

Public Document Pack



Executive Board

Thursday, 21 January 2021 2.00 p.m.
To be held remotely - please contact
Clerk for access

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R'.

Chief Executive

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

PART 1

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2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
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 or voting on the item.	
3. LEADER'S PORTFOLIO	
(A) URGENT DECISIONS	6 - 7

Please contact Ann Jones ann.jones@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8276 or Gill Ferguson gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8059 for further information.

The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 25 February 2021

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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.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 10 December 2020 held remotely

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chair), D. Cargill, Harris, R. Hignett, S. Hill, Jones, T. McInerney, Nelson, Wharton and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, D. Parr, I. Leivesley, M. Vasic, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner and A. Jones

Also in attendance: One member of the press

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

EXB50 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB51 URGENT DECISIONS

The Executive Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided the urgent decision/s taken since the last meeting of the Board and during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

It was noted that the Council's constitution gave authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decisions, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Operational Director Finance and/or the Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.

A list of these decision/s were provided to Members in the report and full details were published on the Council's website.

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

Action

**CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE
PORTFOLIO**

**EXB52 THE FUNDING FORMULA FOR MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS
& ACADEMIES FOR 2021-22**

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – People, which outlined the proposal for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block Funding Formula for Halton’s mainstream schools and academies for 2021-22.

The National Funding Formula (NFF) was used by the Department for Education to calculate the Schools Block element of the DSG allocated to Halton. It was reported that further to earlier consultation with schools and the Schools Forum, it was decided to move Halton’s mainstream schools and academies to the NFF, with transitional protection for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

The Board was requested to make a decision on the funding formula to be adopted for 2021-22; the changes to the NFF for 2021-22 were outlined in the report. The consultation paper sent to schools was attached at Appendix A which also presented each factor of the NFF and the Council’s recommendation to continue to use this for 2021-22. The consultation process and responses were provided in the report.

RESOLVED: The Board approves the continuation of the National Funding Formula for 2021-22.

Strategic Director
- People

**EXB53 PARENT TO PARENT VOLUNTEER FAMILY SUPPORT
PROGRAMME: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STANDING
ORDERS**

The Board received a request for a waiver of Standing Orders in relation to ‘The Venus Project’ who delivered the Parent to Parent Volunteer Family Support Programme.

The Programme recruited, trained, supervised and developed skills of local volunteers who were parents themselves, so that they could provide support and practical assistance to families under stress. Additionally it also delivered the Intensive Cleaning Experience (ICE) Programme, which supported parents and carers to put in place and maintain household cleaning and decluttering routines.

It was reported that the contract was due to end in January 2021. The reasons for a waiver request rather than implementing a tender process were outlined in the report. The request was for a period of one year from 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2022, with the option of a further one-year extension.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board approves the waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.1 iv of Part 3, to allow the continuation of a contract with The Venus Project to deliver, on behalf of the Council, the Parent to Parent Volunteer Family Support Programme, for a period of one year with the option to extend for a further year.

Strategic Director
- People

EXB54 PROPOSAL TO INCREASE PAYMENT RATE FOR HALTON'S ADULT PLACEMENT CARERS AND APPROVE MINOR CHANGES TO THE PLACEMENT SCHEME

The Strategic Director – People, presented the Board with details of a proposal to increase the payments made to Halton's Adult Placement Service Day Carers and to change the name of the service to 'Shared Lives Services'.

Halton's Adult Placement Service provided care for people who had been assessed as requiring support due to age, illness or disability. It offered adults an alternative and highly flexible form of accommodation and/or care or support using the Adult Placement Carer's home as a resource and the care was provided by individuals, couple or families in the local community. Halton had used Adult Placement Carers for almost 20 years and was proud to say that in 2019 they were the regional winners of the Great British Care Awards for Dementia Care.

The report outlined the rationale for the requested increase in payments and the requested change to the name of the service. In support of these requests and other minor changes, Members were referred to Appendix 1 – the Shared Lives Plus Funding Model; Appendix 2 – comparisons with other local authorities for 2020 day carer payments; and Appendix 3 – Halton Shared Lives Carers monthly breakdown of fees paid for 2019 and the proposed increase for 2020. It was noted that there would be an increase of £38,871 per annum for the costs of the Service with the increased payment rates, which was still considerably less than the alternative of day care or residential services.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

Strategic Director
- People

- 1) notes the report and accompanying appendices; and
- 2) approves the requested payment increase, change of service name, advert for carers and minor changes to the scheme.

COMMUNITY AND SPORT AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIOS

EXB55 LEASE OF RECREATION CLUB BUILDING AND KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELDS, DUNDALK RD, WIDNES

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval to the granting of a lease to Widnes FC Ltd, for the Recreation Club building on Dundalk Road and King George V playing fields.

The report outlined the background and history of the Club in recent years and Members were referred to the plan of the site attached to the report.

The Council invited Expressions of Interest (EOIs) to lease the Recreation Club building and King George V playing fields, subject to them being retained for social, sports and recreational use. Following a site visit made by interested parties, only Widnes FC Ltd expressed an interest to continue with discussions and went on to present a proposal to the Council.

It was noted that the proposal would require significant investment and resources to deliver and the report laid out the Council's position and steps required to be taken should the granting of a lease to Widnes FC Ltd be approved.

RESOLVED: That

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

- 1) the Council enter into a lease agreement with Widnes FC Ltd;
- 2) the Council bring forward the site for sporting development, subject to planning permission; and
- 3) the Board delegates responsibility for oversight of the development and lease to the Operational Director – Economy, Enterprise and Property and the Operational Director – Communities and

Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Physical Environment and Community and Sport.

MINUTES ISSUED: 15 December 2020

CALL-IN: 22 December 2020 at 5.00 pm

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 22 December 2020.

Meeting ended at 2.10 p.m.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 21 January 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

PORTFOLIO: Leader

SUBJECT: Urgent Decisions

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To bring to the attention of Executive Board urgent decisions taken since the last meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 That the report is noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Council's Constitution gives authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decisions which are required before the next formal meeting of Executive Board.

These must be made in consultation with the Leader of the Council where practicable, and with the Operational Director – Finance and/or Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services where necessary. They must also be reported for information to the next practically available meeting of the Board.

3.2 More information on each can be found on the Council's website here:

<http://councillors.halton.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?bcr=1>

3.3 The urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of Executive Board:

Date Decision taken	Decision details
1 December 2020	Approval of WONDE – the School Meal Voucher Scheme

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are none other than the constitutional requirement to report urgent decisions for information.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The report is for information, and there are no risk issues arising from it.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

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

9.1 No background papers were used in the preparation of this report. Further information on the decisions taken is available from the link in Paragraph 3.2.

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	21st January 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – People
PORTFOLIO:	Children, Education, & Social Care
SUBJECT:	School Admission Arrangements 2022
WARDS:	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report fulfils the Local Authority's statutory requirement to consult upon and then determine the admission arrangements to Halton's community and voluntary controlled schools for whom the Local Authority is the Admission Authority, and to fulfil the statutory requirement to determine Coordinated Admission Schemes for admission to all primary and secondary schools in Halton including Academy, Free School and Voluntary Controlled schools, for the September 2022 intake.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 The Board approves the attached School Admissions Policy, Admission Arrangements and Coordinated Schemes for admission to primary and secondary schools for the 2022/23 academic year.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 On the 1st October 2020 Halton Local Authority issued a statutorily required consultation on the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes for the September 2022 intake to Primary Schools (attached as Appendix 1) and Secondary Schools (attached as Appendix 2). The Primary Scheme also included the proposed oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools for whom the Local Authority is the admission authority. No change to the existing criteria were proposed as they continue to work well and meet the requirements of the Department for Education's School Admissions Code.
- 3.2 The full consultation was available on the Council's website for parents and carers and any other interested party, and was issued to: all schools for sharing with parents, carers, staff and governing boards, Diocesan Authorities responsible for voluntary aided schools in Halton, all schools in Halton who are their own admission authority, and to all neighbouring local authorities.

- 3.3 The consultation ran until 13th November 2020 and no changes were proposed to the current oversubscription criteria for admission to Local Authority maintained community and voluntary controlled primary schools. All secondary schools in Halton are academies or voluntary aided meaning they are their own admission authority and responsible themselves for consulting and determining their own admissions criteria and their own Published Admission Number (PAN), and any proposed changes they wish to make must be consulted upon and determined in accordance with the statutory requirements regarding consultation and determination detailed in the Department for Education School Admissions Code 2014.
- 3.4 The consultation advised that there would be no individual response to any submissions made, but any responses submitted relating to the purpose of the consultation would be considered by the Council's Executive Board. One response to the consultation was received (attached as Appendix 3). However, that response did not relate to the purpose of the consultation (the timelines and process for schools and neighbouring local authorities set out within the coordinated admissions schemes, and the oversubscription criteria proposed for community and voluntary controlled schools), and a separate response to the individual was sent.
- 3.5 All admission authorities – the Local Authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, and the Governing Boards/Trusts for academies, free school and voluntary aided schools, must ensure that the admission arrangements determined are fair, clear and objective, and fully comply with all statutory requirements. The arrangements proposed by the Council for admission to community and voluntary controlled schools for the 2022/23 academic year reflect those requirements.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Admissions Policy has been drawn up to maximize parental preference for Halton Local Authority maintained community and voluntary controlled schools. The oversubscription criteria contained within the Policy for community and voluntary controlled schools for whom the Local Authority is the admissions authority, reflect the criteria which are considered good practice and acceptable by the Department for Education.
- 4.2 With regard to the Coordinated Admissions Schemes for admission to primary and secondary schools, parents/carers are invited to express a preference (or preferences) for any school for the relevant age group, and must complete an application form which allows them the opportunity to express those preferences. If the school of preference is undersubscribed then all applications will be successful. If the school is oversubscribed then the oversubscription criteria will be applied and places allocated in accordance with the relevant criteria. The Council

