

Public Document Pack



**Employment, Learning and Skills, and
Community Policy and Performance
Board
Monday, 28 June 2021 at 6.30 p.m.
The Bridge Suite, Halton Stadium,
Widnes**

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

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Eddie Jones (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Ellen Cargill (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Victoria Begg	Labour
Councillor Marjorie Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Eddie Dourley	Labour
Councillor Stan Hill	Labour
Councillor Geoffrey Logan	Labour
Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh	Labour
Councillor Tom Stretch	Labour
Councillor Aimee Teeling	Labour
Councillor Louise Whitley	Labour

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 or e-mail
ann.jones@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 20 September 2021*

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

Part I

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

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

At a meeting of the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 8 February 2021 held remotely

Present: Councillors MacManus (Chair), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), J. Bradshaw, Cassidy, Logan, Rowe and Whitley

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Leck, June Roberts and Wallace

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, A. Jones, C. Patino, S. McDonald, S. Bartlett, S. Lowrie and F. Edwards

Also in attendance: Councillor Jones (in accordance with Standing Order number 33) and one member of the press

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

ELS19 MINUTES

Action

The Minutes from the meeting held on 16 November 2020, were taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to noting that Councillor Jones was also in attendance.

ELS13 – Minutes – it was noted that a response from central Government regarding the request to increase the numbers of apprenticeships had still not been received.

ELS16 – Preparations for Halton's Borough of Culture – a brief update was provided; due to the ongoing Pandemic some events had been pushed back to the end of the year but nothing had been cancelled so far.

ELS20 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

ELS21 POLICY UPDATE

The Board received a report outlining recent key

policy announcements relevant to employment, learning and skills. This included *The Government's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution* and the *Liverpool City Region (LCR) Marketing and Investment Strategy*.

It was reported that within the LCR Employment, Learning and Skills Programmes were a number of policy initiatives and programmes that had been announced since the last meeting of the Board – a summary was provided on:

- Kickstart;
- Youth Employment Task Force;
- Youth Hubs;
- Support for 18 year olds;
- Sectoral work;
- LCR – Local Skills Report; and
- Adult Education Budget.

In response to Members queries around the hydrogen economy the following was noted:

- The Council had been looking at the production and use of hydrogen in the Borough for the past two years;
- Officers were working with Liverpool City Region colleagues and other partners in this regard to develop strategies and campaigns going forward;
- One of the Team's Regeneration Officers would be repurposed to focus on green projects alone;
- A further hydrogen workshop to be hosted by Halton was planned for the summer; and
- In the future hydrogen will be used as an alternative to gas and existing gas fired generators could be converted to green energy.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report are noted.

ELS22 ADULT LEARNING SERVICE UPDATE ON TEST AND LEARN PROJECTS

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the Test and Learn projects delivered by Halton Adult Learning Service.

It was reported that the Adult Learning Service was funded through the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB), which was managed by the Combined Authority, who allocated an additional £150k to the service to deliver on two pilot projects, Test and Learn. Halton used the additional

funding opportunity to deliver a number of projects including Web Design, Coding, Digital Marketing and Media, and Engage with Reading (a programme to train reading volunteers to support people in the community with lower level reading abilities).

Members were referred to Appendix 1, which provided details of the Test and Learn delivery and associated data. The Board was pleased that the attendance and success rates had held up well despite the Pandemic and that the project had supported people of all ages to improve their digital skills. It was noted that the reader volunteer programme had received recognition in the education supplement of the 'Times' as being best practice.

RESOLVED: That the Board welcomes the progress made to date in managing the Test and Learn Projects.

ELS23 UPDATE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AND GROWTH TEAM

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an update on key activities being undertaken and/or overseen by the Council's Business Improvement and Growth Team, during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

It was noted that during the past year most of the Team had been working on supporting local businesses during the Pandemic and activities had been changed to reflect this. Some generic support had continued which was summarised in the report and included:

- Business Growth Programme – Phase 2;
- Liverpool City Region Hospitality and Leisure Grants (HLG's);
- Growth Platform; and
- One Front Door.

Officers provided details on screen of HLG's awarded so far in rounds one and two, and advised that round 3 would start later this week. In response to Members questions, the expectation was that the demand in round three would be greater than it was for one and two, as it would reach the wider business community and those without support so far. A number of businesses did withdraw from the Business Growth Programme Phase 2; some wanted 'cash' support as opposed to 'hours' of business support, so did not engage any further with the Programme. It was noted that the diagnostic process for the

Business Growth Programme was now done in house.

It was reported that Phase 3 of the Business Growth Programme would align with the Council's priorities in improving the economic growth by aiding SMEs within Halton to grow, develop, become more sustainable and increase jobs. Phase 3 was planned to run from 1 January 2022 until 30 June 2023 and would require match funding of £85,799.

RESOLVED: That Members note the activities and performance of the Business Improvement and Growth Team and how this aligned with wider national and city region strategies.

ELS24 SPORT AND RECREATION TEAM

The Board received a report on the Council's Sport and Recreation Service covering the 2019-20 financial year and from March 2020 to December 2020, 'Covid year'.

It was reported that it had been an extremely difficult time for the service, the staff, regular customers, and being unable to engage with residents. The service worked actively with partner organisations such as Halton Sports Partnership, in order to facilitate development through a better understanding of the issues and a sharing of resources to achieve success. It was highlighted that without the contribution from staff and partners, much of the work outlined in the report would not have been possible.

It was recognised that sports and recreational activities were an essential component in supporting and developing the infrastructure of the community to improve the quality of life both physically and mentally.

The Sports and Recreation Team consists of two distinct areas: the Sports Development Team; and management of the Council's 3 leisure centres – Kingsway Leisure Centre, Brookvale Recreation Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool. Members were advised that the Team had undergone a number of changes in 2020 and staffing was currently reduced to two full time officers. The report provided a snap shot of local projects delivered during 2019-20 and gave an insight into the key activities that leisure centres had engaged in since March 2020, when the lockdowns began.

Further to Members queries, the following was noted:

- Although the numbers of swimmers were consistent (exception Runcorn Swimming Pool), junior gym memberships were low – these were being encouraged but it was recognised that there was work to be done here;
- The swimming lessons and schools swimming was removed from Runcorn Swimming Pool due to staffing issues but these were transferred to Brookvale and Kingsway;
- An Aquatics Manager had been recruited to focus on the pools and further encouragement of swimming in the Borough;
- One Member commented that Runcorn Swimming Pool was at the heart of the community and should be the focus of a swimming strategy; and
- With regards to the upgrading of facilities in the Borough it was noted that a proposed new Leisure Centre in Widnes had just been granted planning permission and site identification for a new leisure centre in Runcorn had commenced. There were also other sites identified for improvements as part of the indoor facility strategy.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

ELS25 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2020-21

The Board received the performance management reports for Quarter 2 of 2020-21 (1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

It was noted that the key priorities for development of improvement in 2019-20 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

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

The report detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period. Also, information concerning the implementation of high risk mitigation measures relevant to this Board was included in Appendix 1.

The following points were highlighted:

- The Stadium and The Brindley were currently being used as vaccination centres and two testing centres were also to be introduced;
- It was hoped that the Libraries and Leisure Centres would be open in the next two weeks and staff had prepared and were ready to open, as per the current Covid-19 guidelines;
- Waste collection services; open space services and school meals services had kept going through the Pandemic;
- The development of adult remote learning been a success as discussed earlier;
- Some of the KPI reporting had been interrupted due to Covid-19 so some data was unavailable; and
- It was realised that there would be a loss of income from business rates from businesses closing and being unable to reopen, due to the Pandemic.

RESOLVED: That the quarter 2 performance management reports be received.

Meeting ended at 7.55 p.m.

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 21 June 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

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

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

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

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

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

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 28th June 2018

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Employment, Learning & Skills & Community

SUBJECT: Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board Annual Report for 2020/21.

1.0 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF REPORT

1.1 To receive the Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Boards' Annual Report for 2020/21.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the 2020/21 Annual Report be recommended to Full Council.

2.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Article 6 of the Constitution requires each Policy and Performance Board to submit an Annual Report to Council outlining their work, making recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods as appropriate.

3.2 The Annual Report (see attached) has been submitted to the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board for consideration.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no risks associated with the report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no Equality and Diversity issues.

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

None.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EMPLOYMENT LEARNING, SKILLS &
COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD
APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021**

**Introduction from Councillor Andrew MacManus
Chair of the Employment Learning, Skills & Community Policy & Performance Board**

During the past year, as in previous years, we have seen economic uncertainty and reduced funding having a bearing on the work priorities and areas of focus of the Board.

In addition, some of our skills, employment and business support funding are aligned with the *Liverpool City Region* (LCR). However, we continue to ensure that Halton gets its fair share of funding support to ensure that we provide a good standard of service to our residents and businesses.

At the time of writing the future is less certain than at any time in the living memory of many. The country left the European Union on the 31st January 2020 and our trading relationship with the EU was partly decided by the *Trade & Cooperation Agreement* that came into effect on 1st January 2021. How this treaty develops may have a material impact on our residents and businesses.

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced 3 lockdowns covering most of the period of this report. That has severely disrupted employment and businesses. It has put additional demands on Council services.

The future impact of both of these is unknown.

The Board scrutinises the work of the *Economy, Enterprise & Property Division* and the *Community & Environment Division*. Since March 2020 the former has been heavily involved in delivering various government and local schemes to support local businesses and the latter has seen the almost total shut down of its activities with staff being deployed to other Council departments to assist in Covid-19 related work.

This had impacted the work of the Board as staff have not had the normal time to prepare reports. However, this has been circumvented by rolling up areas of interest into catch-all reports.

My thanks to the officers for working with me and the Vice-Chair to develop the agenda items and the quality of the reports and presentations they have produced during the year. Board members also thanked officers at meetings for the work they were doing to cope with the pandemic and maintain services.

This will be my last report as I will be retiring from the council after 11 years of service, 5 of them as chair of the Board. I would like to thank members for their contributions and the support they have shown throughout the years.

I hope that the Board will continue to make a worthwhile contribution to creating an economically prosperous borough in this challenging environment.

THE BOARD'S MEMBERSHIP

During 2020/21, the Board's membership was unchanged and comprised Councillors A. MacManus (Chair) C. Plumpton- Walsh (Vice Chair), J Bradshaw, L. Cassidy, R Leck, G. Logan, June Roberts, C. Rowe, A Telling, P Wallace and L Whitley.

The Board had three virtual meetings during the year. The first meeting was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions on the holding of Council meetings.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

The Council's constitution sets out the Board's strategic priority is to develop policy and scrutinise performance in relation to the Council's objectives.

Specifically in relation to 4 areas:

- Enterprise and employment
- Adult learning and skills
- Culture and leisure services
- Library Service

In addition to reports on these areas there was separate reporting of Covid-19 related matters affecting the Board's area of scrutiny.

COVID-19 SPECIFIC REPORTING

New Working Arrangements

The Board received a report which set out the range of services that had been provided during the Covid-19 pandemic which were relevant to this Board.

These services were:

Business Improvement Team – Services provided included: raising awareness of support available to 2,500 local businesses, query handling and delivery of financial support. The later was in excess of £2M. They also raised awareness of business opportunities, for example the supply of PPE, and scams exploiting the pandemic.

