

Public Document Pack



Corporate Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 26 January 2021 6.30 p.m.
Via public remote access (please contact
Clerk named below for instructions)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David WR'.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Ged Philbin (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor John Abbott	Labour
Councillor Harry Howard	Labour
Councillor Martha Lloyd Jones	Labour
Councillor Chris Loftus	Labour
Councillor Alan Lowe	Labour
Councillor Angela McInerney	Labour
Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh	Labour
Councillor Joe Roberts	Labour
Councillor Kevan Wainwright	Labour

*Please contact Gill Ferguson on 0151 511 8059 or
gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Date Not Specified*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

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1. MINUTES	1 - 4
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 3 November 2020 held remotely.

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chair), Philbin (Vice-Chair), Abbott, Howard, M. Lloyd Jones, C. Loftus, A. Lowe, A. McInerney, Joe Roberts and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor N. Plumpton Walsh

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, I. Leivesley, G. Ferguson, M. Foy, J. Unsworth and J. Yates

Also in attendance: None

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

	<i>Action</i>
CS14 MINUTES	
The Minutes from the meeting held on 8 September 2020 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CS15 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CS16 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 this Board.	
RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.	
CS17 AREA FORUMS ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020	
A report was presented to the Board by the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which informed Members of the project delivery of the Local Area Forums for the financial period 1 April 2019 to 31 March	

2020.

Members were advised that Local Area Forums (LAF) provided a mechanism for Councillors to respond to community needs and aspirations through the funding and delivery of initiatives and projects. Area Forum money could also be used as 'match funding' to help lever in additional funding from a variety of external sources.

It was reported that in 2019/20, £200,000 was allocated to Area Forums, split on a per capita basis across all seven Forums, which covered the Borough. Details of the funding for each of the LAF's, case study information and resident feedback was provided to demonstrate the impact LAF projects had made for Halton's communities. Projects funded through the LAFs were categorised into the following key areas:-

- Children and Youth Facilities;
- Community Events;
- Community Resource and Equipment;
- Community Initiatives;
- Improved Parks;
- Landscapes;
- Pedestrian and Highway Improvements; and
- Community Safety.

It was highlighted that the Area Forum budget had enabled the leverage of other grants and had secured funds from other bodies. Overall, an additional amount of £162,286.82 was 'levered' in to support Area Forum projects, providing a total spend of £413,166.98.

Arising from the discussion, it was agreed that a report would be brought to a future meeting on the impact of the forthcoming Ward boundary changes.

Strategic Director,
Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

CS18 CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an analysis of Corporate Complaints received during the 2019/20 financial year.

The report outlined the two stage procedure to deal with corporate complaints; a corporate complaints trend analysis from 2012 to 2020; the nature of those complaints received; and outcomes. In addition, the report also

provided a summary on complaints and queries that had been received by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2019/20. It was noted that the Ombudsman had made 51 decisions during the year and undertook 38 investigations, 34 of which were not upheld. Members noted that these figures provided reassurance that the Council's internal complaints procedures were robust and effective in resolving fault where it occurred at a local level.

Arising from the report, it was agreed that a copy of the Council's vexatious corporate complaints policy would be shared with the Board.

Strategic Director,
Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

CS19 ENERGY / CARBON REDUCTION UPDATE

The Board considered an update report on related activities aimed at reducing CO2 emissions within the Borough. Since the Council's participation in the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme, the Council had continued to implement a number of actions to reduce its carbon emissions and impact on the environment and at the same time deliver financial savings. Overall, the Council's CO2 emissions continued to reduce from a baseline of 2006/7 of 26,338 tonnes of CO2, to 11354 tonnes for 2019/20.

It was noted that there had been a slight increase in emissions associated with both fleet transport and business mileage from the previous years. In addition, Corporate buildings had also seen a slight increase, this being solely down to increased gas usage. The report advised members on the progress and impact of changes in the Borough which included: street lighting, roof top solar and biomass, the construction of a solar farm, climate action plan, public decarbonisation fund, municipal fleet decarbonisation plan, 3MG going green and the Astmoor low carbon study project.

RESOLVED: That the report and ongoing work be noted.

CS20 CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT 1ST APRIL TO 31ST AUGUST 2020

The Board was provided with a report from the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented details of health and safety management within the Authority from 1 April 2020 to 31 August 2020.

Officers commented that the report highlighted the national and local health and safety information, and together with performance and incident trends, these formed the basis for the recommended actions for 2020/21. In order to be proactive in health and safety management the report also indicated the number of completed risk assessments and training delivered to staff.

The report highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on the period the report covered. There had been a significant reduction in accidents and violent incidents due to a high volume of home working during the nationwide lockdown. A number of risk control measures had been implemented across the authority to protect staff and many frontline workers during this change in working practices. Assistance for staff had also been provided on the Enable e-learning platform via a number of wellbeing programmes and courses;

Members were advised on a number of recommended actions for 2020/21. These had been identified as a result of accident analysis data for 2019/20.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 26th January 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
- (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
- (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
- (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
- (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or

- Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chair will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 26 January 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None

5.4 A Safer Halton

None

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

**8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board Minutes Relevant to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15th October 2020

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB28 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2021/22

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

The Board was advised that the 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 96% collection rate, the calculation for 2021/22 gave a base figure of 35,154 for the Borough as a whole. The Council Tax Base figure for each of the Parishes was noted.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to:

- 1) set the Council Tax Base at 35,154 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) set the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes as follows:

Operational Director - Finance

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	655

Halebank	520
Daresbury	179
Moore	323
Preston Brook	257
Sandymoor	1,316

EXB29 ADDITIONAL HACKNEY CARRIAGE STANDS NEAR RUNCORN STATION

The Executive Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, recommending that they approve the creation of two additional Hackney Carriage stands near Runcorn Station as part of the Runcorn Station Quarter Project.

Members were referred to Appendices one and two, which showed the location of the proposed northerly and southerly stands in Shaw Street, Runcorn. It was noted that these proposed stands would replace the current private rank at Runcorn Station; would be public ranks; and shall be open 24 hours per day. Further, the proposals were recommended by the Regulatory Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2020 and had been the subject of a consultation exercise with the Taxi consultative Group and with the Council’s Highways Section.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the proposals relating to the creation of two additional Hackney Carriage stands near Runcorn Station;
- 2) authorises the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, to fulfil all procedural requirements in accordance with Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and to make the taxi stands Order accordingly, unless there were any objections received; and
- 3) agrees that in the event of any objections being received, the matter be brought back to the Executive Board.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB30 POLICY CHANGES RELATING TO TAXI LICENCING CONDITIONS

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which

made a recommendation from Regulatory Committee to adopt, as Council policy in respect of the Council's taxi and private hire jurisdiction, the *Assessment of Previous Convictions* provisions in the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards (July 2020); and to revoke all existing *Relevance of Convictions* policies.

It was reported that in February 2019 the Department for Transport issued a consultation draft version of a document entitled *Taxi and Private Hire Licensing: Protecting Users*. The final version of the document was issued in July 2020 and was entitled *Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards*.

It was noted that the 2020 Standards had been issued under Section 177 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, so the Council was required to have regard to the document when exercising its taxi and private hire licensing functions. Members were referred to Appendix A – an annex within the document titled *Assessment of Previous Convictions*. They were advised that Regulatory Committee had been applying the *Assessment of Previous Convictions* on a case by case basis since February 2019 and it was now considered appropriate to formalise this and create a formal policy, which would then supersede the existing policy.

The Board noted that the new *Assessment of Previous Convictions* appeared to be clearer than the previous policy and placed passenger safety as a priority, whilst enabled past offenders to sufficiently evidence that they had been successfully rehabilitated so they might obtain or retain a licence.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the *Assessment of Previous Convictions* provisions in the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards (July 2020) be adopted as Council policy in respect of Taxi and Private Hire jurisdiction; and
- 2) all existing *Relevance of Convictions* policies be revoked.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB31 POLICY CHANGES RELATING TO THE RESTRICTION ON HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE NUMBERS IN THE BOROUGH

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, in which the Council’s Regulatory Committee recommended that Executive Board adopts a Council Policy on the limit of the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles licenced within the Borough.

The Board heard that this Policy was considered by the Regulatory Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2020, following a refusal by the Committee to issue an individual with additional licences, which resulted in the individual appealing the decision at the Crown Court. The Court had ordered that an ‘unmet demand survey’ be carried out (attached at Appendix 1) and that the application be re-heard. It was noted that the survey demonstrated that the Committee was correct in concluding that there was no significant unmet demand in the Borough.

The Board was advised that following this, it was now appropriate for the Council’s Policy on limiting the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles be re-considered, as recommended by the Regulatory Committee (minute number REG 13 refers), which recommends that the limit should remain at 267 vehicles.

RESOLVED: That the Policy change as recommended by Regulatory Committee (minute number REG 13 refers) that the Council maintains its current Policy of limiting the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles licensed in the Borough to 267 be approved and adopted as Council Policy.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB32 POLICY FOR MANAGING RENTAL ARREARS FOR COUNCIL OWNED PROPERTY

The Executive Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out a policy and options for how the Council manages rent arrears on its property (land and buildings).

It was reported that Covid-19 had presented significant challenges for the Council as a Landlord, but the Council also acknowledged the impact that the Pandemic has had on its tenants. Upon lockdown the Council adopted a pragmatic approach to the management of rents and immediately introduced a 3 month rental holiday for the vast majority of its tenants, including market traders. This ended in June 2020 and Members were advised that the Council

continued to face challenges in respect of the payment of rents – an estimated 73% of tenants were paying in full, 23% were in arrears. Further, despite the Council’s best efforts in assisting tenants as described, some had unfortunately gone out of business.

It was understood that the effects of Covid-19 would have a long lasting negative effect on the Borough’s economy affecting the income of most of the Council’s tenants and in turn, the income of the Council. The Board was asked to consider a number of options that were aimed at enabling the Council to formulate a longer term policy on how it manages its income generating property portfolio.

The five options were presented to the Board as outlined in paragraph 3.7 of the report and the preferred option agreed was number 5.

RESOLVED: That the Board approved option 5, as outlined in section 3.7 of the report.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB33 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.

**COMMUNITY & SPORT, HEALTH & WELLBEING,
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES
PORTFOLIOS**

**EXB34 PROPOSED LEISURE CENTRE, MOOR LANE, WIDNES -
UPDATE REPORT**

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Economy and Resources which provided an update on work undertaken on the Pre-Construction Delivery Plan, for the new leisure centre on the Moor Lane site.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report is noted;
- 2) the Council pause the project until it had clarity on vacant possession of Moor Lane site;
- 3) once vacant possession was guaranteed, proceed to construction of the new leisure centre; and
- 4) the solar farm option be considered.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 19TH NOVEMBER 2020

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

**EXB44 2020/21 REVENUE SPENDING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER
2020**

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, advising of the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 30 September 2020, together with a forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending

against the operational revenue budget up to 30 September 2020 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. It was reported that in overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by £4.752m. In comparison to the forecasted overspend of £6.951m reported at the end of June 2020, this represented a significantly improved position, but was still of great concern. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 September 2020, with a number of revisions, as listed in the report.

The report also provided the Board with details of the financial impacts of Covid-19 and the Government funding made available to the Council to date. It was reported that there was a forecast shortfall in Government funding of £10.924m, this was summarised in Table A, paragraph 3.16 of the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) departments seek to implement those approved budget savings proposals which currently remain to be actioned;
- 3) Strategic Directors take urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year; and
- 4) Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.19.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB45 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2021/22 to 2023/24, which took into account the potential impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances.

The MTFS sets out a three year projection of the Council's resources and spending and was based on information that was currently available. It was noted that the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic had resulted in delays

to planned changes to Local Government finance in 2021/22. Further, there was limited financial information available for 2021/22, with the Public Sector Spending Review being the first indicator of funding resources – this would be published at the end of November 2020, covering the one financial year only.

The Board was advised that the delay and uncertainty regarding 2021/2022 financial resources meant the financial information included within the MTFS was based on a large number of assumptions and best estimates. The financial forecast would be updated as and when further information was known. Appendix 1 therefore detailed the MTFS from 2021/22 – 2023/24 using a prudent estimate of the financial conditions over the course of the next three years. Appendix 2 presented the Reserves and Balances Strategy.

Reason for the Decision

To seek approval for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative option of not maintaining a Medium Term Financial Strategy had been considered. However, this would not follow good financial management practice, as the Medium Term Financial Strategy was a key element in informing the Council's financial planning and budget setting process.

Implementation Date

The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 will be implemented from 1 April 2021.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;
- 2) the 2021/22 base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Strategy;
- 3) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved;
and

Operational
Director - Finance

- 4) the award of Council Tax Support for 2021/22 remains at the 2020/21 level of 21.55%.

EXB46 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20 AND HALF YEAR REPORT 2020-21

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Annual Report 2019/20 and Half Year Report 2020/21.

These reports updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market, 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.

EXB47 COUNCIL TAX SECTION 13A DISCOUNT POLICY STATEMENT

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which requested approval to amend the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy Statement, to reduce to nil the Empty Homes Premium levied on certain residential dwellings which were being renovated to bring back in to use.

This would apply to properties that had been unoccupied and unfurnished for over two years and required significant works to render them habitable.

RESOLVED: That the amendment to the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy Statement to reduce to nil the amount of Empty Homes Premium payable on certain residential dwellings which are being renovated to being back in to use, be approved as follows:

- 1) From 1 April 2020, reduce to nil the amount of Empty Homes Premium payable on a residential dwelling

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

which has recently been purchased or inherited and where the property was previously unoccupied and unfurnished between two and five years, for a period of three months; and

- 2) From 1 April 2020, reduce to nil the amount of Empty Homes Premium payable on a residential dwelling which has recently been purchased or inherited and where the property was previously unoccupied and unfurnished for over five years, for a period of six months.

EXB48 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 paragraphs 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB49 REPORT TO EXECUTIVE BOARD AND RESOLUTION TO USE COMPULSORY PURCHASE (CPO) POWERS. PROPOSED LEISURE SITE, MOOR LANE, WIDNES

The Executive Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval to exercise the Council’s powers of compulsory purchase to enable delivery of the proposed Leisure Site, Moor Lane, Widnes with vacant possession.

The report outlined the steps required for this process in legal terms and the status of negotiations with third party interests.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.5.3 of the report be approved.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 26th January 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Community and Sport

SUBJECT: Local Area Forums

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1) To provide Members of the Board with details of the impacts that the planned changes to the borough's Ward Boundaries will have upon Local Area Forums, and;
- 2) To ask Members to consider and endorse a number of proposals made in respect of dealing with those impacts and to make recommendations to the Executive Board in respect of the same.

2. RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) **Members consider and comment upon the report;**
- 2) **Members endorse the proposals for dealing with the impacts that Ward boundary changes will have upon Local Area Forums, as set out within the report, and;**
- 3) **A report be presented to the Executive Board recommending that;**
 - a. **Halton's current seven Local Area Forums be disbanded with effect from 5th May 2021;**
 - b. **Six new Local Area Forums, as set out in Paragraph 4.1, be established in Halton with effect from 6th May 2021;**
 - c. **The 2021/22 Local Area Forum budget be allocated as set out within Table 1, and;**
 - d. **Any Local Area Forum budget remaining as at 31st March 2021 be carried forward and allocated as set out within Table 2.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Area Forums provide a mechanism for the Council to deliver community led initiatives and projects. There are currently seven Area Forums that are made up of the Wards as set out below;

Area Forum 1 – Broadheath, Ditton, Hale & Hough Green

Area Forum 2 – Appleton, Kingsway & Riverside

Area Forum 3 – Birchfield, Farnworth & Halton View

Area Forum 4 – Grange, Halton Brook, Heath & Mersey

Area Forum 5 – Halton Castle, Norton North, Norton South & Windmill Hill

Area Forum 6 – Beechwood & Halton Lea

Area Forum 7 – Daresbury

- 3.2 Changes to the borough's current Ward boundaries were due to come into effect on 7th May 2020, however, following the postponement of the 2020 local elections due to COVID-19, those boundary changes will come into effect on 6th May 2021. The boundary changes will have a number of implications for Local Area Forums, including; the Area Forum 'footprints', the population levels within each Forum area and the budget allocations. This report provides Members with details of those implications and makes a number of proposals for Members to consider.

4. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Area Forum 'Footprints'

- 4.1 The establishment of new Wards will affect the current Area Forum 'footprints'. Officers have considered the implications of this and are recommending that six new Local Area Forums be established with effect from 6th May 2021.

Using the current Area Forum 'footprints' as a guide to creating the new ones, Members are asked to consider that six new Area Forums be established as set out below;

Area Forum 1 - Bankfield, Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank and Hough Green

Area Forum 2 - Appleton, Central & West Bank and Highfield

Area Forum 3 - Birchfield, Farnworth and Halton View

Area Forum 4 - Beechwood & Heath, Grange and Mersey & Weston

Area Forum 5 - Bridgewater, Halton Castle and Halton Lea

Area Forum 6 - Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor, Norton North and Norton South & Preston Brook

A plan showing the proposed new Area Forum boundaries and the current Area Forum 'footprints' is attached as Appendix 1.

Local Area Forum Budget Allocation

- 4.2 The annual Area Forum budget is allocated on a per capita basis for each Ward. Changes to the population levels across the Area Forum areas arising from the new Ward boundaries will therefore have implications for the budget allocation. Electorate figures are provided by the Office for National Statistics, however, estimates for each of the new Wards are not currently available and it is therefore recommended that the budget allocation for 2021/22 be calculated using current Electorate figures.
- 4.3 The current total Area Forum budget is £200k and using current Electorate figures would see the budget allocations for each Ward/Area Forum be set at the levels contained within Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Indicative new Area Forum Budget Allocations

Ward	Current Electorate	Ward Budgets
Area Forum 1		
Bankfield	5,280	£10,938.24
Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank	5,265	£10,907.17
Hough Green	5,581	£11,561.81
Total	16,126	£33,407.22
Area Forum 2		
Appleton	4,902	£10,155.17
Central & West Bank	4,983	£10,322.97
Highfield	5,225	£10,824.30
Total	15,110	£31,302.44
Area Forum 3		
Birchfield	6,045	£12,523.05
Farnworth	6,034	£12,500.26
Halton View	5,338	£11,058.40
Total	17,417	£36,081.71
Area Forum 4		
Beechwood & Heath	6,116	£12,670.13
Grange	5,980	£12,388.39
Mersey & Weston	5,752	£11,916.06
Total	17,848	£36,974.58
Area Forum 5		
Bridgewater	5,727	£11,864.27
Halton Castle	4,923	£10,198.67
Halton Lea	5,102	£10,569.49
Total	15,752	£32,632.43
Area Forum 6		
Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor	3,334	£6,906.84
Norton North	5,819	£12,054.86
Norton South & Preston Brook	5,136	£10,639.93
Total	14,289	£29,601.62
	96,542	£200,000.00

Carry Forward of Unspent Area Forum Budgets

- 4.4 It is anticipated that a number Area Forums will have some level of budget remaining that will be carried forward to the 2021/22 financial year. It is proposed that any Area Forum budget underspend at 31st March 2021 be split down to Ward level and allocated to the new Ward that is most closely aligned.
- 4.5 Where any current Ward boundaries alter as a result of the planned changes, the amount of any budget underspend carried forward shall be based upon the proportion of Electorate that made up the old Ward that is transferring to the new one. Table 2 below sets out the implications of this proposed approach.

Table 2 – Proposed Ward Allocation for Area Forum Budget Underspend

Current Ward	Ward to Receive Budget Underspend
Appleton	87% to Appleton, 9% to Central & West Bank and 4% to Halton View
Beechwood	Beechwood & Heath
Birchfield	92% to Birchfield and 8% to Hough Green
Broadheath	43% to Bankfield and 57% to Highfield
Daresbury	83% to Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor and 17% to Norton South & Preston Brook
Ditton	57% to Bankfield and 43% to Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank
Farnworth	15% to Birchfield and 85% to Farnworth
Grange	Grange
Hale	Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank
Halton Brook	93% to Bridgewater and 7% to Grange
Halton Castle	Halton Castle
Halton Lea	88% to Halton Lea and 12% to Grange
Halton View	Halton View
Heath	65% to Beechwood & Heath and 35% to Mersey & Weston
Hough Green	Hough Green
Kingsway	7% to Appleton, 58% to Central & West Bank and 35% to Highfield
Mersey	3% to Beechwood & Heath, 20% to Bridgewater and 77% to Mersey & Weston
Norton North	84% to Norton North and 16% to Norton South & Preston Brook
Norton South	23% to Halton Lea and 77% to Norton South & Preston Brook
Riverside	41% to Central & Weston Bank, 36% to Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank and 22% to Highfield
Windmill Hill	8% to Halton Castle and 92% to Norton North

- 4.6 The proposed transition from the current Area Forum structures to the new ones shall not preclude Members from considering or approving projects to be delivered during the period 1st April 2021 to 6th May 2021. Where any schemes are approved and delivered within current Wards during that period, the financial expenditure incurred shall be charged against the budget allocation of the most relevant new Ward/Area Forum; either in full or, in circumstances where current Ward boundaries change, on a proportionate basis. Where any expenditure is to be apportioned across two or more new Wards, then such apportionment shall be calculated in accordance with the underspend allocation principles in Table 2 above.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The financial implications are set out within the report.

6.0. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no new Policy implications arising from this report.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None identified.

7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None identified.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

None identified.

7.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None identified.

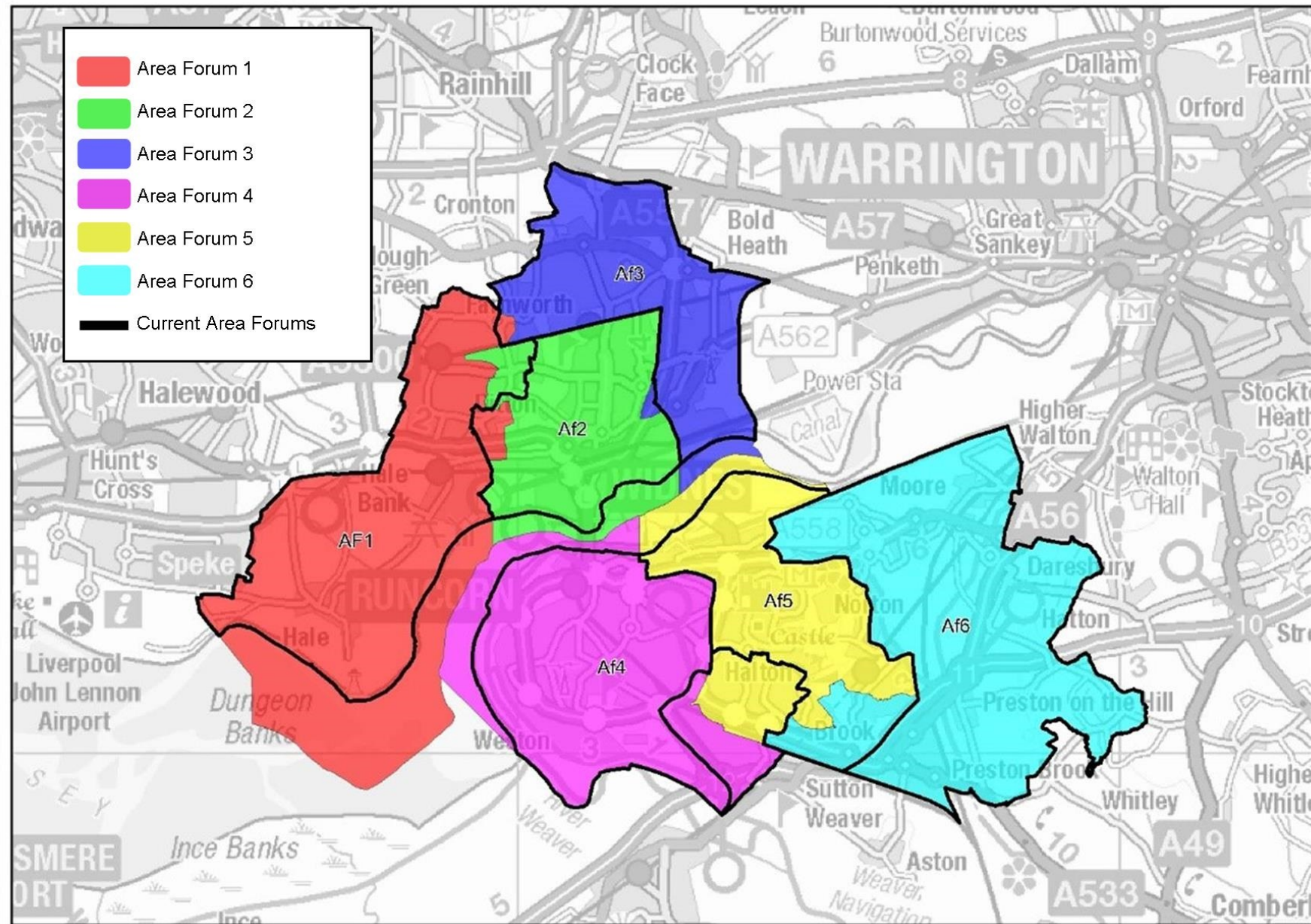
9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None identified.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There are no background papers associated with this report.

PROPOSED NEW LOCAL AREA FORUMS



REPORT TO:	Corporate Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	26 th January 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Community Safety
SUBJECT:	EU Exit and the end of the Transition Period
WARD(S)	All

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the arrangements the Council has put in place, together with its partners, to monitor and if necessary and possible, to mitigate any impacts arising from the end of the EU Exit Transition Period.

1.2 It was considered appropriate to report to this Board given that any potential impacts that arise could affect any Council service.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- i) The Board notes the arrangements in place; and
- ii) Seeks clarification on any issues as required

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 As the Board is aware the UK left the EU on 31st January 2020 with a “Transitional Period” being put in place, ending on 31st December 2020. During that Transitional Period existing arrangements with the EU would continue. The intention being that the Government and the EU would have a Trade and Operation Agreement in place to govern their future relationships beyond that date. Again, Board members will be aware that such an agreement was reached on 24th December 2020. Copies of the Agreement and an “Explainer” document can be found on the Gov.UK website.

Whilst most commentators agree that having a deal was preferential to a “no deal” situation there is still likely to be some disruption caused because of the timing of the agreement being reached and new procedures required to put in place to govern future trading relationships with the EU.

There are many potential impacts of the UK no longer being a

member of the EU and developing new relationships with both the EU and other countries across the world. It is not the intention of this paper to second guess how all this might unfold. However, any potential disruption to imports and exports could have an impact in the borough both for the Council and other public sector bodies as consumers and for businesses within the borough who trade with the EU.

Any impacts arising from those new arrangements are likely to happen gradually for two reasons. First, being that the ports were likely to be quieter over the Christmas and New Year period and secondly as there will have been a degree of stock piling taken as the Transitional Period was drawing to a close.

What follows is a description of the arrangements the Council has in place with its partners to monitor and respond to any impacts that do arise. At the time of writing this report no issues of concern had arisen but as mentioned earlier it is early days.

Cheshire Resilience Forum (CRF)

The Council is currently working in partnership with Cheshire Resilience Forum partners and regional and national agencies, as part of a Command and Control structure. The aim is to predict, assess and mitigate the impacts of the UK's exit from the EU in Cheshire, whilst supporting the national response through the national strategic responsibilities.

As part of the Command and Control structure, Halton is part of both the Strategic and Tactical Co-ordination Groups, which meet on a weekly basis

The objectives of this overall approach is to work in partnership to:

- Risk assess and plan contingencies in the event of a significant risk to public safety or threat to life. This taking account of the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 2 – The Right to Life) and all reasonable measures to safeguard our workers in terms of health and safety legislation.
- Minimise disruption so far as is reasonably possible, to local residents, businesses and users of the local transport network. This has particular focus regarding the strategic road network and delays at ports, in order to maintain both Local and National movements of people and goods.
- Maintain the effective delivery of health and social care provision within Cheshire, including the supply of essential resources such as medicines and equipment.

- Prevent and deter crime and disorder, in order to maximise public safety and confidence in authorities.
- Maintain public confidence through continued dialogue and pro-active communication. Ensuring partners, local residents and visitors of Cheshire are where appropriate, informed, advised and reassured by an effective communication plan, using a variety of communications media.
- Safeguard vulnerable people, including low income groups who are affected are considered in decisions considered.
- Maintain the production and supply of strategically important food and water.
- Maintain the production and supply of strategically important energy.
- Maintain the production, supply and waste removal of other strategically important goods including fuel with a particular focus on the COMAH sites.
- Support the CRF to support local businesses and financial services with the aim to minimise any disruption and maintain business as usual to the public.
- Support the CRF to assess and where possible reduce the economic impact across Cheshire.
- Facilitate peaceful protests, providing a lawful and proportionate response, balancing the needs and rights of those involved with those impacted by the activity.
- Maintain business as usual services across Cheshire by careful planning and the proportionate use of resources.

Planning with Halton Borough Council

The Council has formed an internal officer group, which is meeting on a monthly basis and chaired by the Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources. The aim of the Corporate EU Exit Group is to monitor potential impacts, provide information to the LRF and its risk assessments and escalate matters of concern to Management Team and members.

