



Corporate Policy and Performance Board

**Tuesday, 7 June 2022 6.30 p.m.
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn**

S. Young

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Ged Philbin (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Noel Hutchinson	Labour
Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones	Labour
Councillor Alan Lowe	Labour
Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh	Labour
Councillor Gareth Stockton	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Angela Teeling	Labour
Councillor Sharon Thornton	Labour Party
Councillor Kevan Wainwright	Labour
Councillor Andrea Wall	Labour

***Please contact Gill Ferguson on 0151 511 8059 or
gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 6 September 2022***

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

Part I

Item No.	Page No.
1. MINUTES	1 - 2
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.	
3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	3 - 5
4. EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	6 - 21
5. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP NOTES	22 - 24
6. DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ISSUES	
(A) EXTERNAL FUNDING TEAM UPDATE	25 - 33
(B) HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 2022/23	34 - 38
(C) ANNUAL REPORT	39 - 44
(D) CORPORATE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT 1.4.21-31.3.22	45 - 63
7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING	
(A) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 4 OF 2021/2	64 - 93

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 25 January 2022 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chair), P. Lloyd Jones, A. Lowe, G. Stockton, Thornton and Wall

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Philbin, N. Plumpton Walsh and Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

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

Also in attendance: None

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

		<i>Action</i>
CS26	MINUTES	
	The Minutes from the meeting held on 2 November 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CS27	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CS28	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
	The Board was presented with the Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board.	
	RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.	
CS29	DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT SCHEME TOPIC GROUP	
	The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided details of the work of the Discretionary Support Scheme Topic Group. The Group had met on 15 December 2021 and reviewed the current eligibility criteria for the Discretionary Support Scheme for the following areas:	

- Applicant eligibility criteria;
- Needs which were not covered by the Scheme;
- Applicants not eligible for awards;
- Items currently awarded under the Scheme; and
- Items awarded under the Scheme which had been temporarily relaxed given the availability of Covid Household Support grant funding.

Following a review of the areas, the Topic Group recommended the following changes to the Scheme Policy Document:

- Section 8 – to provide for school meals where a decision was awaited following an application for free school meals; and
- Section 8 to exclude applications for non-emergency home repairs and improvements.

It was also agreed by the Topic Group to continue with claimants not being eligible for awards where benefit claims had been disqualified, disallowed or sanctioned.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Topic Group's review of the Discretionary Support Scheme be noted;
- 2) the criteria used to make awards under the scheme be amended as proposed in the report; and
- 3) the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, be recommended to exercise his delegated authority from Executive Board in liaison with the Executive Board Member – Corporate Services, with regard to recommendation (2).

Meeting ended at 6.55 p.m.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 7 June 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-
- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
 - (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
 - (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
 - (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
 - (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or

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

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

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

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.
- 6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.
- 6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.
- 6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.
- 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

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

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 7 June 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None

5.4 A Safer Halton

None

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

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

APPENDIX 1

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2022

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB65 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC BUSINESS RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented two applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The report outlined details of the applications from NMO Spectrum UK and the Cathie Stankevitch Foundation, in respect of their premises. Appended to the report was the potential annual cost to the Council of granting discretionary rate relief to each organisation.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the request for 15% discretionary rate relief from NMO Spectrum UK in respect of premises at D1, 1st Floor Centre Point, Victoria Square, Widnes, from 1 January 2022, be approved; and
- 2) the request for 15% discretionary rate relief from the Cathie Stankevitch Foundation in respect of premises at Unit 2, Ditton Court, Widnes, from 17 June 2021, be approved.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB66 COVID ADDITIONAL BUSINESS RATE RELIEF FUND 2021/22

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which requested approval for a discretionary business rate scheme for the distribution of Government financial support for businesses affected by the Covid pandemic, but were ineligible for existing support linked to business rates.

Members were advised that on 15 December 2021 Government announced that they would provide additional relief to businesses that did not qualify for any previous reliefs announced as part of the response to Covid-19. The new Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) was £1.5 billion and the amount allocated to Halton was £3,087,468. The CARF support would be provided to businesses through rate relief to their 2021/22 business rate accounts, rather than via a grant payment.

Appended to the report was the *Covid Additional Relief Fund Policy*, which outlined the Scheme's scope and eligibility, application process and how award amounts would be calculated.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Discretionary Covid Business Rate Additional Relief Policy included at Appendix A be approved; and
- 2) approval be given to the Operational Director – Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, to amend the Covid Business Rate Additional Relief Policy, to ensure the Council distributes the full amount of Government grant funding allocated for the Scheme.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB67 REVENUE SPENDING AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 31 December 2021 together with a forecast outturn position; and reported the financial impact of Covid-19 which included a summary of Government funding made available to the Council to date.

A summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 31 December 2021 was presented in Appendix 1, and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by £2.998m. It was noted that this represented a significantly improved position on the forecast provided in quarter 2, where the forecast outturn was an overspend of up to £5.843m; the report outlined the reasons for the improved position. The revisions to the Capital Programme were listed in the report and the revised Capital

Programme was attached at Appendix 3.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) Strategic Directors take urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year; and
- 3) Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 3.18.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB68 BUDGET 2022/23

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director, Finance, which outlined a recommendation to Council in respect of the Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2022/23.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved at the Executive Board meeting on 18 November 2021. It was reported that there were funding gaps of around £12.0m in 2022/23, £4.2m in 2023/24 and £2.6m in 2024/25. The Strategy had the following objectives:

- Deliver a balanced and sustainable budget;
- Prioritise spending towards the Council's priority areas;
- Avoid excessive Council Tax rises;
- Achieve significant cashable efficiency gains;
- Protect essential front line services and vulnerable members of the community; and
- Deliver improved procurement.

In terms of consultation, it was noted that the Council used various methods to listen to the views of the public, and Members own experiences through their Ward work was an important part of that process. Individual consultations had taken place in respect of specific budget proposals and equality impact assessments would be completed where necessary.

The proposed revenue budget for 2022/23 totalled £113.891m; the departmental analysis of this was shown in Appendix C and the major reasons for change from the

current budget were shown in Appendix D. Further to the £1.783m savings approved by Council on 8 December 2021, Appendix B presented further proposed budget savings for 2022/23 of £0.504m.

The Board was advised the final Local Government Finance Settlement figures were awaited, along with confirmation of some 2022/23 grant allocations including the Public Health grant. It was confirmed that the Council would continue to participate in the pilot of the 100% Business Rates Retention Scheme, as part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR).

Further information was provided on the budget outlook, Halton's Council Tax, Parish precepts, Police, Fire and Liverpool City Region Mayor precepts, the Capital Programme, Prudential Code and School Budgets.

It was noted that Members' had received copies of letters from Derek Twigg MP and Mike Amesbury MP, opposing the closure of Runcorn Swimming Pool, as part of the budget savings for 2022/23. Members of the public had also made their objections known to the proposed closure of the pool. Following the Board's consideration of the matter the Leader proposed an amendment to the recommendation. This was seconded and agreed by the Board.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A, which includes setting the budget at £113.891m, the Council Tax requirement of £57.174m (before Parish, Police, Fire and LCR Combined Authority precepts) and the Band D council Tax for Halton of £1,595.67;
- 2) the recommendations in the report relating to the setting of the 2022/23 budget, set out in Appendix B and Capital Programme set out in Appendix F, be supported and recommended to Full Council for approval, with the exception of the proposal contained therein in relation to the closure of Runcorn Swimming Pool;
- 3) the proposal to close Runcorn Swimming Pool be put on hold for a period, no longer than six months, to allow time to see if an alternative delivery model can

Operational
Director - Finance

be identified by giving the opportunity for a third party to come forward with a costed and sustainable business plan to take over the running of the baths. That opportunity would be widely advertised to attract potential interest;

- 4) any proposal must cover both the capital and revenue costs of running the pool in the future;
- 5) if no such proposal is submitted that meets the above criteria within that six month period then the closure of the pool would proceed at that point; and
- 6) the subsequent gap this causes in the budget currently recommended by officers be met by increasing the amount of reserves and balances being utilised to set a legal budget for 2022/23.

EXB69 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT
2022-23

The Board received the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS) which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy for 2022/23.

The TMSS was appended to the report and detailed the expected activities of the treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2022/23). Its production and submission to Council was a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

The Local Government Act 2003 required the Council to have regard to the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years, to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable.

The Act therefore required the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy (AIS), which set out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. Government guidance notes stated that authorities could combine the TMSS and the AIS into one report, which the Council had done and was included in Section 4.

Members noted that the production of a Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement was required and a formal statement for approval was contained within the report at paragraph 2.3, with the full policy shown in Appendix A.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the policies, strategies, statements, prudential and treasury indicators outlined in the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB70 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2022-23

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Finance, on the Council's Capital Strategy for 2022/23.

It was reported that all councils were required to produce a Capital Strategy annually, the aim of which was to ensure that the Council understood the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

Members were advised that the Capital Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, included on the same agenda; this detailed the expected activities of the treasury management function and incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for 2022/23. It was noted that the successful delivery of the Capital Strategy would assist the Council in planning and funding its capital expenditure over the next three years.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the 2022/23 Capital Strategy, as presented in the Appendix attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB71 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2022-23

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2022/23 Municipal Year, which was appended to the report for information.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of meetings for the 2022/23 Municipal Year, as appended to the report.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB76 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

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

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

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

With prior permission from the Leader, Councillors Carol and Norman Plumpton Walsh remained to observe the following item.

EXB77 ACQUISITION OF ST PAUL'S MEWS, RUNCORN

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, requesting approval to the acquisition of the freehold property of 1-4 St Pauls Mews, Runcorn.

Supporting information and financial implications in respect of the proposal were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) approves the acquisition and of the freehold interest in 1-4 St Pauls Mews, Runcorn, as reported in paragraph 3.4;
- 2) authorises the Operational Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property, to arrange for all required documentation for the transactions to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director for Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services; and
- 3) requests that full Council amend the Capital Programme to accommodate this purchase.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2022

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

79) PENSIONS DISCRETIONS STATEMENT 2022/23

The Board received the annual Pensions Discretions Statement for 2022-23 for Halton Borough Council.

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

It was reported that the Pensions Discretion Statement for 2022-23 was based upon the statement for 2021-22, which was approved by Executive Board in February 2021. It was noted that no new discretions had been added and one discretion had been removed for 2022-23 as described in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Pensions Discretions Statement for 2022-23.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB80 MOOR LANE BUS DEPOT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which advised of two offers that had been received for the former bus depot

on Moor Lane.

Members were advised that in November 2020, the Council commissioned Thornber and Walker, a quantity surveyor consultancy to carry out a high level feasibility study to ascertain the potential costs of refurbishing the Moor Lane Bus Depot to provide commercial space. They estimated that the cost of refurbishment would be in the region of £5m. Since the report was commissioned however, construction costs had increased and the building had been designated a Grade 2 listing by Historic England.

It was noted that the listing would have a bearing on any future use of the building, because the listing also related to the interior of the building. The Board was presented with four potential options for the future use of the building. They were also advised of two offers that had been made from local businesses (referred to as X and Y) and the recommendations from officers following these.

RESOLVED: That the Board authorise officers to progress more detailed discussions with Company Y, which would culminate in Company Y being granted a lease for the building.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB81 REVIEW OF COUNCIL WIDE FEES AND CHARGES

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the proposed fees and charges for 2022-23, for services provided by both of the Council's Directorates.