Employment, Learning and Skills Division – Health and Safety measures required the operations of the division to be quickly reassessed and re-modelled to enable continued support for our learners and customers. Within a few days of the first lockdown ICT Services successfully got all staff online and able to work remotely. The Covid-19 situation has resulted in the following changes within the division:

- Cessation of face-to-face delivery of teaching, learning, assessment and employment support
- Adult learning exams were unable to go ahead in centres
- Learner portfolios were only partially completed
- The majority of the summer term adult learning classes were unable to run
- Customers and learners were unable to attend centres to access IT to job search, and self-study.

Operations were remodeled to mitigate these to ensure continued support for users and learners. Staff maintained contact with residents through phone calls and virtual platforms.

In summary, at a local level our immediate actions are to safely re-open the centres and prioritise access for residents that need support the most, particularly those who do not have a social network and access to personal IT.

Supporting the many newly unemployed residents as well as the existing cohort of unemployed residents is a priority now and in the future.

Library services - The library buildings were closed to the public from March 2020. The majority of staff were redeployed. Library teams worked quickly to shift activity to digital platforms with budgets being reallocated to increase resources and support new demand. An intensive social media campaign was developed to engage audiences and highlight resources to new and existing customers.

Sport and Leisure - Kingsway Leisure Centre, Brookvale Recreation Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool closed to the public in March 2020. The majority of staff have not worked since then.

The service is generating no income and anticipates a significant increase in cleaning and training costs to re-open. Participation numbers are not expected to return to pre-Covid-19 levels for a significant period. This will have a major impact on income, thus the subsidy required will increase.

At the time of the Board report a phased opening was proposed. Usage will be controlled by an online booking system.

The service provided a range of web based and print media advice on exercise and health.

Brindley Theatre - It has been closed since March 2020. Staff are working on reorganising and negotiating contracts thus maintaining a full programme once reopening takes place. The bookings diary has over 90% occupancy through to early 2022 with enquires being received daily.

The one year *Theatre Seat Concession* trial was due to finish in July 2020. Due to the building being closed this will be extended in order to complete the trial.

Events - The Councils events calendar was cancelled for 2020.

Community Centres – All were closed in March 2020. Since then a number of staff from the service have taken up redeployment opportunities

Recovery of Halton's Economy

The Board received a report on the borough's *Economic Reset Plan*, which had previously been circulated to all councillors. The plan would be used to ensure that the Council could support local businesses in partnership with local organisations and businesses and partners operating in the LCR.

Local authorities were consolidating existing statutory and operational requirements as we emerged from the first phase of Covid-19. They were reallocating and securing resources in

order to redefine their economies and working to improve the economic and social prospects for residents and businesses over the year ahead.

A presentation to the Board provided further analysis and data on the potential impact of Covid-19 on Halton's economy.

Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund

The impact of Covid-19 on Halton's businesses has been severe with many losing several months of trade and some still not fully operational.

During lockdown the *Business Improvement and Growth Team* collated all current government information for businesses into a single resource for use by Council colleagues and developed dedicated resource packs for specific target groups.

The fund was designed, administered and delivered by the Council and was aimed at businesses that were not able to access previous grant schemes. The criteria for accessing the scheme was discussed in the report together with Halton's focused schemes for eligibility.

A total of 163 grants were made worth £831K.

Liverpool City Region Hospitality & Leisure Grant

At the time of the report LCR was placed in a Tier Lockdown. Businesses most affected by the lockdown were identified in order to offer some level of support.

An allocation of £1,060,792 had been provided to Halton and the Board was provided with an update on the number and the types of businesses eligible for support and the grant allocations awarded.

ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT

The Board received updates on the following that are administered by the *Business Improvement & Growth Team*.

Business Growth Programme

This is an initiative by the LCR to support small and medium sized businesses.

It is being done in 3 phases, currently we are in phase 2. The Board was updated on key activities being undertaken or overseen by the team during the pandemic.

The *programme* aims to support 95 SMEs to ensure growth and sustainability. As they emerged out of the first lockdown, more support was required in the areas of digital marketing, strategic marketing and strategic business planning indicating that businesses required help to reach a wider market and in some cases alter their business strategy.

Most of the team has been working on supporting local businesses and its activities have been changed to reflect this.

Some generic business support has continued, for example the *Business Growth Programme*. This has been supporting SME's by offering an in-depth diagnostic to gauge the type of support required. It is part of the LCR's *Growth Hub Programme*, which supports

businesses by offering fully funded specialist support through the *European Regional Development Fund* and Council funding.

Growth Platform

During the past year this has concentrated on working with businesses and designing solutions to meet their needs. They have been providing support to ease business progress through the pandemic and help emerging from it.

Officers within the team have been liaising with colleagues in the Combined Authority and the Chamber of Commerce to ensure that activities are complementary and do not duplicate existing provision.

ADULT LEARNING & SKILLS

Employment Learning & Skills Division

Since March 2020 the staff within the division have been operating a remote system for customers and learners as all learning centres were closed. The staff were now in the process of preparing for centres to reopen again and planning how delivery to customers and learners would be rolled out given social distancing measures.

As well as guidance surrounding Covid-19 being core to the delivery the Board was advised that the work would focus on supporting those individuals that had been adversely affected economically and had lost jobs and/or confidence.

The report provided updates in the following areas:

- European Social Fund Ways to Work programme;
- LCR Apprenticeship Hub;
- LCR Apprenticeship Growth Plan;
- Department of Work & Pensions Work and Health Programme;
- Merseylink Employment and Skills performance; and
- Adult Learning and Devolution.

In response to councillors' queries regarding the potential for an increased demand for apprenticeships once the furlough scheme ended officers advised that this was anticipated so a request had been submitted to government for the numbers of these to be increased.

During the year a new programme was launched, the *Job Entry Targeted Support Programme*. Members were advised that this would support 1453 participants between October 2020 and March 2022 and would provide placements of not less than 3 months duration.

Department of Work & Pensions Kick Start Programme

This is a new job creation scheme for people aged 16 – 24 which aims to provide wage subsidies to employers who create 6 month work experience placements. The forecast number of placements to be administered between November 2020 and December 2021 is

100. The Executive Board agreed at its meeting held in October 2020 that the Council should apply to become an intermediary for the delivery of the programme.

The report provided detailed information on the programme, Halton's approach, the resources available and costs associated with becoming an intermediary.

Test and Learn Projects

These are delivered by *Halton Adult Learning Service*, which is funded through LCR's devolved *Adult Education Budget*.

The projects included Web Design, Coding, Digital Marketing & Media and Engage with Reading Volunteer Programme. The delivery of the projects was via the existing tutor team together with a digital creative company who co-delivered the digital elements.

The *Reading Volunteer Programme* was reported in the Times Education Supplement as a good practice of *Test and Learn*. The programme helps people to develop both their reading ability and confidence. Additionally, it works to encourage them to seek out qualifications to improve their employment prospects.

These projects have allowed the service to innovate and develop the provision to meet the employment needs in the digital sector as well as supporting people with lower level reading skills to gain essential skills to improve their employability and begin their education journey into recognised qualifications in English and IT.

The following items represent the community areas of the Board's work

Library Service Update

The report outlined the recovery of the libraries following the easing of restrictions after the first lockdown with all libraries open with safety measures in place. The service had renewed its focus on three key values – connection, creative learning and spaces. The Board was provided with details and examples of current projects taking place using these values.

The Board was also advised of *The Joy Project*, a planned season of visual arts activity in public spaces taking place across the Borough this autumn. This was arranged in response to the need to engage creatively with communities during the pandemic which had taken away the option of using the library buildings as venues.

Community Development Service Annual Report

The service helps support local community groups and organisations with their formation and facilitates the delivery of community led initiatives and activity.

The service also has a role in managing the delivery of projects for nine Area Forums enabling councillors to respond to community concerns and aspirations. Examples of projects that the service had helped to deliver throughout the year within each Area Forum were provided.

Information was also provided on community development grants that had been awarded during the year.

It was noted that this role generated effective community engagement with Council departments and partner organisations and contributed to building resilience in Halton's communities.

The report discussed the work of the service, its purpose, activities and performance for 2019/20 against the previous years. The service worked with 101 groups and 6,987 people benefited.

Community Centres Annual Report

The *service* provides the management and delivery of services from centres in Castlefields, Ditton, Grangeway, Murdishaw and Upton. These centres delivered programmes of community activities with varying models of community cafes and service outlets. The main activities were related to health, young people and arts development. There were 313,227 attendances.

It was noted that these centres provided a community hub for residents to enjoy activities and receive services locally.

The Board was provided with a summary and individual centre's performance which included usage, activities and operating costs over a 3 year period.

Preparations for Halton's Borough of Culture 2021

The award of LCR Borough of Culture (BOC) was inspired by the *UK City of Culture Programme* which followed Liverpool's European Capital of Culture in 2008. The new initiative was launched in 2018 as Liverpool celebrated its 10th Anniversary as the UK's only European Capital of Culture. (It needs to be pointed out that Glasgow was a European Capital of Culture in 1990. Liverpool was England's first Capital of Culture.)

The BOC initiative rotates around the city region with the aim of encouraging each of the 6 borough to develop its local talent and potential. This will reflect the ambitions and aims of the *Regional Culture and Creativity Strategy* which looked to build sustainable capacity across the city region.

The progress made so far was outlined to the Board, which included the emerging programme of activities and the potential risks and challenges that could be faced in light of the pandemic.

Members made a number of comments and suggestions.

Officers advised that the BOC could be used as a toolkit from an inward investment perspective to get businesses involved in celebrating the Borough's history and encouraging them to contribute any artefacts they may have. Although businesses had not been approached yet due to the pandemic this task would be revisited when some improvement in the situation was made.

Sport & Leisure Services Update

The team has undergone a number of changes in 2020 with a number of colleagues moving on. There was a reduction in the support provided during 2020 whilst posts remained vacant and staff were deployed for some of their time to support the Council's Covid-19 response.

In 2019/20 there were 516K attendances.

In addition to the areas the constitution requires the Board to scrutinise the following were reported to the Board:

Scrutiny Topic

The Role of the Board earlier in this report referred to policy development. This is done through an annual exercise focusing on one area in detail and is called the Scrutiny Topic. The September 2019 meeting of the Board agreed that '*Traded Areas in the Borough*' would be the scrutiny topic for 2020. The pandemic meant that the normal process of meetings, interviews and visits was not possible. Additionally, the way these areas would operate post pandemic was an unknown.

The Chair consulted the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee and it was agreed the topic would not be pursued and that there would be no topic group in 2020 and 2021.

Performance Report

At each meeting the Board receive this report that informs them of emerging issues and the performance of the divisions in meeting Key Performance Indicators. The later feed out of the annual business plan which in turn is derived from a longer term Council level plan.

Policy Update Report

Again at each meeting the Board receive a briefing on national and regional policies that might affect the areas covered by the Board. This provides the context within which the divisions operate.

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning And Skills And Community Policy Performance Board
DATE:	28 th June 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Employment Learning & Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Presentation Citizens Advice Bureau
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To receive a presentation from the Citizens Advice Bureau regarding activities that the organisation is delivering in Halton.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- i) The board notes the presentation and action points.