Some of the main areas of concern for the authority and which are reported on are:

- Rising costs in relation to food and consumable items;

- Level of preparedness of local businesses, particularly those importing and exporting goods;
- Availability and cost of materials for major projects
- Transport and movement of goods;
- Settlement of EU Citizens and access to employees
- Public anxiety surrounding EU Exit, potentially compounded with COVID anxieties.
- Concerns in relation to consumable parts regarding the maintenance of vehicles;
- Delays on 'vehicle parts' may mean a vehicle / machine is out of action.

Post EU Exit, end of Transitional Period and Implementation of Agreement

It is anticipated that the above arrangements will remain in place, at least until the end of February and until matters become clearer.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is the potential that any disruption could delay or impact upon any of the Council's policies and objectives. These monitoring arrangements have been put in place to help mitigate any such activity.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is a concern that both delay and additional bureaucracy at ports could add to the Council's costs. This would compound the budget challenges the Council already has and could impact on the delivery of frontline services.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 There is the potential for implications for any and all of the Council's priorities.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The risks are articulated within the body of the report. The arrangements outlined have been put in place to attempt to mitigate those risks.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
N/A		

REPORT TO:	Corporate Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	26 January 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community & Resources
SUBJECT:	Council Insurance Arrangements Update
PORTFOLIO:	Resources
WARD(S):	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Council is currently in the process of retendering a number of its major insurance policies. This report provides the Board with details of that process and a wider update on the Council's insurance and risk financing arrangements.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

3.1 In delivering its functions and statutory duties the Council faces many and varied risks. Examples include:

- Personal injury or vehicle damage claims arising from defects in the public highway;
- Personal injury, disease or losses affecting employees that arise in the course of their duties;
- Motor vehicle incidents involving the Council's fleet of vehicles;
- Injuries to, or losses sustained by, members of the public whilst on Council premises or land;
- Injury to individuals or damage to private property caused by trees for which the Council is responsible;
- Damage to, or loss of, Council owned buildings and assets;
- Liabilities arising from errors made by employees or elected members that result in financial loss to a third party;
- Financial loss arising from the theft of money, property, forgery or fraud by an employee or third party.

3.2 With the wide variety of risks faced by the Council, the cost of managing and financing risk is therefore significant. As such, it is important that the Council can demonstrate that it seeks to obtain value for money from this expenditure.

- 3.3 The Council does not have the financial resources to self-insure against all of the risks it faces. Externally procured insurance is therefore one of the ways in which the Council mitigates the cost of risk.
- 3.4 It is however important to note that, in addition to insurance, there are also other factors to consider when quantifying the total cost of risk to the Council. Other direct costs include:
- Retained losses, in the form of deductibles (excesses) and uninsured losses
 - Brokerage fees
 - Claims handling and insurance administration costs
 - Legal defence costs
- 3.5 The total cost of managing risk also includes indirect costs relating to the cost of risk mitigation activities. These can be harder to quantify but include activities such as:
- The Health & Safety function
 - The risk management framework
 - Business continuity management
 - Inspection and maintenance regimes
 - Maintenance of a robust control environment

Self-insurance

- 3.6 Developments in the public sector insurance market in recent years have resulted in insurers seeking significant increases in premium from local authority clients. This consequently incentivises local authorities to accept greater levels of self-insurance in order to avoid increased costs and further pressure on revenue budgets.
- 3.7 Over the past decade the Council has consequently increased its level of self-insurance significantly and therefore self-funds most of its settled claims.
- 3.8 The insurance policies procured by the Council provide cover for claims that exceed the 'deductible' for each policy (the 'deductible' is the equivalent of the 'excess' on a personal insurance policy). The Council's policies also include 'Aggregate Stop Loss' insurance, which puts a cap on total spending on claims that fall within the deductible in a particular year.
- 3.9 Appendix A illustrates the increases in the level of self-insurance across the Council's main insurance policies over the period 2010/11 to 2019/20. It also shows the Aggregate Stop Loss Limits for those policies where such limits are applicable.

Direct Cost of Insurance and Risk Financing

- 3.10 Numerous measures have been introduced in recent years to reduce the direct cost of insurance and risk financing to the Council. These measures include:

- Annual review of the Council's insurance programme to achieve an optimum balance between self-insurance and externally procured insurance
- Frequent re-tendering of insurance covers
- The adoption of in-house claims handling in 2013/14 (for claims up to £50k)
- Increasing the levels of self-insurance across most policy areas
- Regular meetings with the Highways Division to improve the defence of highways claims
- Regular meetings with the Council's external legal advisors to discuss the strategy for each litigated claim

3.11 Appendix B provides a high level summary of the direct costs relating to insurance and risk financing over the period 2010/11 to 2019/20. Whilst there are obviously variations in the cost of claims settled each year, there is a clear downward trend in terms of the overall cost to the Council. In 2010/11, the total direct cost of insurance and risk financing was £2.4m. By 2019/20 this cost had reduced to £838k, a reduction of over £1.5m.

3.12 It should also be noted that there are a number of other factors concerning the Council's business that have an impact on the cost of insurance. Some of these factors can increase costs and some may lead to a reduction in costs. Significant changes over the time period covered include:

- Responsibility for public health transferring to the Council in 2013
- The leisure centres being brought back in house in 2016
- The acquisition of a number of care homes from 2017
- The sale of the Council's industrial units in 2016/17
- The reduction in the number of schools due to academy conversions
- The withdrawal of the former lease car scheme for employees

3.13 Additionally, there are other factors that affect the cost of insurance and risk financing that are outside the Council's control. These include:

- The insurance market – there are relatively few insurers willing to insure public sector risks
- The Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) scheme of arrangement - MMI were local authority insurers until 1992 when MMI ceased trading. The Council is now required to fund 25 per cent of the cost of any historic claims where MMI were the insurer at the time.
- Legacy claims - the Council must also fund any claims relating to the former Cheshire County Council that fall within the Borough of Halton.
- The Judicial Studies Board (JSB) guidelines - these are used to value claims and are reviewed on a regular basis. This generally puts an upward pressure on the cost of settling meritorious claims.

Claims

- 3.14 The vast majority of insurance claims received by the Council relate to public liability, and approximately 70 per cent of those claims relate to Highways. This proportion has remained fairly consistent over a long period and is in keeping with the claims experience of other Highways Authorities.
- 3.15 Appendix C provides a summary of public liability claims received over the period 2010/11 to 2019/20. Key points to note are:
- There has been a significant reduction in the number of claims received over the past decade. In-house claims handling and the adoption of a robust approach to defending claims is likely to have had an impact. Similarly, an effective system of highways inspections and maintenance is also likely to be a contributory factor.
 - There have also been improvements in the defence rate of claims. The successful defence rate for closed claims stands at over 75 per cent for each of the last four financial years.
 - Where claims are ultimately paid, a summary of each claim and the reason why it could not be defended is shared with management to identify learning points and any risk management improvements that can be implemented.
- 3.16 Appendix D provides a summary of employer's liability claims received over the period 2010/11 to 2019/20. Key points to note are:
- Employer's liability claims are much fewer in number than public liability claims, which makes trend analysis less reliable. However, as with public liability claims, there is a notable reduction in the number of claims now being received when compared to 2010/11.
 - In recent years, the numbers of paid claims have been very few and do not indicate any particular areas where the management of risk needs to be improved. However, as with the paid public liability claims, a summary of each claim is shared with management to consider opportunities to improve the management of risk
- 3.17 Appendix E provides a summary of motor vehicle claims received over the period 2010/11 to 2019/20. Key points to note are:
- There has been a huge reduction in the number of motor vehicle claims received over the period; from 119 claims in 2010/11 to just 19 claims in 2019/20.
 - Another important factor is the improvements made in risk management in terms of the fleet vehicles. The installation of on-board cameras in the refuse collection vehicles has had a significant impact and also assists the investigation of claims.
 - Defence rates for motor vehicle claims are generally much lower than for public liability and employer's liability claims. This is principally because liability for any incidents is usually more straightforward to establish. However, it is also due to claims for 'own driver damage' where a third party isn't involved so there isn't anything to defend and similarly, we also fund

repairs / vehicle replacement where vehicles are damaged or stolen by unidentified third parties in which cases there is nothing to defend.

Tenders

- 3.18 Retendering of the Council's range of insurance covers is staggered and is undertaken at two separate intervals. The following policies are approaching the end of a five-year term and are currently in the process of retendered:
- Property
 - Motor
 - Computer
- 3.19 A competitive tender process is currently underway being managed through the YPO Insurance Placement Framework. The process is being supported by the Council's Procurement Team and Aon, the Council's insurance broker. The new policies will be in place for the start of the 2021/22 financial year.
- 3.20 Recent tender exercises have been very successful in delivering premium savings for the Council. However, the Council's broker has advised that the insurance market is hardening and experiencing upward volatility. Market capacity is also declining with insurers being more prudent about which risks to insure. As such, an increase in premiums is now extremely likely, despite the Council's excellent claims history.
- 3.21 The difficult market is being driven by a variety of factors, which include global losses incurred by insurers, the impact of Covid-19, the economic downturn and low interest rates. Many insurers are currently operating at a deficit, with premium income being insufficient to cover claims and operating expenses.
- 3.22 In terms of property cover, rates have been reduced aggressively over the past ten years and would have been likely to increase even without the current pandemic. Additionally, global losses from weather events have been steadily increasing, with 2017 being the costliest year on record. Insurers have also seen an increase in the number of catastrophic claims. This situation has led to Aon forecasting that property premiums may increase by between 30% and 35% this year.
- 3.23 The nervousness amongst insurers is evidenced by the fact that the Council's current property insurer is withdrawing from the local authority market and has confirmed that they will not be submitting a bid. This is despite the Council making no claims to date on its property policy during the five-year period of cover.
- 3.24 A similar difficult position exists in terms of motor insurance. Whilst the number of motorists has reduced over the past year, and the number of claims nationally has been falling for successive years, the increase in the number of cyclists and e-scooter users has resulted in insurers receiving an increase in large claims. Aon are therefore forecasting that motor premiums will increase by between 10% and 20%.

- 3.25 The premium for the Council's computer insurance is approximately £3,000 per year. Again an increase in premium is anticipated but any increase will not be material to the Council's finances.
- 3.26 The Council's remaining insurance covers are two years into long-term agreements. Significantly, the Council's liability insurer is intimating a possible increase of between 20% and 25% in premium for some local authority clients. At the time of writing, renewal terms for 2021/22 are yet to be received. However, should such an increase in premium be required by the insurer it would constitute a breach of the long-term agreement. Options available to the Council would be to:
- Accept the premium increase
 - Re-tender
 - Increase the level of deductible further to maintain the current rates of premium

4.0 POLICY, FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council's approach to insurance is undertaken in accordance with the Risk Financing and Insurance Strategy, which was previously presented to the Board. The Strategy aims to ensure that the structure of the Council's insurance programme achieves an optimum balance between self-insurance and externally procured insurance.
- 4.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, any increase in the Council's insurance premiums from the current tender exercise or from renewals for 2021/22 will add additional pressure on the Council's revenue budget.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Significant revenue savings have been generated by the adoption of a more strategic approach to the Council's insurance and risk financing arrangements over the past decade. This has facilitated the redirection of financial resources towards the delivery of all the Council's priorities.

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

See 5.1 above

5.3 A Healthy Halton

See 5.1 above

5.4 A Safer Halton

See 5.1 above

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

See 5.1 above

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 There are no risks arising directly from this report.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None identified

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act

Levels of Self-Insurance – 2010/11 to 2020/21

Year	Deductible					Aggregate Stop Loss	
	Property Insurance		Motor Insurance	Employer's Liability Insurance	Public Liability Insurance	Employer's Liability Insurance	Public Liability Insurance
	Corporate £	Schools £	£	£	£	£	£
2010/11	250	100,000	250	25,000	125,000	200,000	3,000,000
2011/12	250	100,000	250	25,000	250,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
2012/13	250	100,000	250	25,000	250,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
2013/14	250	100,000	25,000	25,000	250,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
2014/15	250	100,000	25,000	25,000	250,000	2,400,000	2,400,000
2015/16	250,000	250,000	25,000	250,000	250,000	2,400,000	2,400,000
2016/17	250,000	250,000	25,000	250,000	250,000	2,500,000	2,500,000
2017/18	250,000	250,000	25,000	500,000	500,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
2018/19	250,000	250,000	25,000	775,000	775,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
2019/20	250,000	250,000	25,000	500,000	500,000	3,250,000	3,250,000
2020/21	250,000	250,000	25,000	600,000	600,000	3,250,000	3,250,000

Note

Deductible – This relates to the threshold up to which the Council is required to self-fund the cost of each and every claim in a financial year.

Aggregate Stop Loss - This limits the Council's financial exposure from cumulative losses to a specific amount. It only applies to the Council's public liability and employer's liability cover.

Direct Cost of Insurance & Risk Financing – 2010/11 to 2019/20

Year	Property Insurance	Motor Insurance	Liability Insurance	Other Policies	Claims Handling	Brokerage	Claims funded by HBC	Salary costs	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
2010/11	812,634	300,588	251,908	58,047	71,472	19,500	783,121	95,249	2,392,518
2011/12	383,869	294,987	193,605	83,588	48,280	19,500	813,098	56,957	1,893,884
2012/13	401,387	278,522	210,736	84,900	41,440	19,500	884,980	71,030	1,992,495
2013/14	354,865	68,310	202,514	77,315	21,478	19,500	1,111,159	76,984	1,932,125
2014/15	315,946	53,977	251,379	72,798	36,924	12,945	620,101	64,390	1,428,460
2015/16	214,203	48,840	251,379	77,155	23,060	12,945	679,412	71,202	1,378,195
2016/17	103,686	43,345	276,050	80,044	7,789	12,945	755,273	60,497	1,339,628
2017/18	101,052	41,548	246,510	82,203	3,250	12,950	783,735	83,984	1,355,231
2018/19	116,480	43,699	255,539	87,448	1,546	12,950	650,744	99,576	1,267,981
2019/20	117,040	35,488	186,300	89,546	0	12,950	292,444	104,698	838,467

Note

Liability insurance includes: Employers Liability, Public Liability, Professional Indemnity and Officials' Indemnity

Other policies include: Fidelity Guarantee (Crime), Personal Accident, Engineering & Inspection and Computer

Salary costs relate to the Insurance Team that currently comprises 2.92 FTE employees

Public Liability Claims – 2010/11 to 2019/20

Year	Received	Repudiated	Paid	Outstanding	Reserve for o/s claims	Defence rate
2010/11	212	144	68	0	0	67.92%
2011/12	181	122	59	0	0	67.40%
2012/13	212	155	57	0	0	73.11%
2013/14	167	124	42	1	£12,000	74.70%
2014/15	115	77	37	1	£176,200	67.54%
2015/16	102	63	37	2	£92,400	63.00%
2016/17	86	64	20	2	£216,400	76.19%
2017/18	96	71	19	6	£266,300	78.89%
2018/19	72	57	9	6	£82,900	86.36%
2019/20	62	35	6	21	£260,000	85.37%
Total Reserve					£1,106,200	

Note

- The 'reserve' is the estimated value of the claims outstanding if they were to be paid.
- The defence rate for the years 2013/14 to 2019/20 will alter over time dependent upon the outcome of the outstanding claims.
- Claims paid may also include occasional 'goodwill' gestures where liability is not admitted but a small payment is made to the claimant.