The review of fees and charges had been carried out as part of the budget preparations for 2022-23; these were presented in the schedules shown in Appendix A, B and C appended to the report.

The general aim in setting fees and charges was to ensure that the Council fully recovered the cost incurred in providing the service. In a number of cases this was achieved by breaking down the cost of providing a service on a unit basis, but given the volume of services the Council provided, it was not always feasible on a case by case basis. Estimated costs would be reviewed at individual service level and budgeted income targets set to ensure the Council fully recovered the cost of providing that service. It was noted that recovery of the full costs of services throughout the year was dependent on a number of other

factors outside the agreed charge, such as demand, competition and statutory elements.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges for 2022-23, as set out in Appendix A and for 2023-24 as set out in Appendices B and C, be approved.

EXB86 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

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

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

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB88 WOODEND, FORMER UNIT 10 CATALYST TRADING ESTATE, WIDNES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic

Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval to lease Woodend, Former Unit 10 at Catalyst Trading Estate, Widnes.

The report provided the Board with background information in relation to the site and presented three options for its future use, as recommended by the Council's external consultants.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) authorises the Operational Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property to arrange for all required documentation for the lease to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services;
- 2) approves the lease on the terms reported in paragraph 3.6; and
- 3) Council be recommended to include the required funding for the scheme in the Capital Programme, as outlined in paragraph 3.8.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 14 APRIL 2022

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB92 SEN SCHOOL NAYLOR ROAD, INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL CONTRACT WAIVER REQUEST

The Board received a report requesting approval for a waiver of Part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000) by virtue of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v). The request was to enable the Council to enter into an 'enabling contract' with Bowmer and Kirkland, the contractor who would be delivering the new Special Educational Needs (SEN) School, Raise Academy.

The Department for Education (DfE) were leading on the delivery of the new SEN Free School, to serve both Halton and St Helens Councils; the site selected is on Naylor Road, Widnes. The report described the investigation works carried out on the site where the invasive species Horsetail was discovered. The enabling contract would consist of the removal of the invasive species

Horsetail from the site, in advance of the commencement of building works.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the waiver of Part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000) by virtue of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) and the contract be awarded directly to Bowmer and Kirkland, to carry out an enablement contract consisting of the removal from site of the invasive species, Horsetail.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB93 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION FREEPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval for Halton to become part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Freeport. This would include Tax and Customs Sites within the Borough; the administration of the Business Rates Relief and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) opportunities as they arose; and the identification of a series of projects that could be funded through the Business Rates income.

The LCR Freeport Management Board would be submitting a final Business case to Government in April 2022 to establish a LCR Freeport. If successful, it would be one of eight new Freeports set up by Government. Three Tax sites were permitted within each Freeport area along with an unlimited number of custom sites. The LCR Freeport Tax Sites proposed were Parkside in St Helens, Wirral Waters and the 3MG in Halton. Members were advised that Halton had proposed two customs sites, one at 3MG (Stobart Rail Terminal) and one at the Port of Weston.

If the LCR Freeport bid was approved, the Tax Sites would enable new businesses operating within the sites to access tax measures; these were described in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the Council entering into a Memorandum of Understanding to become part of the LCR Freeport;
- 2) gives delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, to take all reasonable steps to participate in the LCR Freeport; and

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

- 3) authorises the Operational Director – Finance, to set up the required processes to facilitate the Business Rates and TIF associated with the Freeport operations.

EXB94 ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION 2022

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought the approval of Council to a small number of changes to the Constitution.

The revised version of the Constitution picked up the changes to the Council's working arrangements that had taken place during the year, as well as other changes which were intended to assist the Council to operate more effectively.

Members were referred to Appendix one where the proposed amendments were listed; these had been considered by the Chief Executive and the Executive Board Member for Corporate Services, in accordance with Article 15.02.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board recommends Council to approve the changes to the Constitution including the matters set out in Appendix one.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB95 ENERGY BILLS REBATE SCHEME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Economy and Resources, which provided details of the proposed implementation of the Government's Energy Bills Rebate Scheme and sought approval for proposed eligibility criteria to be applied for awards under the discretionary part of the Energy Bills Rebate Scheme.

On 3 February 2022, Government announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate Scheme to help households with rising energy bills. This included a £150 non-repayable grant payment for households in council tax bands A to D – known as the Council Tax Rebate Grant; and £144m of discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who were in need but were not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate Grant – known as the Discretionary Fund.

RESOLVED: That

Strategic Director

- 1) the proposals for implementation of the Energy Bills Rebate Scheme set out in the report be approved; and
- 2) the proposed eligibility criteria for awards under the discretionary part of the Scheme, as set out in Section 5 of the report, be approved.

- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 7 June 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Member Development Group Notes

WARDS: N/A

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the notes of the Member Development Group held on 14 October 2021.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The notes of the last meetings of the Member Development Group are before CSPPB as stated in the Constitution.

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 RISK ANALYSIS – None.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES – None.

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

None.

Member Development Group

At a meeting of the Member Development Group held on 14th October 2021
held remotely via Microsoft TEAMS

Present: Councillors V. Begg, J. Bradshaw, B. Gilligan, T. McDermott, J. Stockton, A. Teeling, D. Thompson and P. Wallace.

Officers: K. Mackenzie and A. Scott.

Apologies for absence: Councillors I. Bramwell, M. Ratcliffe and T. Stretch.

MDG 7	NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING	
	The notes of the last meeting held on 15 July 2021 were approved as a correct record.	
MDG 8	REVIEW OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS	
	<p>LOD2 – Number of Members with a Member Action Plan (MAP)</p> <p>The Number of Members with a MAP to date since the election of May 2021 was 54. MAPs had been sent to all newly elected Members for completion. The other 45 Members would also be sent MAPs for their annual review.</p> <p>LOD3 – Percentage of Members attending at least one organised training event in the current financial year.</p> <p>Since April 2021, 76% of Members had attended at least one training and development event. The target was 100% for the year 2021-2022. Some face to face training could resume later on in the year should this be possible, with a blended learning approach on offer. It was noted that the flexible approach was proving very successful with take up of courses.</p> <p>Members had recently attended virtual training sessions on Emergency Planning, Code of Conduct, Local Government Finance and Employment Appeals.</p> <p>The Group noted the increased uptake in training sessions using Teams, and noted that a hybrid approach was working well. Teams also acted as a prompt for sessions on offer.</p>	
MDG 9	LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE	
	<p>Members noted that one newly Elected Member had recently attended the North West Employers training offer for newly elected Members in Salford.</p> <p>A full Induction Programme had been arranged for the new Member to be elected in the Halton Castle Ward on Thursday 25 November 2021. This would be held on Wednesday 1 December at the Municipal</p>	

	<p>Building in Widnes.</p> <p>The Group noted that should any Members or senior Officers wish to be considered as a new Member Mentor, there was an eLearning course on offer.</p> <p>There was a number of eLearning courses on offer for Members via the eLearning portal on the Intranet. If any Member needed assistance they should contact Alison Scott or contact training reception via the following link - Trainrec.Trainrec@halton.gov.uk</p> <p>Members noted the offer was comprehensive and convenient to complete, as courses could be paused and finished when convenient.</p> <p>Members noted the LGA Website had a New Councillor Hub that contained updated information for Members, plus its own eLearning platform.</p> <p>Members noted the Modern.Gov App used to view Committee Agenda papers had been updated. Members should all now be using the new password protected App that listed "Halton Private" when opened. Should any Members require assistance, they should contact Peter Bressington – Members IT Officer. They could also contact Peter via Kathryn and the IT Helpdesk.</p>	
MDG 10	ANY OTHER BUSINESS/MEMBER SUPPORT ISSUES	
	<p>A member of the group mentioned the committee "Call In" process, and whether the timings involved for Part 2 Items on an Agenda could be considered. The Deputy Leader, who was also a member of the Group, stated that he would pass the comments to the Leader and Chief Executive for comment.</p>	
MDG 11	DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING	
	<p>RESOLVED: The next meeting to be held in February 2022 at a date to be arranged to be held remotely via TEAMS.</p>	
	The meeting closed at 6.13pm	

REPORT TO:	Corporate Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	7 June 2022
REPORTING OFFICER/S:	Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Resources
SUBJECT:	External Funding Team Update
WARDS:	Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update to Corporate PPB on the work of the External Funding Team in securing external funding resources into Halton.

The Report covers the following issues:

- An update on the team's key activities and priorities;
- Emerging issues in external funding;
- Funding statistics for the period 2021-2022.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Corporate PPB:

- i. note the content of the report;

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Report focuses on the period April 2021-March 2022; statistics are included for this period and a comparative review of the last five year financial period (between April 2017 and March 2022).

3.2 The External Funding Team's role is to help maximize external funding into the Borough. The Team is responsible for preparing medium to large-scale funding bids (primarily over £50,000) on behalf of Council colleagues, public sector partners, the voluntary sector and the private sector, with the aim of maximising external funding opportunities for Halton.

The Team comprises 5 posts and in the period 2021-22 the cost of the Team was £149,615. The Team secured £13.4 in 2021-22. This means for every £1 spent on the Team, £89.56 was secured in external funding.

The Team focuses mainly on the following funding sources: Government, European, National Lottery, Landfill Funding, Trusts and Foundations.

Key functions of the Team include:

- Maintaining a strategic approach to funding to ensure the most appropriate bids from Halton are submitted and internal competition is averted;

- Undertaking funding searches for specific projects; bid writing and development of supporting documents, e.g. policies and business plans etc.;
- Dissemination of funding information to target audiences, mainly via the production of monthly Funding Bulletins on a range of themes, including a targeted local authority one;
- Lobbying funders, developing strong relationships with key funding bodies, and participating in key forums to ensure Halton gets its fair share of funding;
- Developing strong partnerships with Council colleagues, and the voluntary and private sectors where appropriate, to submit joint bids.
- Develop and deliver an Annual Training Programme for HBC colleagues and partner organisations to enable capacity building.

Team Capacity

The Team currently has only 3 full-time members; one member of the Team moved to another position within HBC and we have one team member on a short secondment. Therefore, we are prioritising specific pieces of work, for example, a Levelling Up bid for HBC and a number of functions have been reduced. For example, we ordinarily produce a range of 10 funding bulletins on a variety of themes each month; for the current period we will produce one bulletin identifying new and key funds.

Emphasis over the period 2021-22 has been on:

- Post-Covid recovery – supporting bids to secure funding with post-Covid recovery themes; many funders' criteria still relate to supporting beneficiaries to emerge from the Covid period
- Supporting the delivery and monitoring of Halton's Borough of Culture programme
- Ensuring the remaining ESIF (European Strategic Investment Fund) is secured, spent and monitored
- Starting to immerse ourselves in the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund and associated programmes e.g. Levelling Up

Examples of schemes supported include:

- Supporting the drafting of a Levelling Up bid for Halton Lea
- Delivering and ongoing strand of Halton's Borough of Culture programme – Celebrating Halton's Heritage, a £200k programme based at St Marie's which runs to Sept 2022
- Supporting Regeneration colleagues on a range of schemes, including Town Deal for Runcorn Old Town/Station Quarter, Unlock Runcorn, Foundry Lane, Astmoor, Hydrogen
- Supported HBC colleagues with a range of bids, including Changing Places Toilets, Family Hub Transformation Fund, Transport for Loneliness funding
- Supporting the Council's Climate Action Plan with the identification of funding streams
- Led on the delivery of Halton's allocation of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and the Welcome Back Fund.
- Supporting a range of community-based schemes, such as Windmill Hill Big Local, Open 360, Nightstop CNW, Halton Play Council, CAB
- Trustee role & funding lead for Catalyst Science Discovery Centre & Museum Limited.