applies the admissions criteria determined for community and voluntary controlled schools to applications for those schools, and the Admission Authority (Governing Board/Trust) for academy, free school and voluntary aided schools apply their criteria for admission and notify the Local Authority of the outcome of those applications. The Local Authority then communicates those decisions to parents/carers on behalf of all schools on the relevant notification date.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The proposed policy complies with statutory requirements for local authorities who are the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, in ensuring that the admission arrangements to community and voluntary controlled schools are fair and do not disadvantage, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with disability or special educational needs.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Educational achievement is critical to the life chances of all children in the borough, and the School Admissions Policy detailing school admission arrangements to community and voluntary controlled schools in Halton underpins the requirement to promote fair access to educational opportunity.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The School Admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools are aligned to the Council's School Transport policies which promotes and supports measures that encourage local communities to use environmentally sustainable forms of travel, especially walking, cycling, and public transport.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The alignment of the School Admissions Policy and School Transport policies promotes the safe travel and transfer of pupils to school.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools are proposed to maximise parental preference for Halton schools. Any amendment to the current arrangements at this time may reduce parental preference and lead to an increased number of admission appeals, adversely affecting the intake at some schools. The coordinated schemes for admission to primary and secondary schools are proposed to ensure that statutory requirement to have such schemes in place is met.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The proposed admission arrangements reflect any requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 The decision is statutorily required.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 Other options considered and rejected include the allocation of places to community and voluntary controlled schools through random allocation (lottery) as this method could be seen as arbitrary and random.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 The Policy and co-ordinated schemes will apply for the September 2022 academic intake.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
School Admissions Code 2014	People Directorate	Martin West
School Standards & Framework Act 1998	People Directorate	Martin West
Education Act 2002	People Directorate	Martin West
Education & Inspections Act 2006	People Directorate	Martin West



HALTON LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS – 2022/23 ACADEMIC YEAR

- 1.0 This document is intended to fulfil the statutory requirements for admissions into reception class in maintained infant and primary schools.
- 2.0 This Co-ordinated Primary Scheme applies to all those schools detailed on pages 15 and 16 of this document. Halton Borough Council (as the Local Authority - LA) is the Admission Authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools, and the Governing Body of each voluntary aided or academy school is the admission authority for the school.
- 3.0 Parents/carers **must** complete their home LA's preference form, therefore if a non-Halton resident is seeking admission to a Halton school, (or vice-versa) they must complete their own authority's form which will then be forwarded to the relevant authority and LAs will then share any cross border applications for consideration.
- 4.0 Halton residents will be required to complete a Halton preference form and will be given the opportunity to express a preference, with reasons, for up to 3 primary schools regardless of which authority the school is in. The LA must invite applications on the preference form and the preference form must comply with mandatory provisions and the requirements of the School Admissions Code. This form will be available on-line and parents are encouraged to apply for a school place via the Halton Borough Council website at www.halton.gov.uk/schooladmissions.
- 5.0 Where a Voluntary Aided School requires supporting information e.g. asking for a reference from a priest or other religious minister for a faith school, or details of baptism etc parents may be required to complete a supplementary form and VA schools **must** inform parents of their requirements within their school's published admission arrangements.
- 6.0 Admission authorities (the LA for community and voluntary controlled schools, and governing bodies for voluntary aided and academy schools) **must** ensure that their determined admission arrangements comply with the mandatory provisions of the Code. In Halton, as

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statutorily required, an Equal Preference Scheme is operated. Within the equal preference scheme all preferences are considered equally against each school's published admission criteria. After all preferences have been considered if only one school named on the preference form can offer a place the maintaining LA will send out an offer of a place. If more than one school can offer a place parents will be offered a place at whichever of those schools is ranked highest on the preference form. This may not be the first preference school. If a school becomes oversubscribed then places will be allocated in accordance with the relevant oversubscription criteria.

- 7.0** Admission authorities **must** provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday and parents are allowed to request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year. In Halton this already happens. Parents can request their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age and admission authorities **must** accommodate these requests where it appears to be in the best interest of the child.
- 7.1** As recommended in the School Admissions Code the LA will allow parents/carers to defer their child's entry to school until the child is of compulsory school age, providing the parent applies and is offered the place within the normal admissions timetable, and the place is taken up within the same academic year.
- 7.2** In addition, the LA, as detailed within the Department for Education document "Advice on the admissions of summer born children" (2020) will ensure that flexibilities exist for children whose parents do not feel they are ready to begin school in the September following their fourth birthday. School admission authorities are responsible for making the decision on which year group a child should be admitted to, but are required to make a decision based on the circumstances of the case. In these cases the School may seek the professional views of Local Authority officers including the Special Educational Needs Assessment Team, the Education Welfare Service, and the Educational Psychology Service, together with any other agencies who are involved with the child/family.
- 7.3** It should be noted that if a child is presently attending a nursery class/early years setting they do not have an automatic right to transfer to the primary school to which the nursery/early years setting is attached (the only exception being The Grange School which is an all-through school). Parents/carers are required to indicate a preference for a primary school along with all other parents/carers. The same applies for children who already have siblings already at a particular school, parents/carers must complete a preference form along with all other parents.

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8.0 APPLYING FOR A PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACE FOR SEPTEMBER 2022

- 8.1** Halton LA publishes online an “Admission to Primary School” booklet (a Composite Prospectus). A letter and information leaflet will be issued to all Halton Primary Schools and will be available at Halton Direct Link Offices, Halton Libraries, on line via the council’s website, and upon request from the Admissions Team. The booklet will be published online in **September 2021** and the on-line application system will be available at the same time.
- 8.2** The preference form will seek three preferences in ranked order. All applications, whether made online or submitted in paper format (by request only) must be submitted by no later than **15th January 2022**. This closing date is a statutorily set closing date. The online application system will not be available after this date and late applications must be submitted on a paper copy of the preference form.
- 8.3** Halton resident parents may request information (a prospectus) regarding schools in neighbouring local authorities but **must** complete their preferences on their home LA form.
- 8.4** The Admissions Team will load all preferences onto the database including those received from neighbouring LAs (inter-LA exchange to take place week commencing **Monday 31st January 2022**). Halton LA will then forward all application details, regardless of whether they are first, second and third preferences to all Voluntary Aided schools and Academies where admission is being sought, at latest by **Friday 11th February 2022**. The Admissions Committee of those governing bodies **must** meet and place in ranked order against their criteria the details of all pupils applying to their school. Governing bodies must treat first, second, and third preferences equally against their admissions criteria, and **must** then notify the Admissions Team by **Sunday 6th March 2022** all pupils’ details in ranked order against their criteria.
- 8.5** The LA will then undertake a final data exchange with neighbouring LAs to ensure that all children have an allocated school by **Friday 18th March 2022**.
- 8.6** When all preferences have been considered and allocations finalised, Halton residents will be able to view their allocated school place online on **Tuesday 19th April 2022**, together with details of the appeal process if applicable. Letters advising of the allocated school place will be posted to parents submitting a paper copy of the preference form on this date. Parents/carers will be required to decline any offer of the school place within 10 school days. If the LA does not hear from the parent/carer then it is assumed the place has been accepted.
- 8.7** Parents will have until **Wednesday 18th May 2022** to lodge any appeals with the LA.

9.0 OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

9.1 If a Halton community or voluntary controlled school becomes oversubscribed, places will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria:

- 1) Looked after children and children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order), and children who appear to the Local Authority as the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted;
- 2) Siblings – pupils with elder brothers or sisters including half brothers and sisters and unrelated children **living together as part of the same household**, already attending the school and **expected to continue in the following year**;
- 3) Pupils living nearest to the school measured using an Ordnance Survey address-point system which measures straight-line distances in metres from the address point of the school to the address point of the place of permanent residence of the pupil.

For admission to community and voluntary controlled schools the following notes apply:

a) Children who have a statement of special educational needs (to be known as Education, Health & Care Plan) will be allocated a place at the school named in the statement (Education, Health & Care Plan). Where a child with a statement (Education, Health & Care Plan) is allocated a place this will reduce the number of remaining places available to allocate within the above oversubscription criteria.

b) If oversubscription occurs within any one of the above criteria 1-3, places will be allocated on distance grounds as described within the distance criteria (3) above. In the instance of a tie regarding distance for the last place to be offered (to two decimal places in metres), a place will be offered using the electronic admission system's random allocation function.

c) Where applications are received for twins, triplets etc, the LA will apply the oversubscription criteria and will oversubscribe the school if a family would otherwise be separated.

d) The address to be used in measuring distance for the purpose of allocating school places will be the child's permanent home address. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility the LA will use the address of the person receiving Child Benefit for allocation purposes. Parents may be required to submit evidence of Child

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Benefit upon request from the LA. It may also be necessary for the Council to carry out checks that the address given is genuine and parents may be requested to produce further documentary evidence of the child's address. The above criteria will apply without reference to the Halton Borough Council boundary.

e) Where applications are received from families of UK Service personnel and other Crown servants, school places will be allocated to children in advance of the approaching school year if accompanied by an official MOD, FCO or GCHQ letter declaring a return date with full address details and providing they would meet the criteria when they return to the UK.

f) If none of the parent's preferences can be met, Halton LA will allocate a school unless there are insufficient places remaining in the authority. In Halton, a place will be allocated at the nearest school, with places available, to the home address measured in a straight-line distance measurement from the child's permanent residence to the school. This does not affect parent's rights to appeal for a place at the school(s) they have been refused.