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Members will receive a presentation from Hitesh Patel from the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- 3.2 Further information will be provided outlining the work of the organisation and how it is being funded to deliver a wide range of advice programmes to residents in Halton.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no further policy implications.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 N/A

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

- 6.1 The work of the Citizens Advice Bureau complements a wide range of the Council's priorities, and is an important and supportive strategic partner in contributing to the borough's community economic regeneration and growth agenda.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no risks identified.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
None		

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning and Skills and Community Policy Performance Board
DATE:	28 th June 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning & Skills & Community
SUBJECT:	Work Programme for the Employment Learning and Skills and Community PPB
WARDS:	All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to propose a work programme for the PPB for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. The programme would be dependent upon COVID-19 restrictions.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

1. PPB Members consider the suggestions outlined in the report relating to presentations at PPBs and, as and when appropriate, study visits.
2. Members consider the two topic titles and take a view on their preferred option as outlined in section 3.iii) of the report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

i) Presentations

External partners could be invited to present to the PPB on various topics and the work they do.

Possible partners/organisations could include CAB; Riverside College; Department of Work and Pensions; Training Providers.

ii) Study Visits (COVID Rules Permitting)

It is suggested that PPB Members will also gain a good understanding of the services provided by both Council teams and external organisations if study visits are arranged.

These visits would need to reflect the business needs of the host organisation, but would need to be long enough in duration to be meaningful.

2-3 hours in duration, is suggested and would obviously be dependent upon COVID-19 safe working. On the latter, Members would be required to make their own arrangements to travel to the venue. These visits could take place between respective PPB meetings.

Visits could include:

- Riverside College – Cronton and or Kingsway Campus
- Brindley Theatre Runcorn
- Libraries
- Catalyst
- Norton Priory
- Halton People into Jobs (Kingsway and or Runcorn)
- Adult Learning Service (Kingsway)
- A local business tbc

Timetable for Municipal Year 2021

Date of PPB (4 meetings)	Possible Presentation
June	CAB
September	Riverside
November	Chamber of Commerce
January	tbc

Study Visit	Date
Catalyst, Norton Priory	July
Halton People into Jobs/Adult Learning	October
Libraries/Brindley	December

iii) Scrutiny Topic Group Items

Each Municipal Year PPBs are invited to work on a Topic.

Two suggestions are as follows:

- i) **Business Support** - To investigate the provision and delivery of business support in Halton.
This will explore the wide range of business support programmes provided by a number of agencies in Halton and elicit recommendations on how the service can continue to be delivered effectively.
- ii) **Health and Well-Being & Employability** – this will focus on the work that the Halton People into Jobs Team and Public Health service undertake collaboratively to help people with mental health issues to seek employment and remain in employment.

The Operational Director will provide further details on the proposed Scrutiny Topic Group items at the meeting.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Presentations and study visits will contribute to board members obtaining greater knowledge of the services and activities that are within the remit of the PPB

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

N/A

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Proposed study visits and presentations relate to the role and remit of the Employment, Learning and Skills and Community PPB.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

6.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

No risks have been identified

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no risks identified

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning and Skills and Community Policy Performance Board
DATE:	28 th June 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director Enterprise, Community & Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	DWP Restart Programme
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to:

- provide information to the PPB regarding the introduction of the Government's Restart Programme;
- advise the PPB that Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning & Skills Division will deliver the programme on a subcontractor basis.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) **the report be noted; and it is noted that the Council's ELS Division will deliver the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Restart Programme on a sub-contractor basis**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Scale of the Restart programme

- 3.1 The new £2.9 billion Restart scheme was announced at the Spending Review on 25 November 2020.

Introduction to DWP's Commercial Agreement for Employment and Health Related services (CAEHRs) Framework and Restart programme

- 3.2 In 2020, DWP launched the new CAEHRS five-year (2020 to 2025), framework-style agreement that looks to incorporate elements of a Framework and a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). As part of the CAEHRS Framework DWP announced the national Restart programme. The Restart programme will provide intensive and tailored supported to unemployed people.

In April 2021, G4S were awarded the Restart programme prime contract for CPA3 (North West).

- 3.3 The programme commenced at the beginning of this month (June 21).
- 3.4 The Restart programme will provide up to 12 months of tailored support for each participant. Early access will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Discussions with Job Centre Plus Work Coach colleagues suggest that this is the most appropriate route for the individual.
- 3.5 Referrals will be made over a 3-year period from June 2021 and Restart will benefit approximately 5449 Halton Universal Credit claimants who are expected to look for and be available for work but have no sustained earnings.
- 3.6 HBC will tailor our offer to local conditions and work closely with employers, internal council departments and other service providers to identify skills gaps and growth sectors to complement our programme of support.
- 3.7 Advisors will be required to maintain regular contact with all participants, to develop a strong understanding of individuals' employment history, skills, aspirations and support needs to develop the right package of support to help each participant succeed. This might include referrals to bespoke training within a growth sector or enable participants to access support to get the certificates/qualification to take up a job in a different industry i.e. CSCS/construction, SIA/security, food hygiene/hospitality and catering.

Performance/achievement

- 3.8 The programme offers 'Payment by Results', which are received on achievement of sustained job outcomes.

All providers will be incentivised to help as many people as possible into sustained employment: the more people helped to sustain employment, the more outcome payments they will receive.

21% of starts on programme (1165) will be paid the 'standard' outcome rate when they reach the sustained outcome point (i.e. meet the DWP earnings threshold).

33% of starts on programme (666) will be paid the 'accelerated' outcome rate when they reach the sustained outcome point (met the DWP earnings threshold)

The Earnings Performance Indicator for outcome payments is calculated by the Contracting Body/DWP in accordance with the HMRC PAYE Data.

3.9 DWP has designed robust Customer Service Standards with contractual force, which will ensure two key measures are achieved:

- regular contact with all participants using a variety of methods and channels
- a personalised offer for all participants, tailored to individual and local need.

Income and expenditure

3.10 The maximum contract package available is £6.7m for programme delivery from June 2021 to February 2026 (referrals will be made by Jobcentre Plus between June 2021 and June 2024 and outcomes can be claimed up to February 2026).

3.11 Income and expenditure will be closely monitored, through a combination of internal and external mechanisms, to ensure that contracts are delivered efficiently.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Employment, Learning & Skills is one of Halton Borough Council's key strategic priorities. The ELS Division ensures its activities align with key Combined Authority and national DWP/government strategies and policies.

4.2 At peak delivery, the Restart programme will require 25 Advisors, in addition to Managers/Team Leaders and a number of support staff. Securing this 5-year contract (up to £6.7m) will enable the council to be a key deliver of DWP's Welfare to Work provision across the borough.

The Restart Programme will also provide opportunity for staff working on other programmes/contracts such as Work and Health Programme/Ways to Work to apply for relevant posts as those contracts come to a natural end.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The total contract package available to HBC through a sub-contract arrangement with G4S is up to £6.7m

Programme delivery will be from June 2021 to February 2026 (referrals will be made by Jobcentre Plus between June 2021 and June 2024 and sustained job outcomes can be claimed up to February 2026).

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Some Restart Programme customers also engage with the CYP services including Troubled Families and these projects complement each other in supporting local residents with a range of issues.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The programme aligns very well with the wide range of employment, learning and skills programmes already being delivered through the Division. The Restart Programme will build on the fantastic achievements that are achieved through similar programmes such as Work and Health Programme/Ways to Work delivery by Halton Borough Council. Supporting a significant number of local residents into paid work is a very positive outcome for the local economy.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

In Halton, high levels of unemployment and poor skills continue to be a negative factor, which acts as a drag on the potential of the local economy. 7.4% of residents are on Universal Credit. The economic activity rate in Halton is higher than the NW and England figures. Halton has a high proportion of residents with no qualifications. 71% of residents have a Level 2 qualification compared to a UK average of 74.6%. The impact of Covid 19 and the subsequent job losses will further contribute to this negative picture.

6.4 There is clearly a need to support residents to improve their skills and support them into employment. The Restart programme delivered through the ELS Division will offer individualised support to local unemployed people to help them maximise their potential and achieve transferable skills, as well as supporting them to seek a sustainable job. The overall aim will be to help reduce worklessness, poverty and deprivation in Halton's most deprived communities and wards.

6.5 A Safer Halton

None

6.6 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.1 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The management of the Restart Programme contract will involve close monitoring both internally and externally to ensure any risks if identified are carefully mitigated, with clear action plans in place to address any underperformance, quality and compliance factors.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 The impact of Covid on job losses has been huge, and another 450,000 redundancies in the UK are forecast in the next quarter, according to recent research (*Institute of Employment Studies*).
- 8.2 The Restart programme targets individuals aged 18 and over, who have been claiming Universal Credit for 12 months or more, and are at risk of becoming long term unemployed. The Programme will support different cohorts including NEET young people, claimants aged over 50 etc.
- 8.3 The Team will also use its CRM system and links with communities, as well as good working relationships with JCP colleagues, to target priority groups including BAME, care leavers, ex-offenders, people with disabilities and health conditions.

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

'None under the meaning of the Act.'

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning & Skills Community Policy & Performance Board
DATE	28th June 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Economic Development
SUBJECT:	Update Business Improvement & Growth Team
WARDS:	Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.0 The purpose of this report is to update Members on key activities being undertaken and / or overseen by the Council's Business Improvement and Growth Team during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 Members will appreciate that since March 2020, most of the team has been working on supporting local businesses during the pandemic and activities have been changed to reflect this. Some generic business support has continued, and this is summarised below.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- 2.1 Members note the activities and performance of the Business Improvement and Growth Team and how this aligns with wider national and city region strategies.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 1. Liverpool City Region Hospitality and Leisure Grants (HLG)

The impact of the Coronavirus is being felt in our communities in many different ways, and Halton's businesses have been severely affected with many losing several months of trade and many are still not fully operational giving the ongoing restrictions.

A presentation was provided to PPB on 16 November 2020 reporting on HLG round 1, setting out how HLG provided by the LCR, and administered by the six Local Authorities was being rolled out. A further presentation was provided to PPB on 8 February 2021 reporting on how HLG round 1 & 2 had gone some way to support local businesses.

A presentation to the PPB will update on:

- The outturn figures for HLG rounds 1 & 2
- The top up grants for HLG rounds 1 & 2
- Taxi grants
- The outturn figures for HLG round 3
- The anticipated top up grants for HLG rounds 1,2 &

2. Growth Platform

During the past year the Growth Platform has concentrated on working with businesses and designing solutions to meet business needs, especially important during the pandemic. They have been providing support to ease business progress through the pandemic and help emerging from Covid-19 for businesses into post-Covid-19 Support:

Covid-19 Support

Covid-19 Business Advice

Covid-19 Legal and professional services advice

Growth Hub Enquiry management

Business Growth Programme

Post-Covid-19 Support

Covid-19 Recovery Grants

New Markets Support

Officers within the business support team have been liaising with colleagues in the Combined Authority (CA) and the Chamber of Commerce to ensure that activities are complementary and do not duplicate existing provision.

3. One Front Door

Mid-way through this financial year there was a change of staffing in the delivery structure of One Front Door providing the Board and management with the opportunity to review the way in which the service operates. This also provided the opportunity to challenge operating practices and review activity. The investment context of the last 12 months is the pandemic and curtailment of business travel opportunities. The revised headline targets are to contribute to increasing the Liverpool City Region's share of UK investment projects from 1.5% to 2% within 3 years and create a target to generate 400 leads per annum for investment.

A new marketing plan for inward investment is now in place with the aim of targeting resources for activities to increase investments in the Liverpool City Region.

The Growth Board have developed a number of value propositions to focus on specific sectors and these are in the final stages of consultation with partners.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The above is aligned to the Local and National Policy.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An increased burden has been placed on the team during the pandemic, particularly in regards to administering the Covid Grants. A burdens fund is being paid to the Council and the Service has requested a nominal recompense for this activity.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Growth in the LCR business base will result in greater employment opportunities for the Borough's young people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Growth in the LCR business base will result in greater employment opportunities for the community of Halton.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Access to sustainable employment will impact positively upon the health of the Borough.