- Support a number of local and sub-regional forums, including Cultivate: Halton Local Education Partnership, Halton Heritage Partnership, Liverpool City Region Heritage Officers Group.
- Take the lead on Visitor Economy for Halton and on the Connecting Cheshire Digital Partnership.

We continue to look at how we can further support HBC colleagues to bid for funding for priority schemes in order that we do not miss out on any appropriate funding streams. The Team produces a monthly Local Authority Funding Update which highlights current funding streams available for local authorities.

3.3 - Funding context and emerging issues

3.3.1 External Funding Environment – Challenges and Opportunities

Much funding, including National Lottery still has a post-Covid focus and we are supporting a number of voluntary sector groups to access this.

Funders are also generally placing more emphasis on environmental sustainability /impact across all types of projects and programme; this aligns with the Government's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and the Team will be looking to ensure that all bids supported consider green measures in relation to their projects. We are supporting the Council's Climate Action Plan through identifying and applying for funding, including LCR's Community Environment Fund.

The Government is starting to release funds via its Shared Prosperity Fund, billed as the replacement for the European Structural Funds programme; funds released include Levelling Up Fund and Community Renewal Fund. The Team is tracking all of these funds and prioritizing bids that HBC decides to submit.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) is also the conduit for funding streams including One Public Estate, SIF, Town Centre Fund, Community Environment Fund and the Team supports colleagues to access these funds where appropriate.

The External Funding Team, working in close collaboration with other Departments, needs to ensure well-planned, competitive, sustainable and, where possible, innovative projects are put forward for Halton's priorities.

The External Funding Team aims to respond to any changes in the current funding environment and maintain knowledge of new strands of funding; the Team maintains regular contact with some of the key funders, including landfill funders, Lottery funders and European and Government funding bodies.

The External Funding Team is able to provide the necessary expertise and experience regarding current bid-writing best-practice and key funder priorities and act as a liaison point with the funders. In a highly competitive field, the Team provides a critical yet objective eye to highlight both the threats and opportunities within each organisational plan, project proposal and chosen funding body.

Case studies from the past 12-months in which the Team played a key role in securing and monitoring important grant investment to the Borough include:

Changing Places Toilets – the Team supported Property Services colleagues to secure £195,000 from this funding stream for the installation of three changing places toilets in Halton

Welcome Back Fund – the Team led on the implementation of this Government allocation of £293k to support the return to the high street, open spaces and visitor attractions and this scheme concluded on the 31st March.

2 x Ways to Work extensions were secured from the European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) pot through bids drafted by the Team to the value of £12.5m.

3.3.2 Capacity and Demand

Demand for the service remains high; the Team received 87 requests for funding in 2020/21, many of which remain active with ongoing support.

The Team works to full capacity which means decisions need to be made at times about where to allocate support, allowing the ability to respond to new enquiries and priorities, manage tight deadlines for bids, horizon scan to ensure opportunities are not missed etc.; Importantly, the Team does not drive projects, but specialises in sourcing funding and bid-writing; the Team does not 'own' bids, the 'owner' needs to drive the project as the specialist in that particular area.

The table below summarises the funding secured by quarter in 2021-22:

Quarter	Funding Secured
1	£342,500
2	£12,660,000
3	£114,730
4	£270,677
TOTAL	£13,388m

Enquiries can be broken down into internal and external as follows: 59 from external organisations and 28 from HBC colleagues.

We are currently monitoring projects worth £36.4 million, have submitted bids worth £2 million and have pipeline projects of £3 million. Our pipeline list gives a current profile of the projects the Team will be supporting over the coming year; this pipeline is subject to new priorities being identified – should this be the case, the new projects will be discussed with the Operational Director and relevant Portfolio Holder.

3.4- ESIF Programme

The Team manages the European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) on behalf of HBC; this includes both project development and bid-writing. To date the Team has helped secure £30m ESIF grants since Jan 2016. No further funding is likely to come through to Halton now from the ESIF programme.

In the last 12 month period the secured two further LCR-wide ESF grants to extend the Ways to Work programmes to the value of £12.5 million.

The Team continues to supporting the Ways to Work Programme

Ways to Work

The Employment, Learning and Skills Division and 14-19 Programme Team secured European Social Fund (ESF) funding to deliver the **Ways to Work Project**. The Team has been providing intensive continued support in checking and monitoring ILM spend, making quarterly claims to the Combined Authority, carrying out procurement exercise for specialist mentors/coaches, preparation for external audits, change controls submitted to DWP and close liaison with the Combined Authority Compliance Team.

3.5 Liverpool City Region and Cultural/Visitor Economy work

The Team continues to undertake some key work with Liverpool City Region and Halton partners in relation to Visitor Economy and Culture:

- The Lead Funding Officer sits on the LEP's Visitor Economy Officers Group and is currently delivering the Halton element of a SIF funded Destination Management programme, worth £102k for Halton; and on the Liverpool City Region Heritage Officers Group.
- The Lead Funding Officer leads on the remaining strand of Halton's Borough of Culture programme, the Celebrating Halton's Heritage project.
- The Team supports Cultivate: Halton Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) which is currently bidding to Arts Council England for a £1 million scheme to deliver a quality arts and cultural programme for children/young people in Halton.
- The Lead Funding Officer sits on the LCR Culture Officers Group which is currently delivering The World Reimagined and Bridge to Bamboo programmes.
- The Team is also supporting bids to the LCR Community Environment Fund 2022

3.6 - Training

The Team delivers a free Training Programme which is available to HBC colleagues and externally to the voluntary and other public sector partners. The courses were delivered from a range of community venues in Widnes and Runcorn with the aim of increasing the quality of bids and capacity building; the courses are being delivered online between January and July 2021 due to Covid restrictions, with the support of Halton and St Helens VCA.

The Annual Programme consists of:

- 4 x half-day bid-Writing sessions
- 2 x half day Monitoring and Evaluation sessions
- 2 x half day Now You've Got Your Grant sessions
- 2 x Developing a Fundraising Strategy

The training sessions are continually updated to improve bid-writing skill levels among both internal and external colleagues and also give a greater understanding of the context in which funding bids are submitted helping to ensure that bids are prioritised and of the highest possible quality.

3.7 - Charging Policy

Executive Board agreed in July 2018 that the Council should pilot a Charging Policy for a period of 12 months, specifically for bid-writing support for external agencies. The pilot was completed in August 2019 and it was agreed the Policy should be rolled out on a permanent basis. £32,000 in fees has been generated by the Team to date.

It is vital that staff across the whole Council implement the Charging Policy where it applies and seeks the support of the External Funding Team to do this where needed.

3.8- Funding Data

3.8.1 - Funding Secured

The table below shows details of the funding secured by the External Funding Team between April 2017 and March 2022. In 2020-21 the Team helped to secure funding of £13.4m.

Year	Funding Secured
2017-18	£2.08m
2018-19	£3.12
2019-20	£6.07m
2020-21	£12.7m
2021-22	£13.4m

The total funding secured by the External Funding Team in the 5 year period was **£47.37m**

3.9- CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The Team's workload remains extremely busy; we are currently managing with a reduced staffing level on a temporary basis and have had to prioritise accordingly.

Focus very much will be on the emerging UK Shared Prosperity Fund and working with colleagues to ensure Halton bids for these funds where appropriate. At the same time we will continue with our remit to support our voluntary sector colleagues to secure funding to deliver their vital services across the Borough.

The external funding environment remains vibrant and we look forward to securing further investment into the Borough in the year ahead to support the corporate vision and key strategic schemes going forward.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

All projects that request support from the External Funding Team must be supporting at least one of the Council's priorities.

- 6.1 Children and Young People in Halton
- 6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
- 6.3 A Healthy Halton
- 6.4 A Safer Halton
- 6.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
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None under the meaning of the Act

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Active Projects

The table below shows the current caseload of the External Funding Team

Steph Projects
HBC Levelling Up Fund – Halton Lea
Catalyst SDC and Museum – Heritage offer upgrade
Halton LCEP - general costs
HBC Regen Green Growth Programme – supporting 2 key strands
LCR Culture Working Group – supporting two key projects
LCR Visitor Economy Working Group – delivering SIF funded destination marketing project
HBC Borough of Culture 2021 – delivering Heritage Lottery Fund project
Steve Projects
Windmill Hill Community Hub – St Berteline’s CE Church – refurb and upgrade
CAB Core Funding (and Special Projects)
Open 360 Digital Inclusion Hubs – Three Venues in Runcorn and Widnes
Halton Play Council – new transport
Halton Haven Hospice – various projects
CHI Café Extension – Canopy and Doors
St Mary’s Church, West Bank - Improvements
Open 360 Digital Inclusion Hub – Six Month Community Project (Hallwood Park and Palace Fields)
HBC Family Hub Local Transformation Fund (FHLTF)
HBC Changing Places Toilets (CPT) Fund
Trinity Safe Spaces – Faith New Deal Pilot Fund
HBC DfT Loneliness With Transport Fund (LWTF)
Recharge & Restore CIC Mental Health & Wellbeing for Vulnerable Women (LCR Cares)
Sara Projects
HBC Town Deal – monitoring and claims
Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF) – delivery/monitoring and claims
Welcome Back Fund (RHSSF phase 2) – delivery/monitoring and claims
Celebrating Halton’s Heritage – Culture HQ – delivery/monitoring and claims
Ways to Work 3.0 - ESF 1.3 YEI Extension More Developed – Inclusive Labour Markets – monitoring and claims
Ways to Work 5.0 – ESF 1.1 Extension Transitional & More Developed – monitoring and claims

3MG RGF project - monitoring
Sci-Tech Daresbury RGF projects - monitoring
Louise Projects
LCR Apprenticeships Hub – ESF bid- guidance
Castner Kellner Electrochemistry Research and Development Centre -Ineos SIF Bid
Jonathan Projects
Wat Phra Singh Temple – running costsand capital work
St Pauls Building Project – capital work
St Lukes – All Churches Trust Bid – capital work

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 7 June 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Finance

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Household Support Fund 2022-23

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline progress with the delivery of the £1.3m grant allocation received by the Council, for the six month extension to the Government's Household Support Fund.

2.0 RECOMMENDED That:

- (i) **Progress with delivery of the Household Support Fund, as outlined in the report, be noted;**
- (ii) **A further progress report be brought to the next meeting of the Board.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 3.1 On 23rd March 2022 the Government announced an extension to the Household Support Fund, which previously operated from October 2021 to March 2022. The Fund is intended to support vulnerable households particularly those including children and pensioners.
- 3.2 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has issued guidance and grant allocations for councils, with the grant funding covering the period 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022. Halton's allocation of grant funding is £1,297,880 of which 5% is permitted to provide for the costs of administering the grant.
- 3.3 The DWP guidance states that;
- (i) At least one third of the total grant funding must be ring fenced to support vulnerable households with children;
 - (ii) At least one third of the total grant funding must be ring fenced to support vulnerable pensioner households, and

- (iii) Up to one third of the total grant funding must be provided to other vulnerable households in need of support.

