

# **Minutes**

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

**Wednesday, 3 December  
2025**

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## **COMMITTEE/BOARD**

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**COUNCIL**

*At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 22 October 2025 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Abbott, Ball, Baker, Begg, Bevan, Carlin, Connolly, Dennett, Davidson, Dourley, Fry, Garner, Gilligan, Harris, S. Hill, V. Hill, Hughes, Hutchinson, Jones, Leck, M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, C. Loftus, K. Loftus, Logan, A. Lowe, McDermott, McDonough, A. McInerney, T. McInerney, Nelson, L. Nolan, P. Nolan, Philbin, Polhill, Rowe, Ryan, Stockton, Stretch, Skinner, Teeling, Thompson, Thornton, Wainwright, Wall, Wallace, Wharton, Woolfall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Bramwell, Goodall, C. Plumpton Walsh, N. Plumpton Walsh and Ratcliffe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, Z. Fearon, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson and R. Rout

Also in attendance: One member of the press and L. Luddington - Grant Thornton UK LLP.

*Action***COU30 COUNCIL MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 9 July 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**COU31 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor announced that:

- alongside neighbouring Civic Heads, she had been invited to visit a ship operated by the Peruvian Navy during their visit to Liverpool and had received a gift for the Mayor's parlour; and
- tickets were on sale for the Mayor's Charity Christmas Party at the DCBL Stadium on 12 December.

**COU32 LEADER'S REPORT**

The Leader made the following announcements:

- the appointment process for the role of Chief Executive had begun and an invitation had been sent to all Councillors to meet the candidates at the DCBL on 23 October 2025;
- the Council had received Government grant funding of £10m for Hough Green Ward and £1.5m for Widnes Town Centre improvements. On behalf of the Council, he thanked Derek Twigg MP for his support in securing this Government funding;
- £26m government funding had also been secured for Town Deal Runcorn and work was ongoing to agree how this could be allocated;
- a consultation exercise had begun on the revised Housing Strategy; and
- he congratulated Widnes Vikings Women Rugby League team who had been crowned League One Champions.

### COU33 URGENT DECISIONS

Council considered a report of the Interim Chief Executive, on the urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED: That Council note the report.

### COU34 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board meetings on 10 July and 11 September 2025 .

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

### COU35 MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 9 July 2025.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

### COU36 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8

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

### COU37 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Council considered a copy of the External Auditor's Report 2024/25 which was presented by Grant Thornton UK LLP.

A number of Key Recommendations and Improvement Recommendations were shown within the report along with management's responses to those recommendations. In addition, three Statutory Recommendations had been made which the Council was required to consider, confirm whether the recommendations were accepted and if so, how they would be addressed. The first two Statutory Recommendations continued from the 2023/24 report.

On behalf of the Council, Councillor Dennett thanked Ms Luddington for the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the contents of the Auditor's Annual Report 2024/25 shown in the Appendix 2 be noted;
- 2) the three Statutory Recommendations highlighted within the Auditor's Annual Report 2024/25 be noted; and
- 3) the Council's responses to the Statutory Recommendations as detailed in Appendix 1, be approved.

Director of Finance

#### COU38 25/26 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 31 JULY 2025 (MINUTE EXB 32 REFERS)

Council considered a report of the Director, Finance, on the revised Capital Programme.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Executive Directors continue to implement the approved 2025/26 saving proposals as detailed in Appendix 3;
- 2) Executive Directors continue to identify areas where they can further reduce their directorate's spending or generate income, in order to ensure the Council wide forecast outturn overspend position for the year remains within budget;
- 3) the report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board, in order to ensure they have a full appreciation of the councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility; and
- 4) Council approve the revisions to the capital

Director of Finance

programme set-out in paragraph 3.24 and incorporated within Appendix 4.

COU39 DCBL STADIUM - NEW PAVA SYSTEM AND STRUCTURAL STEEL MAINTENANCE WORKS AND PITCH REPLACEMENT (MINUTE EXB 40 REFERS)

Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval to proceed with necessary works at the DBCL Stadium.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Capital works identified in the report in sections 3.3 to 3.6 be approved;
- 2) consideration be given to the options outlined in paragraph 5.4 below regarding how the annual capital financing costs might be funded;
- 3) approval be given to add works to the capital programme and include a financial contribution of £1.325m, subject to further work to establish detailed costs, and to proceed with an option to include the implementation of a PAVA system and undertake steel repairs to four stands only. This is to ensure the ongoing safety of the public when using the premises. A decision on options relating to the pitch to be deferred; and
- 4) approval of the detailed costs and the option to be undertaken, be delegated to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Employment Learning, Skills and Community and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

COU40 PUBLIC SURVEILLANCE INFRASTRUCTURE (MINUTE EXB27 REFERS)

Council considered a report of the Director Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval for capital investment to upgrade the Council's CCTV and public surveillance infrastructure.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council approve the inclusion in the Capital Programme, of a scheme of works and £500k investment to address CCTV infrastructure, software

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

and hardware as outlined in the body of the report;  
and

- 2) authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services to prepare tender documents to procure this work.

COU41 LICENSING ACT 2003 - STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

Council was asked to consider the attached report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, on the Statement of Licensing Policy.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1) adopt the Statement of Licensing Policy attached to this report to come into effect immediately following the expiry of the current policy on 6 January 2026; and
- 2) directs that the Director – Legal and Democratic Services publishes the Statement of Licensing Policy in accordance with section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003.

Director, Legal  
and Democratic  
Services

COU42 JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS -  
CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE: STAGE 1 DELEGATION

This item was deferred.

COU43 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 9 July 2025:-

- Children. Young People and Families;
- Local Economy;
- Health and Social Care;
- Housing and Safer;
- Environment and Regeneration;
- Corporate and Inclusion; and
- Audit and Governance.

COU44 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports of the following Committees in the period since the meeting of Council on 9 July 2025:-

- Development Management;
- Regulatory;
- Regulatory Sub Committee
- Taxi Licensing Sub Committee; and
- Appointments

*Meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.*



**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 23 October 2025 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building*

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Bevan, Ball, Harris, T. McInerney, Thompson, Wall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Dennett and P. Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, R. Rout and J. Rosser

Also in attendance: D. Trust Dickinson, C. Deadman and A. Hogarty – Halton Housing Trust

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

*Action*

**EXB48 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

*N.B. Councillor Harris declared an Other Registrable Interest in the following item of business as he is a tenant of Halton Housing. Councillor Wright declared an Other Registrable Interest in the following item of business as she is a member of the Halton Housing Trust Board.*

**HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY  
PORTFOLIO**

**EXB49 HALTON HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT**

The Board received the Halton Housing (HH) Annual Report, which provided an update on their activities since the last report to Executive Board.

The Chair welcomed Debbie Trust Dickinson, who presented the report to the Board – *Annual Report to HBC Executive Board, October 2025*; and her colleagues Amanda Hogarty and Clive Deadman (Chair of the Halton Housing Trust Board).

The report outlined the key achievements over the past year which included:

- customer satisfaction levels across all 12 Tenant Satisfaction perception measures had increased compared to 2024/25 performance;
- there had been significant and sustained improvement in repairs service delivery;
- compliance across 5 out of 6 building safety measures was 100% at the end of March 2025;
- performance against the Trust's target to have 86% of homes with a stock condition survey of no more than 5 years old had been achieved with a year-end figure of 89.5%;
- several community events had been arranged; and
- external accreditations included a gold award by the Council Health Inclusion Team.

The presentation also highlighted the future focus as outlined in the Trust three-year Corporate Plan. This included the Halton Housing Deal for tenants and delivering new homes.

RESOLVED: The Board thanked Halton Housing for the presentation and noted the report.

## **LEADER'S PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB50 URGENT DECISION**

The Board received a report from the Interim Chief Executive, which provided information on urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Board.

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 Director Finance and/or the Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.

One urgent decision had been made since the last meeting of the Board and full details were published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the urgent decision taken since the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**EXB51 PENSIONS DISCRETIONS STATEMENT 2025/26 REVISED**

The Board received the annual Pensions Discretions Statement for 2025-26 for Halton Borough Council.

The Council was required to publish a Pension Discretion Statement annually, to advise the discretions it intended to exercise under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) – this was appended to the report.

It was reported that the Pensions Discretion Statement for 2025-26 was based upon the statement for 2024-25, which was approved by Executive Board in March 2023. It was noted that there had been a revision to the agreed Pensions Discretion Statement 2025/26 incorporating an element to reflect the implementation of the unpaid leave element as required by the Pensions Fund.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Pensions Discretions Statement for 2025-26.