6.4 A Safer Halton

No implications.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

No implications.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

No risk implications.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no equality and diversity issues.

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

'None under the meaning of the Act'

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning & Skills Community Policy & Performance Board
DATE	28th June 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Employment Learning & Skills & Community
SUBJECT:	Business Growth Programme
WARDS:	Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.0 The purpose of this report is to update Members of the PPB on the Business Growth Programme (BGP) which is being undertaken by the Council's Business Improvement and Growth Team.
- 1.2 Members will appreciate that since March 2020, most of the team has been working on supporting local businesses during the pandemic and activities have been changed to reflect this. However, the BGP is one of the service areas that has been protected and continued in its current form.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- 2.1 Members note the performance of the BGP and agree to lobby for a continuation of the programme.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 BGP

The BGP has been supporting SME's that deliver Business to Business, across the Halton Region since January 2013. It is part of the Liverpool City Region's (LCR) Growth Hub Programme, which supports businesses by offering fully funded specialist support through ERDF and Council funding.

Businesses are offered an in-depth diagnostic to gauge the type of support required. The business diagnostic report is completed in house and the support includes:

- Helping businesses to plan for the future
- Looking at the efficiency and processes of the business
- Ensuring your finances are working efficiently
- Making the most of their website and social media
- Advice on HR policies and procedures
- Making the most of tendering and procurement
- Developing your sales and marketing techniques

3.2 Targets and performance 1 January 2019- 31 December 2021

BGP Phase 2 1 January 2019- 31 December 2021	Target Outputs
Business's Assisted (12 hr)	77
Jobs Created	77*

**the job target is high due to it being set under very different circumstances. MHCLG realise the dilemma and are interested in looking at jobs sustained throughout the pandemic too.*

Performance to date:

Number of Businesses Assisted to date – 62

Number of Jobs Created to date – 30

Number of businesses currently receiving specialist support – 15

Number of businesses in the pipeline (enquiries pre diagnostic) – 22

Number of unsuitable enquiries/referrals – 87 broken down as follows:

- Not eligible –15
- Not engaging – 63
- Unsuitable – 9

Total number of enquiries to date - 186

The unsuitable enquiries/referrals received during phase 2 of the BGP have been for a number of reasons including:

- Business has not met the eligibility criteria.
- Business not been engaging with support. e.g. Businesses too busy catching up following Covid lockdowns.
- Business having already received support from phase 1 of the programme, therefore not eligible to receive support in phase 2.

3.3 Evaluation of the BGP

An internal evaluation (Independent of the business Improvement & Growth team) has been undertaken on the BGP. Some of the key findings have been extracted below. The programme continues to perform well and is valued by businesses. This is one of the very few public interventions which smaller businesses can access.

The report asked stakeholders: “asked how effective they felt the diagnosis process was, and 56% found it to be highly effective and 44% felt it was effective. With regards to Action Planning the response was even more positive with 67% finding it to be highly effective and 33% effective. The stakeholders were relatively high in praise for the action plans as not one response gave an answer lower than “good”.

With this being publically a funded programme it is worth discussing what the report has stated regarding the value to efficiency, the programme has supported at least 12 hours of support (or support worth at least £1,000) to 935 businesses over 3 years at a unit cost of £5,305. Based on the online survey which found that this unit cost represents very good value. As identified earlier, the programme delivered £12.26 in net GVA for every pound of expenditure. A Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 12.21:1 is excellent value for money and exceeds a number of relevant benchmarks. This was compared to other national programmes for comparisons.

It would be hard to deny the programme has been well received and achieved a lot towards its initial goals and has been well received by stakeholders including the business owners. This is especially true considering many of the business where newcomers to these type of support programmes or where those who had not been involved for some years.

To provide some further examples of success: Performance on contractual outputs was strong, particularly given the delayed project start. The programme achieved 99% of the enterprises supported target in the original Grant Funding Agreement, and 94% of the employment increase output.

The programme significantly over-achieved the forecast outcome which was to deliver a 2% increase in turnover. The programme delivered a net increase of 1,273 jobs - a 124% increase on the target figure of 566 from the logic model.

There was one point where it was stated the programme had failed to fully achieve - is to have reduced the reliance that businesses have on publically-funded support.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Businesses are still dealing with the effects of the pandemic and are having to evolve to a new way of working. For example we are finding now that businesses who haven't been online before now need support with digital marketing. The BGP is invaluable to Halton's SMEs to avoid business closures.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Business Growth Programme is currently funded 50/50 by ERDF and the Council.

The CA have been discussing the Phase 3 extension to the programme with the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) which will potentially run from the period of 1 January 2022 until 30 June 2023. The Council has been informed that Halton will not be included in the bid for a Phase 3 extension as there is no ERDF funding available.

The Council has understood it would need to find match funding of £85,799 to continue the programme for Phase 3. However, in the absence of ERDF this is now in the region of £124,800 if the Council were to go it alone on the project without the CA as the accountable body. The financial burden at this moment in time is being placed firmly on the Council. To reduce the cost further would seriously affect

delivery.

If funding is not forthcoming from the CA or the Council this valuable service to local businesses will be lost when phase 2 closes on 31 December 2021. This could also result in the redundancy of two experienced members of the Business Improvement & Growth Team.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Growth in the Halton business base will result in greater employment opportunities for local people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Growth in the Halton business base will result in greater employment opportunities for local people.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Access to sustainable employment will impact positively upon the health of the Borough.

6.4 A Safer Halton

No implications.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

No implications.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The Business Growth Programme aims to support 95 SMEs to ensure growth and sustainability. Since the first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020 businesses felt an instant drop in demand which inhibited their ability to trade; as they emerged out of the first lockdown, more support was required in the areas of digital marketing, strategic sales and marketing and also strategic business planning, indicating that businesses required support to reach a wider market and in some cases alter their business strategy. The impact of COVID-19 has hit the Global economy hard; businesses would benefit from the support that the Business Growth Programme could offer moving forward into Phase 3.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no equality and diversity issues.

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

'None under the meaning of the Act'.

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	28th June 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Employment Learning and Skills & Community
SUBJECT:	Borough of Culture
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Borough of Culture project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION that:

1) The report be noted

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background to Borough of Culture

The award of Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture was inspired by the UK City of Culture programme that followed Liverpool's European Capital of Culture in 2008. The new initiative launched in 2018 as Liverpool celebrated its 10th Anniversary as the UK's only European Capital of Culture.

The Borough of Culture initiative is a non-competitive process that will rotate around the City Region with the aim of encouraging each Borough to collaboratively develop its local talent and potential, while reflecting the ambitions and aims of the Regional Culture and Creativity Strategy which looks to build sustainable capacity across the City Region.

The Borough of Culture years are allocated across the City Region as follows:

- St Helens – 2018
- Wirral – 2019
- Sefton - 2020
- Halton - 2021
- Knowsley – 2022

The overall aim of the programme is to stimulate talent, aspiration and promote creativity and economic growth through cultural engagement and

activity across the City Region. Each Borough needs to weave five key elements into their creative programme:

- accessing, enjoying, learning and thriving through culture and creative engagement with skills and talent pathways
- Positive Outcomes – wellbeing, health, education, cohesion and future of work
- Communities – increased participation, particularly the ageing society
- Distinctiveness of Place – promoting the creative and cultural offer to local people and visitors
- Infrastructure – leaving a legacy through better infrastructure for culture and creativity

The aim of Halton's Borough of Culture year is to:

increase participation in quality cultural activity across Halton, helping more people to experience the arts and to benefit from the role that culture can play in transforming lives - improving health and wellbeing, reducing social isolation, increasing community cohesion, inspiring creativity, supporting learning and making Halton a great place to live and work.

The programme is being delivered under the banner of 'Celebrate Halton' and will look to celebrate Halton's past, present and future through a programme of activity, ranging from small community-led activities to large-scale events, which bring in national/international artists.

3.2 Operational overview

The internal project group comprises:

Julie Griffiths (Head of Libraries) – Borough of Culture Lead Officer
Steph Davies (Lead Funding Officer) – funding support, Culture HQ lead
Wesley Rourke – Operational Director lead
Chris Patino – Operational Director lead
Michelle Osborne – Marketing lead

Project Portfolio Lead – Cllr Paul Nolan

Members of the HBC project group are undertaking their role in addition to their substantive role.

Programme Development:

A condition of the grant paid by the CA was that the Council secure additional funding and resource. In 2019 an organisation was appointed through the Council's procurement process and funded by HBC to support the development of the Borough of Culture programme.

ArtReach is a contemporary cultural development agency with a mission to

make great art possible and accessible, connecting art with grassroots and diverse communities to forge creative engagement. ArtReach is a National Portfolio Organisation with Arts Council England. The organisation has a twenty-year track record of work across the UK and Europe and has evolved to deliver four areas of activity:

- 1. Festival development and delivery (both as a Creative Producer and in supporting other delivery organisations)*
- 2. Public art and performing arts commissioning and programming*
- 3. Capital cultural project development support*
- 4. Consultancy to support arts and cultural organisations and artist development*

Artreach's responsibilities are:

- To develop a high quality, engaging, and relevant programme that meets the Borough of Culture aims.
- To commission artists to create work.
- To provide advice and guidance on content and programming.

3.3 Celebrate Halton Programme

The programme was developed in partnership with ArtReach and from consultation with stakeholders. The project offers a diverse programme connecting local creatives with high profile artists from across the North West.

The programme was devised during the pandemic and as a result has an agility and flexibility that have enabled delivery to flux depending on national restrictions. Early activities took place online and were well attended. From 17th May changes in restrictions will allow the delivery of live events.

The programme detail is in Appendix 1

3.4 Funding

An allocation of £200k is made by the CA with an expectation that match funding is also secured to enhance the programme. The project team has successfully applied for and been awarded the following external grants:

Arts Council England research & development support - £15,000

Arts Council England Portfolio Grant - £100,000

National Lottery Heritage Fund - £220,000

Town Centre Commission Fund - £99,000

3.5 Marketing

The project website is celebratehalton.co.uk The events calendar hosts details of all the core commissions alongside events that have been funded by the Made In Halton grants programme, and events uploaded by community groups.

Celebrate Halton was the main feature in the Liverpool Echo culture feature published 11th June. Additional articles have featured in the local press and a wraparound was published in the Runcorn & Widnes Weekly New; alongside a digital banners campaign on the publication websites.

Social media platforms are being used to provide the latest marketing and information:

Twitter @Halton2021
Instagram @Halton2021
Facebook CelebrateHalton

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

HBC is obligated to offer in kind support as part of external funding agreements.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

One of the five core elements of all BoC programme is aimed at Children and Young People – accessing, enjoying, learning and thriving through culture and creative engagement with skills and talent pathways. A young people's panel has been developed as part of the programme development. The programme offers a dedicated festival for young people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

One of the five core elements of all BoC programmes is Positive Outcomes – including for education and future of work – enhancing the cultural offer locally, along with the introduction of nationally renowned organisations and artists will kick start skills development and employment opportunities in the creative industries.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

One of the five core elements of all BoC programmes is Positive Outcomes – including for wellbeing and health – research supports that engagement in cultural and creative activities has a positive impact on wellbeing.