Spending Plan

- 3.4 The Benefits Division will co-ordinate use of the grant on behalf of the Council. In order to maximise the benefit of the grant funding for the Borough's vulnerable households and to ensure it is fully utilised within the relatively short timescales permitted, discussions have been held with colleagues across the Council and also Voluntary Sector partners.
- 3.5 In addition, discussions have been held with LCR and AGMA colleagues, to ensure some consistency of approach across the region.
- 3.6 A spending plan was prepared, as set out in the Appendix, regarding how the grant funding might be utilised via a combination of Council departments and voluntary sector partners, to deliver help and assistance to vulnerable households over the six month period.
- 3.7 The spending plan is intended to provide clarity as to what actions are required of the relevant Council departments and partner organisations, with lead officers being identified. It will also provide a basis for monitoring spending against the grant, as required by the DWP and ensure it is fully utilised in accordance with the grant guidance by 30th September 2022. If the grant is not fully utilised by 30th September 2022 it will be clawed back by the DWP.
- 3.8 In order to ensure at least one third is allocated for vulnerable households with children, free school meal vouchers of £12 per week will once again be provided to approximately 7,500 eligible pupils. These will be provided for both the Summer half term and the Summer school holidays, which it is estimated will cost approximately £630,000.
- 3.9 To support vulnerable pensioner households with at least one third of the funding, all 4,303 pensioners currently receiving Council Tax Reduction will be provided with an award of £120. It is estimated that this will deliver approximately £516,360.
- 3.10 The remaining grant funding (up to a third) will be used to assist other vulnerable households. This will be provided primarily with the assistance of partner organisations as listed in the Appendix. Discussions are being held with each of the partner organisations, to ensure the funding will be delivered in accordance with the DWP guidance and that appropriate monitoring information can be provided to the Council.

Conclusions

- 3.11 Given the urgent need to procure and distribute free school meal vouchers in time for the Summer half term holidays, the Chief Executive utilised urgency powers to approve the spending plan, in consultation with the Leader, Operational Director Legal & Democratic Services and

Operational Director Finance. This decision was published as required and will be reported to the Executive Board on 16th June 2022.

- 3.12 The Spending Plan presented in the Appendix, is intended to ensure that the Council's £1,297,880 grant allocation from the Household Support Fund, is fully utilised in accordance with the DWP guidance and by the deadline date of 30th September 2022.
- 3.13 It is considered that this approach will deliver support to the most vulnerable households within the Borough, especially those with children and pensioners as required by the DWP guidance, and within the short timescales provided.
- 3.14 A further progress report regarding delivery of the Household Support Fund will be presented to the Board on 6 September 2022.

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 5.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**
- 5.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**
- 5.3 **A Healthy Halton**
- 5.4 **A Safer Halton**
- 5.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The delivery of support from the Household Support Fund to the Borough's vulnerable households, has the potential to support all of the Council priorities.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 If the grant allocation from the Household Support Fund, is not fully utilised in accordance with the DWP guidance by the deadline date of 30th September 2022, any remaining grant funding will be clawed back by the DWP. The Spending Plan presented in the appendix is intended to ensure that the grant funding is fully utilised by the deadline.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 None.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Household Support Fund Allocations and Guidance	DCLB Stadium	Paul Garnett Divisional Manager Benefits

APPENDIX

Household Support Fund
Spending Plan 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022

Total grant allocation	1,297,880
Less administration costs (5%)	64,894
Available grant funding	1,232,986
1. Vulnerable Households with Children	630,000
Free school meal (FSM) vouchers provided for: Summer half term 30/5/22 – 3/6/22, 1 week Summer holidays 21/7/22 – 31/8/22, 6 weeks Based on 7,500 children entitled to FSM Paid for 7 weeks £12 voucher per week 49% of total available grant funding	
2. Vulnerable Pensioner Households	516,360
Number of pensioners on council tax reduction = 4,303 Award £120 per pensioner 40% of total available grant funding	
3. Other Vulnerable Households	85,000
Distributed via; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens Advice Bureau (energy/fuel support) £35,000 • Widnes Food Bank £10,000 • Runcorn Food Bank £10,000 • Adult Social Care £5,000 • Holiday Activity Fund £5,000 • Affordable Warmth £10,000 • Halton Voluntary Action £10,000 	

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 7 June 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise Community & Resources

SUBJECT: Annual Report 2021/22

PORTFOLIO: Resources

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To receive the Annual Report of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board for 2021/22, to comment in respect of the same, and to make any changes considered appropriate.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be approved.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

N/A

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

N/A

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

Document	Place of inspection	Contact Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit	2 nd Floor Municipal Building	M. Reaney



CORPORATE PPB ANNUAL REPORT

The year 2021-22 has seen a change back to the new normal, the end of Covid restrictions, and reliance on a common sense approach to dealing with the virus. However it is important to remember the diligence of Council employees in keeping the systems running that support and protect our residents throughout the Pandemic.

This year we have continued to monitor the Performance of the Financial Services Department and appreciated their efficiency in maximising Council tax collection and also the implementation of the various Government business support schemes and the Breathing Space scheme which gives people a chance repay their debts. I would like to thank the team for taking us through a line by line audit of the directorate accounts that fall under the remit of Corporate Services, this is a necessity due to the stringent cuts of 12 years to finance the Council has had to deal with. The External funding Team continues to be successful and in the year 20/21 secured over £12 Million for the Council, public sector partners, the voluntary and the private sector.

The PPB decided to run a topic group on the Discretionary Scheme which has run for 9 years and made some minor adjustments but they are impressed with how the officers operate the scheme in a fair and humane fashion.

The ICT Department continues to modernise and improve data and communication facilities across all areas, making the business even more efficient and accessible to our residents. The data storage and protection team have spent many challenging months transferring those pieces of information that can be digitised onto the ICT system; those can't have been stored securely.

The Health and Safety team worked diligently throughout the pandemic ensuring all the necessary and legal requirements with regard to ensuring community and employee health and safety were met - this enabled services to our community to proceed.

The Widnes Market management team continue to make the market an important part of the shopping offered to the people of the Borough. To accomplish this they have introduced several new facilities and services, a changing places facility, a nursing room/quiet space, multi-faith prayer room, water bottle refill point, student trading days and creative competitions. In addition, they are currently working on themed Sunday Market trading days.

The Property Services Department continues to invest in the structure of the market to make sure it remains fit for purpose. They are also busy organising the the development of the Moor Lane Leisure Centre, the Mersey Gateway Handback sites ,the decarbonisation of the Stadium and maintenance programmes across the Borough. Through its carbon reduction programmes, the Council have reduced the carbon footprint by a total of 43%.

The Legal Services team works hard to keep the Council on a firm legal basis which given the many challenges and complications put forward is a difficult task to undertake. We have an effective Corporate Complaints team that allows us to learn from mistakes or errors we make but protects us from dubious challenges. The Electoral registration services team works efficiently providing a service that ensures voters can take part in the democratic process with the minimum of inconvenience. Members services team ensure councillors are effective in their duties with the provision of training courses and have the equipment to fulfil their role in the community.

Finally I would like to thank the members of the Board for the support they have given me throughout the year and in particular, Mark Reaney and Ian Leivesley for their advice and guidance over the years and the Committee services team for providing such excellent support.

- Councillor Bob Gilligan – Chair, Corporate Policy & Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2021/22, the Board comprised of eleven Councillors – R. Gilligan (Chair), G Philbin (Vice Chair), N Hutchinson, P Lloyd-Jones, A Lowe, N Plumptre-Walsh, G Stockton, A Teeling, S Thornton, K Wainwright and A Wall.

The late Councillor H Howard had also been an extremely valued member of the Board and had very sadly passed away during the municipal year.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to Resources, HR and Training, ICT, Property, Democratic Services, Legal Services, Communications and Marketing, Stadium, Civic Catering, Procurement, Corporate Complaints and Area Forums. The Board also has responsibility for monitoring the performance of the reporting departments which during the last year have been Legal and Democratic Services including Communications and Marketing, Human Resources, Financial Services, ICT and Support Services and the Policy and Performance Divisions.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met four times during the year, with all of the meetings taking place in person again. Set out below are some of the main initiatives upon which it has worked during that time.

BREATHING SPACE

At the June meeting, the Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided information on the Breathing Space process which came into effect on 4th May 2021. It provided Council debtors with legal protections to ensure that creditors pause recovery and enforcement action for a period of up to 60 days.

There were two types of breathing space: a standard breathing space and a mental health crisis breathing space.

- A standard breathing space is available to anyone with problem debt. It provided legal protections from creditor action for up to 60 days. The protections include pausing most enforcement action and contact from creditors and freezing most interest and charges on their debts.
- A mental health crisis breathing space was only available to someone who received mental health crisis treatment and it had some stronger protections. It lasts as long as the person's mental health crisis treatment, plus 30 days (no matter how long the crisis treatment lasts).

Members noted information on:

- Debt-advice providers;
- The insolvency service;
- Applying for a standard breathing space and eligibility;
- Applying for a mental health crisis breathing space and eligibility;
- Qualifying and excluded debts; and
- The Councils role throughout the process and the next steps when a breathing space ends.
-

CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

The November meeting considered an analysis of Corporate Complaints received during the 2020/21 financial year.

The report outlined the two stage procedure to deal with corporate complaints; a corporate complaints trend analysis from 2012 to 2021; the nature of those complaints received; and outcomes.

	<p>In addition, the report also provided a summary on complaints and queries that had been received by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2020/21.</p> <p>It was noted that the Ombudsman had made 17 decisions during the year and upheld 6 complaints.</p> <p>DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT SCHEME, DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS & UNIVERSAL CREDIT</p> <p>In November, the Board received a comprehensive report providing updates on the Discretionary Support Scheme (DSS), Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and Universal Credit (UC).</p> <p>DSS was now in its ninth year of operation and during 2020/21, 610 awards were made totalling £170,554. Full details of funding and expenditure were outlined in the report.</p> <p>In respect of DHP, Members were advised that in 2020/21 grant funding of £527,810 was received and actual expenditure totalled £527,810 representing 1,645 awards. .</p> <p>In addition, Members received an update on UC. As at August 2021 there were 15,960 Halton residents claiming UC.</p> <p>The Board asked the Topic Group to consider the eligibility criteria for DSS in a number of areas, and the January meeting considered the findings of the group, and made recommendations for 2 changes, which were agreed.</p> <p>ENERGY / CARBON REDUCTION</p> <p>In November, the Board considered a report which provided an update on related activities aimed at reducing the Council's impact on the environment and CO2 emissions. The Council started to measure its baseline for carbon emissions in 2006/7, emissions stood at 26338 tonnes of CO2. For 2020/21, the overall emissions had reduced to 9770 tonnes, a further reduction of 13.9%. To date, since 2008, the Council had reduced its carbon footprint by a total of 43%. The report highlighted the key figures for this year across each Council sector and provided an update on the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - street lighting LED programme; - roof top solar on Council buildings and biomass boilers at Brookvale Leisure Centre and Norton Priory; - solar farm on the former St Michael's Golf Course; - public Sector Decarbonisation Fund; - transport projects; and the Council's Climate Change Action Plan
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	<p>PERFORMANCE ISSUES DURING THE COURSE OF THE YEAR</p> <p>The Board considered in detail the performance of the reporting departments. Issues which were overseen during the year included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident statistics • Markets • School catering and the operation of the Stadium <p>WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22</p> <p>During 2021/22, the Board retained the expanded Topic Group which oversaw the operation of the Council's Discretionary Support Scheme and included scrutiny of Universal Credit. The Board agreed that additional topic groups would be established when the need arose.</p>
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REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 7th June 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise Community Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Corporate Accident / Incident Report 1.4.21 to 31.3.22

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on the performance of health safety management within the Authority for 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1 the report be received; and**
- 2 the Board notes the contents of the report including the recommendations and actions for 2022/23.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The health and safety report on the performance of health and safety management in relation to Key Performance Indicators for the current financial year is appended.