Employer's Liability Claims – 2010/11 to 2019/20

Year	Received	Repudiated	Paid	Outstanding	Reserve for o/s claims	Defence rate
2010/11	16	13	3	0	0	81.25%
2011/12	9	5	4	0	0	55.56%
2012/13	9	2	7	0	0	22.22%
2013/14	12	6	6	0	0	50.00%
2014/15	9	6	3	0	0	66.67%
2015/16	11	6	4	1	£44,200	60.00%
2016/17	4	4	0	0	0	100.00%
2017/18	4	1	1	2	£7,100	50.00%
2018/19	7	5	2	1	£15,500	71.43%
2019/20	2	1	0	1	£8,000	100.00%
Total Reserve					£74,800	

Note

- The 'reserve' is the estimated value of the claims outstanding if they were to be paid.
- The defence rate for the years 2015/16 and 2017/18 - 2019/20 will alter over time dependent upon the outcome of the outstanding claims.

Motor Vehicle Claims – 2010/11 to 2019/20

Year	Received	Repudiated	Paid	Outstanding	Reserve for o/s claims	Defence rate
2010/11	119	42	77	0	0	35.29%
2011/12	64	33	31	0	0	51.56%
2012/13	70	31	39	0	0	44.29%
2013/14	63	43	20	0	0	68.25%
2014/15	57	24	33	0	0	42.11%
2015/16	40	12	28	0	0	30.00%
2016/17	28	11	17	0	0	39.29%
2017/18	27	11	15	1	£7,050	42.31%
2018/19	19	6	13	1	£137	31.58%
2019/20	19	5	9	5	£25,650	35.71%
Total Reserve					£32,837	

Note

- The 'reserve' is the estimated value of the claims outstanding if they were to be paid.
- The defence rate for the 2017/18 - 2019/20 will alter over time dependent upon the outcome of the outstanding claims.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 26th January 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Community & Resources

SUBJECT: Performance Management Reports for Quarter 2 of 2020/21

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and to raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the second quarter period to 30th September 2020.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2020-21 were agreed by Members for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:

- Finance
- Human Resources & Organisational Development
- ICT and Administrative Support
- Legal and Democracy
- Policy & Performance
- Property Services
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services

The report details progress made against objectives and milestones and performance targets and provides information relating to key developments and emerging issues that have arisen during the period.

- 1.3 Information concerning the implementation of high risk mitigation measures relevant to this Board is provided in Appendix 1

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board

- 1) Receive the second quarter performance management report;**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification; and**
- 3) Highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be reported at a future meeting of the Board.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Departmental objectives provide a clear statement on what services are planning to achieve and to show how they contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. Such information is central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Departmental service objectives and performance measures are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The introduction of a Thematic Priority Based Report and the identification of business critical objectives/ milestones and performance indicators will further support organisational improvement.

6.2 Although some objectives link specifically to one priority area, the nature of the cross - cutting activities being reported, means that to a greater or lesser extent a contribution is made to one or more of the Council priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 At the time at which Annual Business Plans are developed Directorate Risk Registers are also refreshed and updated. Progress concerning the implementation of any high risk mitigation measures which are relevant to the Board are included as Appendix 1 of the performance management report for the second quarter period.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTIONS 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Not applicable

Corporate Policy and Performance Board– Priority Based Monitoring

Reporting Period: **Quarter 2 – 1st July 2020 to 30th September 2020**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the second quarter of 2019/20 for service areas within the remit of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 It covers key priorities for development or improvement in the various functional areas reporting to the Board in relation to the Council's priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency i.e.:
- Financial Services
 - Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency
 - ICT Infrastructure
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
 - Property Services
- 1.3 The emergence of the global COVID19 pandemic early in 2020 has had a significant and unavoidable impact upon Council services the full extent of which is yet to become known. The Council, along with key partner agencies, has prioritised its resources upon mitigating the serious risks to public health, the protection of vulnerable residents, and the social cohesion of the local community. In developing appropriate responses to emerging national and local priorities this situation is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future.
- 1.4 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 8 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

- 2.1 There have been a number of developments during the period which include:-

Financial Services

Revenues and Financial Management

- 2.2 For the financial year to 30 September 2020, overall Council operational net spending (Excl Covid) was £36.6m against a budget of £36.0m, resulting in an overspend position to date against budget of £0.6m. The forecast position for the year to 31 March 2021 is an overall estimated overspend of £2.4m.
- Spending on capital schemes for the same period totalled £15.1m, representing 35.6% of the total capital programme of £42.4m.
- 2.3 Additionally net COVID related expenditure to 30 September 2020 is £6.2m, with a further £3.0m from lost income and at this stage these costs will be funded from Government Grant. There is limited funding

support available for Covid costs and it is currently forecast there will be a net annual shortfall of £2.4m comparing costs to available funding.

The Council has to date received grant funding of £26.3m towards funding the local cost of the pandemic, of this £13.5m is ring-fenced towards specific spending with £12.8m for general spending

- 2.4 The Council has, and continues, to support businesses through the pandemic by making Government funded business support grant payments to eligible businesses. During the first national lockdown, grants totalling £17.5m were paid to 1,196 small businesses and a further 312 grants paid to those in retail, leisure and hospitality sectors.

Grants also continue to be paid to support businesses forced to close during both current local and national lockdown periods and to date £0.662m has been paid to 458 eligible businesses.

- 2.5 The Council has offered support during the period of the pandemic to taxpayers who have suffered hardship. There have been approximately 4,000 accounts where payment deferrals have been approved to provide support to taxpayers.

Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance

- 2.6 There are approximately 300 appointeeship and deputyship clients for whom the Council manages their financial affairs. For those individuals living in the community they previously collected daily or weekly personal allowances in cash from the Halton Direct Link offices. As a result of the lockdown in March 2020, new arrangements were needed so that these individuals had access to funds for day to day expenses.
- 2.7 Over 200 of the clients, or their carers, were issued with prepaid cards. They operate like a debit card and allow individuals to make payments by card and to withdraw cash from ATMs. They also allow the Council greater flexibility to 'top up' the cards as required. This arrangement has worked extremely well and has now become the default means by which clients are provided with access to their funds.
- 2.8 A Service Level Agreement has been agreed with the Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for the Council to provide a direct payments service to clients who are fully funded by the CCG and this will provide an income stream for the Council. There are presently over 800 individuals who choose to purchase their own care and support through a direct payment. During the pandemic, the Direct Payments team has continued to support and advise these clients as required. This has included delivering supplies of Personal Protective Equipment to those individuals that require it.
- 2.9 The Council has recently contracted with Pay Point to provide customers with more options as to how they can pay their Council Tax, sundry debtor invoices and Business Rates. There are approximately 30 Pay Point outlets in the borough and this will provide customers with more choice and flexibility over where and what time they make payments to the Council. This will be particularly beneficial for those residents who choose to pay by cash and will also strengthen the Council's business continuity arrangements should there be a need to temporarily close the Halton Direct Link offices again in the future. Implementation work is presently underway and the system is expected to go live by the end of the current financial year.
- 2.10 The Council recently received some positive publicity when the Principal Finance Support Services Officer was announced Purchase to Pay Manager of the year by the Purchase to Pay Network. This is a significant achievement as a lot of large organisations compete for this award and other previous winners have included M&S, the Guinness Partnership, Veolia and Burberry. To win the award is a major achievement and reflects really well on the work of the entire Purchase to Pay team.

Benefits

- 2.11 From the 28th September 2020 central government introduced a new duty on individuals to self-isolate if someone tests positive or is identified as a contact by NHS Test and Trace. As part of this initiative a new Self-Isolation Support payment of a £500 lump sum will be made to those on low incomes who meet the necessary criteria, to support them if they cannot work during their self-isolation period.
- 2.12 An online claim application, along with details of eligibility criteria, will be made available to residents via the Council's website as of 12th October 2020 at <https://halton.me/self-isolation-payment-form/>.
- 2.13 The number of people claiming Universal Credit in Halton rose to 16,090 in September from a figure of 10,918 in March 2020 and this likely reflects the impact of national lockdown policies and the negative impact of COVID pandemic upon businesses.

Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

Recruitment and Organisational Development

- 2.14 The Department continues to support the wider Council in the response to COVID-19. HR services are supporting the management of staffing scenarios related to absence, working practices, and restrictions and the resourcing of priority service activity such as Public Health and Social Care continues.
- 2.15 In conjunction with the Council's trade unions, HR procedures related to disciplinary, grievance, capability, job evaluation and restructuring have been adapted to operate virtually with no face to face contact.
- 2.16 As a consequence of the COVID pandemic a policy framework has been developed that would enable the safe return to physical premises and workspaces. A multi-disciplinary 'Reset Group' of Officers and managers from around the organisation, alongside trade union colleagues, was established to successfully implement the framework, accompanied by a robust risk-assessment procedure to ensure adherence to the government COVID-secure standards. By the end of September, the application of this process had seen the safe re-opening of all the facilities that service areas had determined needed to be re-opened.
- 2.17 Learning & Development activity has been moved on-line, with all face-to-face delivery suspended. A dedicated COVID-secure room at Grangeway Community Centre is in use to enable L&D colleagues to deliver training virtually. There has been significant take up of e-learning during the pandemic.
- 2.18 It is clear that the COVID pandemic has changed how, where and when people work. What could have been several years of change and evolution in the workplace has been compressed into a matter of months. The Council has demonstrated that it has a very able and agile workforce, and service provision has continued with fluidity and consistency. The underpinning ICT infrastructure was mature enough to enable a rapid change in working practices when it became necessary. In workforce planning terms, the Council is now in a position to consider its options around how employee capability, working practices, premises and technology can be combined to ensure an effective organisation for the future.
- 2.19 To support this thinking a staff survey has been undertaken to capture views and experiences on the working arrangements that evolved so rapidly in early 2020, with a view to establishing the key elements of what future working arrangements at the Council may look like. 902 responses have been received and these will be analysed during Quarter 3.

- 2.20 The Council's Apprenticeship Policy Framework has been updated and refreshed to reflect the latest guidance. Work is ongoing to identify service areas where it may be beneficial to set up apprenticeships in the next financial year, with a view to the development of a business case to demonstrate potential return on investment.
- 2.21 This financial year has also seen the establishment of 8 apprenticeship conversions in Halton schools (those for which the Council is required to administer the Levy), and the setting up of 3 new apprenticeship posts. This is a positive development, as it has been extremely difficult for schools to support and resource apprentices given the relatively low level of Levy funding that is attributed to each individual school – in most cases it is insufficient to meet the whole cost of training. Support from this department, as well as LCR has led to constructive agreements being secured around the 'pooling' of Levy from a number of schools to enable a school to draw down enough Levy funding to meet training costs.

ICT Infrastructure

ICT Developments

- 2.22 In light of the emergent situation regarding the COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent need for remote working the demand for ICT support has been significant during the first half-year period. The investment in the development of a resilient and agile ICT infrastructure has proved invaluable in facilitating a successful migration from office based to home-working for a significant part of the Council's workforce and has supported the successful and continued delivery of services to the community.
- 2.23 The Council has also successfully initiated software solutions and interfaces that have facilitated online meetings to support the delivery of services and further facilitate collaboration internally between staff and also in regards to meetings of the Council's various Boards and Committees.
- 2.24 The Halton Cloud continues to support all 2600 desktop users with an average of 1800 concurrent users connected into services at any one time, system uptime over this period has been excellent, whilst accommodating a considerable number of changes and adaptations to the requirements profile of our user base over this extended period of the pandemic.
- 2.25 Teams within Schools: Teams is currently under trial within a primary school and will be released along with other variants of conferencing solutions once the trial and security configurations are completed over the next few weeks. All laptop devices are now with schools and children with over 760 devices and 140 mobile routers being deployed.
- 2.26 Social Care data matching is currently underway integrating Halton Social Care Data Sets with NHS Data Sets through a solution known as Graphnet. One of the Halton developers has now completed the 1st of personal data extracts from within the NHS systems literally a couple of days ago. We will be working on the reverse extracts from within our systems. Given the scale of the request this is a considerable piece of work and complex – In the main this will be utilised for Tracking and Tracing but will allow further benefits down the line, such as integration and the development of the One Halton Care Record.

Contact Centre / One Stop Shops

- 2.27 During the period of lockdown all of the One Stop Shop teams are working from home supporting the contact centre and many of the schemes in place to identify and support all Shielded and Vulnerable residents within the borough.

- 2.28 Additionally Over 50% of the Contact Centre team are now working from home effectively and will continue to do so in line with the current restrictions and guidelines.
- 2.29 The Council has offered extended opening hours of contact facilities to support and remain accessible to the local community and business and provide support for a range of local services. . To offer some scale to the level of contact and support being given across this period the average cost of monthly outbound calls within the authority, which is normally approximately £5'000, rose to over £15'000 per month over this period.

Catering, Stadium and Registration Services

- 2.30 The school meals service continues to quickly adapt to the evolving situation, for example by preparing hampers for children who are entitled to a free school meal and who have been unable to attend school premises or sending in packed lunches to schools where appropriate.
- 2.31 In addition the service has continued to provide hot meals within the schools where this has been possible and whilst the pandemic has resulted in some catering staff testing positive for the virus appropriate interventions have been arranged to maintain service provision.
- 2.32 The Coronavirus Act 2020 mandated a number of changes to the service. During Q1 there was a postponement of all Registration Services apart from Death Registrations and Marriages and Civil Partnerships by Registrar General's Licence. Substantial changes were made to the Death Registration process which included documentation from certifying doctors being received by email and registration conducted by telephone. Documents for funeral directors, cremation or burial authorities are scanned and emailed – increasing the time of a registration from 30 minutes to 45 minutes to an hour depending on the complexity of the registration.
- 2.33 During the second quarter of the year all registration duties were allowed to resume with some restrictions in place. As from 4 July Marriage and Civil Partnership ceremonies were allowed to resume with a limit of 30 people and we performed the first ceremony in the country one minute after midnight; which resulted in national /international media coverage. Further restrictions were put in place as from 24 September 2020 restricting the number of people to 15. These restrictions and uncertainties have led to many cancellations and postponements. Throughout the period officers in the service worked closely with colleagues to ensure website content was up to date.

Legal and Democracy

- 2.34 During the period a return to formal meetings of various Council Boards and Committees has been successfully implemented on a remote basis. This has been a significant undertaking and a major challenge which has been successfully delivered with the active support and engagement of Members, Officers and ICT colleagues.