6.4A Safer Halton

Not Applicable

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There is liaison between the Celebrate Halton project team and wider regeneration work currently taking place across the Borough.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no risks associated with the report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The Borough of Culture programme offers opportunities for the whole community through a range of activities and events.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX 1

- Celebrate Halton project timeline

APPENDIX 2

- Celebrate Halton brochure (appended to the report)

APPENDIX 3

- Project cash flow forecast

APPENDIX 1

May
<p>Culture HQ opening 20th May</p> <p>Looking for the place where there's always something going on? Culture HQ is the Celebrate Halton hub right in the heart of Runcorn Shopping City. Visit us at Unit 39 (near Argos) for workshops, exhibitions and talks by local creatives.</p>
<p>Let's Make Festival 17th-29th May</p> <p>Halton Libraries' first festival of 2021 is <i>Let's Make!</i> There will be lots of activities and events that highlight the joy of making for you to get involved with.</p>

We have makers' workshops throughout the festival for all ages, including puppet making with Altru Drama, a creative non-profit organisation based in Liverpool, pixel art and tote bag design with the wonderful digital folk at Mako Create, and a cyanotypes printing workshop with Hazlehurst Studio based artist, Rachael Prime. There will also be a book sculpture workshop with artist Kate Bufton, **who** creates intricate and fragile paper sculptures from pages of timeworn books, and **you** can join us for an online talk with S.E. Lynes, the Amazon #1 bestselling author of 'intelligent and haunting', 'beautifully written' psychological thrillers such as *Valentina*, *Mother*, and her latest novel, *The Housewarming*.

So come on Halton, Let's Make!

June

Get It Loud In Libraries

The award winning Get It Loud In Libraries is returning to Halton for a series of matinee gigs at Widnes Library. First up is Katy J Pearson. Hailing from Bristol, Katy J Pearson has been described by NME as *American-glazed rock where West Country meets Wild West*. Her debut album, *Return*, was released November 2020. Widnes Library will also be playing host to The Lounge Society, an "impulsive, energetic punk" band from West Yorkshire and finally, Brighton based indie-rock band, Porridge Radio. All tickets can be booked via the Get It Loud In Libraries website.

Sunday 6 June, 2.30pm	Get It Loud In Libraries: Katy J Pearson
Sunday 27 June, 2.30pm	Get It Loud In Libraries: Lounge Society
Sunday 18 July, 2.30pm	Get It Loud In Libraries: Porridge Radio

A Life in a Day: Bridge Takeover

Celebrate the moments of a lifetime throughout the day, co-created by local people with artists, choreographers and creatives delivered by Walk the Plank, one of the UK's leading outdoor arts companies.

Saturday 26 June | Silver Jubilee Bridge

Let's Go Green Festival 1st June – 7th August 2021

Join Halton Libraries for a celebration of the outdoors and our planet using art, stories, talks and performance! Experience the outdoors and learn about going green.

Throughout this festival there will be lots of fun and informative events and workshops for you to get involved in.

Artist Rebecca Atherton will be exploring climate change and its effects on the animal kingdom through a series of Love Our Planet workshops where participants will design and create amazing headdresses, depicting great mythological animal god spirits. Each headdress will be accompanied with an environmental pledge and will provoke discussion amongst wearers and viewers. Rebecca works all over the North West and co-runs ArtFull, a participatory and community arts group.

The younger generation will have the opportunity to learn about climate change, the history of protest art and then to create their very own peaceful protest placard in our Save Our Planet workshops lead by artist Colette Whittington. Colette has worked with Tate London and Liverpool and the People's History Museum and has a passion for social protest and protesting for change through art. Participants will then embark on their very own mini protest in and around our libraries.

Booster Cushion Theatre will be taking us on an ecological adventure across continents and Old Town Bloomers will be exploring the great outdoors with us. Norton Priory's bee keeper will host a special workshop and Catalyst Science Discovery Centre will explore biodiversity. We also have a series of outdoor story walks, a talk from a nature author and a gardener's question time, not to mention 'green' inspired craft workshops and an online '10 Days of Green' challenge and lots more!

August

Festival 10:15

Arts festival for young people

September

Celebrate Halton Music - Music Weekender

Borough-wide music festival that will light up the borough with a cacophony of sounds in small venues and unusual spaces. Showcasing musical genres from traditional to electro, from solo performers to bands and choirs. A mix of free and ticketed events.

Saturday 4 & Sunday 5 September | Venues across the borough

Liberty UK 18th-19th September

Liberty UK is a multi-art form pop-up festival that celebrates freedom and democracy. The programme looks closely at a range of socio-political issues that are known to cause division and marginalise people, shining a light on hidden injustices taking place in the heart of our communities. These include climate, isolation, understanding, migration, LGBTQI rights and equality and racism.

The festival is an exciting opportunity to uplift people who have been affected by these issues by sharing their stories. Together creating and shaping a vision for a future that is optimistic and which provides strength to move forward and meet challenges. We want to

create joyful and empowering experiences rather than focusing on the negativity that often surrounds day to day life experience.

Where there is Light

Following the success of 2019's Constellations event at Victoria Park, internationally renowned artists Squidsoup return to Halton. In 2021, as part of a UK tour, they will bring Where There is Light to Halton, a digital light installation showcasing the stories of refugees and asylum seekers.

Let's Tell Our Stories Festival – September – October 2021

Libraries' third festival is about stories. It will celebrate all our stories and hear our voices through storytelling, art, reminiscence, performance and talks. We will have theatre in our libraries and art, music and dance workshops that will explore multicultural stories and voices, and exhibitions and talks that will tell the story of Halton.

November

Halton Light Festival:

Celebrate the power of light on the dark nights of November with events across the Borough.

Light! @ Norton Priory

Light installations created by The Lantern Company will illuminate a woodland trail for audiences to explore a lantern walk, which will be animated by light performances culminating in a fire garden installation with musical accompaniment.

Saturday 27 & Sunday 28 November | Norton Priory Museum & Gardens, Runcorn

Fireworks Display

5 November

Celebrating Halton's Heritage:

Ever wondered who were the industrial movers and shakers that helped build Halton? Who were the workers? How have trades changed over time? Celebrating Halton's Heritage is a project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund exploring trades in Halton over the centuries to present day. Our Heritage Artist will create spectacular large-scale visual art projections featuring local peoples stories. Exhibitions will be hosted across the borough and in our dedicated Heritage Hub.

Our Heritage Hub will feature workshops, music, poetry, and talks exploring the history of Halton's trades.

Our Community Grants will enable organisations to enhance the theme through the delivery of events and activities to engage as many people as possible in celebrating Halton's heritage.

APPENDIX 2



14079 Celebrate
Halton Brochure.pdf

APPENDIX 3

double click to open as pdf

CELEBRATE HALTON



LOOK INSIDE



Celebrate Halton

– it's all in the title!



This year Halton is the Liverpool City Region's Borough of Culture, part of an initiative to celebrate what makes each of the boroughs in the region culturally unique.

We're bringing you a programme of activities to celebrate the borough's past, present and future through everything from small community-led events to larger-scale spectacles designed to fire the imagination, bring joy and represent what truly makes Halton a great place to live, work and visit.

An exciting year that aims to increase participation in high quality arts activity, helping us all to benefit from the vital role culture can play in improving our health and wellbeing, bringing people together, uniting communities, inspiring creativity and supporting learning.



© image Constellations Presents NOVA by suidsoup. Victoria Park, Widnes.

Welcome from David Parr



As we take cautious steps towards reopening our society, I am delighted to be able to share with you our Borough of Culture programme for the coming months.

Following a year when we have been unable to do many of the things we love, it is really good news that we can now, at last, look forward to enjoying some great events together.

Culture plays such a vital role in building strong community connections and improving wellbeing. It brings people together to create shared and lasting memories; it sparks emotions, brings joy and enhances the quality of our lives.

I hope that for us all, this programme of events serves as the perfect tonic as we look to get back to living our lives more normally.

Introduction from Cllr Paul Nolan



The last year or so has been extremely difficult and challenging for us all.

We thrive, learn and develop thorough our interactions and experiences.

It is therefore with great excitement that after much hard work by our fantastic Borough Of Culture Team, HBC can bring you, our residents, a year of celebratory activities and events for the whole borough to enjoy.

Large and small events will create a varied programme, reminiscing and applauding not only our heritage and past, but also the talents of our young people, whose aspirations are key to the future success of our borough.

We will see our skies lit up, our streets turned into stages and hear music echo from some unexpected venues...

So, join in the fun, and let's celebrate Halton in this unique and illuminating way!



**CULTURE
HQ**

Culture HQ

Opening 20 May

Looking for the place where there's always something going on?

Culture HQ is the Celebrate Halton hub right in the heart of Runcorn Shopping City.

Visit us at Unit 39 (near Argos) for workshops, exhibitions and talks by local creatives.

Culture HQ is an artist led space, providing opportunities to connect to the creative community of Halton.

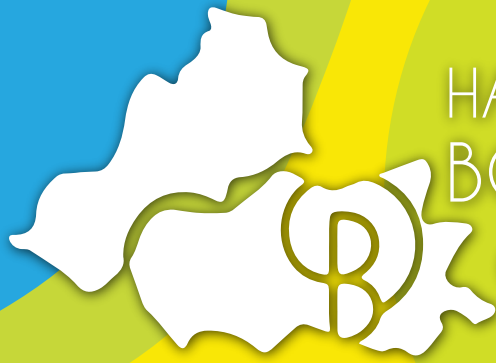
From May till October you can discover and explore Halton based artists, with the chance to share your own work.

Open every Thursday, Friday and Saturday
10am – 2pm.

For all the latest information visit

www.celebratehalton.co.uk/culturehq





HALTON BOROUGH OF CULTURE 2021

What's on May

Let's Make! Festival

Halton Libraries' first festival of 2021 is **Let's Make!** There will be lots of activities and events that highlight the joy of making for you to get involved with.

We have makers' workshops throughout the festival for all ages, including puppet making with Altru Drama, a creative non-profit organisation based in Liverpool, pixel art and tote bag design with the wonderful digital folk at Mako Create, and a cyanotypes printing workshop with Hazlehurst Studio based artist, Rachael Prime. There will also be a book sculpture workshop with artist Kate Bufton, who creates intricate and fragile paper sculptures from pages of timeworn books, and you can join us for an online talk with S.E. Lynes, the Amazon #1 bestselling author of 'intelligent and haunting', 'beautifully written' psychological thrillers such as *Valentina*, *Mother*, and her latest novel, *The Housewarming*.

So come on Halton, Let's Make!