3.2 It highlights health and safety information.

3.3 The report includes information around the number of actual near misses, over 7 day and significant accidents.

3.4 It includes annual HSE information

3.5 It also includes COVID 19 employee figures

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The report assists in the delivery of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

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

The provision of a safe working environment and reduction in accidents is important in order to provide:

- 6.1 **A Healthy Halton**

- 6.2 **A Safer Halton**

- 6.3 **Efficient and Effective Delivery of Services**

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 Accidents which lead to lost time have financial implications for the authority (although these are always secondary to our concern for the well-being of staff and customers).

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues arising from this report.



CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT
CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD
1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1 General	3
1.2 H&S Management System	3
2. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	4
2.1 Summary	4
2.2 Recommendations.....	5
3. INFORMATION	6
3.1 Local/National Information	6
4. LEAD INDICATORS (KPI's)	11
4.1 KPI 1 Risk Assessments	11
4.2 KPI 2 Near Misses	11
4.3 KPI 3 Lone Working Monitoring System	11
5. REACTIVE INDICATORS (KPI's)	13
5.1 KPI 4 Accidents.....	13
5.2 KPI 5 Violent Incidents	14
6. Risk Assessment Position Statements.....	15

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 clearly places responsibility on those who create the risk to manage it. The HSE Strategy, 'Helping Great Britain Work Well' highlights that members of the board have both collective and individual responsibility for health and safety. As such, the need is for board-level members to champion health and safety and be held accountable for its delivery.

Part of this includes identifying areas for improvement in health and safety management with the intention of improving staff morale, reducing in work-related sickness absence and lowering insurance premiums for legal, moral and financial reasons. In particular having robust health and safety procedures in place provides safeguards against legal action being taken against the Authority.

1.2 Health and Safety Management System

In order to demonstrate how Halton Borough Council as an employer is delivering the HSE Strategy, this report is to provide Management Team with details of health and safety performance in relation to Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Details of KPI's are as follows:

LEAD INDICATORS

Proactive action taken and any outcomes

KPI

1. **Number of risk assessments completed on corporate systems**
Rationale – creating a safe working environment
2. **Number of Near Misses**
Rationale – action taken to prevent further similar incidents and before injuries
3. **Percentage of registered staff on the Lone Working Monitoring System who are utilising the system**
Rationale – demonstrating effective management of lone working risks

REACTIVE [Lagging] INDICATORS

Reactive action taken in response to accidents/incidents

4. **Number of Significant¹ and RIDDOR Reportable Accidents²**
Rationale – identify accident/incident trends and actions required to prevent similar occurrences
5. **Number of Violent Incidents**
Rationale – identify incident trends and actions required to prevent similar occurrences

¹ Accidents that either require more than basic first aid, incur time lost or arise from a failure in health and safety management

² Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, (RIDDOR) 2013, including Fatalities, Specified Injuries, Over 7-day Injuries, Reportable Occupational Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences

National and Local Information together with performance gaps and incident trends form the basis for the Recommended Actions for 2022/23.

By responding positively to identified trends, the Authority can demonstrate compliance with the recommendations of the Health and Safety Executive's guidance HS(G)65 "Management for Health and Safety".

2. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Summary

COVID-19 still remains and as an authority we are following government guidance and working towards living with the virus. This means cleaning, hygiene and ventilation are still very much prevalent and is still the main guidance provided by the Health & Safety Executive. As an authority we are also still working on a 50% occupancy in Council buildings.

There is continued demand for personal protective equipment with central distribution still available via the PPE hub at the DCBL stadium. The free government support has now ended for the hub but CQC registered services are still receiving support via the government PPE portal.

The pandemic reflection on previous reports has shown a significant reduction in accidents and violent incidents compared to previous years pre-pandemic. This is slowly starting to change and is also having an impact on violent incidents which are rising to pre pandemic levels.

Reportable and significant accidents for Halton Employees, excluding schools, are currently at a total of 20 across both directorates plus 9 near misses.

Violent Incidents corporately are showing currently as 28 verbal and 8 physical incidents. Within schools for this period there were 21 physical incidents, mainly involving the same 4 children and 2 verbal involving racism.

Lone Working – Contact Centre Monitoring update – registered users have increased from the same period last year and actual percentage use has also slightly increased. This is as predicted with staff returning to face to face visits if safe to do so, however, a larger increase was expected due to mandatory use of the system. A review of the Lone Working process has taken place by the Health & Safety team with a summary below.

Fire audits have been actioned across all corporate buildings, including care homes, to ensure procedures, training and risk assessments are up to date. A full summary of results is included in this report. Sadly due to continual outbreaks 1 care home is still to be visited.

As at 4th April 2022, the total number of COVID-19 sickness absences for the whole pandemic period - from 1st March 2020 - is 1219. This includes all Council services and schools.

For the whole pandemic period to date, the number of COVID absences for Council services (excluding schools) is 643.

For the financial year 1st April 2021 to 4th April 2022, the number of COVID-19 sickness absences is 916. This includes all Council services and schools.

For the financial year 1st April 2021 to 4th April 2022, the number of COVID absences for Council services (excluding schools) is 373 – this represents 15% of all absences.

For the financial year 1st April 2021 to 4th April 2022, the number of COVID absences for schools is 543 – this represents 26% of all absences.

Only 20 of the cases were reported on the H & S system as staff working within their normal workplace from 1st April 2021 to 4th April 2022.

2.2 Recommendations 2022/23

The following recommendations are as a result of the accident analysis data to be actioned during the period 2022/23.

No.	KPI No.	ACTION	RATIONALE	RESPONSIBLE
1.	1	All managers and assessors to ensure risk assessments on the corporate risk assessment system across all areas are reviewed and up to date as per safety bulletin 2021 8.	Position statements, section 7 below.	All managers and assessors
2.	3	Lone working audit of all systems, communications, staff usage and any other contributing factors	Reinforce Management Team decision and safety of lone working employees	Health & Safety Team - completed
3.	3	Review Lone Working Risk Assessments and enforce the 'mandatory' use of the Contact Centre Monitoring system when required	Reinforce Management Team decision and safety of lone working employees	All managers - ongoing

GENERAL ACTIONS

Action a series of Lockdown/Bomb Threat Exercises across main Council buildings	2022/23	Health and Safety Team – time period extended due to COVID19
Review and update Health and Safety policies (Corporate & Schools) requiring timescale or legislation reviews	Ongoing	Health and Safety Team
School Audit and Healthcheck visit programme	Ongoing	Health and Safety Team
Programme of fire audits actioned and ongoing for all corporate buildings	Ongoing	Health and Safety Team and Facilities Management Representatives/Property Services
Action security risk assessments across main council buildings	2021/22	Health and Safety Team - completed
Following workplace inspections of main council buildings all managers to follow up on any recommendations made	2022/23	Responsible managers - ongoing

3. INFORMATION**3.1 National/Local Information****HSE Health and Safety Statistics 2021****Work-related Ill Health**

- **1.7 Million Workers** suffering from work-related ill health (new or long-standing) in 2020/21.
- **13,000 Deaths** each year estimated to be linked to past exposure at work, primarily to chemicals or dust.

Work-related Stress, Depression or Anxiety

- **822,000 Workers** suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety (new or long-standing) in 2020/21.
- **451,000 Workers** suffering from a new case or work-related stress, depression or anxiety.

Work-related MSDs (Musculoskeletal Disorders)

- **470,000 Workers** suffering from work-related MSDs (new or long-standing) in 2020/21.

- **162,000 Workers** suffering from a new case of work-related MSDs in 2020/21.

Occupational Lung Disease

- **12,000 Lung Disease** deaths each year estimated to be linked to past exposures at work.
- **2,369 Mesothelioma** deaths in 2019, with a similar number of lung cancer deaths linked to past exposures to asbestos.

Coronavirus Pandemic

- **93,000 Workers** suffering with COVID-19 in 2020/21 which they believe may have been from exposure to coronavirus at work (new or long-standing). Around half of those suffering were in human health and social work activities.
- **645,000*** **Workers** suffering from a work-related illness caused or made worse by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic (new or long-standing) in 2020/21. Around 20% of those suffering were in human health and social work activities.

* Excludes the 93.000 workers from the first statistic.

Workplace Injury

- **142 Workers** killed at work in 2020/21.
- **441,000 Workers** sustaining a non-fatal injury according to self-reports from the Labour Force Survey in 2020/21.
- **51, 211 Employee** non-fatal injuries reported by employers under RIDDOR in 2020/21.

Enforcement

- **185 Cases** prosecuted by HSE where a conviction was achieved in 2020/21.
- **2,929 Notices** issued by HSE in 2020/21.
- **£26.9 Million** in fines resulting from prosecutions taken by HSE where a conviction was achieved in 2020/21

Fire Audits

A series of fire audits have been actioned and across all corporate buildings to ensure procedures, training and risk assessments are up to date. The audits involve checking and reviewing of fire risk assessments to ensure actions are completed and documentation is up to date, building checks, checking of fire routes, signage, integrity of fire doors, training and training records, fire log books, testing records, fire drills, extinguishers etc. This process has been enabled by the involvement of building FMR's (Facilities Management Representatives).

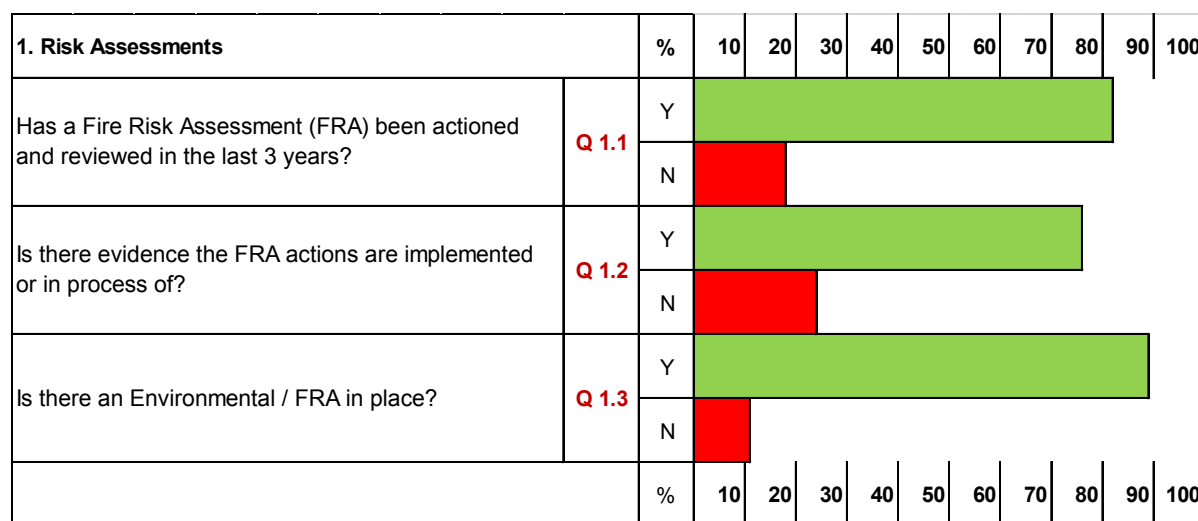
The audit process is divided into 4x areas and focusses on Risk Assessments, Equipment, Maintenance and Induction and Training and is indicated in the graphs below.