Chief Executive

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO**

**EXB52 ALL AGE COMMUNITY CARE PROCESSES AND NEXT STEPS**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Adults, that presented a summary of the current operational and financial process for All Age Community Care (AACC) and the associated financial risks facing the Council in the current landscape. The report considered the financial impact of the changes Cheshire & Mersey Integrated Care System (C&M ICS) had brought about as part of their financial recovery agenda.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the financial pressures facing the Community Care budget outlined in the report be noted; and
- 2) moving forward, financial processes are aligned to reflect contractual financial obligations of the Council and C&M ICS.

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

**EXB53 ASC WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

The Board was advised that early in 2025, Skills for

Health were commissioned to work with the Council to develop an ASC Workforce Strategy for Halton. Following extensive engagement, which include online surveys that captured views across the workforce, one to one interviews with operational leaders and an analysis of workforce data, vacancy trend, pay benchmarks and training uptake, the strategy was presented to the Board for approval.

RESOLVED: That the draft Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy for Halton be approved.

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

#### EXB54 ANNUAL CONSULTATION EXERCISE - FEE RATES

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Adults, that sought approval to enter into consultation with care providers in relation to the annual uplift for 2026/27. The approach to setting fees and agreeing to appropriate uplifts included consulting with all stakeholders and reassuring them that arrangements for determining fees and uplifts were robust. The approach also allowed for uplifts to be considered on an annual basis with consideration given to changes, business costs and the conditions faced by providers.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to actively enter into consultation with care providers in relation to the annual uplift for 2026/27.

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

#### EXB55 JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS - CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE: STAGE 1 DELEGATION

The Board considered a report that sought approval to delegate Stage 1 consideration of substantiation variation to health services, where necessary, when Joint Health Scrutiny (JHS) arrangements may apply. The proposal had previously been presented to the Health and Social Care Policy and Performance Board on 23 September 2025, and the protocol was endorsed.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorse the proposal for Stage 1 delegation as outlined and recommends for onward approval by Council.

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

#### EXB56 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.

## **HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO**

EXB57 DIRECT AWARD OF THE HALTON INTEGRATED SEXUAL HEALTH PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE CONTRACT 2026 VIA PROVIDER SELECTION REGIME – DIRECT AWARD PROCESS C. WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL BE THE LEAD COMMISSIONING AUTHORITY - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, that sought approval to proceed with a procurement process to grant a direct award to Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Axess) for the delivery of the Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS).

### Reason(s) for Decision

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 set out a local authority's statutory responsibility for commissioning the Integrated Sexual Health Service.

The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced a new procurement regime for selecting providers of healthcare services in England: The Provider Selection Regime (PSR).

Therefore, Public Health wish to use this procurement route to award a new contract via PSR Direct Award Process C to the current provider Axess. The contract would be jointly commissioned with Warrington the lead commissioning authority.

The justification to use PSR Direct Award Process C to direct award to Axess is noted below:

- The existing provider was satisfying the existing contract and is likely to satisfy the new contract and the proposed new contracting arrangements
- This would minimise the impact on local families, staff and the wider health and social care economy
- This would ensure continuity of service
- This would reduce bureaucracy and cost associated with a tender exercise
- This would ensure a flexible and proportionate process for selecting providers of health care services, so that all decisions are made in the best interest of people who use the services.

The Public Health could legally and without prejudice, use the PSR route should it be passed at Executive Board level. The Public Health Department had sought guidance and direction from both the Legal Department and the Procurement Department.

#### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative option was to undertake a full competitive tender exercise. This was rejected for the reasons mentioned in section 10. The report recommendation would strengthen and stabilise the current system, especially the Family Hub, Women's Hub, other neighbourhood models and the transformation model. It would also strengthen the existing Partnership and collaborative working streams.

#### Implemented Date

It was intended that the process to provide a direct award would be undertaken following the Executive Board approval, with the new contract to begin on 1 October 2026.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board:

- 1) note compliance with Procurement Standing Order

1.3.5 – Preliminary Estimates Report, Contracts exceeding £5,000,000 in Value;

Director of Public Health

- 2) note compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.4.2(iii) - Joint or Partnering Arrangements with another body or bodies and, under that arrangement another body is the commissioning body, the Standing Orders of that other body shall apply to contracts entered into under the arrangement subject to the prior approval of the Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal and Democratic Services). Warrington Borough Council's Standing Orders will be applicable as the lead commissioning authority;
- 3) note the Local Authority's statutory responsibility for commissioning public health services for the specialist integrated sexual health services (ISHSs). Including testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), the provision of HIV PrEP and provision of the full range of contraception. (Health and Social Care Act 2012);
- 4) approves the use of the new procurement regime for selecting providers of healthcare services in England: The Provider Selection Regime (PSR), Direct Award Process C, to Axess;
- 5) approval to proceed with a procurement process to grant a direct award to Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Axess) for the delivery of the Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS) period 1st October 2026 to 30th September 2031, with the option of 2 x plus 1-year, pre-determined extension periods up to 30th September 2033. This contract is jointly commissioned with Warrington Borough Council, who will be the lead commissioning authority; and
- 6) note the content of the report.

**MINUTES ISSUED: 28 October 2025**

**CALL-IN: 4 November 2025 at 5.00 pm.**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 4 November 2025.**

*Meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.*

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**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 13 November 2025 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building*

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Bevan, Ball, Dennett, Harris, T. McInerney, P. Nolan, Thompson, Wall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, W. Rourke and G. Ferguson

Also in attendance: John Houghton - Hope Street Strategy Company

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

*Action*

**EXB58 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**LEADER'S PORTFOLIO**

**EXB59 URGENT DECISIONS**

The Board received a report from the Interim Chief Executive, which provided information on an urgent decision taken since the last meeting of the Board.

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 Director Finance and/or the Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.

One urgent decision had been made since the last meeting of the Board and full details were published on the Council's website.

**RESOLVED:** That the urgent decision taken since the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.

*N.B. Councillor Wright declared an Other Registrable Interest in the following item of business as she is a member of the Halton Housing Trust Board.*

## **DEPUTY LEADER'S PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB60 PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND, RUNCORN**

The Board received a presentation from John Houghton on behalf of the consultancy Hope Street Strategy Company who were drafting the Vision and Regeneration Plan for the Plan for Neighbourhoods Fund (PfN), Runcorn. The presentation outlined engagement which had taken place to develop the 10 proposals, the vision and impact of the Plan and the next steps.

In the Spring 2024, the then Government announced Phase 2 of their Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPT) programmed which identified Runcorn as one of 20 additional towns across the country that would benefit from an allocation of £19.5m to invest over a 10-year period in local priorities.

In March 2025, the LTPT was renamed PfN by the new Government and the timeline for delivery was pushed back to April 2026. The intention remained that the £19.5m funding (25% revenue/75% capital) over a 10-year period would provide long term certainty to deliver a range of interventions. A funding profile was provided at Appendix 1 and a full list of interventions, including sub-interventions was provided at Appendix 2. A robust assessment process for determining which projects to be taken forward would need to be developed and this would be undertaken by a sub-panel of the Runcorn Town Neighbourhood Board, alongside officers.

It was noted that in order to access the funding, the Council would need to produce a Regeneration Plan for the agreed area by 28 November 2025, along with a 4-year investment plan. Hope Street Strategy Company had been employed to develop the Regeneration Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the update and associated presentation.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB61 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2026/27 - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Finance, on the requirement for the Council to determine the Council Tax Base for its area and the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

The Council Tax Base was the measure used for calculating Council Tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (Cheshire Fire Authority, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), in the calculation of their Council Tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula which represented the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent Band 'D' dwellings.

Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 97% collection rate, the calculation for 2026-27 gave a base figure of 37,115 for the Borough as a whole. The Council Tax Base figure for each of the Parishes was noted.

#### Reason for Decision

To seek approval for the Council Tax Base for the Borough and also the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

#### Alternative options considered and rejected

The Council was required to determine annually the Council Tax Base and to notify the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the Environment Agency and Parish Councils.

#### Implementation date

The Council Tax Base 2026/27 would be implemented from 1 April 2026.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve:

Director of Finance

- 1) setting the 2026/27 Council Tax Base at 37,115 for the Borough and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) setting the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes

as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	675
Halebank	540
Daresbury	424
Moore	338
Preston Brook	368
Sandymoor	1,739

EXB62 2025/26 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 25

The Board received a report from the Director of Finance, advising of the Council's overall revenue and capital net spending position as at 30 September 2025, together with a 2025/26 forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 September 2025 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. It was reported that in overall terms the net Council spend as at 30 September 2025 would be over the approved budget by £2.658m. The outturn forecast for the year estimated that net spending would be over budget by £4.672m if no corrective action was taken. Appendix 3 detailed the Council approved savings covering 2025/26 and 2026/27, together with information on progress to date. Appendix 4 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 September 2025, highlighting the schemes which had been revised. Appendix 5 set out the Budget Risk Register as at 30 September 2025.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Executive Directors continue to implement the approved 2025/26 saving proposals as detailed in Appendix 3;
- 2) Executive Directors continue to identify areas where they can further reduce their directorate's spending or generate income, in order to ensure the Council wide forecast outturn overspend position for the year remains within budget;
- 3) this report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board in order to ensure they have a full appreciation of the councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific area of responsibility; and

Director of Finance

- 4) Council be asked to approve to the revisions to the capital programme set out in paragraph 3.25 and incorporated within Appendix 4.