9.2 THE GRANGE ALL THROUGH SCHOOL

The Grange is a designated all through school, therefore children enrolled in the nursery at the closing date will automatically transfer from the nursery to infants, infants to juniors, and juniors to secondary within The Grange. Following the transfer of those children from the nursery to reception class the remaining places will be allocated in accordance with the school's admissions criteria. If a child is enrolled to the nursery after the primary closing date, and allocations have been made and the school is full, the child will be placed on the waiting list.

10.0 LATE APPLICATIONS FOR HALTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Late applications for places at Halton Local Authority maintained community and voluntary controlled schools received after the closing date will not be considered until after the main allocation of places has taken place for all those applications received on time. If an application is received after places have been allocated and the school(s) of preference are oversubscribed, the child will be placed on the school's waiting list, the child's position on the waiting list being determined by the admission policy. Parents have the right of appeal if admission is refused and details on the appeals process are given in paragraph 15 below. If parents are making a late application to a voluntary aided school or academy the school will advise how this will be dealt with. Late applications **must** be made on a paper copy of the preference form which can be obtained from any of the Halton Direct Link Offices or directly from the School Admissions Team. The online application system is not available after the deadline for application, **15th January 2022**.

11.0 CHANGE OF PREFERENCE

If parents decide to change their preference after the closing date they will need to request and complete another preference form. The on-line facility will not be available after the closing date. If places have already been allocated the LA may not be able to meet the change of preference and the child's name will be added to the waiting list as detailed in paragraph 14 below. It should be noted that the online application process will cease on the closing date, so parents/carers will need to request and complete a paper copy of the application form.

12.0 CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If a pupil moves house **after the closing date of 15th January 2022 and before 11th February 2022**, parents must notify the LA. The LA may require documentary evidence to confirm this change of address. For changes made on or after **12th February 2022**, the address used for the initial allocation of places will be the permanent place of residence provided in application before this date. A new address may be submitted for purposes of waiting list position if required and documentary evidence will be necessary to confirm this change of address.

13.0 WITHDRAWAL OF OFFER OF A SCHOOL PLACE

Halton LA and the admission authorities of schools in the LA, reserve the right to withdraw the offer of a school place in limited circumstances. These may include where a fraudulent/intentionally misleading preference form is received claiming a false sibling or false residence.

14.0 WAITING LISTS

The LA will maintain waiting lists for oversubscribed community and voluntary controlled primary schools. The waiting list will comprise of those pupils refused admission to the school(s) of preference. This list will be maintained from the time of initial allocation until the end of the Autumn Term (**31st December 2022**), at which point the waiting list will cease. If a place becomes available at an oversubscribed school, the place will be reallocated in accordance with the published over-subscription criteria detailed above. Parents should be aware that their child's place on the waiting list might alter, either up or down, dependent upon the movement of other applicants. The waiting list forms part of the co-ordinated scheme, therefore applications received up to the end of the Autumn Term will be considered within the scheme, following which any applications received after this date will be dealt with as an in-year admission and the in-year application process will be applied.

15.0 ADMISSION APPEALS

Parents who are not offered a place at any of their preferred community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided trust or academy schools have a right of appeal to an independent appeals panel under section 94 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be submitted in writing but parents have the right to present their case to the panel in person. Appeals will be conducted in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. The decisions of independent appeals panels are legally binding on all parties.

Regulations made under Section 1 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 limit the size of an infant class (in which the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6, or 7 during the school year) to 30 pupils per school teacher. Parents will have a right of appeal but an appeal panel can only uphold this appeal if it is satisfied that:

- a) It finds that the admission of additional children would **not** breach the infant class size limit; or
- b) It finds that the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or were not correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied; or
- c) It decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

The decisions of independent appeals panels are legally binding on all parties.

Applications for admission to Aided Church schools will be referred to the Admissions Committee of the governing body of the school concerned. The LA, acting on behalf of the governors, will notify parents of the result of their application. If the application is not approved parents will be notified of their statutory right of appeal.

16.0 SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:

The LA as commissioner of school places is continually reviewing and monitoring the number of places available against projected pupil numbers and updates head teachers accordingly. It is possible that occasionally, there may be certain geographical areas within the borough where demand for places is higher than the actual number of places available, and the LA will, in discussion with the school, give consideration to admitting above a school's Published Admission Number (PAN). Admitting above a school's PAN will only be agreed between the school and the LA where it is confirmed that to do so will not affect the school in the longer term and will not have a detrimental

effect on neighbouring schools and providing it does not breach infant class size legislation.

The figure in brackets denotes the school's proposed Published Admission Number for 2022 but may alter as a result of any school reorganisation.

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:

All Saints Upton C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (30)
Astmoor Primary (25)
Beechwood Primary (20)
Brookvale Primary (40)
Castleview Primary (20)
Fairfield Primary (90)
Farnworth C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (60)
Gorsewood Primary (30)
Hale C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (25)
Halebanks C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (15)
Hallwood Park Primary (25)
Halton Lodge Primary (30)
Hillview Primary (30)
Lunts Heath Primary (60)
Moore Primary (30)
Moorfield Primary (45)
Murdishaw West Community Primary (30)
Oakfield Community Primary (40)
Pewithall Primary (30)
Simms Cross Primary* (40)
The Brow Community Primary (25)
Victoria Road Primary (40)
Westfield Primary (25)
Weston Primary (30)
Weston Point Primary (20)
Windmill Hill Primary (25)
Woodside Primary (30)

* in the process of converting to academy status

ALL THROUGH ACADEMY SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:

The Grange (60)

VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:

CHURCH OF ENGLAND:

Runcorn All Saints' CE Aided Primary (20)
St Berteline's CE Aided Primary (44)
St Mary's CE Aided Primary (35)

CATHOLIC:

Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Catholic Primary (30)
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Catholic Primary (30)
St Basil's Catholic Primary (60)
St Bede's Catholic Infant (75)
St Bede's Catholic Junior (75)
St Clement's Catholic Primary (30)
St Edward's Catholic Primary (15, to be confirmed)
St Gerard's Roman Catholic Primary & Nursery (30)
St John Fisher Catholic Primary (30)
St Martin's Catholic Primary School (30)
St Michael's Catholic Primary (30)
The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary (20)

ACADEMY SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:

Bridgewater Park Academy (30)
Daresbury Primary (30)
Ditton Primary (60)
Palace Fields Primary Academy (30)
St Augustine's Catholic Academy (25)
St Michael's with St Thomas C E Primary (30)
Widnes Academy (30)

TIMETABLE FOR SEPTEMBER 2022 PRIMARY ADMISSIONS

15th January 2022
Closing Date for applications

Monday 31st January 2022
Inter LA exchange of preferences

By Friday 11th February 2022
preference details sent to all VA
and Academy schools to rank
applications in criteria order

Sunday 6th March 2022 VA and
Academy schools must have ranked
all applications in criteria order and
submitted the details to the LA

18th March 2022
Final exchange of data between
neighbouring LAs to confirm
allocations

19th April 2022
Online notification of offer for
parents submitting preferences
online. Letter posted to parents
submitting paper copy.

18th May 2022
appeals to be lodged with LA



HALTON LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS – 2022/23 ACADEMIC YEAR

- 1.0** This document is intended to fulfil the statutory requirements for admissions into year 7 at secondary schools in September 2022.
- 2.0** Halton Local Authority is consulting on the proposed admission arrangements to determine a co-ordinated scheme which will apply to all secondary schools in the authority's area for the September 2022 intake.
- 3.0** The Scheme will apply to the following schools in the table below. The table also details the proposed Published Admission Number (PAN) for each school, and the type (category) of school:

School	PAN	Type
The Grange	180	Academy
Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College	300	Voluntary Aided
St Chad's Catholic and Church of England Joint Faith High School*	190	Voluntary Aided
Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy	180	Academy
Ormiston Chadwick Academy	190	Academy
The Heath School	240	Academy
Wade Deacon High School	315	Academy
Sandymoor Ormiston Academy	120	Academy

*In the process of converting to academy status.

It should be noted that at the time of writing some schools may be in the process of determining their PAN for 2022, providing they have consulted in accordance with the statutory requirements of the School Admissions Code.

Each Academy School (including Free Schools) has a Trust who is responsible for determining the admission arrangements for its school. The Governing Bodies of the Voluntary Aided Schools are the

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admission authorities for these schools. Academy Trusts and Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided Schools are required to undertake their own consultation regarding admission arrangements.