Some audit questions generate not applicable (N/A) responses (not shown here). Where this is the case they have been discounted from the total to generate the percentage score.

Y – Yes

N – No

AR – Attention Required



2. Equipment		%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Are weekly fire alarm tests carried out with records maintained?	Q 2.1	Y	<div></div>									
		N	<div></div>									
Are fire drills carried out twice a year?	Q 2.2	Y	<div></div>									
		N	<div></div>									
Is there evidence that fire drills are debriefed with records maintained?	Q 2.3	Y	<div></div>									
		N	<div></div>									
Are there arrangements for carrying out daily / weekly / 6-monthly fire checks?	Q 2.4	Y	<div></div>									
		N	<div></div>									
Is the FMR aware of how to access records of maintenance of fire equipment?	Q 2.5	Y	<div></div>									
		N	<div></div>									
Have maximum numbers (the flow rate) been identified and recorded for halls / rooms where events take place involving large numbers?	Q 2.6	Y	<div></div>									
		N	<div></div>									
Are fire extinguishers and any other fire fighting equipment or systems regularly checked for apparent faults and deficiencies?	Q 2.7	Y	<div></div>									
		N	<div></div>									
		%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

3. Maintenance		%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	
Is fire loading in protected areas prevented incl. excessive number of displays, items under stairs etc. and is general housekeeping of a good standard?	Q 3.1	Y											
		N											
Are fire risks in offices / rooms kept to a minimum incl. overloading extension leads / multi-point adapters, use of portable heaters, suspended displays, etc.?	Q 3.2	Y											
		N											
Are any fire doors are wedged open?	Q 3.3	Y											
		N											
Is all fire signage clear and legible and up to date, i.e. fire marshalls, assembly points etc.?	Q 3.4	Y											
		N											
		%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	

4. Induction & Training		%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Are there written fire procedures incl. actions to take with confirmed fires, high-vis for fire marshals, booking in / out for visitors, management of meetings, security procedures, details of key contacts e.g. KDE & Uniqwin,etc?	Q 4.1	Y										
		N										
		AR										
Are staff / tenants aware of the fire procedures?	Q 4.2	Y										
		N										
Are there booking in / out systems for staff who are regularly in / out of buildings / offices?	Q 4.3	Y										
		N										
Upon alarm activation has someone been identified who is available whilst the building is open to check the alarm and affected zone (Fire Warden) or to call KDE to check and / or reset the alarm?	Q 4.4	Y										
		N										
		AR										
Are PEEP's in place for staff, tenants or regular visitors who need assisted evacuation?	Q 4.5	Y										
		N										
Have staff received annual fire safety awarness training?	Q 4.6	Y										
		N										
		AR										
Have Fire Wardens / Fire Marshals received training with refreshers every 3 years?	Q 4.7	Y										
		N										
Are there sufficient staff who are Fire Evacuation Chair trained?	Q 4.8	Y										
		N										
Is there evidence that Fire Evacuation Chair trained staff practice during fire drills?	Q 4.9	Y										
		N										
Have relevant staff received Fire Extinguisher training, e.g. caretakers, Fire Wardens, kitchen staff, etc.?	Q 4.10	Y										
		N										
Are records of all fire training maintained indicating staff who have been trained / not trained, type of training, date of training and date next required?	Q 4.11	Y										
		N										
As the FMR for the building have you completed the FMR training on Enable / Adapt online training system?	Q 4.12	Y										
		N										
		%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

In general the negative answers are mostly pandemic related with buildings being closed and general procedures and training not being actioned. FMR's are working towards resolving the negative responses in conjunction with Property Services.

This process will be repeated 2023/24.

4. **LEAD INDICATORS**

4.1 . **Number of risk assessments completed on corporate systems**

4.1.1 An electronic risk assessment system, based on the Intranet, has been 'live' since September 2011 with a planned overhaul during 2022.

- Actual number of assessments completed up to 31/3/22 are; 1795

Enterprise, Community & Resources – 1168, 70% of expected
People – 627, 48% of expected

See section 7 for position statements and comparisons.

4.2 **Number of Near Misses**

4.2.1 **The number reported in the last 3 years are:**

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
8	2	9

From the 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 there have been 9 near misses reported on the corporate accident/incident system.

4.3 **Percentage of registered staff on the Lone Working Monitoring System who are utilising the system**

4.3.1 Lone Working – Contact Centre Monitoring update – registered users have increased from the same period last year and actual percentage use has also slightly increased. This is as predicted with staff returning to face to face visits if safe to do so, however, a larger increase was expected due to mandatory use of the system. A review of the Lone Working process has taken place by the Health & Safety team with a summary below.

	Jan – Mar 2021		Jan – Mar 2022	
	Registered Users	No's Using System	Registered Users	No's Using System
Enterprise Community & Resources People	82	17	81	31
People	294	61	309	95
TOTAL USERS	376	78	390	126
% OF USE	21%		32%	

Lone Working Review of Contact Centre Monitoring System and Mandatory Use

The aim of this review was to study the current arrangements for corporate health & safety within Halton Borough Council in relation to Lone Working.

During the study period policies, procedures and systems were examined. The way they work together was also studied and how employees and managers contribute.

An overall view is regularly provided by quarterly data from system usage of the Contact Centre Lone Working monitoring system (see above).

During the study period, the overall management of health and safety appeared adequate but it became apparent that concerns were raised in relation to the use of the lone working system where a significant or high risk had been identified to employees and a potential of harm to service users.

Concerns raised, centred on the apparent lack of system usage.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been considered throughout, as this caused major changes to how services were delivered. Therefore, the data studied covered times pre lockdown, during lockdown and as restrictions imposed on staff were starting to ease. It also studied the process for being entered on the system. Solutions were found that were proved to be economically viable, easy to create and manage, sustainable and practical. Each solution has the ability to be measured, thus proving its own worth and reducing the amount of risk that day to day operations generate.

The solutions are also sensible and can be easily justified which increases the likelihood of continued compliance over time. They revolve around increased engagement between management and workers together with a training program that incorporates both initial and refresher training.

The full report can be viewed below.

<http://hbc/teams/HANDS/SharedDocuments/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2Fteams%2FHANDS%2FSharedDocuments%2FSystem%20Reviews&FolderCTID=0x0120003DEC6339D7DE9044947F73269366C3D9&View=%7BD1A035E3%2DF142%2D4C5A%2D9DC2%2D964B4467C9DD%7D&InitialTabId=Ribbon%2ERead&VisibilityContext=WSSTabPersistence>

5 REACTIVE ['Lagging'] INDICATORS

5.1 Number of Significant and RIDDOR Reportable Accidents

The number of significant accidents and RIDDOR reportable to the HSE for both Directorates excluding schools that took place from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 is 20, a slow rise to pre pandemic levels as staff return to the workplace.

Directorate	Specified Injury	> 7-Day	Significant
Enterprise, Community and Resources	0	7	8
People – excluding schools	1	2	2
TOTAL 2021/22	1	9	10
TOTAL 2020/2021	1	3	7
TOTAL 2019/2020	1	16	28

Main Categories

	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2021/22</u>
STF	10	6	23
Man Han	9	1	11
Equipment	7	0	2

Other Categories 2021/22

Hit by moving or flying object – 8
 Hit something fixed or stationary – 3
 Hit by moving vehicle – 2
 RTC – 2
 Sharps – 2
 Injured by an animal – 1
 Entrapment – 1
 Entanglement – 1
 Trapped by something clasping – 1

Please note the majority of accidents in the main and other categories resulted in minor injuries, not reportable or requiring further action.

5.1.1 Days Lost

- The main categories of days lost are as follows;

	Days Lost		
	2018/19	2019/20	2021/22
1. Slips, trips and falls	83	20	67(+47)
2. Manual handling	121	77	77(0)
3. Equipment	3	25	0(-25)

- The total days lost is 144 on the above categories. This represents an increase compared to 2019/20 (last time data was gathered re pandemic) which was 122.
- Accidents categorised as 'Other' totalled 111 days lost and included the partial de-gloving of a finger and a trapped hand in a trade waste bin.
- A road traffic collision resulted in 22 days lost with other smaller categories totalling 19 days lost (Entrapment, Sharps and Hit by a flying or moving object).
- In total 296 days were lost due to workplace accidents/incidents (excluding COVID-19) 2021/22

5.2 Number of Violent Incidents

5.2.1 From 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Directorate	Verbal	Physical
Enterprise, Community and Resources	13	2
People	15	6

Directorate	Verbal	Physical
TOTAL 2021/22	28	8
TOTAL 2020/21	8	1
TOTAL 2019/20	30	12

The 13 verbal incidents for E, C & R occurred within the HDL sites (10), Halton People into Jobs and the Cemetery. 2 physical incidents involved Waste Management and the H & S Team.

People directorate had 15 verbal incidents. 1 involving the HIP team and anti-vac protestors. The other incidents were voicemails and emails received by the Housing Solutions team from 1 service user, 2 home visits and 1 children's centre incident. There were 6 physical incidents involving care homes (2), PBSS (2), Fostering and Inglefield.

5.2.2 Schools

From 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 there have been 21 physical violent incidents and 2 verbal racist incidents within schools.

Schools	Verbal	Physical
TOTAL 2021/22	2	21
TOTAL 2020/21	4	11
TOTAL 2019/20	0	45

6. Risk Assessment Position Statements

Completed Assessment Comparisons

Enterprise, Community & Resources – 2017/18 **830** completed
People – 2017/18 **312** completed

Enterprise, Community & Resources – 2018/19 **1036** completed
People – 2018/19 **396** completed - increased

Enterprise, Community & Resources – 2019/20 **1234** completed
People – 2019/20 **625** completed - increased

Enterprise, Community & Resources – 2020/21 **1081** completed
People – 2020/21 **577** completed - decreased

Enterprise, Community & Resources – 2021/22 **1168** completed
People – 2021/22 **627** completed - increased

See table below.