**EXB63 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2025-26 HALF YEAR UPDATE**

The Board considered a report from the Director of Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Half Year Report as at 30 September 2025.

These reports updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market during the first half of the financial year to 30 September 2025, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The report provided supporting information on the economic outlook, interest rate forecast, short-term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing and investments, budget monitoring, new long-term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

**EXB64 HOME TO SCHOOL AND POST 16 TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY 2026-2027 RECOMMENDATIONS - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Children's Services, that provided an update on the consultation process that had taken place from 2 April to 6 May 2025, on the Home to School and Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2026-27. A copy of the Policy was attached to the report and would be implemented from 1 September 2026 for all new applicants for travel support.

Reason(s) for Decision

To agree changes to the Home to School and Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy 2026-

27

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Given the current financial position of the Council and the significant pressure on this current Home to School Transport budget, to do nothing would impact the local authority's ability to set a balanced and sustainable budget.

Implementation Date

All aspects of this policy would be implemented from 1 September 2026 for all new applicants for travel support.

RESOLVED: That the 2026-27 Home to School & Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) be approved.

Executive Director  
of Children's  
Services

*N.B. Councillor Bevan declared an Other Registrable Interest in the following item of business she is a member of the Fortuna Female Society.*

**EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS AND  
COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO**

EXB65 CULTURE

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the Culture Work Programme and Borough of Culture approach for 2026 and beyond. Halton was scheduled to deliver Borough of Culture in 2026 and the report set out the draft programme for the year.

It was noted that new arrangements for the future programme of Borough of Culture had been in place since 2018. Liverpool City Region (LCR) Chief Executives had met earlier this year and the LCR Neighbourhoods and Communities Directors Group had met in March 2025. An experienced consultant had also been procured to engage with key delivery stakeholders across the LCR and this had provided recommendations on the future of the programme.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the 2026 year of culture work programme;
- 2) supports a forward culture approach; and

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

- 3) agrees a proposal to explore a music festival for Halton in 2027.

**HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PORTFOLIO**

**EXB66 APPROVAL OF THE BOROUGH WIDE HOUSING STRATEGY - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval to make a recommendation to Council for the approval of a Borough wide Housing Strategy (A copy of the Strategy document was attached to the report). It was noted that a six-week public consultation exercise was taking place until 16 November 2025, on the draft Strategy and a summary of the responses received to date was reported.

Following the closure of the consultation exercise, comments would be reviewed, and any final changes would be made to the Strategy. In order to expediate this process it was recommended that the Board gave delegated approval to the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Sustainability, to agree any final revisions to the Strategy.

Reason for Decision

Approval of a new five-year Borough wide Housing Strategy for Halton to allow implementation.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable.

Implementation date

Five Year Strategy 2026-2031.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the progress on the production and consultation of the draft Housing Strategy for Halton 2026 – 2031 (Appendix A) and supporting evidence document (Appendix B);
- 2) provides delegated approval to the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

Sustainability to agree any final revisions to the draft Housing Strategy; and

- 3) Council be recommended to approve the revised Housing Strategy.

EXB67 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.

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

EXB68 VICTORIA PARK CHARITY

This item was deferred until a future meeting.



**MINUTES ISSUED: 19 November 2025**

**CALL-IN: 26 November 2025 at 5.00 pm.**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 26 November 2025.**

*Meeting ended at 2.44 p.m.*

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**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board on Wednesday, 8 October 2025 at the DCBL Stadium, Widnes*

Present: Councillor Wright (Chair)  
 Councillor T. McInerney  
 Councillor Woolfall  
 J. Adamson – Halton Borough Council  
 K. Anderson – Public Health  
 K. Butler – Democratic Services  
 K. Graham – Halton Borough Council  
 C. Gregory – Public Health  
 M. Hancock – Public Health  
 I. Onyia, Public Health  
 McPhee, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust  
 A. Leo, Integrated Commissioning Board  
 Hughes  
 D. Nolan, Adult Social Care  
 S. Patel, Local Pharmaceutical Committee  
 M. Roberts – NHS Cheshire & Merseyside  
 J. Sanderson - Integrated Commissioning Board  
 J. Wallis – Bridgewater Community Healthcare  
 D. Wilson – Healthwatch Halton  
 S. Yeoman, Halton & St Helens VCA

*Action***HWB11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Wayne Longshaw – St. Helens & Knowsley Hospitals, David Wilson - St. Helens & Knowsley Hospitals and Lisa Windle – Halton Housing.

**HWB12 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2025 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.

**HWB13 STRONGER FOR LONGER SERVICE**

The Board considered a report which informed them about the launch of a new service called “Stronger for Longer”, which was aimed at supporting adults in Halton, over the age of 55.

The free 12-week programme combined services and community support to help participants stay mentally, socially, and physically active. It provided 1:1 support, early intervention, and a focus on prevention to help older adults

improve their quality of life and maintain their independence. The report outlined how the programme was developed and how it differed from the previous 1:1 service.

Following a referral to the service, clients would undertake an initial assessment which would help identify the appropriate level of support needed and there were 3 different tiers:

- Tier 1 – Information and Advice
- Tier 2 – Practical Support
- Tier 3 – Coaching & Confidence-Building

Over the course of the programme, individuals would be reviewed with adjustments being made if necessary. Following completion of the course, clients would be re-assessed including the improvements that had been made to reduce their social isolation. The report included a case study which demonstrated an example of a success story.

To promote the new service, a launch event was held at the DCBL Stadium in July 2025 where information was available on how local groups and individuals could refer into the service. The event was attended by a range of organisations and services, which included representatives from Halton Borough Council, the NHS and the Third Sector.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board agree to promote the new service and identify partnership working opportunities to work with the older population of Halton.

#### HWB14 HEALTHWATCH HALTON ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

The Board received the 2024-25 Annual Report for Healthwatch Halton which highlighted key activities, themes and impact from the past year.

During the past 12 months Healthwatch Halton had spoken to over 5,900 people and delivered 276 outreach sessions. It had supported more than 16,900 people through feedback collection and signposting, which included 15,104 who received tailored information and advice. 15 reports had been published on various matters, which included GP access, pharmacy services, care homes children's accident and emergency and community diagnostics. Healthwatch Halton had also targeted support to the underserved communities such as LGBTQ+ residents, veterans, the homeless and those who were digitally

excluded. Through their input, they had improved clearer signage and letters at Whiston Hospital, improved communication at Warrington Hospital and helped to provide additional staffing in the children's accident and emergency department.

Their statutory funding for 2024-25 from Halton Borough Council totalled £131,251 which was supplemented by additional income from Integrated Care Systems funding projects of £3,472.

The report also outlined the future priorities which included:

- Access to primary care;
- Women's health and maternity services; and
- Improving quality and dignity in care homes.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) receive the report; and
- 2) continues to support Healthwatch Halton in promoting patient voice and co-production across local health and care services.

The Board gave thanks to Healthwatch Halton and the valuable work they do to support residents of the Borough and help drive future improvements across health services.

#### HWB15 ONE HALTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Board received a report and accompanying presentation from the NHS Director – Halton which provided an update on the Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme: Health and Social Care, and local development plans within Halton.

One Halton Partnership comprised a wide range of members, which included NHS bodies, local authority representatives from Children's Services, Adult Services and Public Health, and non-statutory bodies. The Partnership was the vehicle for delivery of national and local priorities and Halton's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Neighbourhood Health Model was intended to join up services in the community in a more effective way,

particularly for people with more complex health and care needs, helping children thrive and supporting adults to stay independent for longer, improve health and wellbeing, and reduce avoidable pressures on health, social care and other public services.

Neighbourhood Health had a 10 Year Health Plan priority and its ambition was to shift care from hospitals to community; move from analogue to digital; and sickness to prevention.

The presentation provided the latest overview of progress and outlined the work that had been undertaken with partners.

RESOLVED: That the report and presentation be noted.

#### HWB16 MODEL ICB UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the NHS Director – One Halton, which provided an update on the Model Integrated Care Board (ICB) Blueprint.

On 1 April 2025, Sir Jim Mackey, Chief Executive of NHS England, wrote to all ICB's and NHS Trusts to provide further detail on the Government's Reform Agenda for the NHS. The letter highlighted the significant progress made in planning for 2025/26 and outlined a move to a medium-term approach to planning, which would be shaped by a 10 year Health Plan and the outcome of the Spending Review.

