in regard to the additional traffic stacking back up onto the adopted highway. In addition to this, the tracking details provided fail to demonstrate safe and unhindered movement

of large vehicles increasing potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles in this location to the detriment of highway and pedestrian safety.

Such conflict is considered to result in an unacceptable and severe impact on highway safety. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Policy C1 of the Halton Allocations and Delivery Local Plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in this regard.

DEV64 24/00147/FULEIA - PROPOSED ERECTION OF AN ELECTRICITY SUBSTATION WITH ASSOCIATED PLANT, ALONG WITH ACCESS, LANDSCAPING, MEANS OF ENCLOSURE, BOUNDARY TREATMENTS AND ASSOCIATED ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS ON LAND OFF WINDMILL HILL AVENUE, RUNCORN

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.

Members noted the information from the AB Update List relating to comments made by the Open Spaces and Highways Departments, as well as the recommendation for an additional condition restricting the height of any future external transformer or other plant and machinery to 4.2m.

The Committee was addressed by local Ward Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones, who spoke objecting to the proposal on behalf of the residents of Farnley Close. He argued *inter alia*:

- That the residents of Farnley Close were advised when they bought their properties that the area behind their houses was protected from development;
- The original location for a substation was on Sandymoor to service the new housing developments, however it was found that a second one would be needed;
- Due to cabling issues associated with two substations, it was decided by SPEN to move to a new location on Windmill Hill Avenue and build a larger capacity substation; and
- The outlook for the residents of Farnley Close will be greatly affected by the development of this substation.

The Committee was then addressed by local Ward

Councillor Ryan, who also spoke against the proposal. He stated that he did not object to the substation itself, just its location. He cited the following *inter alia*:

- It was understood that the Grid in the area needed reinforcing to accommodate new developments and for the future;
- This proposal imposed issues for the existing residents of Farnley Close who have, in some cases, lived there for 30 years. The view from their properties would be detrimental and affect the value of their homes;
- The substation being proposed was huge – 30m x 24.5m x 24.5m and was only 2 metres from the site boundary;
- The site is outside the Sandymoor South boundary;
- This was a departure from the DALP and the site is allocated Greenbelt land;
- There was a query relating to the ownership of the land; and
- It was hard to believe that this was the only available site for a substation.

Councillor Ryan requested that the Committee refuse the application and that the Applicant looks for a site located in Sandymoor.

Mr Cove, a representative of the Applicant, then addressed the Committee. In response to the query regarding the ownership of the land, he confirmed that SPEN had owned it since 2001. He made the following comments *inter alia*:

- Homes England was a public body that funded new and affordable housing in England;
- The proposal was for a substation which was a critical piece of infrastructure needed for the supply of power to new homes and existing homes in Windmill Hill, Sandymoor and Murdishaw;
- The smallest footprint possible was used;
- Biodiversity and planting strategies would be included;
- Trees measuring 4.5 metres would be planted along the boundary line immediately after the development was complete;
- Sound levels from the substation would be kept to minimum; and
- There were no objections received from any of the statutory consultees.



In summary he added that this was an essential piece of infrastructure required for future development and urged the Committee to support the recommendation.

Members discussed the following:

- The original site and the subsequent relocation of the substation to Windmill Hill Avenue;
- The ownership of the land;
- Material considerations in respect to requesting the substation be relocated to Sandymoor;
- Sympathy was felt for the residents of Farnley Close in relation to proximity of the substation, its size and the potential for devaluing of house prices;
- Open space calculations and loss of greenspace;
- The cabling of the substation; and
- Public consultations carried out.

One Member moved a refusal, based on the location being unsuitable, this was seconded.

In response to the Committee's debate, Officers clarified that requesting the Applicant to move to another location was not a material consideration, as the application before the Committee must be determined as it is, in line with planning policies. It was also confirmed that property values and land ownership were not material considerations and that a valid reason for refusal had not been given.

The Legal Advisor concurred with this, adding that if Members were minded to refuse, then a valid, defensible reason must be presented before a vote can be taken by the Committee.

After hearing the Planning Officer's and Legal Officer's advice, the motion to refuse was withdrawn by the seconder.

It was commented that the proposal was not just for Sandymoor housing developments but was also required to ensure resilience of the Grid in the area for the future.

The Officer's recommendations were moved and seconded and the Committee voted to approve the application by a majority, subject to the conditions listed below.

**RESOLVED:** That authority be delegated to the Director – Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair, to approve the application subject to

satisfactory resolution of the outstanding highway and drainage matters and subject to conditions relating to the following:

1. Standard 3 year timescale for commencement of development;
2. Specifying approved and amended plans;
3. Materials condition(s) requiring submission and agreement of details;
4. Implementation of a scheme of bat and bird boxes and brash piles in accordance with details to be submitted and approved;
5. Submission and agreement of tree protection plan and arboricultural method statement;
6. Requiring all fencing and switch rooms doors to be colour coated dark green;
7. Restricting hours of construction;
8. Submission and agreement of a construction environmental plan including RAMs for terrestrial mammals;
9. RAMs for amphibian species;
10. Protecting nesting birds;
11. Securing implementation of landscaping as agreed;
12. Submission and agreement of a Landscape Environmental Management Plan;
13. Controlling external lighting;
14. Drainage conditions;
15. Requiring noise levels from fixed plant and equipment on site, measures at the perimeter of the site not exceed 27dB(A);
16. Completion validation testing with respect to noise; and
17. Requiring levels to be carried out as approved.

*Meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.*

**REGULATORY SUB COMMITTEE**

*At a meeting of the Regulatory Sub Committee on Monday, 30 September 2024 at The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Wallace (Chair) and Bramwell

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Abbott

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Hesketh, W. Pringle, A. Strickland and P. Wilson

**ITEM DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

*Action*

**REGS6 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12 June 2024 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.

**REGS7 APPLICATION FOR TO VARY A PREMISES LICENCE –  
BANKSEY'S BAR, 75 ALBERT ROAD, WIDNES, WA8 6JS**

A meeting of the Regulatory Sub-Committee (acting as Licensing Committee under the Licensing Act 2003) of Halton Borough Council was held at Municipal Building, Widnes on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 commencing at 4.30pm.

The meeting was held to hear an application made under section 34 of the Licensing Act 2003 for the variation of a Premises Licence at Banksy's Bar Widnes. The application was amended during the hearing by the Applicant to reduce the end time to 11pm on Live Music, Recorded Music and Dance, and to include the condition on noise limiters agreed with the Environmental Health Department (wording annexed hereto) and the condition on admission of children to the premises agreed with Cheshire Police (wording annexed hereto) with all other matters remaining as set out in the Operating Schedule to the variation application. It was this amended application that

was determined by the Sub Committee.

In attendance were: -

- Members of the Regulatory Sub Committee comprising Cllr Pamela Wallace (Chair) and Cllr Irene Bramwell. (Cllr John Abbott sent apologies) ('the Sub Committee')
- Piers Warne, (TLT Solicitors, Bristol) representing the Applicant - namely Bethany Owens ('the Applicant')
- Kim Hesketh (Licensing Manager)
- Alex Strickland (Legal Adviser)
- Wendy Pringle (Taxi Enforcement Officer – to observe proceedings)
- Philip Wilson (Environmental Health)
- Lynn Fletcher, Jane Hargreaves and Mr & Mrs Jones ('Residents')

The hearing was triggered as a result of the objections by the Residents who attended the hearing and others who did not, namely James Howard Smith and Jeanette Everitt. Councillor Eddie Jones also lodged an objection but was not able to be present at the hearing due to scheduling difficulties.

There were no representations from Responsible Authorities, other than for a condition on noise limiters suggested by the Environmental Health Department, the wording of which was agreed by the Applicant before the hearing and for a condition in respect of children being present on the premises which was agreed before the hearing by Cheshire Police.

After the Chair of the Sub Committee had introduced the parties, the Legal Adviser outlined the procedure to be followed. The Licensing Manager presented the Licensing Report with appendices including Location Plan (Appendix A), the schedule of Licensed Premises in the local area (Appendix B), copy of the current Premises Licence with summary (Appendix C), the Variation Application (Appendix D), a copy of the objections (Appendix E) and extracts from policy and guidance (Appendix F) - setting out the nature of the application, noting that there had been no objections from responsible authorities, including Cheshire Police in respect of the prevention of crime and disorder/anti-social behaviour statutory licensing objectives (or otherwise) and that conditions had been agreed between the Applicant and Cheshire Police (regarding Children) and Environmental Health (regarding noise limiters).

**DETAILS OF THE APPLICATION (AS AMENDED DURING THE HEARING)**

Opening Hours

Monday – Thursday	11.00 to 00.30
Friday & Saturday	11.00 to 01.30
Sunday	11.00 to 00.30

Live Music

Monday – Thursday	11.00 to 23.00
Friday & Saturday	11.00 to 23.00
Sunday	11.00 to 23.00

Recorded Music

Monday – Thursday	11.00 to 23.00
Friday & Saturday	11.00 to 23.00
Sunday	11.00 to 23.00

Dance

Monday – Thursday	11.00 to 23.00
Friday & Saturday	11.00 to 23.00
Sunday	11.00 to 23.00

Late Night Refreshment

Monday – Thursday	23.00 to 00.00
Friday & Saturday	23.00 to 01.00
Sunday	23.00 to 00.00

Supply of Alcohol

Monday – Thursday	11.00 to 00.00
Friday & Saturday	11.00 to 01.00
Sunday	11.00 to 00.00

**THE HEARING**

The Applicant started to present their case by pointing out that there had been no complaints in respect of the Premises over the past 12 months. Further it was noted that there were no objections to the variation by Responsible Authorities and that appropriate conditions had been agreed with Cheshire Police (regarding the presence of children on the Premises) and with the Environmental Health Department (regarding a noise limiter to mitigate potential noise nuisance). It was underlined that the basis of the

variation application was only to seek an extra hour per day that was being requested when compared to opening times on the current licence (in addition to the new provision of regulated entertainment).