- 4.0** From September 2021 Halton residents will be given the opportunity to complete a common preference form and express a preference, with reasons, for up to 3 secondary schools using this form for a school place in September 2022. The LA must invite applications on the preference form and the preference form must comply with mandatory provisions and the requirements of the DfE School Admissions Code. This form will be available on-line and parents/carers are required to apply for a school place via the Halton Borough Council website at www.halton.gov.uk/schooladmissions. Parents/carers should only complete one application form and preferences may include Halton schools and schools maintained by other LAs. Paper forms are available by request only.
- 5.0** Admission authorities i.e. governing bodies for voluntary aided, academy and free schools **must** ensure that their determined admission arrangements comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code. All admission authorities must operate an Equal Preference Scheme. Within an equal preference scheme all preferences are considered against each school's published admission criteria. After all preferences have been considered, if only one school named on the preference form can offer a place, the LA will send out an offer of a place. If more than one school can offer a place, parents will be offered a place at whichever of those schools is ranked highest on the preference form. This may not be the first preference school. If a school becomes oversubscribed then places will be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.
- 6.0 APPLYING FOR A SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACE FOR SEPTEMBER 2022**
- 6.1** Halton LA publishes online an "Admission to Secondary School" booklet (a Composite Prospectus). A letter and information leaflet will be issued to all year 6 pupils attending Halton Primary Schools and Halton resident pupils who attend schools in other LAs, advising parents of the online booklet and application process, and will be available at the Halton Direct Link Offices, Halton Libraries, on line via the Council's website, and from the Admissions Team. The booklet will be published online at the start of the Autumn Term, **September 2021**, and the on-line application system will be available at the same time.
- 6.2** The preference form will seek three preferences in ranked order (regardless of which LA the school preferences are for). Applications from Halton resident parents, either on-line submissions or hard copy (by request only), must be returned no later than **31st October 2021**.

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- 6.3** Halton resident parents may request information (a prospectus) regarding schools in neighbouring LAs but **must** complete their preferences on the Halton form. Halton LA will work with its neighbouring authorities: Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington, Liverpool, Knowsley, and St Helen's, together with any other admission authority where a parent has applied for a school place.
- 6.4** On-Line Admissions: LAs are required to have a facility for parents to apply on-line for a secondary school place. This facility is in place for Halton residents via Halton Borough Council's website at www.halton.gov.uk/schooladmissions. This is the preferred method of application. Residents who cannot apply online may request a paper copy of the preference form from any of the Halton Direct Link Offices or directly from the School Admissions Team.
- 6.5** Halton LA will record all preferences on the admissions database, including those received from neighbouring LAs whose children are seeking a place at a Halton School and will forward, week beginning **15th November 2021**, details of all first, second, and third preferences for admission to aided schools and academies, for consideration in accordance with their published admission criteria.
- 6.6** The governing bodies of voluntary aided schools and academies should note that they must treat first, second, and third preferences equally against their admission criteria and **must** place in ranked order, against their criteria, the details of all pupils applying to their school, and must return the ranked list to the Admissions Team by Friday **10th December 2021**.
- 6.7** When all preferences have been considered and allocations finalised, Halton residents will be able to view their allocated school place online on **Tuesday 1st March 2022**, together with details of the appeal process if applicable. Letters advising of the allocated school place will be posted to parents submitting a paper copy of the preference form on this date. Parents/carers who applied online will also receive an email confirming the allocated place.
- 6.8** If none of the parent's preferences can be met, Halton LA will allocate a school unless there are insufficient places remaining in the authority. In Halton, a place will be allocated at the nearest school, with places available, to the home address measured in a straight-line distance measurement from the child's permanent residence to the school. This does not affect the parent's rights to appeal for a place at the school(s) they have been refused.

7.0 EARLY AGE TRANSFER TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Children of exceptional ability and maturity can be considered for transfer to secondary schools one year earlier than normal. It is the responsibility of the Head teachers of primary/junior schools to put

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forward the names of any pupils whom they consider are physically, intellectually, and emotionally suitable to benefit from such a transfer, and who might be educationally disadvantaged by remaining in the primary sector for a further year. However, as a first step, head teachers will discuss possible candidates with parents, the school's link adviser, and the Educational Psychologist. Parents who consider that early transfer might benefit their child should discuss this with the head teacher.

8.0 LATE APPLICATIONS FOR HALTON SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Late applications for places at Halton Local Authority maintained community schools received after the closing date will not be considered until after the main allocation of places has taken place for all those applications received on time. If an application is received after places have been allocated and the school(s) of preference are oversubscribed, the child will be placed on the school's waiting list, the child's position on the waiting list being determined by the admission policy. Parents have the right of appeal if admission is refused and details on the appeals process are given in paragraph 14 below.

If parents are making a late application to a voluntary aided school the school will advise how this will be dealt with. Late applications **must** be made on a paper copy of the preference form which can be obtained from any of the Halton Direct Link Offices or directly from the School Admissions Team. The online application system is not available after the deadline for application, **31st October 2021**.

9.0 CHANGE OF PREFERENCE

If parents decide to change their preference after the closing date they will need to complete another preference form. If places have already been allocated the LA may not be able to meet the change of preference and the child's name will be added to the waiting list. It should be noted that the online application process will cease on the closing date, so parents/carers will need to request and complete a paper copy of the application form.

10.0 CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If a pupil moves house **after the closing date of 31st October 2021 and before 16th January 2022**, parents must notify the LA. The LA may require documentary evidence to confirm this change of address. For changes made **after 16th January 2022**, the address used for the initial allocation of places will be the permanent place of residence provided in application before this date. A new address may be submitted for purposes of waiting list position if required and documentary evidence will be necessary to confirm this change of address.

11.0 WITHDRAWAL OF OFFER OF A SCHOOL PLACE

The admission authority of any school in Halton LA reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a school place in limited circumstances. These may include where a fraudulent/intentionally misleading preference form is received claiming a false sibling or false residence.

12.0 WAITING LISTS

Waiting lists will be held for all oversubscribed secondary schools. The Local Authority, who are responsible for coordinating admissions, will maintain the waiting lists for oversubscribed schools and, if a place becomes available, will liaise with the relevant schools before reallocating any available place. Secondary schools must not reallocate any places, this is the responsibility of the Local Authority for the secondary transfer process. The waiting list will comprise of those pupils refused admission to the school(s) of preference. This list will be maintained from the time of initial allocation until the end of the Autumn Term, at which point the waiting list will cease. If a place becomes available at an oversubscribed school, the place will be reallocated in accordance with the published over-subscription criteria for the relevant school. Parents should be aware that their child's place on the waiting list might alter, either up or down, dependent upon the movement of other applicants. The waiting list forms part of the co-ordinated scheme, therefore applications received up to the end of the Autumn Term (**31st December 2022**) will be considered within the scheme, following which any applications received after this date will be dealt with as an in-year admission and the in-year admission process will be applied.

13.0 ADMISSION APPEALS

Parents who are not offered a place at any of their preferred schools have a right of appeal to an independent appeals panel under section 94 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be submitted in writing but parents have the right to present their case to the panel. Appeals will be conducted in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. The decisions of independent appeals panels are legally binding on all parties.

Applications for admission to Aided Church schools, Trust and Academy schools will be referred to the Admissions Committee of the governing body of the school concerned. The LA, acting on behalf of the governors, will notify parents of the result of their application. If the application is not approved parents will be notified of their statutory right of appeal. The deadline to submit an appeal will be **Wednesday 23rd March 2022**.

15.0 SCHOOLS WITH SIXTH FORMS

Each school with a sixth form **must** include in its consultation paper the arrangements they propose to use to allocate places in Year 12. It is not intended that the LA will co-ordinate admissions to sixth form, therefore applications must be sent to the relevant admission authority (i.e. the school) for consideration. Parents and children above compulsory school age have the right to make separate applications for more than one school.

Each school **must** set an admission number for its sixth form, and should say in its published information what the anticipated sixth form capacity will be. However, the published admission number **must** only relate to those being admitted to the school for the first time and should be based on an estimate of the minimum number of external candidates likely to be admitted. It is not necessary for children already in the school to apply formally for places in year 12, but the admission arrangements **must** give details of any entry requirements. Children in care **must** be given highest priority within the criteria, schools **must not** interview children or their families for entry to year 12, although meetings can be held to provide advice on options and entry requirements. Entry **must not** be dependent on attendance, behaviour record, or perceptions of attitude or motivation. Where the admission authority has not admitted up to its PAN it cannot refuse to admit applicants who have met the minimum entry. Any other applicant refused must be given the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

TIMETABLE FOR SEPTEMBER 2022 SECONDARY ADMISSIONS

SEPTEMBER 2021 – APPLICATION PROCESS COMMENCES

31ST OCTOBER 2021 CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS

WEEK COMMENCING 15TH NOVEMBER 2021 LA PROVIDES DETAILS OF ALL 1ST 2ND AND 3RD PREFERENCES TO VA SCHOOLS

BETWEEN 15TH NOVEMBER AND 10TH DECEMBER 2021 ADMISSION COMMITTEES OF OWN AUTHORITY SCHOOLS MUST MEET TO CONSIDER ALL APPLICATIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

NO LATER THAN 10TH DECEMBER 2021 OWN AUTHORITY SCHOOLS MUST HAVE RANKED ALL APPLICATIONS IN CRITERIA ORDER & SUBMITTED THIS LIST TO THE LA, FOLLOWING WHICH INTER-LA EXCHANGE OF DATA WILL ALSO OCCUR

1ST MARCH 2022 ONLINE NOTIFICATION OF OFFER MADE TO PARENTS APPLYING ONLINE. LETTER POSTED TO PARENTS SUBMITTING A PAPER COPY OF THE PREFERENCE FORM

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Dear Sir/Madam

As part of the consultation in to school places in Halton I would like to put forward the following points for consideration.

The standard of secondary education in the town has really improved over recent years and each school in the town has something to offer. My concerns are to do with fairness, risk to meeting strategic objectives, risk to meeting the requirements of the schools admissions code.