In order to achieve the ambitions it was noted that:

- ICB's would need to reduce their management costs by an average of 50%;
- ICB's would need to commission and develop Neighbourhood Health Models; and
- NHS providers would need to reduce their corporate cost growth by 50% by quarter 3 of 2025/26, with the savings to be reinvested locally to enhance frontline services.

On 2 May 2025 the first draft Model ICB Blueprint was shared with all ICB's, which outlined the future role and functions of ICB's as strategic commissioners within the NHS. The Blueprint set out a number of expectations and in order to respond effectively, NHS Cheshire & Merseyside had identified a programme of work to help meet the requirements of the document. They had also established a

Transition Task and Finish Group to oversee the organisational change and duties transfer.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### HWB17 JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Members of the Board considered a report from the Director of Public Health which provided an update on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

The Board were updated on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which analysed the health needs of the population to inform and guide commissioning of health, well-being and social care services within local authority areas. The JSNA underpinned the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and commissioning plans. The main goal of a JSNA was to assess the health needs of a local population in order to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Since the first executive summary of the JSNA in 2012, the approach had continued to receive good feedback from various partnerships and stakeholders. As a consequence, the revised annual summary had used broadly the same approach to provide updated data and information since the previous version.

The report set out the key changes since the previous summary and the developments for the JSNA during 2025/26. It was noted that the process for agreeing and developing a work plan for the remainder of 2024/25 and into 2025/26 would be managed in collaboration with key stakeholders and members of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Healthwatch Halton suggested that it would have been useful to include some real life experiences, however, the statistics were very helpful. It was confirmed that although the voices of local people were always explored when the full JSNA document was produced, consideration would be given to including them in future summaries.

Members of the Board were encouraged to share the JSNA within their respective teams.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the draft summary document be approved for publication.

#### HWB18 HALTON CARE HOME DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Board considered a report which provided an update on the work and progress of the Halton Care Home Development Group over the past 18 months. It also provided an overview of forthcoming plans.

The Care Home Development Group was established to promote a collaborative, system-wide approach to enhance the care and support provided to care home residents across Halton. The groups focus was to improve standards, outcomes and experiences within the sector.

The report described the key initiatives and developments which were overseen by the group. The aim of the initiatives were to support care home staff to improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

It was noted that Millbrow Care Home received a “Good” CQC rating in the Summer and a case study outlining the journey undertaken in order to achieve this result was attached as an appendix to the report. A presentation with further examples was also delivered to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### HWB19 END OF LIFE

The Board received a report which provided an overview on the continued work regarding End of Life (EOL) services in Halton.

Halton was currently the worst performing area within Cheshire and Merseyside for EOL services. Under the direction of the One Halton Ageing Well Delivery Group, several projects were underway to develop an EOL system and meet NHS England targets relating to advance care planning, Gold Standards Framework meetings and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) decisions. A wide variety of stakeholders participate in the projects, including GP’s, Hospital Trusts, Community Services, Halton Borough Council and representatives from the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector.

In 2024, a Locality Group completed the “Getting to outstanding” self-assessment toolkit and the findings informed the Palliative and End of Life Care Local Improvement Plan for Halton.

The report also outlined a number of areas of focus



for 2025-26 and these were set out in section 3.4 of the report. Engagement work had been undertaken with “Dying Matters” to try and change people’s opinions on death and dying and encourage them to talk to family and friends about their wishes. It was agreed that although this might be sensitive subject, it was an important matter and therefore it was suggested that a NHS marketing campaign would be helpful to get the message out to encourage people to start talking about it.

There was also some discussion regarding recent changes regarding “do not resuscitate” (DNR) orders. Key changes included making it mandatory for healthcare professionals to have honest and timely conversations with patients, improved documentation of decisions, and to ensure that policies were understood across all settings. The goal was to empower patients and their families to make informed choices about their care in difficult conversations.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### HWB20 BETTER CARE FUND PLAN 2025/26 - QUARTER 1 UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Adult Services, which provided an update on the Quarter 1 Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan 2025/26, following its submission to the National Better Care Fund Team.

In line with the national requirements, the quarter 1 report focussed on reporting on the spend and activity funded via the discharge funding allocated to the local authority and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside (Halton Place).

The Board noted that the schemes funded via the discharge funding were:

- Oakmeadow Intermediate Care Beds;
- Reablement Service;
- Halton Intermediate Care and Frailty Services; and
- Halton Integrated Community Equipment Service.

RESOLVED: The Board note the report.

*Meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.*

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## LOCAL ECONOMY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Local Economy Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 15 September 2025 in the Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), Begg, Connolly, Garner, Rowe, Ryan and Skinner.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Gilligan and Hutchinson.

Absence declared on Council business: None.

Officers present: D. Cooke, H. Roberts, K. Arrowsmith, G Ferguson, and I. Moorhouse.

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

#### *Action*

#### ELS9 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### ELS10 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

#### ELS11 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board was presented with the minutes relating to the Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Portfolio, which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of the Board.

The Board commented that they would have preferred to be consulted on the health and leisure in Halton before it went to Executive Board.

#### ELS12 PRESENTATION ON HALTON BUSINESS INVESTMENT & GROWTH TEAM

The Board received a report and accompanying presentation which provided an overview on the Halton Business Investment & Growth Team. The Team ran the

UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) funded Halton Business Support Service and offered expert assistance to local businesses to make them more productive and competitive. They also helped with growth strategies and property searches.

The presentation outlined the range of current services offered to Halton businesses and progress on the delivery of the funded programmes and a view to post March 2026 when UKSPF funding came to an end.

Work done by the Team included signposting businesses to local council services and having one to one meetings or workshops with businesses in Halton to educate them on areas like cyber security. 67 businesses were supported between 2022-25 which was the target, and 15 new businesses were created but it was unknown how many jobs were created.

Post March 2026, Liverpool City Region (LCR) will focus on business support, housing, strategic planning & regeneration, transport, digital & energy infrastructure, employment skills and health as part of its industrial strategy. LCR would look at what could be done to replace UKSPF money when it ends in March 2026. It was noted that in early 2026 an Economic Forum will be held; 140 companies attended this event last year.

It was confirmed that there was no clarity on what would replace the UKSPF as Central Government attention shifted to combined authorities and devolution. Business rate relief was unavailable under the UKSPF, but the Team would signpost businesses to alternative sources of support.

Following some questions from the Board the following points were made:

- a proposal was raised that the Council should require new developments in Halton to offer on-site apprenticeships for local young people, in partnership with schools and colleges.
- the Team's promotional materials for town centre regeneration will be shared with the Board.
- it was confirmed that outreach to developers and property agents was conducted via the LCR network, real estate events, and local promotion. The Council did not have its own budget for self-promotion. The Board noted a need to better highlight Halton's strengths, for example its transport links.

- it was suggested the Council explore co-location and flexible working spaces, following Liverpool City Council's example.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

Interim  
Regeneration and  
Business Growth  
Manager

*Councillor Aimee Skinner left the Meeting at this juncture at 19:32*

#### ELS13 PRESENTATION ON SCI-TECH DARESBUY

The Board received a report and accompanying presentation which provided an overview on the Sci-Tech Daresbury Joint Venture and the positive impact it had. Sci-Tech Daresbury Joint Venture was established in 2010 as a partnership with the Science & Technology Facilities Council (Daresbury Labs) and Langtree Property Partners. The site has been a legally designated Enterprise Zone since 2012 and in 2024 it became part of the Liverpool City Region Health & Life Sciences Investment Zone. It is the only National UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) Lab in the north of England and 160 companies were on site varying in size.

The presentation outlined the Sci-Tech Daresbury Campus including that it had the fastest supercomputer in the UK on site and one of Europe's largest liquid helium cryogenic cooling facilities. Other key points included:

- Businesses on site had a 95% survival rate.
- There were mainly small businesses onsite, but the average sales growth was 29%.
- £45 million was invested into the campus and £20 million of this was from public sector grants. £6.5 million of this came from the Council using the Enterprise Zone Borrowing Mechanism.
- The Council owned 25% of Daresbury Joint Venture assets. £883,000 per annum in business rates is currently retained by the Council for reinvestment into the enterprise zone until 2037.
- 15% of employees on site were from Halton.
- Over 70% of jobs at Daresbury were degree level and above and over 189 apprenticeships were created in the last four years.
- Roughly £3 million per annum is spent in the local supply chain just from the Joint Venture.
- A public engagement programme was established to work with local schools and colleges to engage with students on activities

including coding and video game design.

It was confirmed that placements at Daresbury had increased for students from schools in Halton, but the reason why employment levels were unknown. Officers agreed to ask the companies on site to see if they were receiving applications from students from Halton.