Risk Assessment Position Statement - All Directorates

01 April 2022

		Enterprise, Community & Resources				People			
		<i>Expected No. RAs</i>	<i>Actual No. RAs (up-to-date)</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Earliest Review</i>	<i>Expected No. RAs</i>	<i>Actual No. RAs (up-to-date)</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Earliest Review</i>
Risk Assessment Type	Home Working Risk Assessment	415	268	64.58	06/04/2022	281	106	37.72	06/04/2022
	Environmental/Fire Risk Assessment	69	40	57.97	07/04/2022	79	44	55.7	26/04/2022
	Fire Risk Assessment								
	Lone Working Risk Assessment	30	12	40	20/04/2022	25	8	32	27/04/2022
	Manual Handling Risk Assessment	7	5	71.43	19/04/2022	1	1	100	28/04/2022
	Occupational Risk Assessment	254	192	75.59	06/04/2022	60	32	53.33	20/04/2022
	Ladder Checklist	10	10	100	21/04/2022				
	General Risk Assessment	102	42	41.18	07/04/2022	168	68	40.48	28/04/2022
	COSHH Risk Assessment	40	39	97.5	07/04/2022	71	57	80.28	26/04/2022
	COSHH	14	12	85.7	09/08/20	4	1	25	27/04/20

	(Advanced) Risk Assessment			1	22				22
	Transport in Depots Risk Assessment	1	1	100	23/08/20 22				
	Workstation Risk Assessment	717	547	76.2 9	01/04/20 22	606	310	51.1 6	07/04/20 22
	Total	1659	1168	70.4	-	1295	627	48.4 2	-

Lynn Pennington-Ramsden
Principal Health and Safety Advisor,
Risk and Emergency Planning
1st April 2022

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 7 June 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Community & Resources

SUBJECT: Performance Management Reports for Quarter 4 of 2021/22

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and to raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the final quarter period to 31st March 2022.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2021-22 were agreed by Members for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
- Finance
 - Human Resources & Organisational Development
 - ICT and Administrative Support
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Policy & Performance
 - Property Services
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services

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

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 are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The introduction of a 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.

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

None within the meaning of the Act.

Corporate Policy and Performance Board– Priority Based Monitoring Report

Reporting Period: **Quarter 4 - 1st January– 31st March 2022**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the final quarter of 2021 / 22 for service areas within the remit of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 It covers key priorities for development or improvement in the various functional areas reporting to the Board in relation to the Council's priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency i.e.:
- Financial Services
 - Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency
 - ICT Infrastructure
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
 - Property Services
- 1.3 The emergence of the global COVID19 pandemic early in 2020 has had a significant and unavoidable impact upon Council services the full extent of which is yet to become known. The Council, along with key partner agencies, has prioritised its resources upon mitigating the serious risks to public health, the protection of vulnerable residents, and the social cohesion of the local community. In developing appropriate responses to emerging national and local priorities this situation is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future.
- 1.4 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 8 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

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

2.2 Financial Services

Benefits Division

Covid19 Self-isolation Support Payments

In February 2022 the Government announced that the Self-isolation Support Payment scheme would be extended up to 6th April 2022. The table below shows the number of awards paid since the beginning of the Scheme in September 2020, up to its closure on 6th April 2022.

SIP Awards	Mandatory	Discretionary
No. of awards	1,384	563
Current spend	£692,000	£281,500

Universal Credit Implementation

The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) statistics indicate at 10th February 2022 there were 15,257 people within Halton claiming Universal Credit. By way of providing context, in March 2020 there were 10,918 Halton residents claiming Universal Credit, and this illustrates the impact of Covid19.

Processing Times

At 31st March 2022 processing times for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction were as follows: new claims 16.71 days and changes in circumstances 9.82 days.

2.3 Revenues and Financial Management Division

2022/23 Budget & Council Tax Setting

The 2022/23 net budget of £113.9m was approved by Council on 02 March 2022. The net budget will be part funded from an increase of 2.99% to Council Tax, of which 1.0% relates to the Adult Social Care Precept. The 2022/23 council tax requirement is £57.2m and the Band D council tax level (before local and major precepts) is £1,595.67.

2021/22 Quarter 3 Spending

For the financial year to 31 December 2021, overall Council operational net spending (excl Covid) was £80.5m against a budget of £79.5m, resulting in an overspend position to date against budget of £1.0m. The forecast position for the year to 31 March 2022 was an estimated overspend of £1.5m.

Covid costs and loss of income for the third quarter of the year is a total of £14.3m, with forecast costs through to the end of the year of £17.9m. It is expected there will be a shortfall in Government Grant of approximately £1.5m in funding Covid costs and loss of income for the year.

This provides a total forecast outturn overspend of £3m.

Capital spending at 31 December 2021 totalled £13.3m, which is 96% of the planned spending of £13.9m at this stage. This represents 61% of the total Capital Programme of £21.8m (which assumes a 20% slippage between years).

Council Tax and Business Rate Collection

Council tax collection for the final quarter of the year is 94.15%, marginally up by 0.01% on this point last year. Cash collection for the year to date is £68.4m, this includes £2.2m collected in relation to previous year debt.

Business rates collection for the final quarter of the year is 97.38%, up by 1.2% on this point last year. Cash collected for the year to date is £53.2m, this includes £1.1m collected in relation to previous year debt.

Breathing Space

From May 2021 the Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space) gives someone in problem debt the right to legal protections from their creditors. As at 31 March 2022 the Council has in place 79 Breathing Space applications for debts totalling £0.128m (56 applications totalling £0.101m as at December 2021). They are analysed as follows:

Council Tax – 41 applications, value of debt £0.073m

Sundry Debts – 1 applications, value of debt £0.001m

Mersey Gateway – 37 applications, value of debt £0.054m

Omicron Business Support Grants

On 21 December 2021 the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) announced a new business support grant scheme for business. The scheme provides support to hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses, in recognition that the rise of the Omicron variant means that some businesses are likely to struggle over the winter period. In total to 31 March 2022 grant awards of £0.431m were made to 118 businesses.

Covid Additional Relief Fund

In December 2021 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced a new COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) of £1.5 billion. The fund is available to support those businesses that pay business rates, who are affected by the pandemic but that are ineligible for existing support linked to business rates. Halton has been allocated an amount of £3.087m. On 17 February 2022 Executive Board approved a discretionary scheme allowing eligible businesses to apply for the support relief. Businesses have up to 31 May 2022 to submit an application.

2.4 Audit, Procurement & Operational Finance Division

Client Finance

The Client Finance team provides an Appointeeship and Deputyship Service to around 340 vulnerable individuals who lack the capacity to make decisions about their financial affairs.

The team was recently inspected by the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) - the body that supervises public authority deputy arrangements to make sure that appointed deputies are carrying out their legal duties and are acting in the very best interests of clients at all times.

Following their visit to Halton, the OPG said they were making no recommendations for improvement in any of the four standards that were assessed as part of the review. In summarising their inspection, the OPG emphasised that the Council has a well-run and dedicated Deputyship service, in particular praising the “extremely well organised” systems in place.

They said it was evident that staff had “detailed knowledge” and it was clear they were “dedicated to their clients”. There was direct praise from the clients themselves too, who highlighted the excellent communication and close working relationships that had been formed.

Finance Support Services

Arrangements for settling Suppliers’ invoices via card payment and the rebate generated from the early payment scheme, generated more than £130k in income for the Council in 2021/22.

During the financial year, 92.57% of all Council supplier invoices were paid within 30 days.

Procurement Policy Note on contracts with Suppliers from Russia or Belarus

The Cabinet Office published Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 01/2022 regarding contracts with Russian or Belarusian suppliers. The PPN applies to central government departments and executive agencies and is advisory for all other public contracting authorities.

In response to the PPN, the Council has reviewed its contracts with Russian or Belarusian suppliers. Two small sites were identified as using Gazprom for the supply of gas. These sites have since been switched over to the Crown Commercial Service Framework, which does not include any suppliers from Russia or Belarus.

Direct Payments

The Direct Payments team delivers a support service to over 800 individuals who have opted to have their assessed care and support needs met by receiving a Direct Payment. As part of their role, the team undertakes an ongoing programme of audits of individual Direct Payment accounts to provide assurance that funding has been used in compliance with support plans and agreed outcomes. The audit process also involves recovering surplus funds where appropriate.

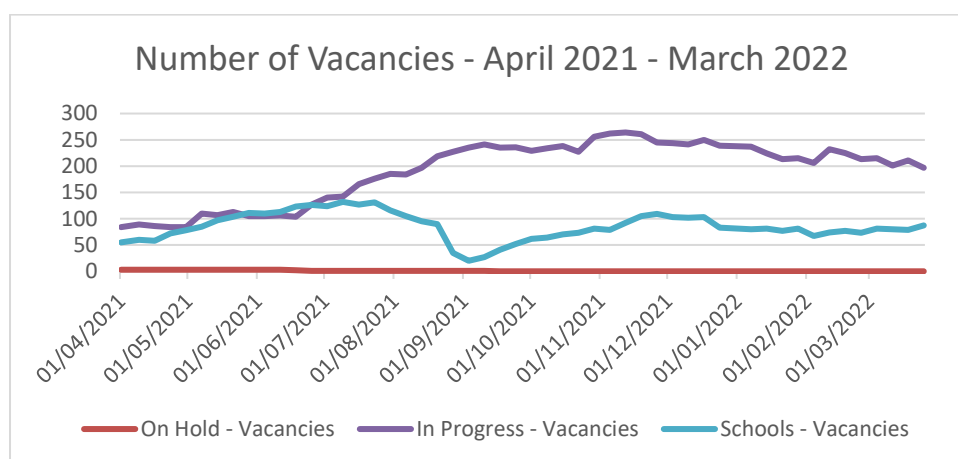
During 2021/22, the team completed a total of 568 audits and recovered over £1.8m.

Insurance

The Council's Personal Accident and Travel policy and the Crime policy were recently retendered. The Personal Accident and Travel policy has been awarded to AIG via Risk Management Partners. This has resulted in a premium saving of approximately £5k when compared to the expiring premium. The Crime policy has been awarded to Aviva via Maven Public Sector, who were the incumbent provider. This has resulted in a premium increase of just £450. All other policies were renewed with the existing insurers.

2.5 Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

Whilst the Efficiency, Resourcing & Recruitment Service has provided significant support to the organisation throughout 2021/22, with notable success (e.g. Chief Executive recruitment, Operational Director Community & Environment Recruitment and Director of Public Health recruitment), the service continues to see unprecedented demand across the council during quarter 4. As we enter the new financial year, there are likely to be in excess of 400 vacancies in the system during Q1 of 2022/23. The service was not designed and is not resourced sufficiently to deal with this level of demand, consequently this situation is not sustainable and will inevitably lead to service degradation and requests for recruitment not being fulfilled. This combines with a difficult market for many role types. The average time to recruit indicator (PPPE LI 12) is showing a longer timescale at the year end point. The situation in Halton reflects the general trend across the Local Government sector. The graphic below shows the pattern of demand in Halton over the year. Other than applying additional resources – for which there is no funding stream – the only way to deal with this situation is through selective demand management.



As referenced in Q3, in order to explore the changing dynamics of the sub-regional labour market, a strategic group led by the Chief Executive of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has now convened and the LCR CA and 6 local authorities are pooling expertise and knowledge to consider ways in which prevailing workforce challenges can be met. Current focus is on three key areas; The creation of a common LCR approach, principles and brand for recruitment, exploring opportunities for collaboration on leadership, coaching, mentoring graduate and talent management programme, and identifying workforce, resource and succession planning challenges. Thereafter exploring opportunities for career development pathways for business-critical roles that are difficult to recruit and retain to.

Aligned to the above, the Department is undertaking a project to identify key areas in the Council where succession planning is required to ensure that services remain stable into the medium and long-term. It is envisaged that up to a third of the Council's workforce could retire in the next ten years, which means that action is required now to ensure a continuity of skill, experience and knowledge in a wide range of roles and functions into the future. A report is due to be considered by Management Team in May / June 2022.