Admission criteria:

Schools admissions code section 1.14 states that catchment areas MUST be reasonable. Must makes this a legal requirement. Reasonable is more subjective, however the dictionary definition refers to "fair" more than once and from a legal perspective reasonable it often referred to as the "man on the street test". So, if you asked someone what they thought would they consider something to be fair in the context of the situation.

Taken alone each school sets out a clear and reasonable admissions criteria, based on distance for 2 schools and faith/ partner schools for the other.

However – as there is just over 1 mile between the two schools that specify distance as their main criteria I do not see how this can be fair and therefore reasonable.

Our town is ~ 31 square miles yet children and families living in less than half of that space ~ 13 square miles have a choice of the school, some a choice of all three. Yet others, outside the distance boundary have no choice at all and if they have no faith they are 9th on the list of the other, faith, school in the town.

To illustrate with some examples, (for simplicity the catchment boundary is considered to be for both academies to be around a mile but is known to be less than that in some years and Wade Deacon is set at a maximum of 1600m):

Child A – Lives within ~ 1 mile of both OCA and Wade Deacon and is Catholic baptised/ of faith – Full choice of 3 schools

Child B – Lives within ~ 1 mile of both OCA and Wade Deacon and is not baptised/ of faith – Choice of 2 Academy schools though able to choose to be considered a space at the faith school if wishes, though 9th on the criteria list.

Child C – Lives within 1 mile of either OCA or Wade Deacon and is baptised/ of faith – Choice of either an academy place or a place at faith school

Child D – Lives over ~ 1 mile from both OCA and Wade Deacon is baptised Catholic – Meets the 4th criteria selection to choose a place at faith school

Child E – Lives over ~ 1 mile from both OCA and Wade and has no faith – No choice of academy school and 9th on the list to receive a place at the faith school.

So against the admissions code is it fair and therefore reasonable that:

A portion of families and children get a choice of 3 schools and some children and families get no choice what so ever?

That distance is used to differentiate yet catchment areas overlap so significantly one even passes the gate of the other school?

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That families and children can use faith and choose to baptise to take advantage primary school places then choose to not use faith when choosing a secondary school?

That children who don't have faith have their options limited?

That some children and families can have the empowerment and feeling of being in control of their own destiny through choice where others feel they have to take with whatever is left?

Is it fair that one school has a sibling rule when another does not?

*This is not a question of advantaged children vrs disadvantaged children as children of all socio-economic backgrounds are affected by lack of choice.

Steps must be made to change catchments to offer a fairer distribution of choice.

Strategy:

Overall Halton is operating at 87% capacity in secondary schools. Widnes schools are suffering from oversubscription, showing the demand for places. Runcorn has more secondary school places available than Widnes yet the population of school age children (up to 19) is roughly the same.

Within the councils own strategy, they state that a reasonable distance for children over 8 to travel to school is 3 miles. Although it maybe 3 miles as the crow flies from some areas as there is a body of water to cross no school in Runcorn offers reasonable traveling distance to many parts of Widnes and therefore the towns provision should be considered separately.

If you split the towns there is a high risk that capacity of the schools in Widnes does not meet demand. There are 870 primary school places available vrs 805 high school places (with some of those high school places earmarked for Catholic children in Speke and Cronton) so there is a risk of capacity not meeting demand.

Although there are more exports than imports in the town has any consideration been given to if this was voluntary, e.g. wanted to leave the town for school or by having no choice? Can we really rely on this in the future as schools around the town become more in demand as houses continue to be built closer to Penketh and Rainhill for example.

Also in the strategy the long term view considers the declining birth rate, but does not reference any forward considerations about changing population demographics. Due to the housing boom.

Risk:

Section 2.25 of the schools admissions code states: Where a maintained school or Academy is to be closed, the local authority must collaborate with all schools in their area to consider the best way to secure provision for children in other local schools

Fairfield high was closed in 2010 – long before I moved to the town. However, this would have been the secondary option for my family to choose as it served our side of Widnes. It closed and for a while Wade Deacon covered my side of Widnes, which includes many boroughs such as Farnworth, Crows wood, Halton view, Weates Close etc.

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For those of us on this side of the town unless we have faith, especially Catholicism, we are at risk of being left in a no mans land of priority for school spaces. Too far away to meet the distance criteria of any school either in Widnes or neighbouring towns. Of no faith so at the bottom of the list of admission criteria for P&P.

P&P's reputation has been building over recent years with the introduction of new leadership. Results and ethos are all showing that it is good school and one that is sure to become increasingly sought after if this momentum stays . This school selects on faith and does not specify that you have to live in Widnes. So children from surrounding towns who are baptised Catholic could start to choose a place at this school.

Other schools in neighbouring towns are either too far away to access reasonably and/or state distance as their selection criteria. These are in towns where there is a housing boom and many houses are being built closer to the schools.

Schools in other towns are becoming increasingly not an option so something must be done to ensure a fair and even distribution of schools places within Widnes. It makes no sense to think a child could get a place at school 2 – 5 miles away that differentiates on distance when a place at a school 1 mile away isn't an option.

Note: If either Penketh or Rainhill are mandated to take children from Widnes it is not in their publises admissions criteria and this therefore does not meet the legal requirements of the school admissions code.

My ask is that as part of this consultation you:

Consider the fairness of the criteria that selects pupils for secondary schools. How can a situation that allows "child A" a choice of 3 schools and "child E" no choice be a fair and reasonable way of managing access to school places in a town?

Consider that children have already been split by distance and consider allocating feeder schools so that the situation is fairer, more evenly distributed and children and parents have certainty about the future. Something that is even more vital in this post pandemic world.

Consider how the council will meet its obligation to provide a school place to all children if something doesn't change in the admissions criteria of the 3 schools.

Look at the disparity between Runcorn and Widnes – Runcorn has more schools, more available places, smaller class sizes, smaller schools, but a smaller population and a similar, though smaller, school age population.

Consider that investment in school facilities (primary and secondary) and more secondary spaces are needed in Widnes to meet the demand for spaces.

Consider that Runcorn should not be included in school capacity planning of Widnes as few children in the town would have a Runcorn school either 3 or 2 miles away as defined in the school strategy. So capacity in Runcorn should be irrelevant to the consideration of capacity in Widnes.

I sincerely hope that the points raised are debated and that all points are carefully and respectfully considered.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 21st January 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – People

PORTFOLIO: Children, Education, & Social Care

SUBJECT: Capital Programme – 2021/22

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides a summary of the capital funding received by the Council from central government to support capital works and programmes within schools for the 2021/22 financial year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) **The position regarding capital funding from the Department for Education for 2021/22 is noted;**
- ii) **The proposals to be funded from School Condition Capital Allocation are approved;**
- iii) **The capital allocations are put forward for inclusion in the Budget report to full Council.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Department for Education has not yet announced the Capital Grant Allocation for 2021/22, but given the timescales for some of the proposed capital projects, there is a requirement to present this report. The allocation stated in this report is based on the 2020/21 allocation which was £903,847. We are currently unsure if the Department for Education will adopt the same methodology as previous years, therefore for the purpose of planning the 2021/22 capital programme, the 2020/21 allocation figure has been used. In the event that the 2021/22 allocation is reduced, or in the event that a school converts to academy status which impacts on funding received by the Council, the amount of funding available for elements of the capital programme will be reduced accordingly.

3.2 Detailed in the table below is the indicative funding available to support capital projects across the school estate:

GOVERNMENT FUNDING	
School Condition Allocation – Local Authority maintained schools i.e. community and voluntary controlled schools (INDICATIVE FIGURE BASED ON 2020/21)	£903,847
Allocated to fund condition and suitability projects at Local Authority maintained schools.	

4.0 School Condition Allocation funding.

4.1 The table below details how the School Condition Allocation will be utilised.

Description	Estimated costs	Description
Asset Management - Computer Aided Design (CAD) Plans and Condition Surveys	£25,000	CAD plans of school buildings are updated where improvement works/changes to accommodation have been carried out. The condition surveys are essential in order to identify any condition issues and plan for future capital repair programmes
Asbestos Management	£12,000	Annual update of asbestos surveys and undertaking of resulting remedial works.
Accessibility projects	£50,000	Funding that schools can apply for to resolve accessibility issues within school buildings.
Contingency	£76,847	Used for emergency and health and safety works that arise during the year.
Capital Repairs	£770,000	A programme of capital works undertaken at community and voluntary controlled schools, determined by the Local Authority, based upon a priority of need in discussion with schools and colleagues in Property Services.
Total	£933,847	

The total amount of £933,847 detailed above comprises £903,847 (based on 2020/21 School Condition Allocation), together with a required total contribution from schools (circa £30,000).

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The programme of works will allow the Council to continue to meet its requirement to enhance the school environment through capital projects.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 In April 2020 the Department for Education announced the final capital allocations for 2020/21, for Halton this was £903,847. At the time of writing, the 2021/22 allocation has not yet been announced, and we are currently unsure if this will follow the same methodology as previous years, therefore for the purpose of planning the capital programme for 2021/22 the 2020/21 allocation figure has been used. In the event that the allocation is reduced, or should further schools convert to academy status which will also reduce the amount of funding the Local Authority receives, the amount of funding available for elements of the capital programme will be reduced accordingly.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Capital Repairs Programme will contribute to Halton's Carbon Management Programme by helping to produce more energy efficient buildings.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

8.1 Children and Young People in Halton.

The Capital Programme will address condition and suitability issues within school buildings and will continue to improve the learning environment for children and young people.

8.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

As above.