Regarding Daresbury's charity partnership, the Board requested that the next charity partnership be established with a charity based in Halton if possible.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

Interim  
Regeneration and  
Business Growth  
Manager

#### ELS14 HALTON ADULT LEARNING – THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM IN 24/25

The Board received a report on Halton's Creative Curriculum for Adult Learning in 2024/25. Work was done to design programmes that would allow a holistic development of literacy, teamwork, communication/presentation skills, self-reflection and confidence. Halton Adult Learning was wholly funded by LCR's Adult Skills Fund. Officers provided brochures to the Board detailing the work undertaken in 2024/25 including crafts, murals, educational trips to free to access places and writing stories which were published. Most of the 450 adult learners in Halton enrolled on the creative courses and the feedback received was very positive.

Regarding the books that the adult learners had got published, Officers agreed to see if they could be provided to local schools as it promoted local successes.

The Board praised the work done by Halton Adult Learning and suggested that the learner's artwork go in Brindley Theatre.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Quality & Learner  
Experience  
Manager

#### ELS15 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2025/26

The Board received the performance management reports for Quarter 1 of 2025-26 (1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025) 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 2025-26 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.

It was confirmed that the new Brindley Library was now set to open in the spring of 2026 due to site issues. Despite the footfall reduction at the relocated Library, service usage had increased due to the usage of online services.

Officers agreed to get an update regarding the condition of the swimming pool at Halton Leisure Centre.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Operational  
Director  
Economy,  
Enterprise and  
Property

#### ELS16 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 31 MAY 2025

The Board received a report from the Director of Finance, which gave the Council's overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31 May 2025, together year-end outturn position. All Policy and Public Performance Boards had received this report.

It was confirmed that the Board were unable to receive the budget information for July 2025 because this data was unavailable at the time when the agenda legally had to be published.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Meeting ended at 9:01p.m.*

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## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Health and Social Care Policy and Performance Board held on Tuesday, 23 September 2025 at Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Dourley (Chair), Baker (Vice-Chair), S. Hill, A. Lowe, N. Plumpton Walsh and Stretch and Healthwatch Co-optee D. Wilson.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Davidson, Goodall and Hughes

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Butler, D. Nolan, D. O'Connor and L. Wilson

Also in attendance: T. Leo – Halton Place, NHS Cheshire & Merseyside, 16 members of the public and 3 members of the press

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

*Action*

#### HEA10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held 24 June 2025, having been printed and circulated, were signed as a correct record.

#### HEA11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following public question had been received:

##### **Question 1**

Following the outcome of the CQC assessment being only 2 points away from requiring improvement and the factual supporting information that has been brought to the PPBs attention, will the PPB now recommend that the Council appoint an external agency to undertake a full review of the failings, processes and conduct of senior council officers to enable robust learning to prevent future unavoidable harm of vulnerable residents?

##### **Response**

The Chair advised that some additional information had been provided in support of the question / request and this

was made available to all Members of the Board to consider. It was agreed that the Board would meet separately to decide what next steps needed to be taken and if necessary, what recommendations would need to be made to the Executive Board.

It was noted that Ms. Gobin requested that David Nimble be commissioned to undertake the external review.

### **Supplementary Question**

How can assurances be made, that Officers of Halton Borough Council who were heavily implicated in this case, will be held accountable for their involvement in this conduct?

### **Response**

The Board would review the information received and consider if any recommendations were needed to be put forward to the Executive Board. Any subsequent reviews would present findings for action.

## **HEA12 ONE HALTON PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

The Board received a presentation from the NHS Director – One Halton, which provided an update on One Halton Partnership activities and followed previous reports which had been shared with the Board.

The presentation outlined the Integrated Care Board (ICB) key priorities and how these aligned to Halton Place priorities; Halton's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the challenges in Halton; examples of the things the Integrated Neighbourhood Deliver Model was working on; and the delivery structure of One Halton.

The following additional information was provided in response to Members questions/comments:

- some of the data provided in the presentation was for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate Halton's life course from "starting well" to "ageing well";
- the current Health & Wellbeing Strategy was live and updated every 3 years;
- One Halton Partnership would not be affected by the merge of Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- the population of Halton was approximately 130,000

and on average GP's offer between 55,000 and 60,000 appointments every month. In addition, walk-in Urgent Treatment Centre appointments were available; and

- Family Hubs needed to be promoted in clinics/in the very early stages of maternity services.

RESOLVED: That the One Halton update is received and noted.

#### HEA13 MODEL ICB UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the NHS Director – One Halton, which provided an update on the Model Integrated Care Board (ICB) Blueprint.

On 1 April 2025, Sir Jim Mackey, Chief Executive of NHS England, wrote to all ICB's and NHS Trusts to provide further detail on the Government's Reform Agenda for the NHS. The letter highlighted the significant progress made in planning for 2025/26 and outlined a move to a medium-term approach to planning, which would be shaped by a 10 year Health Plan and the outcome of the Spending Review.

In order to achieve the ambitions it was noted that:

- ICB's would need to reduce their management costs by an average of 50%;
- ICB's would need to commission and develop Neighbourhood Health Models; and
- NHS providers would need to reduce their corporate cost growth by 50% by quarter 3 of 2025/26, with the savings to be reinvested locally to enhance frontline services.

On 2 May 2025 the first draft Model ICB Blueprint was shared with all ICB's, which outlined the future role and functions of ICB's as strategic commissioners within the NHS. The Blueprint set out a number of expectations and in order to respond effectively, NHS Cheshire & Merseyside had identified a programme of work to help meet the requirements of the document. They had also established a Transition Task and Finish Group to oversee the organisational change and duties transfer.

It was noted that the 31% staff reduction would inevitably have a local impact on headcount across Cheshire and Merseyside and consideration would need to be given on how services contained within the blueprint would continue to be delivered; some functions may transfer

elsewhere.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

HEA14 INTRODUCING THE SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE RACE EQUALITY STANDARD (SCWRES) INDIVIDUAL DATA REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

The Board received a report regarding the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (SC-WRES) Improvement Programme. This programme supported local authorities to address evidence of inequality through the collection and analysis of their workforce data against 9 key metrics. Organisations could then use their findings to develop an action plan to drive change and improvement.

The SC-WRES was a new annual data return made to Skills for Care and represented details of the Council's Adult Social Care workforce. A 12 month improvement programme had been developed and was attached at appendix 1 of the report.

Skills for Care had published the latest findings from the SC-WRES and these were set out in the report. The findings were taken from the 9 indicators. The data analysis was carried out at organisational level, which not only enabled local authorities to develop action plans but it was also used to produce a national report, giving an anonymous reflection of the social care sector.

In 2024, 76 local authorities participated in the SC-WRES improvement, with 73 providing data about their adult social care workforce and 43 (of the 73) also provided data about the children's social care workforce for the report.

Halton submitted their action plan in June 2025 and signed up to the programme for three years. The action plan would be made available to the public via social media and the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

HEA15 HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ADULT SOCIAL CARE - CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Adults, which provided details of the outcome of Halton's Adult Social Care CQC Assessment.

The final report was published on 4 July 2025 and Halton's Adult Social Care Services were rated overall as Good. The rating had been informed by judgements made from across a number of themes and quality statements, such as working with people and providing support.

The report was also accompanied by a short presentation which outlined two specific areas of the assessment:

- What We are doing Well – the headlines; and
- Areas for Improvement.

A draft Improvement Plan had also been developed and this was attached at Appendix 2 of the report.

RESOLVED: That the report and presentation be noted.

#### HEA16 ADULT SOCIAL CARE BUDGET POSITION

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Adults, which provided a summary of the Adult Social Care (ASC) budget position. It also highlighted the actions being taken to address immediate financial challenges and identify known budget pressures in the short to medium term.

It was anticipated that the ASC division would be overspent against the planned budget by circa £700,000. This would be the first year that the division would not achieve a balanced budget. This was due to problems of recruitment and retention and the underachievement of income for the community meals and telehealth care services.

Community Care services were experiencing significant and increased pressures and these were detailed in the report. A Community Care budget recovery working group had been established to identify ways to reduce spend.

A financial recovery action plan and tracking monitoring system had been established with the aim of delivering a balanced community care budget at year end. The details of this was contained in section 6 of the report.

Social Care budgets had been impacted by ongoing financial pressures within the NHS, such as access to Continuing Health Care and costs incurred from services

such as transport, medication support and occupational therapy, which should all be funded from health. Current responsibilities and processes changes were under review across the Cheshire and Merseyside region. There were also additional pressures from packages transitioning from Children's Social Care. However, it was noted that the Complex Care Pool Budget was on track to achieve a balanced budget.