Monday 17 - Saturday 29 May

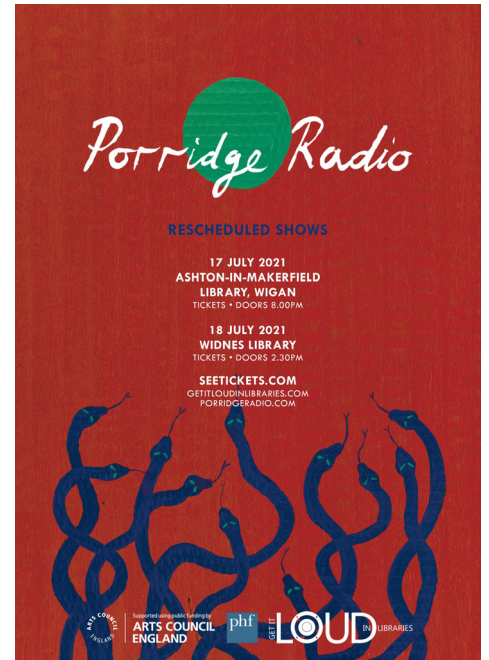
Details and booking information for each festival can be found on Halton Libraries' website

library.haltonbc.info

Monday 17 May	Science Makers: Bug Hotel	Widnes Library
Tuesday 18 May	Maker Workshop: Dream Catchers	Widnes Library
Wednesday 19 May	Science Makers: Oreo Moons	Halton Lea Library
Wednesday 19 May	Author Talk: S E Lynes	Online Event
Thursday 20 May	Maker Workshop: String Art	Halton Lea Library
Friday 21 May	Maker Workshop: Tote Bags	Halton Lea Library
Saturday 22 May	Maker Workshop: Pixel Art & Tote bags	Widnes Library
Saturday 22 May	Maker workshop: Puppet making	Halton Lea Library
Monday 24 May	Library Science Makers: Circuit Bugs	Widnes Library
Tuesday 25 May	Maker Workshop: Let's Cross Stitch!	Halton Lea Library
Wednesday 26 May	Library Science Makers: Gene Bracelets	Halton Lea Library
Thursday 27 May	Maker workshop: Cyanotypes	Halton Lea Library
Friday 28 May	Drumming Workshop: Drum-Believable!	Halton Lea Library
Saturday 29 May	Maker Workshop: Paperchain Art	Widnes Library
Saturday 29 May	Book sculpture workshop	Halton Lea Library

What's on June

© GET IT LOUD IN LIBRARIES image: SASAMI Lancaster Library, September 2019



The award-winning Get It Loud In Libraries is returning to Halton for a series of matinee gigs at Widnes Library. First up is Katy J Pearson. Hailing from Bristol, Katy J Pearson has been described by NME as “American-glazed rock, where Country meets Wild West.”. Her debut album, *Return*, was released November 2020. Widnes Library will also be playing host to The Lounge Society, an “impulsive, energetic punk” band from West Yorkshire and finally, Brighton based indie-rock band, Porridge Radio.

All tickets can be booked via the Get It Loud In Libraries website.

getitloudinlibraries.com/gigs



Sunday 6 June,
2.30pm

Get It Loud In Libraries: Katy J Pearson

Sunday 27 June,
2.30pm

Get It Loud In Libraries: Lounge Society

Sunday 18 July,
2.30pm

Get It Loud In Libraries: Porridge Radio



What's on

June

©Mark Waugh, Manchester Day Parade, created by Walk the Plank

A Life in a Day: Bridge Takeover

Imagine celebrating a whole lifetime in one day? Local people from Widnes and Runcorn are being invited to take part in an extraordinary journey....across the Silver Jubilee Bridge on one Saturday afternoon in June. You can make the crossing with friends, family or as part of a group, to celebrate sixty years of connection across the Mersey. The event will be co-created by local people with artists, choreographers and musicians and produced by Walk the Plank, one of the UK's leading outdoor arts companies. Call 07902548547 or email lauralannon@yahoo.co.uk for more information.

Saturday 26 June | 12-6pm | Silver Jubilee Bridge



WALK THE PLANK



What's on June/August

Let's Go Green Festival

Join Halton Libraries for a celebration of the outdoors and our planet using art, stories, talks and performance. Experience the outdoors and learn about going green.

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Artist Rebecca Atherton will be exploring climate change and its effects on the animal kingdom through a series of Love Our Planet workshops where participants will design and create amazing headdresses, depicting great mythological animal god spirits.



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Tuesday 1 June – Saturday 7 August 2021



Image: JFI Leicester 2018 - © Matt Cawrey Photography

What's on

August/September/October



Halton's Got Talent - A 10 Year Celebration

Previous Halton's Got Talent winners and runners-up take part in a spectacular Grand Finale to celebrate 10 years of Halton's premier talent show.

Saturday 21 August | 7pm | The Brindley Theatre Runcorn

Celebrate Halton Music Weekender

Borough-wide music festival that will light up the borough with a cacophony of sounds in small venues and unusual spaces. Showcasing musical genres from traditional to electro, from solo performers to bands and choirs. A mix of free and ticketed events.

Saturday 4 & Sunday 5 September | Venues across the borough

Liberty UK

Liberty UK is a multi-artform pop-up festival that celebrates freedom and democracy. The programme looks closely at a range of socio-political issues that are known to cause division and marginalise people, shining a light on hidden injustices taking place in the heart of our communities. These include climate,

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www.libertyukfestival.com

18 - 19 September 2021

Let's Tell Our Stories Festival

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Date TBC

Where there is Light

Following the success of 2019's Constellations event at Victoria Park, internationally renowned artists Squidsoup return to Halton. In 2021, as part of a UK tour, they will bring Where There is Light to Halton, a digital light installation showcasing the stories of refugees and asylum seekers.

Date TBC

What's on

September - November

Museum of the Moon @Norton Priory

Museum of the Moon is a new touring artwork by UK artist Luke Jerram.

Measuring six metres in diameter, the moon features 120dpi detailed NASA imagery of the lunar surface. At an approximate scale of 1:500,000, each centimetre of the internally lit spherical sculpture represents 5km of the moon's surface.

The installation is a fusion of lunar imagery, moonlight and surround sound composition created by BAFTA and Ivor Novello award winning composer Dan Jones.

my-moon.org

Photo credit: Luke Jerram, Lakes Alive, UK, 2016

October | Norton Priory Museum & Gardens, Runcorn

Fireworks Display

Halton's spectacular annual fireworks display which can be viewed throughout the borough.

Friday 5 November

Halton Light Festival:

Celebrate the power of light on the dark nights of November with events across the borough.

Date TBC





What's on November

Image: Light Up Leicester 2020 © Chris Patrick Photography



Light! @ Norton Priory

Light installations will illuminate a woodland trail for audiences to explore a lantern walk, which will be animated by light performances culminating in a fire garden installation with musical accompaniment.

**Saturday 27 & Sunday 28 November
| Norton Priory Museum & Gardens,
Runcorn**



For all the latest information, details of these and all the community events taking place across the borough and to purchase tickets visit: www.celebratehalton.co.uk



Halton's Heritage

Celebrating Halton's Heritage:

Ever wondered who were the industrial movers and shakers that helped build Halton? Who were the workers? How have trades changed over time?

Celebrating Halton's Heritage is a project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, exploring trades in Halton over the centuries to present day.

Our Heritage Artist will create spectacular large-scale visual art projections featuring local peoples' stories.

Exhibitions will be hosted across the borough and in our dedicated Heritage Hub.

Our Heritage Hub will feature workshops, music, poetry, and talks exploring the history of Halton's trades.

Our Community Grants will enable organisations to enhance the theme through the delivery of events and activities to engage as many people as possible in celebrating Halton's heritage.



Widnes Vikings All-Time 17

Widnes Vikings supporters celebrated the Borough of Culture by selecting their #AllTimeWidnes17 in a poll which generated huge interest.

This was to honour the pioneers and trailblazers who helped put Widnes and Halton on the map with their efforts for the club, recognising home-grown talent alongside those who came to the town and left a lasting mark. Executive Boxes at the DCBL Stadium will be renamed and redecorated to honour those chosen. Over 50,000 votes were cast, with countless memories shared between supporters. See the final 17, plus head coach: <https://widnesvikings.co.uk/your-all-time-widnes-17-announced/>



Get involved

FUNDING AVAILABLE



If you are interested in the opportunity to fund your creativity you could apply for a [Made In Halton grant](#).

Celebrate Halton is offering up to £750 to individuals and organisations delivering cultural events and projects in Halton this year.

Full details and application form are available on the website.

SUBMIT YOUR EVENT



You can also upload your event to the Celebrate Halton website and make your activity part of this year's programme. (terms & conditions apply)

Visit the website for information on community events taking place across the borough.

Website: www.celebratehalton.co.uk

Email: BoroughOfCulture@halton.gov.uk

Twitter @Halton2021

Instagram @halton2021

Facebook @celebratehalton

[#CelebrateHalton](#)

Celebrate Halton was devised and delivered by ArtReach. ArtReach makes great art possible and accessible, connecting art with grass roots and diverse communities to forge creative engagement. Find out more at www.artreach.biz



LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
COMBINED AUTHORITY

METROMAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND



Town Centre Commission Fund



GOLD SPONSOR



REPORT TO: Employment, Learning and Skills,
and Community Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 21st June 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director (Enterprise Community and
Resources)

SUBJECT: Performance Management Reports for
Quarter 4 of 2020/21

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and raise, any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the fourth quarter period to 31st March 2021.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2020 -21 were agreed by Members for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
- Enterprise, Employment and Skills
 - Community and Environment

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

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

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

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 At the time at which annual business plans are developed, Directorate Risk Registers are also refreshed and updated. Progress concerning the implementation of any high risk mitigation measures, relevant to this board, were reported at quarter 2.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Not applicable.

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

Not applicable

Employment, Learning, Skills and Community PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report

Reporting Period: **Quarter 4 – 1st January 2021 – 31st March 2021**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the fourth quarter of 20/21 for service areas within the remit of the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2020-21 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy & Performance Board i.e.
- Employment, Learning and Skills
 - Library and Culture and Leisure Services
- 1.3 The emergence of the global COVID19 pandemic early in 2020 has had a significant and unavoidable impact upon Council services the full extent of which is yet to become known. The Council, along with key partner agencies, has prioritised its resources upon mitigating the serious risks to public health, the protection of vulnerable residents, and the social cohesion of the local community. In developing appropriate responses to emerging national and local priorities this situation is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future.
- 1.4 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 8 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

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

Employment, Learning & Skills

- 2.2 Skills Capital Improved Facilities grant was used to refurbish the upper floors of Kingsway Learning Centre. The works were completed in Q4 and included a new lift, creation of a new Adult Learning Reception, a new Learner Break Out area and accommodation for Halton People into Jobs. In addition, a wide range of new and exciting digital equipment was installed to provide up to date facilities for learners.
- 2.3 Both the Acorn and Kingsway Learning Centres were re-opened to learners in Quarter 4 and this was the first time in nearly 12 months that learners were able to come into class and home testing kits are distributed to learners as per Government guidelines
- 2.4 The first 'Kickstart' opportunities were filled during the quarter 4 period with the Halton People into Jobs service acting as a gateway between employers and the Department of Work and Pensions by supporting local residents aged 18 – 27 and in receipt of Universal Credit into paid 6-month job placements.

- 2.5 A further £40K has been made available from the Combined Authority to support access to learners following lockdown. These monies will be used to facilitate a return to learning which will include new and targeted marketing campaigns and the production of videos to support a consistent induction to learners and 1:1 support for the most vulnerable.
- 2.6 HPIJ made a number of applications during Quarter 4 to become a subcontractor for the Government's new flagship employment programme – Restart. Decisions will be announced in the next quarter and if successful, HPIJ would need to recruit a new team to deliver this programme.
- 2.7 A meeting took place with the Education and Skills Funding Agency during quarter 4 regarding the delivery of the High Needs Support Internship Programme which will be delivered by the Adult Learning Team. This project will support 10 young people aged 16 – 24 and who have an Education and Health Care Plan into a supported internship placement with a local employer.
- 2.8 Dates for the LCR Apprenticeship Support by Be More Apprenticeship Graduation and Skills Show were confirmed during Quarter 4 and venues booked accordingly. The Graduation will take place on the 21st November at the Grand Central in Liverpool and the Skills Show will take place on the 18/19 January 2022.