Property Services

- 2.24 Phase 1 of the refurbishment of Millbrow Care Home, at an estimated cost of £1.5M, has now been put on hold in light of current circumstances around COVID-19
- 2.25 The refurbishment and remodelling of the Adult Learning provision at Kingsway Learning Centre is currently on site and progressing well. Handover is due w/c 19th October, the lift replacement and some glazing work will not be completed until slightly later however due to long lead in times.

- 2.26 Works to convert Orchard House, a large domestic bungalow, into 2 separate units for adults with substantial learning disabilities are now substantially complete, with just a few additional works having been identified.
- 2.26 The 2020/21 Education maintenance programme consists of 14 separate projects at a total cost of circa £800k. The majority of the projects within the programme were completed across the summer period, and whilst there are still a few projects yet to complete it is anticipated that this will be by year-end.
- 2.27 In addition the 2020/21 corporate maintenance programme has been agreed and various projects are progressing and will mainly be complete by year end. The budget has been revised in year as a result of necessary saving requirement, as such some projects may have to be deferred to 2021/22 due to budget pressures.
- 2.28 Design development work has been continuing in respect of the Crow Wood Lane supported living development. The proposal will see 2 supported living residential units developed with associated accommodation for staff. Site investigation survey work is continuing, it is hoped we will be in a position to tender the work as soon as funding is confirmed.

3.0 Emerging Issues

- 3.1 A number of emerging issues have been identified during the period that will impact upon the work of services including:-

Financial Services

Revenues and Financial Management

- 3.2 The draft accounts to 31 March 2020 were published on the Council's website on 28 August 2020. The External Auditor (Grant Thornton LLP) are in the process of auditing the accounts and due to report on this and Value for Money arrangements to the Business Efficiency Board on 24 March 2021.
- 3.3 Work is underway on developing the Council's net budget for the year 2021/22. The Medium Term Financial Strategy was reported to Executive Board on 19 November 2020 and identified a budget deficit of £15.2m for the year.

Government will confirm the final Local Government settlement position in January 2021, this together with a review of reserves and proposed budget efficiencies will be vital in helping the Council to achieve a balanced budget position.

Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance

- 3.4 As a contracting authority, the Council has legal obligations to publish certain notices in relation to public procurements. For procurements which are launched after 23:00 on 31 December 2020, the Council will be required to publish notices relating to those procurements on the Find a Tender Service (FTS) instead of OJEU/TED. Appropriate arrangements have been put in place for the Council to comply with the new requirements and existing legal and policy requirements for the Council to advertise on other platforms such as Contracts Finder will remain in place.

Benefits

- 3.5 The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) are to launch the Housing Benefit (HB) Award Accuracy Initiative from 5th October 2020, which involves local authorities (LA) undertaking activities to identify unreported changes of circumstances. LAs are being given funding to carry out specific activities to proactively identify unreported changes and make sure that the right amount of Housing Benefit is paid to the right person at the right time. The DWP will send a list of claims every month to LAs that it has assessed as high risk, and the LA will carry out a full case review to validate the claim. The HB Award Accuracy Initiative will continue for the remainder of 2020/21 and into 2021/22.

Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

- 3.6 The COVID pandemic has sharply highlighted a shortage of candidates for technical and professional roles across local government. Areas of particular concern are public health roles, nursing roles, environmental health and trading standards. These have been areas of concern for some time, recognised within professional networks as areas requiring attention. The current situation has magnified that and in the post-pandemic analysis, local government in conjunction with regional employers and the LGA need to consider how such roles can be developed for the future to ensure that the labour market can meet the required capacity.
- 3.7 The engagement of agency workers to meet increased service demand in areas such as adult social care continues. The HR service was supporting operational areas to plan restructuring of services that were TUPE'd inwards and have been areas of high usage, with a view to establishing a more stable permanent staff structure. The advent of the pandemic has delayed this process, which, combined with additional demand in these operational areas, has kept usage at a high level. In the circumstances, it's an unavoidable situation. Work will be picked up as soon as priorities and resources allow – likely to be into the spring of 2021 if the pandemic is brought under control.
- 3.8 A recent court judgement will result in some retrospective changes to public sector pension schemes, including LGPS being required. The McCloud judgement refers to the Court of Appeal's ruling that public sector pension reforms implemented by government in recent years (2014 for LGPS) unlawfully treated existing members differently based upon their age on the 1 April 2012. In light of the judgement, the government has confirmed there will be changes to all main public sector schemes to remove this age discrimination and new legislation enacted. It is therefore likely that a significant amount of work will be required on the part of employers to confirm pay details for specified periods for what could be a large number of employees.

ICT Infrastructure and Administration

- 3.9 From a technical perspective the coming months will be an extremely busy time with the upgrade of key server hardware solutions to accommodate the redevelopment of the infrastructure that supports all desktop, telephony and server-based systems. This is a major project that as of the start of December has completed the 1st phase of the development allowing the considerable task of upgrading the Virtual Desktop infrastructure, this upgrade will allow major developments such as the release of Teams and the Office 365 Suite within this virtual environment to compliment the use of Skype and the delivery of other conferencing mechanisms to enable the further development of home and remote working.
- 3.10 Following the relaxation of lockdown the One Stop Shops are now open to the public with extended opening hours resumed. Footfall within the key Town Centre areas has increased and Halton is the only authority within the region to open and continually support the ongoing delivery of such face-to-face services.

3.11 The central administration service again continues to support and adapt to key demands with staff within building where necessary and with others working from home supporting new systems, process and services as the pandemic evolves and the need for support changes almost daily.

Legal and Democracy

3.12 Work is continuing on the review of Committee structures, and the annual review of the constitution will shortly commence.

3.13 The local elections scheduled to take place in May 2021 will be the first following the completion of the boundary review and there will also be Police & Crime Commissioning Metro Mayor and Parish elections.

Property Services

3.14 A number of our maintenance contracts are coming to an end as such in conjunction with Procurement we are now working on procuring new contracts where necessary. The contracts include Water Hygiene, Asbestos Management, Security, CCTV & Intruder Alarm maintenance. All will be procured so that new contracts are in place when the existing ones expire.

3.15 £1bn of grant funding is being made available to support energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects where up to 100% of the capital costs may be available. The scheme is being run by SALIX and Halton are looking to put a bid together in order to try and secure funding for such projects. The deadline for bids is Jan 11th January 2021.

4.0 Risk Control Measures

4.1 Risk control forms an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and Performance Monitoring arrangements. As such Directorate Risk Registers were updated in tandem with the development of the 2020 – 21 Business Plans.

4.2 Progress concerning the implementation of all high-risk mitigation measures is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

5.0 High Priority Equality Actions

5.1 Equality issues continue to form a routine element of the Council's business planning and operational decision making processes. Additionally the Council must have evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011.

5.2 The Councils latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives is published on the Council website and is available via:







<http://www4.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/Equality-and-Diversity.aspx>

6.0 Performance Overview

- 6.1 The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate.
- 6.2 It should be noted that given the significant and unrelenting downward financial pressures faced by the Council there is a requirement for Departments to make continuous in-year adjustments to the allocation of resources in order to ensure that the Council maintains a balanced budget.
- 6.3 Whilst every effort continues to be made to minimise any negative impact of such arrangements upon service delivery they may inevitably result in a delay in the delivery of some of the objectives and targets contained within this report.

Financial Management

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
FS 01a	Report 2020-23 Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board - November 2020.	
FS 01b	Report 2020/21 revenue budget, capital programme and council tax to Council - March 2021.	
FS 02c	Provide quarterly monitoring reports on the overall budget to Executive Board.	
FS 03a	Publish the Statement of Accounts following external audit by 31st July 2020.	
FS 04a	Establish Treasury Management Policy and report to Council - March 2020.	
FS 05a	Establish and report prudential indicators to Council - March 2020.	

Supporting Commentary











Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will be reported to Executive Board on 19 November 2020. The financial forecast is being regularly updated. Revenue budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax on track to be reported on 03 March 2021.

2020/21 Q2 overall budget information will be reported to Executive Board on 19 November 2020. It will present an overspend to date excluding Covid19 of £576k and forecast an outturn overspend of £2.4m, with a number of service demand areas highlighted which are causing the overspend.

As a result of the Covid19 pandemic the deadline for completion of the audit of accounts was deferred to 30 November 2020. The draft Statement of Accounts was provided to the External Auditor on schedule on 28 August 2020. However, the External Auditor will inform the Business Efficiency Board on 18 November 2020 that due to lack of staff resources on their part, the audit would not be reported to Business Efficiency Board until 24 March 2021.

The 2019/20 Treasury Management Policy was approved by Council on 04 March 2020 and the half-year report will be presented to Executive Board on 19th November.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 01	Receive an unqualified external audit opinion on the accounts.	Yes	Yes	n/a		n/a
FS LI 02	Receive positive comment (annually) from the External Auditor relating to the financial standing of the Council and the systems of internal financial control.	Yes	Yes	n/a		n/a
FS LI 03	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected	TBA	TBA	53.89%		
FS LI 04	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received	TBA	TBA	53.60%		
FS LI 05	Average time for processing new claims (Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction)	TBA	TBA	18.37		
FS LI 06	Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances	TBA	TBA	4.51		

Supporting Commentary

Audit of 2019 / 20 statement of accounts remains ongoing and the Audit Findings relating to the 2019-20 financial statements have yet to be published.







Council Tax collection is down by 1.16% as at the same period in 2019/20. The impact of Covid and payment deferral of approximately 4,000 accounts leads to uncertainty in the 2020/21 target being achieved. It is possible the collection reduction will result in a lower than forecast cash receipt position for the year.

Additionally the collection of business rates has fallen by 3.8% when compared to the same period last year and the position reflects that referred to above.

Whilst the processing of new claims is not as good as the same period last year it remains within target and has reduced at quarter 2 from 21 days in April 2020.

Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Service

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
PPPE 01a	Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy May 2019	
PPPE 01c	Regular engagement with service managers to identify areas of challenge and develop appropriate bespoke solutions April, September, December 2020, and March 2021.	
PPPE 01d	Full implementation of Leadership and Management Development Programme September 2020.	
PPPE 02b	Establish 20 new existing employee apprenticeships to enable up-skilling in a range of business areas, compliant with the requirements of apprenticeship legislation March 2021	
PPPE 04b	Implement resourcing plans with service management in appropriate areas September 2020.	
PPPE 04c	Ongoing monitoring of agency usage and spend April, September, December 2020, and March 2021.	

Supporting Commentary

The actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy forms the basis of the workplan for the year and a new Organisational Development Strategy for 2020 – 23 has been approved by Executive Board.



Regular engagement with Service Managers continues and a range of interventions have now been delivered or are in progress to meet operational requirements. Broader COVID-19 related issues are being addressed through increased mental health focused training / signposting.

The delivery of the Leadership and Management Development Programme continues with Cohort 1 (MBA) commenced in Sept 2019 with 10 delegates working with Liverpool John Moores University, funded via Apprenticeship Levy. Cohort 2 (MSc) has commenced in September 2020, on the same basis

9 new apprenticeship 'conversions' have been established in the period since 1st April 2020.

HR services working with services most affected by COVID-19 pandemic to support resourcing decisions in a post-pandemic environment and additional detail regarding agency usage is provided in the table below.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
PPPE LI 01	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	11.66	10	3.94		

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
PPPE LI 03	Percentage of Employees without sickness	66.28	70	83.4		
PPPE LI 04	Total Full Time Equivalent Staffing Establishment	3,431	For information Only	3,353	For information Only	For information Only
PPPE LI 05	Total Staff (head count)	4,575		4,276		
PPPE LI 06	Total Agency Worker Usage (number of placements – year to date)	655	650	439		
PPPE LI 07	Total Agency Worker Cost (gross cumulative cost – year to date)	£2.216 M	£1.5M	£1.48M		
PPPE LI 10	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are: ¹					
	a) Women	61.78	55	63.4		
	b) from BME communities	3.45	2.0	2.87		
	c) with a disability	0.9	8.0	0.88		
PPPE LI 13	Average time to recruit (Applicant Tracking System reported figure)	15 days	15 days	12 days		

Supporting Commentary

Paradoxically, the impact of COVID-19, and changes to working patterns and practices had a positive impact on absence levels. The average number of FTE days lost at the end of Q2 stands at 3.94 (contrasting with 5.16 at the end of Q2 2019). This includes COVID related absence. A period of lockdown across Q1 will inevitably have meant that people were not mixing with others both in and outside of the workplace, reducing the incidence of many illnesses, as well as COVID infection.






Number of agency worker placements and spend has been unavoidably and adversely affected by the COVID situation and the need for additional resources. Please see the emerging issues section of this report for additional contextual information.

With regards to top 5% of earners there is positive movement on two of three component indicators (a) and (b), both of which are above target. Fluctuation exists in (c), due to turnover. It should be noted that recruitment in to 5% of earners is very limited, and as such scope for significant change is low.

Average time to recruit is presently within the expected range.

ICT and Administrative Support Services

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
ICT 01a	Continued Enhancement of the virtualization platform to enhanced or new technologies - March 2021.	
ICT 01b	Further development of Cloud Services Platform - March 2021.	
ICT 01c	SharePoint and Records Management enhancements - March 2021.	
ICT 01d	Interactive Web Services Enhancement and further SharePoint Integration - March 2021.	
ICT 02a	Continuing improvements, enhancements and commercial use of Cloud system - March 2021.	







Supporting Commentary



The extension of the new desktop facilities continues with over 2,600 Virtual Desktop users now utilising the RDSH Platform and this will continue over the coming months.

SharePoint and Records Management enhancements have been successfully implemented with software and hardware upgrades being deployed in both of the Council's data centres.

The development of the Cloud system has resulted in internal and external clients now utilising this solution and most recently the Council's Cemeteries system has successfully been deployed to a third party on a commercial basis.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
ICT LI01	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	99.5%	99.00%	100%		
ICT LI02	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	100%	99.00%	100%		
ICT LI03	School Support SLA: % of calls responded to within <u>agreed</u> target*:					
	a) Priority 1	100%	85.00%	100%		
	b) Priority 2	99%	90.00%	100%		
	c) Priority 3	100%	95.00%	100%		




Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
	d) Priority 4	100%	95.00%	100%		
ICT LI04	Average working days from delivery to completion of a new PC.	10 (Days)	10 (Days)	1 Day		

Supporting Commentary

All measures are showing a positive outturn at quarter 2. With regards to new PC's New procedures are in place, with the advent of a full VDi based workforce all desktop's can be replaced the same day – a process is also in place for home workers to drop off and collect a new device, again a same day service.

Legal & Democracy







Key Objectives / milestones



Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
LD 01	Review constitution - May 2019 .	
LD 02a	To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting where desired.	
LD 02b	To induct all new members by October 2019 .	