Following discussions and questions raised by Members of the Board, some additional information was noted:

- at the end of 2022-23, the total overspend for Care Homes was £1.9M this was due to Government grants coming to an end after the Covid Pandemic, although the activity needed to continue e.g. additional staffing, PPE etc. The following year the overspend reduced to £1.6M and this year the projected overspend was £800,000;
- the most financially challenging area was Community Care due to it being demand led; and
- recruitment and retention was still a major issue in care homes, however, there had been an improvement in social care and an end date for agency staff had been agreed. A report with further details would be presented to the Board in due course.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the financial position outlined in the report; and
- 2) consider the budget pressures highlighted in the report.

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

#### HEA17 JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS - CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE - STAGE 1: DELEGATION

The Board received a report from the Executive Director - Adults, which introduced proposed revisions to the Joint Health Scrutiny (JHS) Arrangements, which were in operation across Cheshire and Merseyside.

The arrangements provided a framework for local authorities to individually and collectively review and scrutinise matters relating to planning, provision and operations of health services. As outlined in the report, prior to any establishment of JHS arrangements, each local authority should decide individually whether a proposal

represented a substantial/variation or not, referred to as Stage 1. The regulations would then place a requirement of a local authority that agree the proposal to establish a joint overview and scrutiny.

In the past, there had been instances when Boards had been asked to consider proposals when timings of the proposals had not aligned with scheduled Board meetings and on therefore special PPB's had to be arranged for the proposals to be considered.

In Halton's case, it was suggested that a Stage 1 delegation should be made by the Lead Officer of the PPB, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the PPB. Having a scheme of delegation in place would support this process and would only be initiated when timings did not allow for the proposals to be scheduled within the normal round of Board meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorse the proposal for a Stage 1 delegation and recommend Executive Board agreement, for onward approval by Council.

#### HEA18 ADULTS DIRECTORATE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE CARE 2030 VISION

The Board considered a report which provided an overview of the Adults Directorate's activity which directly impacted on the priority themes identified in the North West Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Care 2030 Strategy.

The Strategy was published in 2021 and set out a 10 year outlook to achieve change as well as a long-term vision for Adult Social Care across the region. The Strategy recognised that demand for social care continued to grow and this was set against substantial financial challenges. In order to achieve the vision, the Strategy identified four priority objectives: Future Models; Future Markets; Future Workforce and Sector Led Improvement.

The report outlined key developments and the progress Halton had made towards the Care 2030 priorities and vision. It would continue to work alongside NW ADASS to meet the objectives of transforming the sector.

The Board was assured that staff in both the Adults and Children's Directorates work closely to ensure a seamless transition from children to adults services and this had been helped by reverting back to the 14-25 eligibility

criteria.

It was noted that currently, apprenticeships were recruited in-house from staff within Care Management services and this was a robust process, however, in the future this would be expanded to allow applications from staff within Provider Services.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### HEA19 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - QUARTER 1 2025/26

The Board received the Performance Management Reports for quarter one of 2025/26.

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 2025-26. This included a description of factors, which were affecting the service.

It was noted that quarter 1 data in respect of Adult Social Care was not yet available. However, key developments, emerging issues and financial statements that related to Adult Social Care were included in the report.

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.

Some queries were raised in relation to the Public Health performance indicators and it was agreed that further information would be circulated to Board Members in due course.

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management report for quarter one of 2025/26 be received.

Director of Public Health

#### HEA20 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 31 MAY 2025

The Board received a copy of a report, which was presented to the Council's Executive Board on 10 July 2025. The report outlined the Council's overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31 May 2025, together with the latest 2025/26 outturn forecast. The report also described the reasons for key variances from budget.



The Executive Board had requested that a copy of the report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board for information, to ensure that all Members had a full appreciation of the Councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility.

It was noted that the four in-house Care Homes continued to struggle and were forecast to be £0.8m over budget by year-end. This was mainly due to continued high use of agency staff to cover sickness and recruitment issues.

RESOLVED: That the Councilwide financial position as at 31 May 2025, as outlined in the report, be noted.

*On behalf of the Board and the previous Chair of the Board, Councillor Dourley thanked Damian Nolan for his work and contribution to the Board and Adult Services. Damian was due to leave the Authority at the end of the month and he was wished well for the future.*

*Meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.*

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**HOUSING AND SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Housing and Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 18 November 2025 at the Board Room, Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Fry (Chair), Carlin (Vice-Chair), Bramwell, Connolly, Garner, C. Loftus, A. McInerney, L. Nolan, Ratcliffe and Teeling

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: S. Burrows, K. Butler, R. Freeman and N. Goodwin

Also in attendance: 4 observers in the public gallery

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

*Action*

**SAF19 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair advised the Board that he had recently represented Halton on the Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioners Office Complaints Sub-Committee, which considered three complaints, all of which were dismissed.

**SAF20 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2025 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**SAF21 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

**SAF22 DOMESTIC ABUSE PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, regarding the work undertaken by the Domestic Abuse Board and the work programme for the period 2025/26.

The Board, which was a multi-agency partnership,

underwent a review which had included its membership, to ensure appropriate senior level representation from stakeholders. It also published an interim strategy, mobilised its Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and set out a work programme which was supported by a sub-group structure. The Board meets on a bi-monthly basis.

The interim Domestic Abuse Strategy, which was attached to the report as an appendix, set out four strategic priorities:

- act before someone is harmed;
- increase safety for those at risk;
- identify and stop harmful behaviours; and
- support people to live the life they want after harm occurs.

The Board responded to these priorities by establishing four sub-groups titled Prevent, Prepare, Protect and Pursue. The groups work collectively to operationalise the priorities through high level oversight, partnership co-ordination and outcome driven planning. The structure would also ensure the work of the Board feeds into the Safeguarding Boards, Scrutiny Boards and any other statutory groups.

Accommodation arrangements for domestic abuse had fed into the emerging Housing Strategy for the Borough, to ensure that statutory requirements were met and to improve housing offers for emergency, supported and dispersed accommodation for victims and their families going forward.

Also attached to the report was a draft Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This provided a strategic overview of domestic abuse in Halton, the statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which would inform future service commissioning, Housing Strategy and multi-agency co-ordination. There had been some key findings from the draft assessment and these were outlined in section 3.9 of the report. The JSNA also included 13 strategic recommendations, which the Partnership Board needed to consider.

Members of the Board were advised that work was underway to raise awareness of older persons domestic abuse and a partnership event was planned for 21 November 2025 to discuss prevention and best practice management for those who supported individuals at risk of, or experiencing, domestic abuse in later life.

The following additional information was provided in response to Members questions/comments:

- although Halton's perpetrator rate was higher than the national average, it was suggested that the national figure was exceptionally low and therefore more work was required to identify the reason for this. Further work was also required to identify how Halton compared to its neighbouring authorities. It was agreed that Members would be provided with a further update in due course;
- concerns were also raised regarding the statistics of Halton's repeat victimisation rate and the Board requested further clarification on this;
- Members were reassured that Halton was compliant with the Domestic Abuse Act. However, with regards to accommodation, Halton needed to strengthen their dispersed step down offer and how it supported victims who required family type accommodation in residential areas, hence the importance of input to the Housing Strategy. In terms of emergency accommodation, the Executive Board had approved a significant capital investment in a programme of work earlier in the year and this was now in motion;
- there was a mutual agreement between local authorities to share referrals and provide supported accommodation in out of areas to help protect victims; and
- Domestic Abuse victims were prioritised in terms of housing allocations.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the development of the statutory Domestic Abuse Partnership Board governance arrangements;
- 2) endorse the work programme; and
- 3) note the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Domestic Abuse.

Director of  
Community &  
Greenspaces

## SAF23 TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Director of Public Health, which provided an update on the work of the

Trading Standards Service over the past 12 months and the contribution this work had made to the Council's public protection and community safety objectives.

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, age restricted sales, explosives, scams awareness, fair trading, doorstep crime, e-crime, fraud, counterfeit and illicit goods – including tobacco and vapes and animal feeding stuffs. 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;
- tobacco and vapes;
- age restricted sales;
- consumer advice and the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline;
- product safety; and
- iCAN consumer alert network and Facebook.

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:

- the secure “159” helpline provides direct access to a bank's fraud department, enabling anyone to report suspicious calls or seek help if they believe they may be the victim of a scam;
- there was no accreditation scheme for compliant shop owners, particularly those selling tobacco or vaping products. Such premises were required to hold licenses, which were subject to review as part of regulatory oversight; and
- concerns were raised about scams/fake products which were promoted via Facebook. Trading Standards advise consumers not to make any purchases via Facebook as consumer protection laws

may be limited. In particular, third-party sites linked from Facebook were not covered by Facebook's Purchase Protection.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the report;
- 2) agree to follow the Halton Trading Standards page on Facebook to increase awareness.

SAF24 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR  
QUARTER 2 OF 2025/26

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Report for Quarter 2 of 2025/26.

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2025/26 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as detailed below:

- Community Safety and Protection;
- Risk and Emergency Planning;
- Drug and Alcohol Action;
- Domestic Violence; and
- Housing.