8.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

8.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

9.1 Capital Repairs

It is current practice for schools to contribute towards the cost of works. Consultation with schools on their contribution to any proposed works will take place following the Council's consideration of the budget report in March 2021. If schools cannot or are not willing to contribute, any proposed projects will not be carried out in 2021/22, and deferred for future years.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

10.1 The Accessibility funding provides capital funding to improve the accessibility of mainstream and special schools for pupils with disabilities and the wider community. Consideration to access issues is given in all building projects. The capacity of schools to meet the needs of children with

more complex needs and disabilities will be developed further through building works at schools.

11.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

11.1 To deliver and implement the capital programmes.

12.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 Not applicable.

13.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

13.1 Capital Programmes for 2021/22 to be implemented with effect from 1 April 2021.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Schools Capital Funding Allocations 2020/21 Department for Education 15/04/2020.	People Directorate	Catriona Gallimore

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	21 st January 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, People
PORTFOLIO:	Children, Education & Social Care
SUBJECT:	PAUSE Delivery Model for Halton as part of the Liverpool City Region
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Halton to enter into a partnership with the registered charity Pause and the other city region authorities Wirral, Liverpool & Knowsley to develop a regional Pause programme to address the increasing demands on statutory services and rising numbers of looked after children and the need to safely manage a reduction in children becoming looked after.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members of the Executive Board approve that:

- i) In consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education & Social Care, the Strategic Director People and the Strategic Director of Enterprise, Community & Resources accept grant funding from Pause for the establishment of a Pause Practice in Halton.
- ii) Authority be granted for the Council to enter into a collaboration agreement with the registered 'Pause' charity, Halton Borough Council, Knowsley Council and Wirral Council to oversee the delivery of Pause Practices within the local authority areas.
- iii) The Strategic Director, People in liaison with the Operational Director, Finance seeks to identify potential sources of funding for the Council's contribution to enable the continuation of the project once the DfE funding ends.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Within the Liverpool City Region, work has been undertaken to develop a pilot project involving a regional Pause model to work with women, who have had multiple children removed from their care, and who are at risk of having future children removed, and to provide intensive support to break this cycle. It is proposed that two Pause Practices are developed, Liverpool and Wirral and Halton and Knowsley. The project will be delivered by Pause, a national charitable body, who will recruit and employ staff and oversee the programme which will commence in March 2021. Pause has secured DfE funding to enable this regional development and match funding from the four local authorities will not be needed until late 2021/22.

- 3.2 Pause is an intensive trauma-informed relationship-based model that aims to reduce the damaging consequences of children being taken into care. The programme does this by working with women who have had multiple children removed from their care, and who are at risk of having future children removed, supporting them to break the traumatic cycle of repeat pregnancies and removals. An 18-month individually tailored package of support for women is delivered by a dedicated Practitioner working intensively with the individual woman, to address a broad range of emotional, psychological, practical, and behavioural needs. The level of support can range from access 24 hours a day at the beginning of such an arrangement, to 5-10 hours per week.
- 3.3 Time when they have no children in their care and are not pregnant, allowing them to focus on their needs. There is a growing body of robust independent evidence that demonstrates that Pause is a highly effective intervention. This is in terms of both supporting women to make important changes in their lives and providing significant cost avoidance for local authorities as it reduces the number of infants brought into care.
- 3.4 There are currently 28 Pause Practices working across 32 local authorities in the UK, with more practices in development. St Helens implemented the Pause model in October 2017 and have been successful at engaging and supporting women and are now working with their second community of women.
- 3.5 An independent evaluation, commissioned by Department for Education's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme (2017), found that Pause improves the lives of those it works with, increasing engagement with other services, including healthcare, and tackling issues of self-esteem and trauma. Most significantly, it was found to reduce the number of children needing to go into care. The economic impact was explored in the first external evaluation of Pause which identified that for every £1 spent a saving of £1.38 was made. Further work has been undertaken in the second evaluation which was commissioned by the DfE and is due for publication later in 2020. This study found that the estimated benefit to cost ratios (savings per £1 spent) were significant at £4.50 over 4 years and £7.61 over 18 years.
- 3.6 In 2018, the Merseyside local authorities of Liverpool, Wirral, Halton and Knowsley expressed an interest in establishing Pause Practices. A scoping exercise was undertaken to determine the scale and pattern of recurrent removals in the Liverpool City Region with a view to developing a regional Pause. Across the four local authorities, 401 eligible women were identified who had between them 1724 children removed from their care. Halton's figures evidenced that there were 173 eligible women and 470 children removed into care. The exercise revealed that almost three quarters of the women had experienced domestic abuse; issues with drugs and/or alcohol were extremely prevalent in 57%; almost half of the women had mental health issues and nearly a quarter had been known to children's social care as children.
- 3.7 To enable the development of a regional Pause, the national team, Pause – Creating Space for Change, submitted a bid to the DfE's Innovation Fund and was successful in being granted £1.1million. The funding relies on each local authority committing an amount as match funding for the DfE funding which has been granted to Pause.

St Helens have been allocated £290,000 and the remaining funding is available for the four interested local authorities. To meet the grant requirements the Pause Practices will need to go-live by March 2021.

- 3.8 Due to the way in which Pause is to be delivered in the region and the requirements of the DfE grant funding, Pause are required to spend the grant by passing it on to each local authority (or to a single local authority acting on behalf of the others) and for the money to then be reallocated back to Pause (together with each authority's match funding) for the actual delivery of the pilot project.
- 3.9 It is proposed that there will be two Pause Practices, one practice in Liverpool and Wirral and one in Halton and Knowsley. The Pause charity itself would deliver the project (by way of a delivery arm within its organisation) as this would be more cost effective. The Pause programme would be largely funded in 20/21 and 21/22 by the DfE grant, with the local authorities only contributing a small amount in Quarter 4 in 21/22. Match funding will be required in 22/23 as detailed in the Financial implication section below to fund the programme until December 2022.
- 3.10 As this is effectively a pilot project for the region to understand whether the Pause methodology can be successfully implemented here, each Council will pay their contribution towards the pilot to Pause by way of a grant to allow Pause to undertake the project.
- 3.11 In addition, it is proposed that a collaborative agreement be entered into by the four local authorities and Pause, to allow the local authorities in their capacity as key stakeholders to supervise the delivery of Pause in their respective areas and across the region.
- 3.12 Pause – Creating Space for Change will deliver the two Pause Practices, through a new division of their organisation, recruiting, employing and training staff. The Liverpool/Wirral Practice will be slightly larger than the Halton/Knowsley practice, reaching 48 women as detailed below:

Pause Practice	Liverpool & Wirral	Halton & Knowsley
Number of women reached	48 women in total: Liverpool: 24 Wirral: 24	32 women in total: Halton: 16 Knowsley: 16
Practice size	1.fte Practice Lead (team manager) 6.fte Practitioners 1.fte Coordinator	1.fte Practice Lead (team manager) 4.fte Practitioners 1.fte Coordinator

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This pilot project for Pause in Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool and Wirral will be based around grant funding being provided to Pause as match funding for Pause's DfE funding as well as all parties entering into a collaborative agreement which will essentially establish a project board to allow the local authorities to oversee the

Pause delivery in their respective areas and across the region.

- 4.2 Due to legal and audit requirements, Pause has stipulated that they must “spend” the DfE funding by passing it on to the local authorities. However, as Pause is itself going to deliver the Pause pilot project in the local authority areas, the local authorities involved will pass the DfE grant, together with their respective match contributions, back to Pause to allow Pause to fund the staffing resources required for the pilot.
- 4.3 While the more usual operating model for Pause is for each authority to run its own Pause practice, this is not considered practical in this instance, because a regional approach has been required by the DfE and hence due to differing employment terms, pay structures, as well as the need to coordinate and manage the pilot across the region, it has not been deemed practical for each authority to do so in this instance.
- 4.4 Accordingly, each local authority will instead grant-fund the project to be carried out by Pause and to provide this opportunity for women in the community to engage with Pause.
- 4.5 The collaborative agreement will operate at a high level to allow the local authorities and Pause to regularly meet and discuss the progress of the project. In addition, the local authorities will be able to assist in the facilitation of local partnerships in order to champion the Pause programme in their respective areas.
- 4.6 It has been confirmed by Pause during discussions that technically each authority could choose to exit the project at any time and that if the project were to fail (or to be considered as failing) then the project could be abandoned before completion. There is hence no obligation on any authority to continue, should issues be encountered.

5.0 **FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Pause model is an invest to save initiative. Alongside the scoping exercise, the potential return on investment was explored. This analysis focused on the cost avoidance associated with 16 women in Halton taking a pause from pregnancy for the 18 months duration of the programme. Pause has created a bespoke tool that summarises costs associated with the removal and support of children who are looked after away from home. It identifies typical costs associated with achieving permanence for children – pre-birth risk assessments, decision-making processes and the cost of accommodating the child.
- 5.2 Costs are split into three categories:
 - *Cashable costs*: relate to the procurement of additional service; costs associated with the removal of children, including legal costs and the placement costs that are provided by the local authority or by the private and voluntary sectors.
 - *Internal costs*: comprised of local authority internal costs, for example the cost of social worker time and the cost of internal adoption processes.
 - *Total costs*: this is the sum of cashable and internal costs.

The findings set out in the table below detail the assumed spend incurred by the local authority without Pause and the cumulative net cost avoidance attributable to running a Pause Practice in the local authority area.