Following questions from the Sub Committee, the Applicant agreed to amend the variation application to ensure that Live Music, Recorded Music and Dance finished by 11pm daily.

The Applicant offered that the condition on the licence that required closing of windows/doors have further wording added to ensure that they were closed during times of regulated entertainment.

The Applicant made clear that any decision must be based on evidence.

The Residents took turns to address the Sub Committee. They related points that were drawn from their written representations, expressing concern about the increased hours and the new introduction of regulated entertainment.

The Environmental Health Officer informed the hearing that whilst there had been no noise complaints in respect of the Premises under the current management, a condition had been agreed with the Applicant to mitigate potential noise nuisance in the future, in order to protect the living environment of nearby residents.

### **THE DETERMINATION**

The Sub Committee resolved to grant the (amended) application for the variation of the Premises Licence on the terms set out in section 2 of this Notice with the inclusion of the conditions agreed between the Applicant and Cheshire Police relating to children and that agreed between the Applicant and Environmental Health relating to noise limiters and with the maintenance of the current condition in relation to closing of doors and windows at 9pm with the additional wording 'unless regulated entertainment is taking place in which case they shall remain closed'. All other conditions are to remain as per current licence and the operating schedule submitted for this variation application.

### **SPECIFIC REASONS FOR THE DETERMINATION**

In making its determination, the Sub Committee had regard to the statutory licensing objectives, the statutory

guidance and Halton Council's own Statement of Licensing Policy.

The Sub Committee found that: -

1. Whilst the Sub Committee was sympathetic to the issues raised by Residents, it was conscious that there was none or no sufficient evidence advanced to ground these objections that would link them to the premises under operation of the current management. In fact, the Residents during the hearing expressed general satisfaction with the way the premises are currently managed and there was acknowledgement that the current management is effective, and the situation had greatly improved from the previous management. The Sub Committee took account of the need for evidence to impose restrictions (in particular paragraph 9.43 of the statutory section 182 Guidance) and was mindful of the court decisions in Daniel Thwaites plc v Wirral Borough Magistrates Court and Hall & Woodhouse Ltd v Poole BC in respect of this and concluded there was no or no sufficient evidence to refuse the request for an extended hour per day.
2. The Sub Committee was encouraged by and gave particular weight to the fact that the Applicant was a responsible operator, and the Sub Committee took note of her promise to continue to manage the premises in a responsible way and they attached considerable weight to this assurance.
3. The Sub Committee was further encouraged by the undertaking given by the Applicant to move the door of the Premises to a more suitable location (to mitigate against any potential noise nuisance) in due course.
4. As set out in the statutory guidance, the Sub Committee looks to Cheshire Police as the main source of advice on crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour issues. The Sub Committee noted that the police regarded the application as satisfactory, to the extent that they did not make any representations on the variation application (other than to agree with the applicant a condition relating to the presence of children at the premises).
5. The Sub Committee noted that there had been no complaints to the Environmental Health Department

in respect of noise from the Premises. Notwithstanding that, a condition had been agreed with the Applicant in respect of a noise limiter which should assist, should any noise nuisance be identified in the future.

6. On balance, the Sub Committee therefore finds that the variation application (as amended) does not undermine the licensing objectives.

It was noted and made clear to Residents that there are powers to deal with premises if the operation of a licence leads to the licensing objectives being undermined, including the possibility of a formal review of the Premises Licence should that be necessary. Furthermore, it was underlined, that any noise complaints should be made to the Environmental Health Department and any issues of crime/anti-social behaviour should be raised with Cheshire Police immediately to allow an appropriate investigation to take place.

**TIME THAT THE DETERMINATION SHALL TAKE EFFECT**

Forthwith.

*Meeting ended at 6.40 p.m.*



**TAXI LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE**

*At a meeting of the Taxi Licensing Sub Committee on Tuesday, 6 August 2024 in the The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Wallace (Chair), Abbott and Stockton

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Hesketh and A. Strickland

Also in attendance: None

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE**

	<i>Action</i>
<p>EXB14 MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2024 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>EXB15 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985</p> <p>The Committee considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with subsection 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and</li> <li>2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in</li> </ol>	

maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with subsection 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph, 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

EXB16 TAXI LICENSING MATTER

Case 780

RESOLVED: That the Single Status Driver's Licence be revoked with immediate effect.

*Meeting ended at 7.02 p.m.*

**TAXI LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE**

*At a meeting of the Taxi Licensing Sub Committee on Wednesday, 2 October 2024 in the The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Wallace (Chair), Abbott and V. Hill

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Hesketh, W. Pringle and A. Strickland

Also in attendance: None

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE**

*Action*

**TLSC17 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 6 August 2024, having been circulated, were signed as a correct record.

**TLSC18 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

The Committee considered:

- 1) whether members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were

applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

TLSC19 TAXI LICENSING MATTER

Case 781

RESOLVED: That the application to renew a Single Status Driver's Licence be renewed with a warning letter.

*Meeting ended at 4.17 p.m.*