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 the quarter 2 performance management report be received and noted.

*Meeting ended at 7.26 p.m.*

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**ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 12 November 2025 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), P. Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chair), V. Hill, McDermott, Nelson and L. Nolan

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Hutchinson and Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Ferguson, S. Burrows, I. Saxby and A. Plant

Also in attendance: J. Hayes, D. Lyon and M Bennett – Mersey Gateway Crossings Board

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

*Action*

**EUR19 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2025, having been circulated, were signed as a correct record.

**EUR20 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

**EUR21 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES**

The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board relevant to the Environment and Regeneration Policy and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.

**EUR22 MERSEY GATEWAY PROJECT**

The Board received a report and accompanying presentation in relation to the achievement of the seven strategic objectives of the Mersey Gateway Project.

The Mersey Gateway Bridge opened to traffic on 14 October 2017 and on the eighth anniversary, almost 190 million crossings had been made. The Silver Jubilee Bridge and MGB had been operating concurrently for the past 4.5 years. The Council established the Project with the intention of delivering seven strategic objectives, which had all been achieved, and these were outlined in the report and in the presentation.

The Project had delivered major transport improvements and an 80% reduction in traffic using the Silver Jubilee Bridge, which allowed it to be freed up for local use. This had led to social benefits to communities in and around Halton which included improvements to public transport facilities across the river, walking and cycling facilities and health and improved road safety. As a result of reduced air pollution, the Air Quality Management Areas in Halton were revoked in November 2023.

The Board were also advised on the work of the Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust which had seen the following achievements:

- creating and managing new wildlife habitats;
- delivering environmental improvement works;
- conducting environmental monitoring to assess bird populations; and
- community engagement such as work with local schools.

It was agreed that the presentation would be shared with all members of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report and presentation be noted.

#### EUR23 ANNUAL ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION AND CASUALTY REPORT

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided the latest road safety statistics released by the Department for Transport (DfT) through the publication of the 2024 Comprehensive Annual Report.

The report set out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in 2024 and compared these figures with those from previous years, which showed a substantial fall in overall casualty numbers. This 16% reduction compared very favourably with the national picture

where there had been a 4% decrease.

Members noted that Halton had achieved its performance targets as set by the DfT; there were 123 road traffic collisions involving personal injury within Halton, 35 fewer than the previous year. The latest figures (2024) for Halton showed a welcome substantial fall in overall casualty numbers, following marginal annual increases post-Covid.

In addition, the report highlighted an update on the work the Road Safety Team had undertaken in 2024/25 which would continue to cover road traffic collision reduction schemes, road safety education, training and publicity as well as engaging with Cheshire Police to target effective enforcement action.

The report also outlined information on the following road safety initiatives:

- Gyratory Red Light Camera;
- “Smiley” Speed Indicative Device/Sign (SiDs);
- Mobile Speed Camera Sites;
- Collision Sites;
- Safer Active Travel;
- Education; and
- Halton 2025/26 Strategy.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton over the past decade be noted; and
- 2) the 2026/27 strategy of road safety schemes and road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed.

#### EUR24 PEST CONTROL – UPDATE ON FEES AND CHARGES

The Board received a report from the Director of Public Health, which provided an update on the Pest Control Service following the implementation of a charge for rat treatments in April 2025.

In February 2025, the Board agreed to introduce a new fee to recover the full cost of rat treatments on domestic properties. However, residents who were in receipt of Council Tax reduction benefits would be exempt. The proposal was ultimately agreed by Council as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26.

Since the charge had been reduced the number of treatments delivered by the service had reduced and the service would not achieve its anticipated income target. It was noted that the potential negative consequences of the charge outlined in the report to the Board in February had not materialised. These included an increase in rat activity and an increase in enforcement cases for the Environmental Protection team.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorse the proposal to continue with the current means tested charges for rat treatments. This includes the provision of free treatments for residents in receipt of Council Tax reduction benefit.

#### EUR25 ENVIRONMENTAL FUND UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the expenditure of the Environmental Fund.

Planning permission for the Runcorn Thermal Power Station (TPS) Plant was granted in September 2008. The Plant was subject to a legal agreement, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The legal agreement contained a provision that the owner of the Plant agreed to pay the Council an annual lump sum payment for every tonne of fuel received and processed.

The fund had been in operation since 2015 and to date had generated £7,936,270.74. The projects that had benefitted from the fund were set out in Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the report and the wide range of projects that had benefitted from the fund, as set out in Appendix 1.

#### EUR26 PROGRESS OF THE PLANNING POLICY TEAM'S LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS)

The Board received a report which set out the work of the Planning Policy Team's progress to date on the following projects:

- Transport and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)
- Social Value in Planning SPD
- House Extensions SPD
- Call for Sites Exercise

It was noted that consultation on the House Extension

and Transport Accessibility SPDs would take place in mid November. Whilst consultation around the Social Value in Planning SPD would take place in early 2026. It was anticipated that the SPDs would be submitted to Executive Board for approval in 2026.

The Board was advised that the Call for Sites exercise was a process of gathering information and assisted the Council to understand any potentially available sites for future development. At the request of a large landowner the Council had extended the deadline for this exercise to 5 December to allow them to submit a site to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted and Officers proceed with the necessary consultation to endorse Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).

#### EUR27 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2025/26

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Report for Quarter 2 of 2025/26.

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2025/26 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 the quarter 2 performance management report be received and noted.

*Meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.*

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**CORPORATE AND INCLUSION POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Corporate and Inclusion Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 4 November 2025 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chair), Philbin (Vice-Chair), Carlin, Davidson, Leck, Logan, McDermott, C. Loftus and N. Plumptre Walsh

Apologies for Absence: Councillors McDonough and A. McInerney

Absence declared on Council business: None.

Officers present: M. Reaney, E. Dawson, L. Combes, C. Westwood, P. Garnett, G. Tootle, S. Davies, B. Reardon and I. Moorhouse.

Also in attendance: M. Wainwright and K. Gummer (observing)

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD	
CS18	MINUTES
The Minutes from the meeting held on 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2025 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CS19	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME
The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CS20	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES
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 the Board, and were attached as Appendix 1 for information.	
The Board expressed that they would like to discuss the Voluntary Severance Scheme before any final decisions are made by the Executive Board.	
CS21	UPDATE REGARDING THE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND AND DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2025
The Board considered an update regarding delivery	

*Action*

of the Government's Household Support Fund and progress with Discretionary Housing Payments between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025. This included the breakdown of spending for the Discretionary Support Scheme which included money for free school meal vouchers and foodbanks. The Household Support Fund will be replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund, and it was expected that Halton would receive the same amount.

The following additional information was provided in response to Member's questions:

- Regarding foodbanks, it was clarified that Runcorn Food Bank had not spent all their allocation yet, but it was expected that they would.
- Both Widnes and Runcorn's foodbanks received the same amount of funding.
- When the Household Support Fund was introduced, the Council involved many third sector parties including the Citizen's Advice Bureau. However, the funding provided could not be used to fund salaries of those who worked in the third sector.
- Free school meals took up £1 million of the Household Support Fund's payments and £500,000 was given to pensioners.
- There would be new Government guidance regarding payments from Government Funds.
- It was confirmed that the Team's staffing structure had stayed the same but there was a vacancy following a retirement.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## CS22 CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT 1/4/25 TO 31/8/25

The Board considered the performance of Health Safety Management within the Authority for 1st April 2025 to 31st August 2025. This included the proposed recommendations from the accident analysis data for the first half of 2025 from 1st April and be actioned during the period 2025/26. The risk assessments remained the same and work was being done to 'tie up' the system.

The Board was advised that:

- The first set of data for lone working was obtained, but this could not be compared until 2026.
- There had been a decrease in incidents in workplaces but an increase in the 43 primary schools that reported to the Council.



- 15 incidents came from one school and support was given to school staff when these incidents occurred.

It was confirmed that academies do not report incidents to the Council, and these incidents would only be known if academies shared this information. Officers agreed to see if they could obtain these statistics through the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Monitoring Officer

Ofsted guidance emphasised that schools should collaborate with the local community and officers had written to academies before asking them to share their incident statistics. Officers agreed to see if this issue was unique to Halton.

Health & Safety Advisor

A Board Member noted that if a child was violent in school, then they could become violent in the community, and this would become a Council issue. Officers agreed to liaise with the Director of Education on this to see if Ofsted would need to be involved.

Health & Safety Advisor

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## CS23 WIDNES MARKET

The Board considered an update on Widnes Market. The Market's business plan outlined the strategic priorities and actions to be implemented by the Market Management Team to ensure that Widnes Market continued to operate successfully and sustainably. This included using social media and partnerships with organisations including the Business Improvement and Growth Team, Digital Cheshire, and Halton Chamber of Commerce.