Supporting Commentary

The revised Constitution was approved at annual Council as planned and all Members have had the opportunity to have a MAP meeting and the cancellation of the 2020 Elections has meant that no new Members joined the Council.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
LD LI 01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total).	55 (98.21%)	56 (100.00%)	56 (100%)		
LD LI 03	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days).	10 (Days)	10 (Days)	10 (Days)		
LD LI 04	Average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department (working days).	3 (Days)	3 (Days)	5 (Days)		


Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
LD LI 05	% of Executive Board minutes published within 5 working days after the meeting.	100%	100%	100%		

Supporting Commentary

All indicators are showing positive performance at the half-year stage and there is no indication at this stage that annual targets cannot be achieved. With regards to care Proceedings existing constraints have meant that the position is presently slightly below target but additional support is now in place.

Community & Environment

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
CE 0 1a	Deliver a promotion and educational campaign (school meals) - September 2020 and January 2021 .	

Supporting Commentary

Given the current COVID pandemic no work is likely to be undertaken with schools during this financial year.

Key Performance Indicators


Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 01	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Primary Schools.	TBC	n/a	See comment	n/a	n/a
CE LI 02	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Secondary Schools.	TBC	n/a	See comment	n/a	n/a
CE LI 03	Take up of school lunches (%) – primary schools.	TBC	n/a	See comment	n/a	n/a
CE LI 04	Take up of school lunches (%) – secondary schools.	TBC	n/a	See comment	n/a	n/a

Supporting Commentary

The measures cannot be reported as a result of the present COVID situation.

Property Services

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
EEP 07a	Proposed new Leisure Centre at Moor Lane – commence works on-site by December 2021	
EEP 07b	Crow Wood Lane assisted living development – commence works on site by April 2021	
EEP 07 c/d	Deliver all annual corporate and schools programmed maintenance projects by March 2021	
EEP 07e	Millbrow refurbishment – commence works on site by July 2021	
EEP 07f	Complete refurbishment of 71 High Street, Runcorn by June 2019	

Supporting Commentary

The leisure centre development is presently on hold pending vacant possession of the site becoming more certain.

Design work is continuing on the Crow Wood Lane scheme with tender and procurement work to follow..

Programmed works continue and additional information is provided within the Key Developments section of this report.

Whilst the Millbrow refurbishment has had to be placed on hold due to the COVID situation works on the refurbishment of 71 High Street continue and a schedule of works is currently being prepared for pricing.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 01	Greenhouse gas EEP(GHG) emissions indicator (Tonnes CO ₂ e).	TBA	TBA	11,354 tonnes CO ₂ e (actual 18/19)		
EEP LI 04	Occupancy rates of investment and commercial portfolio.	TBA	TBA	100% Investment and 90% Commercial		
EEP LI 05	Occupancy of Widnes Market Hall.	TBA	TBA	91%		

Supporting Commentary

The overall emissions for 2018/19 amounted to 14,730 tonnes. The emissions for 2019/20 are 11,354 tonnes which equates to a 3.2% overall reduction.

Energy consumption in buildings has gone up slightly, however as the kw/h-CO₂ conversion factor has been amended again to reflect the greater mix of renewable energy being generated, the overall CO₂ emissions from buildings have reduced slightly.

Emissions from street lighting have seen the biggest reduction, reducing by 17.9% from the previous year.

Occupancy rates at Widnes Market Hall remain positive and as expected at quarter 2 and unit costs of office accommodation will be reported at year-end.

The investment and commercial portfolio is likely to remain negatively affected by the COVID situation for the remainder of the current financial year.

Occupancy levels in the indoor Market remain very strong despite the 3 month closure due to COVID-19.

7.0 Financial Statements

FINANCE DEPARTMENT**Revenue Budget as at 30th September 2020**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,655	2,768	2,738	30	59
Supplies & Services	346	253	216	37	73
Insurances	1,038	526	528	(2)	(4)
Concessionary Travel	2,218	538	305	233	466
LCR Levy	2,241	2,241	2,241	0	0
Rent Allowances	35,500	16,816	16,816	0	0
Non HRA Rebates	70	33	33	0	0
Discretionary Housing Payments	528	239	239	0	0
Discretionary Social Fund	106	54	54	0	0
Bad Debt Provision	0	0	0	0	(131)
Total Expenditure	47,702	23,468	23,170	298	463
Income					
Fees & Charges	-229	-136	-129	(7)	(14)
SLA to Schools	-464	-464	-466	2	2
Business Rates Administration Grant	-156	0	0	0	0
Hsg Ben Administration Grant	-461	-230	-230	0	0
Rent Allowances	-35,500	-13,213	-12,935	(278)	(552)
New Burdens Grant	-67	-67	-208	141	141
Council Tax Admin Grant	-204	-204	-202	(2)	(2)
Non HRA Rent Rebates	-70	-36	-36	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grants	-58	-1	-2	1	3
Liability Orders	-256	27	27	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-31	-10	-10	0	0
Discretionary Housing Payments Grant	-528	-176	-176	0	0
Dedicated School Grant	-106	0	0	0	0
Universal Credits	-12	-12	-12	0	0
VEP Grant	0	0	-11	11	11
CCG McMillan Reimbursement	-80	-19	-21	2	2
LCR Reimbursement	-2,241	-2,241	-2,241	0	0
Total Income	-40,463	-16,782	-16,652	(130)	(409)
Net Operational Expenditure	7,239	6,686	6,518	168	54
Covid Costs					
Employees	0	0	5	(5)	(5)
Discretionary Social Fund	0	0	6	(6)	(6)
Supplies & Services	0	0	13	(13)	(13)
Covid Loss of Income					
Reimbursements & Other Grants	-31	-31	0	(31)	(46)
Liability Orders	-150	-150	0	(150)	(300)
Fees & Charges	-5	-5	0	(5)	(5)
Government Grant Income	0	0	-210	210	375
Net Covid Expenditure	-186	-186	-186	0	0
Recharges					
Premises Support	249	125	125	0	0
Central Support	2,311	1,156	1,156	0	0
Recharge Income	-5,031	-2,505	-2,505	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,471	-1,224	-1,224	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	4,582	5,276	5,108	168	54

Comments on the above figures

In overall terms net revenue spending at the end of quarter 2 is £0.054m under the profiled budget.

Employee spend is currently below budget profile and this is projected to continue for the remainder of the year. This is due to vacancies within Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance Division and the Revenues and Financial Management Division. Changes in staff hours and recharging staffing costs to outside grant funding and Ways to Work Programme has also had an impact on staffing costs.

In the last financial year insurance net spend was £0.279m lower than the available budget for the year. Insurance spend is dependent upon the amount of insurance claims received and excess paid. It is difficult to project the ongoing demand for insurance costs and therefore it is assumed spend will be in line with budget for the year but this will be monitored and assumptions reviewed.

Supplies and services spend is showing an underspend against budget profile due to tighter control across all divisions.

Concessionary travel is projecting a large underspend due to the effects of Halton Borough Transport no longer an operator following liquidation.

Bad Debt provision is a projection relating to increases in non-payment of Benefits overpayments in this financial year. It also includes projections in relation to council tax and business rates liability order non-payments.

Rent Allowance income is showing a significant shortfall. This is because there has been an increase in the costs of supported accommodation. Only 60% of supported accommodation is funded from housing benefits, 40% the council is obliged to pay.

Covid expenditure is as a result of staff overtime within Business Rates and Benefit teams. Other Costs are in relation to Pay Point system and additional Social fund payments which are as a result of pandemic.

Loss of Income is mainly due to council tax and business rates liability orders income. Other income losses are due to hold on fraud investigations penalties, loss of rebate for spend from councils card programme. Income has also been reduced due to suspension of early payment scheme. Although this scheme is back up and running if further restrictions come into place there will be continued losses.

Overall it is expected the department net spend position for the year will be marginally within the annual budget

POLICY, PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE & EFFICIENCY DEPARTMENT**Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2020**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	1,968	925	909	16	32
Employee Training	126	38	34	4	7
Supplies & Services	138	90	87	3	6
Apprenticeship Levy	300	115	111	4	7
Total Expenditure	2,532	1,168	1,141	27	52
Income					
Fees & Charges	-102	-38	-55	17	34
Reimbursement and Other Grants	0	0	-17	17	1
School SLAs	-456	-456	-392	(64)	(63)
Total Income	-558	-494	-464	(30)	(28)
Net Operational Expenditure	1,974	674	677	(3)	24
Covid Costs					
Employees	0	0	1	(1)	(1)
Covid Loss of Income					
Government Grant Income	0	0	-1	1	1
Net Covid Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Recharges					
Premises Support	91	45	45	0	0
Central Support	963	481	481	0	0
Recharge Income	-2,631	-1,327	-1,327	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-1,577	-801	-801	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	397	-127	-124	(3)	24

Comments on the above figures

As at 30 September 2020, the Policy, Performance, People and Efficiency Division is marginally above budget profile

The schools SLA income gap has arisen from a lower level of take up from schools, it is also compounded by a reduction of staffing numbers across schools. The charges are "per established post". A revised pricing will be needed next financial year as service is becoming unsustainable.

The underachievement in maintained schools SLA income has however been offset by an overachievement in fees and charges income in relation to SLA Academy charges for HR and payroll services.

Overall the department is forecast to underspend against the net budget at year end by approximately £0.024m.

ICT and Administration**Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2020**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	7,081	3,609	3,609	0	39
Supplies & Services	976	514	435	79	157
Computer Repairs & Software	958	958	1,014	(56)	(223)
Communications Costs	17	17	38	(21)	(36)
Other Premises	64	45	53	(8)	(15)
Capital Financing	78	0	-12	12	33
Transport Expenditure	3	1	0	1	0
Transfers to Reserves	15	0	0	0	15
Total Expenditure	9,192	5,144	5,137	7	(30)
Income					
Fees & Charges	-1,129	-365	-139	(226)	(433)
SLA to Shools	-543	-543	-456	(87)	(14)
Transfer from Reserves	-29	-29	-29	0	0
Total Income	-1,701	-937	-624	(313)	(447)
Net Operational Expenditure	7,491	4,207	4,513	(306)	(477)
Covid Costs					
Employees	0	0	8	(8)	(8)
Supplies & Services	0	0	577	(577)	(614)
Capital Costs	0	0	105	(105)	(643)
2020/21 Saving - Staff Efficiencies	-464	-464	0	(464)	(730)
Government Grant Income	0	0	-1,154	1,154	1,995
Net Covid Expenditure	-464	-464	-464	0	0
Recharges					
Premises Support	406	203	203	0	0
Transport Support	20	10	10	0	0
Central Support	1,213	607	607	0	0
Asset Rental Support	1,494	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-11,500	-5,749	-5,749	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-8,367	-4,929	-4,929	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	-1,340	-1,186	-880	(306)	(477)

Comments on the above figures

In overall terms spending is above the budget profile by £0.306m at the end of the second quarter.

The main areas for this outturn position are as follows:

Employee's costs are forecasting a small underspend against budget profile. These projections are based on present staffing structure and current vacancies. A significant restructure is planned to take place, but due to Covid cannot be implemented. The restructure had been proposed to generate efficiency savings which have been built into the 2020/21 staffing budget. These savings have been funded from Covid government grant due to lack of time and resource to implement.

Supplies and services costs underspend is mainly in relation to savings within ICT Corporate Services and Admin Divisions. Within the Admin Division costs are reduced across all supplies and services due to Covid and staff working from home. Costs in relation to printing, office equipment are lower than profiled.

Computer repairs and software expenditure is above budget profile, mainly due to increases in the cost of the Microsoft licence agreement and potential VMware costs. These costs are ongoing network costs which are linked to service requirements so not controllable.

Fees and charges income budget relates to external client income for traded services for Agresso implementation and continued support. This income is unlikely to be generated and is therefore a significant budget pressure for 2020/21.

It is forecast net spend will exceed the available budget by £0.477m at 31 March 2021.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2020

Capital Expenditure	2020/21 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
ICT Rolling Capital Programme	700	133	133	567
Total Capital Expenditure	700	159	159	541

Comments on the above figures.

It is expected that this capital programme will fully spend by year end.

LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT**Revenue Budget as at 30th September 2020**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	1796	874	834	40	81
Transport	8	7	6	1	2
Supplies & Services	272	108	83	25	51
Civic Catering & Functions	49	6	0	6	12
Legal Expenses	219	123	123	0	0
Total Expenditure	2,344	1,118	1,046	72	146
Income					
Land Charges	-47	-6	-6	0	0
License Income	-247	-97	-103	6	13
School SLA's	-82	-82	-79	(3)	(3)
Fees & Charges Income	-57	-12	-16	4	8
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	0	0	-1	1	5
Government Grants	0	0	-6	6	6
Transfer from Reserves	-37	-37	-37	0	0
Bad Debt Provision	0	0	10	(10)	(10)
Total Income	-470	-234	-238	4	19
Net Operational Expenditure	1,874	884	808	76	165
Covid Costs					
Employees	0	0	7	(7)	(30)
Legal Expenses	0	0	10	(10)	(54)
Covid Loss of Income					
Land Charges	-2	-2	0	(2)	(2)
License Income	-8	-8	0	(8)	(8)
Government Grant Income	0	0	-27	27	94
Net Covid Expenditure	-10	-10	-10	0	0
Recharges					
Premises Support	61	31	31	0	0
Central Support	328	164	164	0	0
Recharge Income	-1,781	-891	-891	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-1,392	-696	-696	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	472	178	102	76	165

Comments on the above figures

In overall terms, spending is below budget profile at the end of second quarter.

With regards to expenditure, employee costs are below budget profile £0.040m, mainly due to cancellation of municipal elections, which has resulted in a reduction in staffing costs.

Supplies and services budgets are underspent mainly due to reduced advertising expenditure, this is an estimation at this point and could change towards the end of the financial year due to demand .

Legal expenses are dependent on the number of cases so cannot be projected accurately. Covid has resulted in increased workload and the overall annual effect cannot be confirmed until further into the financial year.

Land and license income is dependent on demand for property searches and license applications, so a volatile budget which difficult to project. Due to Covid, income levels were initially reduced but it is expected that income levels will now return to normal.

Government grant income relates to IER (individual Election Registration) monies. This grant is used in relation to costs relating to maintaining and updating Electoral registration records.

Covid expenditure related to staffing costs for the Communications Lead Officer whose hours increased due to pandemic. Other Covid costs relate to outsourcing of legal work. This was as a result of delays in recruitment for a solicitor post. Increased legal costs are also projected due to cancellation of Court hearings resulting in additional review meetings.

All 2020/21 budget savings budget will be achieved.

Overall although some costs are difficult to project at this point it is expected that the department will spend within budget for the year.