	1.5 years	3 years	5 years
Spend (without Pause project)	£704,448	£826,818	£989,978
Net cost avoidance attributable to Pause Practice	£504,448	£626,818	£789,978

The calculations relate to a pause in pregnancy during the 18-month programme and the associated avoided births nine months after the end of the programme. Pause, if successful, will continue to influence a reduction in children being removed, as risks will have lessened and enabling women to parent their child/children safely. There will also be ongoing costs that are saved with fewer children in care.

Revenue implications

The Pause programme would be funded in 2020/21 and 2021/22 by the DfE grant, with the local authorities only required to contribute a small amount in Quarter 4 in 2021/22. Match funding will be required in 2022/23 as detailed in the table below to fund the programme until December 2022.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Expenditure				
Liverpool & Wirral practice	98,065.10	430,381.14	325,871.57	854,317.81
Knowsley & Halton practice	73,548.82	322,785.86	244,403.68	640,738.36
Total expenditure	171,613.92	753,167.00	570,275.25	1,495,056.17
Funding				
DfE contribution	171,613.92	623,442.25	-	795,056.00
Liverpool contribution	-	37,064.22	162,935.79	200,000.00
Wirral contribution	-	37,064.22	162,935.79	200,000.00
Knowsley contribution	-	27,798.16	122,201.84	150,000.00
Halton contribution	-	27,798.16	122,201.84	150,000.00
Total funding	171,613.92	753,167.00	570,275.25	1,495,056.00

Although it is anticipated that local authority contributions will be funded from the cost avoidance of children not being taken into care in the year as a direct consequence of the programme interventions the Strategic Director People will work with Chief Finance Officer to identify other funding streams and grant allocations to fund the continuation of the project.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

This targeted intervention will have a universal benefit as it will help reduce the numbers of children coming into care.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Support for these vulnerable women to develop the skills and confidence to become independent and recover from trauma will enable them to access learning and employment opportunities.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Experience elsewhere has found that these women usually have unmet and complex health needs. Through this targeted intervention they will have their health needs met and reduce the impact of chronic long-term problems.

6.4 A Safer Halton

These vulnerable women are often subject to Domestic Abuse and exploitation this targeted intervention will safeguard them and reduce the chance of their criminalisation.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

NA

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The invest to save proposal is made on the basis that there is an established track record that the Pause programme delivers positive outcomes and results in less children coming into care. This is a time-limited programme and an evaluation will be undertaken of the first cohort to assess whether there has indeed been a cost avoidance or not. If not, then the Pause programme will not be commissioned for a second cohort.

7.2 Pause has confirmed that should the programme cease after 21 months there will no redundancy costs to any local authority as the staff will be Pause employees.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Support for these vulnerable women to develop the skills and confidence to become independent and recover from trauma will enable them to live free from statutory involvement.

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 21st January 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People

PORTFOLIO: Health & Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Age UK – Mid Mersey : Direct Award

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of part 3, for the granting of a Direct Award for the delivery of a Wellbeing Model from Age UK – Mid Mersey from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2024.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board

- i) **Note the contents of the report and associated appendix; and**
- ii) **Approve a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of part 3.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Age UK Mid-Mersey play a vital role in providing older people in Halton with the necessary support that helps promote their wellbeing and independence. Their focus is on supporting older people to continue to live fulfilling lives in their own homes and to enable older people to live in an environment that promotes personal safety, social engagement and activity, maximises wellbeing and reduces the ill effects of social isolation and the adverse impacts of ageing. Age UK – Mid Mersey are considered to be the 'go to' charity for older people in Halton.

3.2 Age UK Mid-Mersey has been providing information, participation, social inclusion, safe and well schemes and older people engagement in the Borough for a number of years and these have been funded via two contracts with the Council and additionally funded through the local and national Age UK charity.

3.3 The current 3 year contracts that we have with Age UK Mid-Mersey to deliver the above services are due to expire on 31st March 2021 and although we do not want to radically change the provision of services we commission from them, we do recognise that the services provided cannot remain static and must adapt as people's needs change. The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been a prime example of this.

3.4 As such, we are seeking approval to provide a Direct Award to Age UK – Mid Mersey, over the next 3 years, to provide their Wellbeing Model within the borough

which will:-

- Provide a single point of access and unified approach to Wellbeing via a robust screening tool for all clients that will identify the needs of the client in relation to *Loneliness & Isolation, Mental Health & Wellbeing, Safeguarding and Accessibility to services*;
- Identify risk indicators to allow proactive intervention/referrals to appropriate support;
- Provide a range of support based on client needs, for example; Social Inclusion, Helping Hand, Health & Wellbeing Activities, Digital buddies, Veteran support, Information and Advice (Warm Homes & Home Energy, Benefit Checks), Wellbeing Support, Volunteering Opportunities and Engagement Groups;
- Ensure clients are signposted to appropriate support that cannot be provided via Age UK Mid Mersey;
- Provide intelligence for partners and shared learning; and
- Allow effective consultations with older people, local stakeholders and Age UK National to address gaps in service/provision and to inform and shape service development across our sector. Allow collaborative working with partners to extend our reach and broaden our support.

As part of the contract, Age UK – Mid Mersey will work during the course of the contract to enhance their offer of support to include Digital Inclusion, Helping Hand, eHealth innovations and Loss and Bereavement Support.

Attached at **Appendix 1** are details of the Client Support Pathway and further details of how the Wellbeing Model would be delivered.

- 3.5 Due to the long standing presence that Age UK - Mid Mersey has had within the Borough, the reputation it has built up over the years and the well-established relationships that they have with health, social care and the local voluntary and community sector, rather than retendering for this contract, which could result in the Council foregoing the clear benefits that having well established networks etc. in place brings, it is recommended that the Council continue to commission services from Age UK – Mid Mersey in order to support positive outcomes for older people within the Borough.

The service staff have a sound local knowledge of the population, geography and voluntary and community sectors in Halton and have used this to help people achieve personalised outcomes.

- 3.6 To ensure that the service delivered is of the necessary quality, we have robust contract management arrangements in place, which consists of the quarterly provision of both quantitative and qualitative information, regular reporting through to Halton Borough Council's Adult Social Services Senior Management Team and half-yearly monitoring meetings with the provider.

- 3.7 A waiver in compliance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of part 3 is sought to award Age UK – Mid Mersey a contract for a three-year period from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2024.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Continuing this service supports the council in its ongoing development of out of hospital services with NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group and the wider health and social care sector.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 Non-Emergency Procedures (exceeding a value threshold of £100,000) on the basis that compliance with Standing Orders is not practicable because the Council's requirements can only be delivered by a particular supplier (1.14.4 (v)).

5.2 Awarding a contract to the existing provider would support continuity of provision for older people within the Borough.

5.3 The waiver would be effective for the period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2024.

5.4 The total financial cost to the authority is £168,724 per annum. Total contract value over the three-year term is £506,172.

5.5 The Board will note that as part of awarding the last 3-year main contract to Age UK - Mid Mersey, the contract value for years 2 and 3 of the contract were reduced by 10% each year.

It is felt that no further funding reduction is currently achievable if an effective service is to continue to be provided to meet the required needs of older people within the Borough. Therefore, it is recommended that the yearly costs over the course of the direct award remain the same.

5.6 The cost of this contract can be met from within existing budget allocations.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

None identified.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Age UK Mid Mersey provides volunteering opportunities and associated training and development opportunities for residents of Halton.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

This service makes an important contribution to the health and social care system in Halton.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 This contract falls below the current EU Light Touch Regime threshold of £663,540 and subsequently the risk of challenge will be negligible.

7.2 The Service will continue to be monitored to ensure that the Council and Halton residents receive value for money.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

9.1 Executive Board approval is required to direct award this contract.

10.0 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

10.1 Retendering this contract which would result in the council foregoing the clear benefits that having well established networks and relationships in place brings in developing services and supporting Older People in the Borough.

11.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

11.1 1st April 2021

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

12.1 Not applicable.

Client Support Pathway

How can we help?.....

Screening Tool

- Loneliness & Isolation
- Mental Health & wellbeing
- Safeguarding
- Accessibility

Support

- * Social Inclusion
- * Helping Hand
- * Health & Wellbeing Activities
- * Digital buddies
- * Veteran support
- * Information and Advice (Warm Homes & Home Energy, Benefit Checks)
- * Wellbeing Support
- * Volunteering and Engagement Groups

Signposting

- * Health and Social Care
- * Carers Centres
- * Disability Support
- * Community services
- * CAB
- * Housing



How else can we support you?

- * Continuous contact, follow-up calls and wellbeing visits with all client.
- Conduct consultations, inform local and national work, share our learning with partners.
- Work with partners to broaden our support

What else do we do?



Developing Services: (2021-2024)

- Loss & Bereavement Support
- eHealth innovations
- Digital Inclusion
- Helping Hand

Additional Services

- Local and National Campaigns
- National resources & Funding
- Digital Maturity National programme
- Social Prescribing & Frailty National Programme

Wellbeing Model

Heads of Services:

- Operations and Delivery
- Quality and Development

ADVICE UNIT

- Tiered support based on need: may include basic signposting and self care, low level support and assisted advocacy, complex case work
- Benefits advice & Assistance with form filling (e.g. attendance allowance)
- Provision of Information

SUPPORT UNIT

- Social Inclusion
- Helping Hand
- Loss and Bereavement
- Health & Wellbeing Activities
- Wellbeing Support
- Veteran Support

ENGAGEMENT UNIT

- Digital Buddies
- Consultations and Engagement groups
- Volunteering
- Campaigns
- Service User Involvement
- Shared Learning with partners
- Collaborative working

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	21 January 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Physical Environment
SUBJECT:	Runcorn Town Investment Plan (TIP)
WARDS:	Mersey Ward

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to submit Runcorn's Town Investment Plan. The deadline for submissions is 31st January 2021. Therefore, it is proposed that sign off of the final document is delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder Physical Environment

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Executive Board

1. Agrees in principle to the Runcorn Town Investment Plan and project list; and
2. Delegates approval of the final submission of the Runcorn Town Investment Plan to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder Physical Environment in order to meet the 31st January deadline.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

On the 1st November 2019, Government issued the Towns Fund Prospectus inviting 100 towns to develop a Town Investment Plan to benefit from up to £25m funding each from a national £3.6bn fund. Runcorn was one of the towns that was invited to develop a TIP.