The following additional information was provided in response to Member's questions:

- The data in 3.6 of the report showed the positive effect of the social media strategies had for the market and showed the difference from three months before they were implemented.
- A new social media strategy was planned to highlight free parking areas within a 3-minute walk to the market.
- Market stall occupancy was at 82% and the market covered its own costs.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## CS24 PROGRAMMES OFFICE UPDATE

The Board considered the annual update on the work of the Programmes Office in securing and managing external funding resources. The report provided an annual update on the Programmes Office key activities and priorities and the funding statistics for the period 2024-25. Development and Investment Services was split into two halves: funding & development and monitoring & compliance, which was increasing in the amount of work that needed to be done. The Team was aiming to get a 'fair share' of funding for Halton from the Government and raise the borough's profile. In the future, funding would come from the new Pride and Place Fund from Central Government.

The following additional information was provided in response to Member's questions:

- As Halton has a castle, this should be promoted more as historical buildings were very popular with tourists.
- As the first constructed canal in the country, it was noted that the Bridgewater Canal should be promoted to tourists.
- Officers run a project called 'Destination Halton' which worked with the Liverpool Combined Authority to promote tourism.
- A new place strategy was being developed to encourage tourism and improve the area for residents.
- Officers do not instigate tourism projects, but these projects should be able to access the incoming Pride and Place Fund.
- League tables that showed the funding amounts that areas received were not produced anymore.
- For future projects, officers agreed to look at holding a member seminar to inform members on how funding could be obtained.
- As Halton was not a priority area for National Lottery funding, there had been a decline in people applying for their funding in the borough.
- Halton got 7.9% of UKSPF due to the level of deprivation in the borough.
- Officers asked councillors or members of community groups to forward their email address ([funding@halton.gov.uk](mailto:funding@halton.gov.uk)) if they wanted help to access funding.

Programmes  
Manager

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The Board considered the performance management for the second quarter period to 30th September 2025. Key priorities for development or improvement in 2025-26 were agreed by Members for various functional areas.

The following additional information was provided in response to Member's questions:

- The Board expressed a concern in the reduction of workforce stability.
- It was clarified that the planned solar panel farm for Halton Leisure Centre would go out to bid in early 2026 with a contract being awarded in the spring of 2026.
- Officers agreed to investigate how much money the solar panels would save and how much power they would provide.
- Officers agreed to clarify whether the intention is for the new Halton Leisure Centre to operate on a full cost recovery basis and therefore, whether the delay with connecting the Leisure Centre to the Solar Farm is affecting this.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Assistant to the  
Chief Executive

Head of Leisure

*Meeting ended at 19:41*

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**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Audit and Governance Board held on Wednesday, 19 November 2025 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chair), Connolly (Vice-Chair), Abbott, V. Hill, Ratcliffe, Thornton and Wallace

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Guest, E. Dawson, M. Murphy and G. Ferguson

Also in attendance: M. Derrick – Grant Thornton UK LLP

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

	<i>Action</i>
AGB23 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
AGB24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2025-26 HALF YEAR UPDATE	
The Board considered a report from the Director of Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Half Year Report as at 30 September 2025. The report had previously been presented to the Executive Board at its meeting on 13 November 2025 and was noted.	
These reports updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market during the first half of the financial year to 30 September 2025, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.	
The report provided supporting information on the economic outlook, interest rate forecast, short term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing and investments, budget monitoring, new long term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken	

during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### AGB25 RECRUITMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER

The Board considered a report of the Director - Finance, that provided an update on the process to recruit an Independent Member to the Board. This followed the review and update of the Board's terms of reference and composition to ensure that they complied with Cipfa's recommended practice. It was noted that the post had been advertised in early November and the closing date for applications was 28 November 2025. It was hoped that interviews would be held in December 2025 and would be undertaken by a Panel comprising the Chair, Vice-Chair and Director of Finance.

RESOLVED: That the update on progress with the recruitment of an Independent Member to the Board, be noted.

#### AGB26 EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

The Board received an update report regarding the completion of the audit of the Council's 2024/25 year-end accounts from Mr Derrick on behalf of the Council's external auditors Grant Thornton. He advised that it was anticipated that an Audit Certificate for 2024/25 would be issued to the Council shortly.

On behalf of Grant Thornton, he thanked the Council's Finance Team for their support during the audit of the Council accounts for 2024/25.

RESOLVED: That the verbal progress update from the Council's external auditor Grant Thornton UK LLP, be received.

#### AGB27 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Board received a report from the Head of Audit and Operational Finance, updating Members on the internal audit activity since the last progress report to the Board on 24 September 2025. It also highlighted any matters that were relevant to the Board's responsibilities as the Council's Audit Committee.

Members were referred to appendix 1, 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 October 2025, 591 days of audit work had been completed, which represented 56.3% of the total planned days for the year.

The report's appendix set out the progress against 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan. Since the last progress report Internal Audit had finalised 11 audits, each of which included an overall assurance opinion. Full copies of the Internal Audit reports were included in the Part II of the agenda as they contained exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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

AGB28 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.

AGB29 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT (PART 2)

The Board received a report from the Head of Audit and Operational Finance, which provided full copies of the Internal Audit reports completed since the previous update on 24 September 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Internal Audit work completed during the reporting period be noted.

*Meeting ended at 6.50 p.m.*



**REGULATORY COMMITTEE**

*At a meeting of the Regulatory Committee on Wednesday, 17 September 2025 in the  
The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Wallace (Chair), Abbott (Vice-Chair), Begg, Bramwell,  
K. Loftus, Nelson and Stockton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Fry and Hughes

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: E. Wilson-Lagan, K. Hesketh and C. Harrison

Also in attendance: None

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

REG3	MINUTES	<i>Action</i>
	<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2025 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.</p>	
REG4	LICENSING ACT 2003 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY	
	<p>The Committee received a report setting out the results of consultation exercise on the draft Statement of Licensing Policy ("the draft Policy") which had been considered by Members at the previous Regulatory Meeting on 2 July 2025. The current Policy was due to expire on 6 January 2026 and a new policy needed to be in place by 7 January 2026. One consultation response had been received by Cheshire Police which proposed that the reference to the Arc-Angel scheme at paragraph 103 in the draft Policy be removed as this scheme was no longer in force and replaced by the recognised schemes that are currently in place, namely Best Bar None and Licensing Savi.</p>	
	<p>As this amendment was minor and not one of substance, Officers did not consider it was necessary to reconsult and recommended the draft Policy be updated</p>	

with the amendment proposed by Cheshire Police. The Committee agreed and approved the draft Statement of Policy with the minor amendment by Cheshire Police and recommended it be adopted by Council accordingly.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approve:

- 1) the draft Statement of Licensing Policy, as set out in Appendix A, and that it be recommended to full Council for adoption; and
- 2) an appropriate form of wording for the Council resolution would be "The Council"
  - a) adopts the Statement of Licensing Policy attached to the report to come into effect immediately following the expiry of the current policy on 6 January 2026; and
  - b) the Director of Legal and Democratic Services publishes the Statement in accordance with section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003.

Director, Legal  
and Democratic  
Services

*Meeting ended at 6.54 p.m.*

**APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

*At a meeting of the Appointments Committee held on Friday, 15 August 2025 at Box 17, DCBL Stadium, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Dennett, Ratcliffe and Thompson

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Davidson and Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: R. Rout

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

*Action*

**APC10 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2025, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and agreed as a correct record.

**APC11 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 Committee 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 4 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 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### APC12 STAFFING MATTER

Following a recruitment process the Committee considered candidates for the posts of Interim Director of Transformation and Interim Director of HR & Corporate Affairs.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Lisa Taylor be appointed to the post of Interim Director of Transformation; and
- 2) Hayley Hamlett be appointed to the post of Interim Director of HR & Corporate Affairs.

*Meeting ended at 1.20 p.m.*

## APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

*At a meeting of the Appointments Committee held on Thursday, 9 October 2025 at the Box 17, DCBL Stadium, Lower House Lane, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Ball, Davidson, Ratcliffe, Thompson and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: R. Rout, G. Haining and S. Wallace-Bonner

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

*Action*

APC13 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 Committee 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 4 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 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

APC14 APPOINTMENT TO THE POST OF: INTERIM DIRECTOR OF COMMISSIONING AND PROVISION, AND INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CARE MANAGEMENT, SAFEGUARDING AND QUALITY

Following an internal expression of interest process and the drawing up of a shortlist, the Committee considered candidates for the posts of Interim Director of Commissioning and Provision, and Interim Director of Care Management, Safeguarding and Quality.

RESOLVED: That,

- 1) Sarah Foy be appointed to the post of Interim Director of Commissioning and Provision; and
- 2) Debbie O'Connor be appointed to the post of Interim Director of Care Management, Safeguarding and Quality.

*Meeting ended at 2.40 p.m.*