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2020

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	13,636	6,570	6,165	405	493
Premises	2,176	1,314	924	390	463
Supplies & Services	979	491	475	16	9
Book Fund	155	40	40	0	0
Hired Services	541	155	66	89	179
Food Provisions	85	15	12	3	2
School Meals Food	1,384	154	134	20	0
Transport	157	86	91	(5)	(10)
Area Forum	210	34	34	0	0
Contribution to Archives	57	0	0	0	0
Levies	31	31	30	1	1
Waste Disposal Contract	6,188	0	0	0	136
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	84	0	0	0	65
Grant to Norton Priory	172	86	87	(1)	(1)
Capital Financing	0	0	50	(50)	(50)
Rolling Projects	0	0	86	(86)	(86)
Total Expenditure	25,855	8,976	8,194	782	1,201
Income					
Sales Income	-737	-450	-203	(247)	(325)
School Meals Sales	-1,274	-100	-86	(14)	(40)
Fees & Charges Income	-3,484	-2,281	-2,128	(153)	(345)
Rents Income	-78	-39	-28	(11)	(22)
Government Grant Income	-1,077	-1,077	-943	(134)	(134)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-547	-108	-95	(13)	44
Schools SLA	-1,208	-1,208	-1,309	101	101
Internal Fees Income	-380	-166	-37	(129)	(320)
School Meals Other Income	-130	-22	2	(24)	(31)
Catering Fees	-14	-9	-9	0	0
Capital Salaries	-173	-60	-57	(3)	(7)
Transfers from Reserves	-133	-38	-38	0	18
Total Income	-9,235	-5,558	-4,931	(627)	(1,061)
Net Operational Expenditure	16,620	3,418	3,263	155	140

Covid Costs					
Community Development	0	0	1	(1)	(1)
Community Safety	0	0	9	(9)	(9)
Leisure & Recreation	0	0	7	(7)	(16)
Open Spaces	0	0	248	(248)	(299)
Schools Catering	0	0	19	(19)	(19)
Waste & Environmental Improvement	0	0	3	(3)	(592)
Shielding Hub	0	0	25	(25)	(25)
Avoided Costs					
Commercial Catering	98	24	0	24	98
Community Development	35	27	0	27	35
Leisure & Recreation	368	126	0	126	368
Open Spaces	712	245	0	245	712
Schools Catering	972	651	0	651	972
Stadium	451	92	0	92	451
Covid Loss of Income					
Commercial Catering	-110	-34	0	(34)	(110)
Community Development	-269	-147	0	(147)	(269)
Leisure & Recreation	-1,091	-653	0	(653)	(1,091)
Open Spaces	-1,263	-514	0	(514)	(1,263)
Schools Catering	-1,497	-954	0	(954)	(1,497)
Stadium	-682	-215	0	(215)	(682)
Waste & Environmental Improvement	-12	-12	0	(12)	(12)
Government Grant Income	0	0	-1,676	1,676	3,249
Net Covid Expenditure	-2,288	-1,364	-1,364	0	0
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,640	820	820	0	0
Transport Support	2,360	1,184	1,073	111	223
Central Support	4,170	2,085	2,085	0	0
Asset Rental Support	146	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-488	-244	-244	0	0
Net Total Recharges	7,828	3,845	3,734	111	223
Net Departmental Expenditure	22,160	5,899	5,633	266	363

Comments on the above figures

The net Department spend is £0.266m under the available budget at the end of Quarter 2 and the estimated outturn underspend for 2020/21 is £0.363m under budget.

The Department has been greatly affected by Covid-19 in the first half of 2020/21. Many services were halted for at least part of the first half of the year, whilst others have had to make changes to working methods and service delivery, all of which have had an impact on the Department's budgetary position. As such, the estimated Department outturn for 2020/21 has changed considerably from 2019/20, with the caveat that there are many uncertainties around when and how service provision can begin to return to normal. The assumptions used in preparing these figures are that The Brindley will remain closed for the rest of 2020/21; Kingsway Leisure Centre and Brookvale Recreation Centre will remain open for the rest of the financial year with reduced capacity; Runcorn Swimming Pool will remain closed until next year; functions at the Stadium will not be able to take place for the rest of the year and any matches staged will be behind closed doors; Community Centres and Libraries will remain open but will operate with restrictions on services in line with Tier 3 guidance; and a full School Meals service will continue to be offered from September, albeit with disruption caused by increased student absences and partial school closures. Any changes to these assumptions will result in major changes to the Department's financial position.

Employee expenditure is £0.405m under budget at the end of Quarter 2. The underspend relates to a large number of unfilled vacancies in the Leisure Centres, The Brindley and within Open Spaces. Site closures and reductions in service delivery have allowed vacancies across the Department to be held open for longer than usual which has also contributed to the underspend. As services are now beginning to resume, some of these vacancies have now been filled and it is not anticipated that an underspend of this scale will continue into Quarters 3 and 4. Savings on casual staff and overtime from sites that are currently closed have been classed as costs avoided due to Covid-19 and have been netted off reported Covid-19 income losses.

Premises costs are £0.390m under budget at the end of Quarter 2. Utilities and repair costs have reduced considerably whilst sites have been closed, although these will likely increase again now sites have started to reopen. The outturn position is currently projected to be £0.463m under budget due to ongoing closures at The Brindley and Runcorn Swimming Pool, a reduction in services offered at the Stadium and reduced energy usage at the Leisure Centres due to restricted capacity.

Spend on Supplies and Services is currently £0.016m under budget and spend on Hired Services is currently £0.089m under budget. This underspend has been generated by reduced spending on services that were temporarily halted, and spending is expected to return to normal once sites reopen.

No invoices have been received for the waste disposal contracts in 2020/21. Estimated expenditure has therefore been calculated based on the average cost per tonne in 2019/20. Any changes to these costs could have a large impact on the Department's outturn budget.

The overspend on Rolling Projects partially relates to emergency works to the Sankey Canal which have been necessitated by the closure of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station. Once the preliminary stages of the work are complete, a report will be taken to the Board which will set out options to fund the project.

An estimate of the income loss due to Covid-19 has been made based on the income received by the Department in 2019/20 and has been reported separately from the normal operational income. The underachievement of Sales Income of £0.247m at the end of Quarter 2 therefore relates to shortfalls in catering income from Commercial Catering and the Stadium which have been ongoing issues for many years.

Minimal income has so far been received for School Meals sales due to schools only being open for a very limited number of children in the summer term. It is extremely challenging to estimate the income which is likely to be received during the rest of the year as the service has been subject to considerable disruption since resuming fully in September, many schools have had to send large numbers of children home to self-isolate. Sales income will also be affected by the economic downturn due to a likely increase in free school meals numbers and possible reductions in the amount of household income available for discretionary spending. These factors mean that any projections relating to the School Meals service are subject to a high degree of uncertainty and could change considerably by the end of the 2020/21 financial year.

Fees & Charges Income is £0.153m under budget at the end of Quarter 2. This relates to historic shortfalls in income in the Leisure Centres and the Stadium, offset by an increase in income for Cemeteries, the Crematorium and green waste licences.

The shortfall in Government Grant income relates to the Universal Infants Free School Meals Grant.

The Department has incurred £0.312m of additional costs due to Covid-19 at the end of Quarter 2. £0.217m of these costs relate to the rental of the ice rink for use as a temporary morgue and the installation of a temporary cremator to cope with additional service demand. There were also £0.020m of additional costs incurred due to the School Meals service requiring to operate throughout the school holidays, and £0.015m of food costs relating to the Shielding Hub for distribution to vulnerable residents. The estimated additional costs for the whole of 2020/21 are £0.961m. The majority of the additional costs are in relation to waste disposal, caused by a significant increase in the amount of waste generated from households during lockdown. This has

increased considerably from the estimated cost at Quarter 1 due to the Liverpool City Region being subject to Tier 3 restrictions from October. It has now been determined that the temporary cremator will be required to be in place throughout the rest of 2020/21 at an additional cost of £0.020m. There are also additional costs being incurred relating to PPE and cleaning requirements in buildings which are open to the public.

Covid-19 related income losses across the Department in Quarter 2 are estimated at £2.529m, offset by £1.165m of avoided costs for casual and agency staff, overtime, food and bar provisions, and costs of artists performing at The Brindley.

It has been assumed that all additional costs and loss of external income that can be attributed to Covid-19 will be covered by government grant funding. This includes a grant of £0.231m awarded by the Arts Council to assist with the running costs of The Brindley, as well as to purchase equipment to enable the theatre to reopen safely in 2021/22. The only impact of Covid-19 which is shown as having an effect on the Department's financial position is therefore the loss of internal income which cannot be offset by grant funding. This loss of income will be offset by a reduction in expenditure across other Departments. This has the largest impact on the Stadium and the Community Centres, all of which receive significant income from internal room hire.

Transport recharges are currently £0.111m under budget, which is projected to increase to £0.223m at the end of 2020/21. This is consistent with the historical trend of reduced transport running and maintenance costs within the Department.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2020

	2020/21 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	69	33	33	36
Children's Playground Equipment	120	20	20	100
Landfill Tax Credits	10	0	0	10
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13
Crow Wood Play Area	90	6	6	84
Crow Wood Pavilion	1	1	1	0
Peelhouse Lane Cemetery	349	300	308	41
Victoria Park Glass House	25	20	20	5
Sandymoor Playing Fields	27	0	0	27
Town Park	246	20	14	232
Open Spaces	542	150	154	388
Bowling Greens	5	4	4	1
Widnes & Runcorn Cemeteries – Garage & Storage	3	3	3	0
Litter Bins	20	20	20	0
Brookvale Recreation Centre Pitch	488	0	0	488
Moor Lane Leisure Centre	4,986	984	984	4,002
Total	6,994	1,561	1,567	5,427

Comments on the above figures.

Stadium Minor Works – There have been major works carried out to modernise the Bridge Suite, including upgrading to energy efficient LED lighting.

Children’s Playground Equipment - This is an ongoing project which includes spend on improvements within the Borough’s playgrounds.

Crow Wood Park – The park building and the external works are substantially complete and the next phase of landscaping works is now under way.

Open Spaces Schemes – This covers spending on a variety of externally funded projects, including works to Sunnybank Park, Hale Lighthouse Approach, Birchfield Gardens and several projects in the Runcorn Hill area.

Peelhouse Lane Cemetery – The major hard landscaping is nearing completion. The final planting needed to complete the scheme will take place in the autumn.

Victoria Park Glass House – Works to the glass house are now complete. Works to the garden are currently being carried out.

Sandymoor Playing Fields – The main work has been completed and the site has now been handed over to the Parish Council. There will be some soft landscape establishment works to complete over the next year.

Widnes & Runcorn Cemeteries - Garage & Storage – Work at both sites has now been completed, with the exception of some final establishment works. There will be a retention payment due in 2020/21.

Town Park – The southern paths phase is nearing completion, with only reinstatement works remaining to be completed.

Bowling Greens – Works related to the removal of the bowling green is now substantially complete.

Moor Lane Leisure Centre – Works currently on hold due to potential compulsory purchase orders (CPO) on site.

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget as at 30 September 2020

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	4,472	2,129	2,145	(16)	(31)
Repairs & Maintenance	2,205	995	895	100	200
Premises	76	64	64	0	0
Energy & Water Costs	694	252	234	18	33
NNDR	472	464	486	(22)	(22)
Rents	179	63	63	0	1
Economic Regeneration Activities	34	5	0	5	10
Security	471	168	168	0	0
Supplies & Services	260	212	197	15	15
Supplies & Services - Grant/External Funded	1,022	386	386	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisation	150	19	19	0	0
Covid-19 Discretionary Business Support Grants	831	831	831	0	0
Capital Financing	21	21	21	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	210	122	122	0	0
Total Expenditure	11,097	5,731	5,631	100	206
Income					
Fees & Charges	-876	-301	-301	0	(1)
Rent - Commercial Properties	-780	-319	-221	(98)	(216)
Rent - Investment Properties	-39	-17	-17	0	0
Rent - Markets	-570	-200	-198	(2)	(2)
Government Grant Income	-1,615	-1,012	-1,012	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Income	-1,044	-178	-178	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-440	-434	-434	0	0
Recharges to Capital	-206	-67	-67	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-794	-244	-244	0	0
Total Income	-6,364	-2,772	-2,672	(100)	(219)
Net Operational Expenditure	4,733	2,959	2,959	0	(13)
Covid Costs					
Staffing	0	0	1	(1)	(1)
Repairs & Maintenance	0	0	26	(26)	(51)
Security	0	0	16	(16)	(16)
Supplies & Services	0	0	74	(74)	(84)
Covid Loss of Income					
Rent - Commercial Properties	-197	-197	0	(197)	(312)
Rent - Investment Properties	-5	-5	0	(5)	(5)
Rent - Markets	-209	-209	0	(209)	(235)
Covid Grant Funding	0	0	-528	528	704
Net Covid Expenditure	-411	-411	-411	0	0
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,777	888	888	0	0
Transport Support	28	14	14	0	0
Central Support	2,082	1,041	1,041	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-6,592	-3,296	-3,296	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,701	-1,353	-1,353	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	1,621	1,195	1,195	0	(13)

Comments on the above figures

Finance continue to work closely with the Department to ensure that a balanced budget is achieved.

Whilst effective control over expenditure can be maintained, income remains a budget pressure, as the majority of the income is generated externally.

It is projected that the saving measures put forward by the Department for 2020/21 will be met.

However, future revenue savings are becoming increasingly hard to find, given the number of employees within respective business units. In addition, the department consists of 134.4 staff, of which 73 are externally funded, through grant/capital or external sources. There are three vacancies in the department at present. One vacancy is being recruited to whilst the remaining vacancy within the Investment & Development Division will not be filled and any savings will be used towards meeting the staff turnover saving target of £0.092m

The Repairs & Maintenance Programme is projected to be under budget this financial year. An assessment has been carried out to identify work that is not committed and which can be delayed until the next financial year to help balance the budget.

The negative variance in recent years for Energy & Water Costs was addressed at budget setting time. Due to the majority of staff now working from home the budget continues to show a positive variance this financial year. This may increase during the next few months depending on the working from home situation.

Some buildings have been acquired as part of a particular regeneration scheme and currently remain vacant. As a result, in the interim, operating costs will have to be funded internally until the buildings are demolished. This with the additional cost of NNDR on empty buildings is causing a significant budget pressure.

The report shows how much Grant/External Funding the Department receives for Supplies & Services. This highlights the difficulties the department is faced when making savings on controllable budgets.

Adult Learning Division has contributed £0.122m as match funding towards the Ways to Work Programme. During the last 4 year this has generated £1.808m in matched funding, creating an employment programme of £4.773.

Commercial Property rent continues to be the main budget pressure for the department. During the last few years, the Council has disposed of many properties, either in preparation for regeneration projects but also to generate capital receipts, which have been reinvested in Council services. This loss of rent has not been reflected in the future setting of income targets.