Library and Culture and Leisure Services

- 2.9 Digital Library use continues at a high level due to movement of activities online and the resulting changes in customer behaviour. 'Restart' events, including the Borough of Culture and reconnecting communities with physical library spaces are now being co-ordinated and scheduled.
- 2.10 During the Quarter 4 period Grangeway and Ditton Community Centres continued to operate as Covid-19 SMART testing sites. Since the sites were opened in December, a total of 58,067 lateral flow tests were carried out.
- 2.11 The Council's 5 Community Centres reopened on 12th April but only for limited pre-booked children's group activities. The centres remain closed to the general public but as of 12th April the cafes at Castlefields, Upton and Murdishaw will begin providing a take-away service for members of the public. In accordance with the Government's 'roadmap' to easing lockdown restrictions, it is planned that the Centres will reopen for indoor café provision and adult group sports and exercise classes on 17th May.
- 2.12 As would be expected sports and recreation activity has been significantly and unavoidably disrupted during the 2020 – 21 financial year as a result of the COVID situation.
- 2.13 However every effort has been made to facilitate ongoing provision of services supporting community health and fitness and it is recognised that such activities can take on added meaning for individuals and families during times of relative isolation.
- 2.14 Support has continued to help adults stay active at home through updating, motivating and sharing content for online access and through the use of various Social Media channels and for example the Halton Zoom Community Exercise timetable has been disseminated including through the Active Halton webpage.
- 2.15 Virtual meetings continue to take place with various local sports groups and organisations such as Halton Ramblers, Sports England and Housing providers and £10K has been secured to deliver young people's sport activity.
- 2.16 The Council has supported an 'Active through football' application and during quarter 4 consultation activity was arranged. This is a Sport England lottery funded initiative which is delivered by the Football

Foundation and is aimed at increasing activity levels and creating sustained behaviours change through football in a place based approach. The aim of the initiative is to increase activity levels in people 16+ from lower socio economic groups. The outcome of the application will become known in the coming months and further information is available via <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/active-through-football>

- 2.17 Maintenance work has also been undertaken to the Frank Myler Pavilion during the lockdown period and prior to the planned re-opening on 17th May. The building is now COVID complaint and a one way system has been introduced alongside sanitiser stations, and social distancing measures along with QR Codes and contactless card payments.
- 2.18 The Leisure Hub was launched at the end of March and will undergo 2 months testing and piloting. It now has 1606 active customer accounts registered to use the new online booking and membership system and Leisure staff have been supporting the Vaccine Hub at Halton Stadium.
- 2.19 Welfare calls have been completed by Fitness staff to all Direct Debit members and these have been extremely well received and feedback from users who welcomed both the interaction itself, particularly for those who are relatively isolated in normal circumstances, and the motivation it provided to keep active during lockdown.

3.0 Emerging Issues

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

Employment, Learning & Skills

- 3.2 Covid has had a detrimental impact on apprenticeships within the city region and it has been agreed that the Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team (managed by HBC on behalf of the CA) will undertake 2 apprenticeship campaigns over the next few months. One will focus on general promotion of apprenticeships (benefits, types etc.) whilst the other will target employers that are creating apprenticeships to advertised them on our [Be More Portal](#)
- 3.3 If, as previously referred to within the Key Developments section, HPIJ is successful in being awarded a Restart contract, the team will increase significantly. A review of current accommodation will be required. Delivery of this programme will be mid/end of June 2021 and will initially be for 3 years.
- 3.4 HPIJ will reopen its doors to the public in April 21. Together with other services in the Division, we await further updates on the Government's Roadmap as to how adult learners and customers will be affected.

Library and Culture and Leisure Services

- 3.5 Services are now considering the future delivery of services in light of the situation that has prevailed for the preceding 12 months. Work will now be undertaken to implement any 'rebalancing' measures that may result from experiences to date particularly with regards to remote / digitalisation of the Council's offer.

4.0 Risk Control Measures

- 4.1 Risk control forms an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and Performance Monitoring arrangements. As such Directorate Risk Registers were updated in tandem with the development of the suite of 2019 – 20 Directorate Business Plans.
- 4.2 Progress concerning the implementation of any high-risk mitigation measures relevant to the Board were reported at Quarter 2.

5.0 High Priority Equality Actions

- 5.1 Equality issues continue to form a routine element of the Council's business planning and operational decision making processes. Additionally the Council must have evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011.
- 5.2 The Council's latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives is published on the Council website and is available via:





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

6.0 Performance Overview

The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate.

Employment, Learning & Skills

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
EEP 01a	To manage and sustain employment support programmes Work Programme by March 2021	
EEP 01b	To prepare an Economic Reset Plan for the Borough by July 2020	
EEP 05a	To prepare funding bids to support Halton's Borough of Culture 2021 by November 2020	
EEP 05b	To implement the Adult Education Test & Learn Pilots and prepare evaluation report by January 2021	

Supporting Commentary

See overleaf

EEP 01a

The DWP Work and Health Programme and JETS programme will continue beyond March 2021. HPIJ has also secured the new 5yr DWP Restart programme on a sub-contractor basis.

EEP 01b













The pandemic has resulted in the business improvement and growth team allocating time and resources to supporting businesses to access grants. However, it is important to think beyond the current crisis and develop a longer term strategy to support the borough's economy. As such a reset plan has now been prepared and this will continue to be reviewed as the situation evolves.

EEP 05a/b

In 2021 Halton becomes the Liverpool City Region's borough of culture. The Council will continue to seek matching funding to develop a programme of activities to complement funding provided by the Combined Authority.

Work will continue into 2021 – 22 to undertake pilot schemes that are focused on ICT and digital participation in order to further support Adult Learning activity within the Borough.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19 / 20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 08	Number of Enrolments (Adult Learning).	1,618	2950	524		
EEP LI 09	Number of People supported into work.	351	300	333		
EEP LI 10	Percentage of learners achieving accreditation.	25%	42%	12%		
EEP LI 11	Total number of job starts on DWP programme (Ingeus).	51	156	142		
EEP LI 12	Number of new starts into permitted/paid work for local people with disabilities (over 12 month period).	55	75	25		
EEP LI 13	Number of Businesses Supported.	220	500	514		

Supporting Commentary

EPP LI08

Due to a combination of COVID lockdown measures and the closure of buildings for refurbishment the number of learning enrolments has been significantly affected. Although remote learning has been supported a significant number of learners preferred to wait for centres to reopen before enrolling on a

course. Home schooling commitments have also had an impact as many learners are in the 24 – 49 age cohort and have child-minding responsibilities.

EEPLI 09

More than 108 people were supported into work during the quarter 4 period giving an annual total of 333.

EEP LI10



The number of learners achieving accreditation during the year has also been adversely affected for the reasons explained above.

EEP LI11 / 12

There were 69 starts on DWP Work and Health Programme in Quarter 4 and 25 individuals with health / conditions were supported into paid employment. Totals for the year were 142 and 102 respectively.

Community Services





Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
CE 02a	Deliver a programme of extended informal learning opportunities meeting identified local targets - March 2021	
CE 02b	Develop a programme of cultural activity meeting identified local targets – March 2021	

Supporting Commentary

Full activity / engagement of informal learning programme delivered online including Makefest, Readathon & bespoke author events. Additionally the Borough of Culture programme has successfully been delivered online.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19 / 20 Actual	20 / 21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 07	Number of active users (physical & digital resources) of the library service during the last 12 months.	614, 391	n/a	1,779,950		
CE LI 08	Number of physical and virtual visits to libraries (annual total)	636, 827	n/a	1,485,023		

Supporting Commentary

People continued to use libraries during the pandemic and the Council's iterative approach to delivery and the agile allocation of resources ensured Halton continued to have a modern vibrant library service even when building access was limited.

7.0 Financial Statements

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget as at 31 March 21

	Annual Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000
Expenditure			
Employee Related Expenditure	4,430	4,384	46
Repairs & Maintenance	2,103	1,891	212
Premises	97	97	0
Energy & Water Costs	691	627	64
NNDR	463	487	(24)
Rents	166	168	(2)
Economic Regeneration Activities	13	13	0
Security	471	430	41
Supplies & Services	352	308	44
Supplies & Services - Grant	691	682	9
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	111	111	0
Covid-19 Discretionary Business Support Grants	2,417	2,417	0
Capital Finance	155	155	0
Transfer to Reserves	1,035	1,035	0
Total Expenditure	13,195	12,805	390
Income			
Fees & Charges Income	-1,010	-1,001	(9)
Rent - Commercial Properties	-671	-468	(203)
Rent - Investment Properties	-39	-39	0
Rent - Markets	-315	-315	0
Government Grant	-3,585	-3,585	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-872	-879	7
Schools SLA Income	-480	-480	0
Recharges to Capital	-216	-216	0
Transfer from Reserves	-996	-1,061	65
Total Income	-8,184	-8,044	(140)
Net Operational Expenditure	5,011	4,761	250
Covid Costs			
Staffing	0	59	(59)
Repairs & Maintenance	0	81	(81)
Security	0	16	(16)
Supplies & Services	0	85	(85)
Reopening High Street Safely	0	25	(25)
Covid Loss of Income			
Rent - Commercial Properties	-316	0	(316)
Rent - Investment Properties	-5	0	(5)
Rent - Markets	-470	0	(470)
Government Grant Income			
General Covid Funding	0	-1,032	1,032
Reopening High Street Safely	0	-25	25
Net Covid Expenditure	-791	-791	0
Recharges			
Premises Support	1,777	1,777	0
Transport Support	28	28	0
Central Support	2,082	2,082	0
Asset Rental Support	1,308	1,308	0
Recharge Income	-6,592	-6,592	0
Net Total Recharges	-1,397	-1,397	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,823	2,573	250

Comments on the above figures

Finance worked closely with the Department in year to ensure that a balanced budget was achieved, this has resulted in a final underspend against available budget of £0.250m

Whilst effective control over expenditure was maintained, income remained a budget pressure, as the majority of the income is generated externally.

The saving measures put forward by the Department for 2020/21 have been met.

The department consists of 134.4 staff, of which 73 are externally funded, through grant/capital or external sources. The department put a hold on all vacancies until the next financial year. This helped towards meeting the staff turnover saving target of £0.092m

Due to the closure of The Brindley and other corporate buildings the security budget is under budget this financial year.

The negative variance in recent years for energy and water costs was addressed at budget setting time. Due to the majority of staff now working from home the budget is showing a positive variance this financial year.

The Repairs & Maintenance Programme is under budget this financial year. An assessment was carried out to identify work that was not committed and which can be delayed until the next financial year to help achieve a balanced budget position. The department also undertook an exercise to establish what expenditure was capital in nature, this has now been reclassified within the capital programme in order to make a saving on the revenue budget.

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

Adult Learning Division has contributed £0.212m as match funding towards the Ways to Work Programme. During the last 5 years this has generated £2.9m in matching funding, creating an employment programme of £5.5m

Commercial Property rent continues to be the main budget pressure for the department. During the last few years, the Council has disposed of many properties, either in preparation for regeneration projects but also to generate capital receipts. This loss of rent has been reflected in the setting of the 2021/22 budget income targets.

Grant conditions have allowed the Council to recharge staff time to projects, resulting in the Department over achieving on transfer from reserves income this financial year.

Covid Costs

The majority of the costs for COVID are related to loss of income. The market tenants and some commercial property tenants were given a rent free period for a majority of the year.

Additional costs for the department relate to the purchase of PPE equipment, adaptations to corporate buildings plus security on the Ice Rink whilst it was being used as a morgue.