The Government's stated objective of the Towns Fund is 'to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth' through capital investment in:

1. urban regeneration, planning and land use: increasing density – strengthening local economic assets – site acquisition, remediation and preparation
2. skills and enterprise infrastructure: ensuring towns have the space to support skills and small business development

3. connectivity: developing local transport schemes and improved digital connectivity

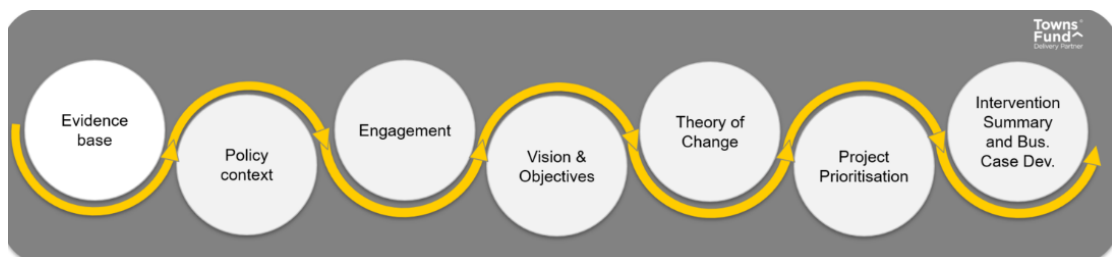
The prospectus identified a number of actions that would need to be taken, including the requirement for a Town Board to be established by the end of January 2020 with an independent chair. The role of the Board is to:

- Develop and agree an evidence based Town Investment Plan
- Develop a clear programme of interventions
- Coordinate resources and influence stakeholders

The approach by the Runcorn Town Board to developing the Investment Plan comprised the following stages:-

- contextual review
- stakeholder engagement
- vision;
- project development and review
- draft and final reporting

Government Guidance is clear that there should be a golden thread approach which aims to ensure alignment across the key components of the TIP which is shown below.



<https://townsfund.org.uk/blog-collection/golden-thread>

The **contextual review** considered the evidence based and policy context. The Board considered the challenges and threats facing the town such as market failures as well as COVID-19 impacts. Information from the Towns Fund Data dashboard and HBC Research and Intelligence was used to understand the challenges the town is facing as well as the strengths and opportunities the TIP can support and build on. These were considered alongside other local, regional and national policy to ensure that the TIP linked to make a more powerful case for investment.

Due to COVID-19 **stakeholder engagement** was carried out predominately online. The My Town website gathered suggestions from the public which ultimately fed into the long project list and a public questionnaire was completed by over 600 people. A limited number of paper questionnaires were circulated to groups in the Runcorn Old Town

with limited access to the internet. There was also engagement with Halton Business's via Halton Chamber zoom meetings and young people at Riverside College and Power in Partnership (PIP) to ensure that they could help shape the vision for Runcorn.

Feedback from the government's consultants advised that further engagement work and feedback from the community and stakeholders was needed to test out whether the projects that have been developed, are in line with local aspirations. As a result, further survey work and consultation is being undertaken to address this.

The **Vision Statement** evolved from and built on this work and sets out the objectives and themes for the TIP, which also supports how the projects were prioritised.

Project Development and review includes the theory of change and project prioritisation. A long list of projects was compiled from the My Town web site and suggestions from the public and groups directly to the Board members. A prioritisation process was undertaken to ensure that the projects which best fit the funding criteria were taken forward. The government criteria above was supplemented with 10 local measures agreed by the Town Board. Projects were scored and the following projects were agreed for inclusion in the TIP as they have the strongest links to the vision and evidence of need:-

The emerging projects are set out below:

Project descriptions

Creative and Digital Cluster: Local residents do not always have the necessary skills to access the higher skilled job opportunities with the businesses on the outskirts of town. There is demand for more digitally skilled workers. This project will deliver a new skills facility on the high street providing especially young people access to creative and digital play, learn, and training for future employment opportunities.

Mixed-use High Street Hub: Runcorn is an area where many residents suffer from poor health in comparison to average levels. The project will deliver a new health and education facility on the high street providing local residents improved access to a wider variety of health, wellbeing, and training services.

Unlock Runcorn: Runcorn town centre has suffered from under-investment by the private sector, low footfall, and low average spend, with high vacancy rates and many hot food takeaways. The project delivers a new and unique visitor attraction, maximising the use of heritage and waterways assets, providing increased footfall and spend, to make the town centre thrive.

Brindley Theatre upgrade: The town centre currently lacks welcoming public spaces and well-designed buildings at its heart. The project delivers a well-designed extension to the Brindley Theatre with a large café-restaurant, and a welcoming, safe, and inclusive civic space on the Brindley green, providing a more accessible and visible cultural destination, increasing dwell time and supporting the evening economy.

Runcorn Station Quarter: There are a lack of businesses located in the town centre providing better job opportunities. The project delivers a new enterprise facility at the station gateway, with quality modern offices, that are not available in the town centre. This will attract new businesses, providing a wider variety of job opportunities in the heart of the community, more accessible to local people.

New homes: The project would deliver new quality homes on a variety of sites, which have been left undeveloped due to contamination, and other issues. This will provide new homes for an ageing population and attract families with young children to achieve mixed developments.

High Street transformation: Runcorn town centre environment is relatively dominated by car use. The project will create a more pedestrian and cycling friendly High Street environment, whilst maintaining bus priority, providing better local connections, and more opportunities for active lifestyles, social interaction, and wellbeing.

The final drafting of the Runcorn TIP is underway and must be submitted by 31st January 2021. Members will recall that the Council also submitted a bid for Future High Streets Fund. Unfortunately the Council received notification on 26th December 2020 that its FHSF bid had been unsuccessful. Feedback from Government for the reasons behind that decision is being sought to ensure that any lessons to be learnt from that process can be taken into account in the TIP submission.

Following submission, feedback on the Town Investment Plan is expected by the end of March 2021 and if successful in passing this stage, the Board will have a further year to work up detailed, individual project business plans.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The potential significant investment described in this report flows from the Council's strategic policies contained in the Local Plan, the Mersey Gateway Plus Regeneration Strategy, and the Local Transport Plan.

These strategic documents are supported at a more detailed level by documents that capture the Council's ambitions at a more focussed scale, for example the Runcorn Station Quarter Masterplan and Runcorn Vision documents. The ambition for the Runcorn Old Town area is:

- Build a stronger town centre

- Improve linkages, accessibility and movement
- Utilise assets, waterways, culture and heritage
- Grow the residential offer
- Realise the full potential of the mainline station and
- Connectivity to major cities.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Preparation of the Town Investment Plan has been made possible with a revenue grant of £162,019, which has been used to provide additional specialist development support. Further revenue funding will be required from April 2021 to develop each of the project business cases for submission March 2022. This funding required to buy in specialist advice and is likely to be approximately £200,000.

In July 2020 the Council were informed that they would receive an interim capital payment of £750,000 from the Town Fund to commence projects and support with the bringing forward of some sites for development.

In order to draw down £25 million of Town Deal Funding, it is estimated that £5m of matching funding will be required.

This funding will be required for land acquisitions, site preparation and improvements to the basic scheme to ensure a more sustainable development.

The matching funding will be sought from a number of sources including the Council, National Lottery and the Combined Authority. A further report will be brought to the Board when it is known what external funds have been secured.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Indirect benefits will be gained from a much improved physical environment for local communities. There will be benefits to this group from the employment, learning and skills as well as the health and safer implications described below.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

In the long-term there are strong prospects of new job creation as a result of an enhanced digital and cultural business cluster in the town centre. The mixed use hub will provide Riverside College students training and work experience opportunities in a healthcare setting.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The projects will deliver improved active travel linkages between the station, town centre, canal and Crosville car park. The improved bus offer will increase opportunities to use public transport, thereby engaging

an element of active travel and also environmental benefits and will have a positive local impact on air quality.

The mixed use hub will provide improved health screening facilities in a central town centre facility.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Upon completion, the projects will provide safer, and interconnected routes between the station and town centre for cyclists and pedestrians. Improvements. Repurposing of buildings and encouraging more evening activity at the Brindley increases natural surveillance and will make the local area feel safer to those who travel through these new areas.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The combination of projects will provide an improved urban environment for residents and visitors.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

All regeneration programme have associated project risks with uncertainty arising from various aspects of the process, such as securing match funding, the need to acquire land, material availability and fluctuating prices (COVID and Brexit), severe weather, securing regulatory consents, environment factors, ecology assessments and from ground conditions that are experienced when work starts (such as contamination, uncharted utilities). These risks may lead to increased project delivery timescales and costs. These risks are highlighted in the Project Template and work to reduce and mitigate these will be undertaken during the stage 2 detailed business case.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Town Investment Plan Project Prioritisation List	Municipal Building, Widnes	Wesley Rourke