Capital grant conditions allowed the Council to recharge staff time to projects.

A balanced budget is forecast this financial year.

Covid Costs

The majority of the costs for COVID are related to loss of income. The market tenants and some commercial property tenants were given a three month rent free period in April. The department is forecasting that the Flea Market at Widnes Market will not open until at least January.

Additional costs for the department relate to the purchase of PPE equipment, adaptations to corporate buildings plus security on the Ice Rink whilst it was being used by the Council. It is also projected that additional cleaning will be required in the next few months.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2020

	2020-21 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
3MG	72	21	21	51
Foundry Lane Residential Area	150	112	112	38
Equality Act Improvement Works	303	58	58	245
Widnes Market Refurbishment	149	88	88	61
Broseley House	24	20	20	4
Solar Farm	699	637	637	62
Solar Farm Extension	67	49	49	18
The Croft	30	0	0	30
Murdishaw Redevelopment	38	0	0	38
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	470	321	321	149
Kingsway Learning Centre Equipment	281	10	10	271
Halton Lea TCF	721	8	8	713
Sci Tech Daresbury – Project Violet	6,389	128	128	6,261
Runcorn Town Centre Redevelopment	750	34	34	716
Total	10,143	1,486	1,486	8,657

Comments on the above figures.

Sci Tech Daresbury Project Violet- Project Violet commenced on site in August 2020 and the groundworks are commencing to schedule

Widnes Market - Evaporative cooler works completed. Initial redecoration works completed. Further phases of works planned for the remaining allocation

3MG -Alstom have confirmed they will expand on their existing site rather than purchase more land from the Council. CDP have confirmed they will acquire all the remaining land, including the public open space.

Solar Farm - All commissioning and testing has been completed. The system passed the Plant Performance Ratio test in September 2020 and the commissioning certificate was completed in August 2020.

The Council formally took over the site in September 2020.

Equality Act Improvement Works - The installation of a stair lift to improve access within Kingsway Learning Centre is currently on site and the Council is planning for various upgrade works to be undertaken later in the year following on from the various access audit reports carried out by consultants Cassidy & Ashton

Broseley House - Only one tenant now remains and notice has been served on them with a view to having them vacate the building when their lease expires in June 2021. Once vacated the building will be demolished and the site brought forward for redevelopment. Minimum works will be carried out until then so there should be little expenditure over the short term.

Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities – Works are progressing well and on budget, phases 1 and 2 have been handed back to the end user, The Council have a delay on the lift installation and the sliding folding partition but the rest of the works are progressing well

Halton Lea TCF – The project for the Community Shop is near completion.




Foundry Lane – The Foundry Lane project relates to the regeneration of the Foundry Lane industrial estate in Halebank. Over the next 5-10 years, the aim is to regenerate the 8ha site from its current low quality/value industrial usage, to a thriving mixed tenure housing estate of approx. 400 units. The project is currently at procurement stage in order to appoint a long term Development Partner.

Murdishaw –The Council is awaiting confirmation of the masterplan in partnership with Onward Homes. Outcome delayed due to Covid. Currently liaising with Onward to agree priority schemes. Hope to identify quick win projects for delivery in Q3/4.




8.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
Green 	Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the annual target <u>is on course to be achieved</u>.</i>
Amber 	Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the annual target is on course to be achieved</i>
Red 	Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain</u> that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the target <u>will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</i>

Direction of Travel Indicator

Green 	Indicates that performance is better as compared to the same period last year.
Amber 	Indicates that performance is the same as compared to the same period last year.
Red 	Indicates that performance is worse as compared to the same period last year.
N / A	N / A
	Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year.

Implementation of High Risk Mitigation Measures (Corporate PPB) – Quarter 2 to 30th September 2020

The purpose of this report is to provide an update concerning the implementation of mitigation measures for those areas of risk which have been assessed as high that are of relevance to the Board.

Business Area – Financial Management

Assessment of current risk		Impact (Severity)	Likelihood (Probability)	Score (I x L)		
ECR R1	Failure to set a balanced budget, capital programme and council tax in accordance with statutory requirements <i>(Strategic Priority: Corporate effectiveness and business efficiency)</i>	4	4	16		
Risk control measure(s)		Lead Officer	Timescale Review	Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Score
R1 a	<i>Medium Term Financial Strategy is updated regularly as information is received from Government and other sources, and this informs the budget preparation process which is driven by Management Team and the Members' Budget Working Group.</i>	Operational Director (Finance)	Annually	4	3	12
R1 b	<i>Given the current scale of Government grant reductions, a strategy for development of budget proposals has been adopted by Management Team and the process for identifying proposals commenced as early as possible.</i>					
R1 c	<i>The budget timetable is structured to ensure the budget preparation process results in approval by Council and in advance of statutory deadline. Regular monitoring ensures the process is kept on track.</i>					
R1 d	<i>Initial budget proposals are presented to Council in December, with further proposals presented to Council in March, to ensure delivery of a balanced budget, capital programme and council tax.</i>					
R1 e	<i>Detailed guidance is provided to all budget managers regarding the process and the timetable to be followed.</i>					
R1 f	<i>The budget is prepared in accordance with statutory requirements and the S151 Officer ensures a balanced budget and council tax is presented for approval by Council.</i>					

Implementation of High Risk Mitigation Measures (Corporate PPB) – Quarter 2 to 30th September 2020

Assessment of current risk		Impact (Severity)	Likelihood (Probability)	Score (I x L)		
ECR R1	Failure to set a balanced budget, capital programme and council tax in accordance with statutory requirements <i>(Strategic Priority: Corporate effectiveness and business efficiency)</i>	4	4	16		
Risk control measure(s)		Lead Officer	Timescale Review	Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Score
R1 g	<i>Collection Fund (Business Rates and Council Tax) balances are monitored on a monthly basis, so that early consideration can be given to the impact of actual collection rates on future budget setting.</i>					

Progress update

- R1a - The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was reported to Executive Board on 19th November 2020. This will inform the budget preparation process being driven by Management Team and the Members' Budget Working Group.
- R1b - Given the Covid19 pandemic and the uncertainty regarding future Council funding, the process for developing the 2021/22 budget was delayed until there was more certainty. On 26th November 2020 the Budget Working Group considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy and agreed the process for identifying budget savings to meet the forecast budget gap for 2021/22.
- R1c/d - Budget proposals are currently being developed by Management Team, which will be presented to the Budget Working Group in January 2021. This will follow the Local Government Grant Settlement due in mid-December 2020, which will confirm the Council's funding for 2021/22 and thereby the budget gap. Budget proposals will then be considered by Executive Board on 25th February 2021 and recommended for approval by Council on 3rd March 2021 to deliver a balanced budget, along with the capital programme and setting the level of council tax.
- R1e - Detailed budget preparation guidance and a timetable has been issued to all Budget Managers, who are also being supported by their Finance Officers
- R1f - The estimated Council Tax Base for 2021/22 was approved by Council on 11th November 2020. All budget saving proposals are scrutinised by the Finance Department to ensure their robustness, prior to them being presented for consideration by the Budget Working Group. The Local Government Grant settlement in mid-December 2020 will provide details of the level of funding available to support the Council's budget. This will enable the S151 Officer to determine that a robust and sustainable budget is presented for approval by Council on 3rd March 2021.
- R1g – Business rates and council tax collection rates are being monitored regularly and are reported quarterly to Executive Board and Corporate Policy and Performance Board. The Collection Fund has been monitored closely throughout the year to assess the potential impact of Covid19 upon collection rates. A deficit position on the Collection Fund is forecast by year-end, which will impact upon budget setting for 2021/22 onwards. However, Government have announced through the Spending Review that they will fund 75% of such deficits, with the remainder being recovered over three years.

Implementation of High Risk Mitigation Measures (Corporate PPB) – Quarter 2 to 30th September 2020

Detailed guidance regarding these arrangements is awaited, so that any impact for 2021/22 budget setting can then be determined and Police and Fire will be notified as to their respective shares of the Collection Fund deficit.

Assessment of current risk - (Financial Management cont'd)			Impact (Severity)	Likelihood (Probability)	Score (I x L)	
ECR R4	Failure to contain overall spending for the financial year within the Council's annual net budget. <i>(Strategic Priority: Corporate effectiveness and business efficiency)</i>		4	4	16	
Risk control measure(s)		Lead Officer	Timescale Review	Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Score
R4 a	Budget monitoring reports are prepared on a quarterly basis and reported to Management Team, Executive Board and Policy & Performance Boards.	Operational Director (Finance)	Annually	4	3	12
R4 b	A budget risk register is maintained with quarterly updates to Management Team.					
R4 c	Budget monitoring is undertaken on a day to day basis between Finance Officers and Budget Holders. Budget monitoring reports are sent monthly to all Budget Holders to assist them to check spend, highlight budget variances and review outstanding commitments.					
R4 d	Early identification is sought of services, which are under pressure and appear likely to overspend significantly against budget. This enables action plans to be put in place as soon as possible and monitored, including regular monitoring of trends and forecasts for demand-led services.					
R4 e	Reasonable levels of general and earmarked reserves are maintained in order to minimise the impact of budget overspends.					

Progress update

R4a - Departmental budget monitoring reports for quarters 1 and 2 have been reported to PPBs as appropriate. The Council wide quarter 2 budget monitoring report was presented to Management Team and then to Executive Board on 19th November 2020. Covid 19 related spending and income losses have been presented alongside the Council's core budget, to enable the financial impact of Covid19 to be separately identified and monitored.

R4b – The budget risk register was updated at the end of Quarter 2 and presented to Management Team.

Implementation of High Risk Mitigation Measures (Corporate PPB) – Quarter 2 to 30th September 2020

- R4c – Budget monitoring is being undertaken on a daily basis by Finance Officers in liaison with Budget Managers. The latter have been issued with budget monitoring reports for their areas on a monthly basis. Monthly returns are being provided to MHCLG regarding Covid19 related expenditure and estimated income losses.
- R4d - Team have received regular progress reports highlighting those areas currently spending over budget and the actions being taken by each Directorate to bring spending back in line with budget as far as possible by year-end.
- R4e - The level of reserves is reviewed each quarter to ensure they remain reasonable given the spending pressures facing the Council and the outcome is reported to Executive Board. The Reserves and Balances Strategy has been updated and was presented to Executive Board as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy on 19th November 2020.

Implementation of High Risk Mitigation Measures (Corporate PPB) – Quarter 2 to 30th September 2020

Business Area – ICT Services

Assessment of current risk		Impact (Severity)	Likelihood (Probability)	Score (I x L)		
ECR R5	Network problems or failure prevents the delivery of Council Services. <i>(Strategic Priority: Corporate effectiveness and business efficiency)</i>	4	3	12		
Risk control measure(s)		Lead Officer	Timescale Review	Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Score
<i>R5 a</i>	<i>Business Continuity Plans / Disaster Recovery Plans in Place</i>	Operational Director (ICT & Admin)	Annually	3	2	6
<i>R5 b</i>	<i>Key Services identified so that when network problems occur those areas are given priority</i>					

Progress update

The continued virtualisation of server-based systems linked to the authorities active/active dual data centre strategy maintains both the DR/BCR plans for the council's ICT solutions. The council also utilises 3 internet connection locations again creating a level of resilience linked to supported multi vendor LAN and WAN networking strategies supporting both DR/BCR planning requirement. The authority operates and owns industry standard backup facilities holding multiple copies of data assets.

Implementation of High Risk Mitigation Measures (Corporate PPB) – Quarter 2 to 30th September 2020

Business Area – Legal & Democratic Services

Assessment of current risk		Impact (Severity)	Likelihood (Probability)	Score (I x L)		
ECR R8	Failure to implement effective Corporate Governance Arrangements results in decision making which lacks transparency, accountability, and efficiency. <i>(Strategic Priority: Corporate effectiveness and business efficiency)</i>	4	3	12		
Risk control measure(s)		Lead Officer	Timescale Review	Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Score
<i>R8 a</i>	<i>Standard Report formats</i>	Operational Director (Legal & Democratic Services)	Annually	4	1	4
<i>R8 b</i>	<i>Adoption of a written Constitution reviewed annually</i>					
<i>R8 c</i>	<i>Implementation of statutory access to information requirements</i>					
<i>R8 d</i>	<i>Implementation of Overview and Scrutiny arrangements</i>					

Progress update

Standard report formats remain in place and are kept under review to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose.

The Constitution was approved in May 2020.

Access to information requirements are kept under constant review. Extensive work and training was carried out concerning the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation in May 2018 and all staff were required to complete an e-training module.

Overview and Scrutiny arrangements continue to operate effectively and necessary amendments are made as & when required.

Implementation of High Risk Mitigation Measures (Corporate PPB) – Quarter 2 to 30th September 2020

Business Area –Community and Environment

Assessment of current risk			Impact (Severity)	Likelihood (Probability)	Score (I x L)	
ECR R29	Cost of using the stadium to disadvantaged/community groups.		4	3	12	
ECR R30	Lack of knowledge of the benefits of the Halton Leisure card.		4	3	12	
Risk control measure(s)		Lead Officer	Timescale Review	Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Score
R29 a	Ensure all community user groups are made aware of discounts available.	Operational Director	Quarterly	2	2	4
R30 a	Work closely with Sports Development team to actively promote the HLC to all low income/community user groups.			2	2	4

Progress update

R29a There are a number of clubs and charities who use the stadium facilities currently and they are aware of discounts available, such as, Table Tennis, Karate, Ladies Gym, Kickboxing, Let's Go Club, Chemics Café. We also support with Widnes Vikings and a number of charitable organisations. Any discounts are discussed and agreed by Stadium Management.

R30a Despite the continued promotion of the offer, the uptake of the card has declined over the last few years. This could be down to the fact that the discounts and number of providers listed on the card has reduced.

Implementation of High Risk Mitigation Measures (Corporate PPB) – Quarter 2 to 30th September 2020

Business Area –Community and Environment

Assessment of current risk			Impact (Severity)	Likelihood (Probability)	Score (I x L)	
ECR R31	Financial pressures on the service to increase rate of return.		4	3	12	
ECR R33	The cost of a school lunch to low income families.		4	3	12	
<i>Risk control measure(s)</i>		Lead Officer	Timescale Review	Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Score
<i>R31 a</i>	<i>Look to source additional funding. Produce a healthy eating policy and have it formally adopted by the Council.</i>		Operational Director			
<i>R33 a</i>						

Progress update

R31a Due to Covid 19 a number of initiatives have been applied which has seen the introduction of free meal entitlement all year round rather than just term time only. ALL children in KS1 are entitled to a free school meal regardless of eligibility and when a child moves to KS2, the universal credit application has been short-circuited, allowing them to have a free school meal without waiting for the six week period.

R33a A fundamental review has taken place that has seen the introduction of every child in secondary school receiving a free, reusable water bottle.