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**Capital Projects as at 31 March 21**

Project Title	2020/21 Capital Allocation £'000	Actual £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
3MG	72	39	33
Foundry Lane Residential Area	150	154	(4)
Kingsway House Moves	13	17	(4)
Equality Act Improvement Works	93	83	10
Widnes Market Refurbishment	290	249	41
Broseley House	35	34	1
Solar Farm	705	701	4
Solar Farm Extension	61	75	(14)
The Croft	30	31	(1)
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	499	449	50
Kingsway Learning Centre Equipment	281	183	98
Halton Lea TCF	371	21	350
Sci Tech Daresbury – Project Violet	6,389	4530	1,859
Runcorn Town Centre Redevelopment	750	2102	(1,352)
Property Improvements	200	202	(2)
Totals	9,939	8,870	1,069

Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities – Works to upgrade the centre have been completed and include a new lift, some room reconfiguration to create a dedicated Learner Break Out area and reception, new lighting, carpets and redecoration to all adult learning rooms and the staff kitchen.

Kingsway Learning Centre Equipment – All equipment has now been ordered and much of it installed, including new Clever Touch screens, banks of laptops and iPad, digital display screens in the corridor, glass display cabinets, new furniture and the procurement of an art mural (yet to be created).

Runcorn Town Centre Redevelopment – Allocation was used towards a site acquisition in the Runcorn Station Quarter to support the emerging masterplan proposals.

3MG – Alstom are investing in their site including an additional rail siding. CDP are preparing a planning application for their site. Liberty Park has strong interest in the 108,000sqft unit. Warburton's construction at Viking Park is proceeding well.

Sci Tech Project Violet – Construction is well underway on the 48,000 office space, with completion expected in November, Chrysalis loan funding agreement has been signed. Outline planning application has been submitted for the next 150,000 sqft on the remaining JV land.

Broseley House – There is currently only one remaining tenant in the building who is due to vacate the premises by 30 June 2021. The Council is currently in the final stages of evaluating the tender returns in

respect of the demolition of the building. The lowest tender return is well within the budget estimate, this has still to be checked however. All demolition works should be complete by 31st December 2021.

Equality Act – Projects have been completed at Kingsway Learning Centre, 45A Moorfield Road, The Brindley and the Market, the budget has been underspent this year however due to delays with some works due to COVID. Projects not completed out of the 2020/21 budget will roll over to 2021/22.

Widnes Market – The outdoor roofing, gutters and downpipes replacement project has been completed on site, however there are still some small sections to be done. The practical completion payment has not yet been received until these works have been done.

Solar Farm - The Construction of the Solar Farm was completed in Aug 2020 with formal handover to the Council in early September following completion of the commissioning tests. To date has system has produced 463,000kwh of electricity which is in line with expectations.

Property Improvement – Capital works has been carried out on the Old Police Station, Widnes Market and Glendale.

The Croft – The purchase of the Croft Public House is now complete.

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT**Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2021**

	Annual Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000
Expenditure			
Employees	13,296	12,626	670
Premises	2,176	1,936	240
Supplies & Services	1,088	910	178
Book Fund	155	135	20
Hired Services	541	484	57
Food Provisions	137	127	10
School Meals Food	775	775	0
Transport	157	145	12
Other Agency Costs	181	170	11
Waste Disposal Contract	6,188	6,136	52
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	41	20	21
Grant to Norton Priory	172	174	(2)
Capital Financing	262	312	(50)
Rolling Projects	56	56	0
Total Expenditure	25,225	24,006	1,219
Income			
Sales Income	-733	-354	(379)
School Meals Sales	-815	-617	(198)
Fees & Charges Income	-3,318	-2,983	(335)
Rents Income	-101	-118	17
Government Grant Income	-1,077	-1,154	77
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-597	-590	(7)
Schools SLA	-1,221	-1,328	107
Internal Fees Income	-280	-126	(154)
School Meals Other Income	-279	-89	(190)
Catering Fees	-114	-73	(41)
Capital Salaries	-173	-166	(7)
Transfers from Reserves	-189	-227	38
Total Income	-8,897	-7,825	(1,072)
Net Operational Expenditure	16,328	16,181	147

Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2021...continued

	Annual Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000
Covid Costs			
Community Development	0	1	(1)
Community Safety	0	8	(8)
Leisure & Recreation	0	13	(13)
Open Spaces	0	324	(324)
Schools Catering	0	17	(17)
Waste & Environmental Improvement	0	540	(540)
Shielding Hub	0	25	(25)
Surge Enforcement Scheme	0	88	(88)
Winter Grant Scheme	0	500	(500)
Covid Loss of Income			
Commercial Catering	-58	0	(58)
Community Development	-189	0	(189)
Leisure & Recreation	-658	0	(658)
Open Spaces	-354	0	(354)
Schools Catering	-165	0	(165)
Stadium	-542	0	(542)
Waste & Environmental Improvement	-32	0	(32)
Government Grant Income			
General Covid Funding	0	-2,927	2,927
Surge Enforcement Grant	0	-87	87
Winter Grant Scheme	0	-500	500
Net Covid Expenditure	-1,998	-1,998	0
Recharges			
Premises Support	1,640	1,640	0
Transport Support	2,360	2,192	168
Central Support	4,170	4,170	0
Asset Rental Support	3,558	3,558	0
Recharge Income	-488	-488	0
Net Total Recharges	11,240	11,072	168
Net Departmental Expenditure	25,570	25,255	315

Comments on the above figures

The net Department spend is £0.315m under budget as at 31 March 2021.

The Department has been greatly affected by Covid-19 during the past year. Many services were halted for the majority of the year, whilst others have had to make changes to working methods and service delivery, all of which have had an impact on the Department's budgetary position. As such, the Department outturn for 2020/21 has changed considerably from 2019/20, with the caveat that there are many uncertainties around when and how service provision can begin to return to normal.

Employee expenditure is £0.670m under budget at the end of the year. Underspend against budget relates to a large number of unfilled vacancies in the Leisure Centres, The Brindley and within Open Spaces. Site closures and reductions in service delivery during Covid have allowed vacancies across the Department to be held open for longer than usual which has also contributed to the underspend.

Premises costs are £0.240m under budget at the end of 2020/21. Utilities and repair costs have reduced considerably whilst sites have been closed. The outturn position is under budget due to ongoing closures at

The Brindley and Runcorn Swimming Pool, a reduction in services offered at the Stadium and reduced energy usage at the Leisure Centres due to restricted capacity.

Spend on Supplies and Services is £0.178m under the revised budget and spend on hired services is £0.057m under budget. This underspend has been generated by reduced spending on services that were temporarily halted during the pandemic.

Rolling Projects spend partially relates to emergency works to the Sankey Canal which have been necessitated by the closure of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station and has been funded centrally by the Council.

Reduced income has been received for School Meals sales during 2020/21 due to schools being closed for large parts of the year. It was extremely challenging to estimate the income which was likely to be received during the year as the service was subjected to considerable disruption since resuming fully in September, as many schools had to send large numbers of children home to self-isolate. Sales income was also affected by the economic downturn and an increase in free school meals numbers. These factors meant that any projections relating to the School Meals service were subject to a high degree of uncertainty and changed considerably during 2020/21 financial year.

Sales and Fees & Charges income is £0.379m and £0.335m less than the budgeted target at the end of the financial year. This relates to continued shortfalls in income in the Leisure Centres and the Stadium, offset by an increase in income for Cemeteries, the Crematorium and green waste licences.

Internally generated income for room bookings, school meal costs and catering is £0.385m under the budgeted target for the year. It is likely this will have a continued impact on the department's budget in the future if there is to be ongoing changes to staff working from home and meetings taking place virtually. The income loss for the department will be offset by reduced spend across all Council services. This area of the budget will be reviewed once it is known how the impact of covid will affect working arrangements across the Council.

The Department has incurred £0.928m of additional costs due to Covid-19 for the 2020/21 financial year. £0.296m of these costs relate to the rental of the ice rink for use as a temporary morgue and the installation of a temporary cremator to cope with additional service demand. There were also £0.020m of additional costs incurred due to the School Meals service requiring to operate throughout the school holidays, and £15k of food costs relating to the Shielding Hub for distribution to vulnerable residents. The majority of the additional costs are in relation to waste disposal, £0.539m caused by a significant increase in the amount of waste generated from households during lockdown. This has increased considerably from the estimated cost at the start of the year due to the Liverpool City Region being subject to Tier 3 restrictions at various times of the year as well as part of a national lockdown. There were also additional costs incurred relating to PPE and cleaning requirements in buildings which were open to the public.

Covid-19 related net income losses across the Department for 2020/21 amounted to £1.998m, which was covered by a government grant. The areas of the largest losses included Leisure Centres, Community Centres, The Brindley and School meals as these services were closed for the majority of the year.

During 2020/21 any additional costs and loss of external income that can be attributed to Covid-19 have been covered by government grant funding. This includes a grant of £0.231m awarded by the Arts Council to assist with the running costs of The Brindley, as well as to purchase equipment to enable the theatre to reopen safely in 2021/22.

Another Covid grant announced by the Government in late 2020 was the Winter Grant scheme for £0.500m, which has been utilised to provide free school meals vouchers for children of the borough.

Capital Projects as at 31 March 2021

Project Title	2020/21 Capital Allocation £'000	Actual £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	69	60	9
Children's Playground Equipment	128	128	0
Landfill Tax Credits	10	0	10
Upton Improvements	13	0	13
Crow Wood Play Area	90	22	68
Crow Wood Pavilion	1	1	0
Peelhouse Lane Cemetery	389	368	21
Victoria Park Glass House	25	21	4
Sandymoor Playing Fields	3	1	2
Town Park	246	23	223
Open Spaces	542	331	211
Bowling Greens	5	4	1
Widnes & Runcorn Cemeteries – Garage & Storage	3	0	3
Litter Bins	26	26	0
Brookvale Recreation Centre Pitch	488	11	477
Moor Lane Leisure Centre	1,986	1,089	897
Stadium Decarbonisation Scheme	1,200	0	1,200
Totals	5,224	2,085	3,139

Comments on the above figures.

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

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

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

Open Spaces Schemes – This covers spending on a variety of externally funded ongoing projects, including works to Sunnybank Park, Birchfield Gardens and several projects in the Runcorn Hill area. In addition, work commenced in January 2021 on the Seafarers & Covid Memorial Garden at Runcorn Cemetery.

Peelhouse Lane Cemetery – Cemetery is now completed and operational.

Victoria Park Glass House – Works to the glass house and gardens are now complete. The garden area has now been handed over to the Volunteer group to take over the day to day running.

Sandymoor Playing Fields – The project is now completed and has been handed over to The Parish Council.

Widnes & Runcorn Cemeteries - Garage & Storage – Work at both sites has now been completed, with the exception of some final establishment works. There will be a retention payment due in 2021/22.

Town Park – The southern paths phase is complete and design work for the next phase near Palacefields Avenue and Stockham Lane is underway.

Bowling Greens – All works at the bowling greens have now been completed.

Brookvale Recreation Pitch – The Football Foundation Grant application decision is not due until July 2021 so significant spend on this project will not commence until then.




Moor Lane Leisure Centre – Works currently on hold due to potential compulsory purchase orders (CPO) on site and major work will now begin in 2021/22.

Stadium Decarbonisation Scheme – Scheme now due to commence in 2021/22.





8.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

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

Direction of Travel Indicator

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