The Organisational Development & Performance Service supported the successful appointment of the Council's new Chief Executive, deploying a range of psychometric tools as part of the recruitment process, including detailed feedback to all shortlisted CEO candidates.

The quarter saw the completion of marking, claiming certificates for Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) level 5 students (ILM Presentation event arranged for 12th April). External Verification Sampling by the ILM inspector produced a positive report. The service is planning and has shortlisted for two ILM level 3 cohorts starting April and Sept 2022 (2 x 15 students on each), with a further ILM level 5 planned for Feb 2023.

Delivery of the Leadership & Management Framework continues to go well with 43 managers current working through the Framework. Planning and preparation for a further 60 managers has been completed with the launch event being delivered in April 2022.

During the quarter, the OD team has been working with services to develop role specific training for employees that don't have a corporate IT account. Specifically, development of an electronic Data Protection sign off for operational staff has been completed to ensure compliance around GDPR for those employees without a corporate IT account – this is designed to strengthen the Council's information governance arrangements.

The On-boarding and the Corporate Induction e-learning modules have been updated with the new Chief Executive's video messages to provide an inclusive approach to new staff and demonstrate senior support to the principles of learning and OD.

1941 e-learning modules were completed during the quarter, demonstrating an increase over the previous quarter and evidencing a continued high rate of engagement with e-learning as a personal development method. This has now become embedded as an efficient way to provide wide-scale learning and development

Following the Government relaxing all COVID-19 restrictions during Q4, the Council has started to revert back to office based working. There remains some nervousness around transmission risk and office space remains limited to 50% capacity. Take up of the opportunity to return to office based working has been variable across the organisation. A more structured approach will be required and this will be developed in Q1 of 2022/23. A working group that was in place during 2020/21 to manage the re-opening of services after lockdowns 1, 2 and 3 will reconvene to consider how to safely integrate staff back into office spaces. It should be noted however that prior to 2020 the Council had actively moved towards an agile working principle in office areas as a result of property rationalisation. The matter of return to office spaces has attracted much media attention, however the Council cannot mandate the return of all staff to offices at all times as there is not sufficient workspace available. The changes that the Council had made prior to 2020 lend themselves to a more formal model of agile working and this will be focused upon in the delivery of the Council's structured 'Future Work Programme' in 2022/23.

COVID-19 has inevitably caused absence issues across the organisation, however these have been managed effectively with no major disruption for extended periods of time in service areas. At the end of Q4, COVID-19 was the reason for circa 20% of all staff absence in the year. By the end of December 2021 there has been a total of 1219 recorded absences due to COVID-19 in the Council and schools since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, 916 of these occurring since April 2021.

It was reported in Q3 that new legislation requiring that all people working in care homes must be fully vaccinated against COVID19, or have evidenced clinical exemption, came into force on 11th November 2021. During Q4, this was revoked. Despite the unpredictability of this whole issue, the Adult Care services, HR and Trade Unions have managed this situation effectively and without major disruption.

2.6 ICT and Administration

Sickness levels, across Admin, ICT, Data Compliance and Customer Services remained over this quarter at a manageable level, with only 4 long term sick cases more importantly decreasing numbers of staff testing +ve with COVID symptoms over the last period. Q3 One Stop Shop staffing issues have now been resolved but leaving the department with a recruitment issue that will need to be resolved.

The ICT teams **covered all emergency** calls over this continued period of home working effectively, with all calls resolved quickly without any disruption to key services. Software Systems and Hardware maintenance plans remain in place linked to out of hours and weekend working to compliment extended front-line working hours.

The Halton Cloud continues to support all 2600 internal/external desktop users with an average of 2000 concurrent external non-HBC/HBC Employee users connected into services at any one time from home, system uptime over this quarter has been excellent, whilst accommodating a considerable number of changes and adaptations to the requirements profile of our user base over this extended period of the pandemic and beyond.

The Records Management and Print Facility is fully operational and supporting the authority and its clients with new services being developed supporting the authority through centralising data and improving secure access to physical as well as digital data sets.

- Incoming mail scanning (corporate)
- Hybrid mail (corporate)
- RMU Office now open at Picow Farm Road
- Sefton invoicing contract services delivered throughout the lockdown
- Cemeteries support
- Open Spaces Service support
- Courier service

Warehouse: RMU staff, observing social distancing, are continuing to work on warehouse tasks as required.

Data retention in SharePoint (SP): creating a process to prepare SP data for migration to the new SP environment is underway. This will align with the Corporate wide Records Retention Policy.

Data audit: The scope of the Electronic records review increased to include data quality. Looking to further develop the IAR to include all Council records data not just personal data.

Post room consolidation (corporate): completed with linkages to new digitised postal services together with a review of software solutions to enhance this facility and create a corporate solution. **Courier service for Libraries:** Fully operational delivering services to the public. **Hybrid mail (corporate):** Care Home and CYPD Contracts teams added. Monthly HM data is being recorded to compare alongside physically franked mail to check correlation.

Schools ICT Programme: Halton Borough Council (HBC) ICT Services following the restructure has adapted and changed its services to schools and academies in order to meet the changing requirements of schools.

The service offers a comprehensive package of support ranging from basic admin machine connection to the council network to scheduled technician visits, and have added services and key personnel supporting the technical requirements to improve the overall support package from HBC. This service will now continue with the extended offer of GDPR support SLA's for all schools.

Contact Centre

Service Area	Contact Centre	Percentage
Adult Social Care	4765	20.10%
Council Tax	4441	18.74%
Waste Management	4001	16.88%
EDT	2520	10.63%
Childrens Social Care	1850	7.80%
Corporate Processes	1149	4.85%
Registrar	716	3.02%
Benefits	705	2.97%
Highways	609	2.57%
Environmental	545	2.30%
Housing Solutions	351	1.48%
Open Spaces	287	1.21%
Unknown	262	1.11%
HBC - OOH Procedures	261	1.10%
Halton Housing Trust	192	0.81%
Finance and Support Services	162	0.68%
Property Services	134	0.57%
Education	129	0.54%
Planning and Building Control	121	0.51%
Transportation	112	0.47%
Revenues	108	0.46%
Community And Leisure	101	0.43%
External Agencies	44	0.19%
HDL - internal procedures	32	0.13%
ICT Services	29	0.12%
Legal and Licensing	29	0.12%
Families Information Service	16	0.07%
Economy	15	0.06%
Risk and Emergency Planning	8	0.03%
Human Resources	4	0.02%
Tourist Information	2	0.01%
Youth Services	2	0.01%
Fleet Management - MOT	1	0.00%
HHT OOH	1	0.00%
Grand Total	23704	100.00%

One Stop Shops

Service Area	HDL Halton Lea	HDL Widnes	Grand Total	Percentage
Council Tax	1399	1632	3031	23.27%
Adult Social Care	1021	1736	2757	21.17%
Finance and Support Services	750	1001	1751	13.44%
Waste Management	349	433	782	6.00%
Benefits	407	244	651	5.00%
Corporate Processes	235	348	583	4.48%
Environmental	211	223	434	3.33%
Highways	166	254	420	3.22%
Open Spaces	193	153	346	2.66%
Unknown	210	85	295	2.26%
Education	118	119	237	1.82%
Transportation	124	113	237	1.82%
Housing Solutions	103	125	228	1.75%
Childrens Social Care	141	82	223	1.71%
Human Resources	74	100	174	1.34%
HDL - internal procedures	56	87	143	1.10%
Property Services	44	80	124	0.95%
Planning and Building Control	44	59	103	0.79%
Registrar	38	59	97	0.74%
Halton Housing Trust	52	34	86	0.66%
Revenues	33	43	76	0.58%
Legal and Licensing	21	48	69	0.53%
Community And Leisure	32	32	64	0.49%
External Agencies	33	21	54	0.41%
Economy	13	20	33	0.25%
HBC - OOH Procedures	3	6	9	0.07%
Tourist Information	1	6	7	0.05%
Families Information Service	3	3	6	0.05%
Risk and Emergency Planning	1	4	5	0.04%
EDT		1	1	0.01%
Grand Total	5875	7151	13026	100.00%

Agresso:

The upgrade to Agresso ERP Milestone 7.8: continues over the next quarter the Agresso team will be working closely with all system users to define and design the major upgrade of the Agresso services to the latest version and then move to ERP Version 8.0 once available for all clients, together with a review of Income Manager and the potential move to the HayCentric payments modules enhancing online payment facilities. This is a considerable undertaking given the complexity associated with all partners now within the system – this upgrade will release added levels of security – functionality and user driven services.

2.7 Legal and Democracy

The Audit and Governance Board considered the revised draft of the Members Code of Conduct at its meeting in March and recommended its approval by Annual Council.

Executive Board at the April meeting will consider minor revisions to the constitution, and make a recommendation to Annual Council.

Council approved the updated Members Allowance Scheme in March. It will take effect on 1st April, for a period of 3 years.

2.8 Community & Environment**Catering, Stadium and Registration Services****School Meals Service**

The service is still experiencing a high turnover of staffing, we continue to use casuals and agency as and when required. This along with still COVID absences and general sickness is putting pressure on certain catering outlets, however we still continue to offer an excellent service and have not had to resort to a cold service in any school for several months.

Civic Catering

It was agreed at full council in March 2022 that Civic Catering would close at Municipal Canteen and also Halton Lea. Consultation over the reorganisation is due on the 30/03/22 with all Civic Catering employees.

DCBL Stadium

The stadium has continued to host events under guidelines and more recently fully opened up for meetings and conferences. Enquiries we have received for meetings & conferences are vastly down on previous years however this was to be expected.

Widnes Vikings season began in January with a friendly match against Batley and the so far the attendances for the first 2 games are significantly up on the matches during the pandemic and on a par with that of pre pandemic fixtures.

Decarbonisation work has nearly finished at the stadium with only snagging to be completed. This should greatly reduce the stadium's carbon footprint

PCN have been in touch with the possibility of using the stadium again for booster vaccinations, this is still to be confirmed.

Widnes FC are near the end of their playing season with only 2 matches remaining, again we have seen an increase in attendances and a rise in concourse bar income.

2.9 Economy Enterprise & Property Services

Property Services Operations

Millbrow Care Home- Proposed refurbishment

The proposed refurbishment works at Millbrow, at an estimated cost of £1.5m, have been on hold since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Adults Services are now looking again at their model of delivery and further feasibility works are being undertaken in respect of the service requirements going forward.

Proposed New Leisure Centre Moor Lane

The Compulsory Purchase Order has now been approved and the general vesting declaration has been executed. The anticipated main start on site date is early August 2022, however some enabling works will be completed prior to then, the tree felling work having already been undertaken.

Education maintenance programme 2021/22

The 2021/22 Education maintenance programme was approved by Council in March. The programme consists of 18 separate projects at a total cost of circa £1.36m. 15 of the projects have now been completed and it has been agreed that the remaining 3 which are all window replacements will be deferred to next year in order to fit in with the schools to cause as little disruption as possible.

Education maintenance programme 2022/23

The 2022/23 Education maintenance programme was approved by Council in March. The programme consists of 12 separate projects at a total cost of circa £780k. Design works will now commence in respect of delivering these projects throughout the year, but primarily over the summer holiday period.

Corporate Maintenance programme 2021/22

The 2021/22 corporate maintenance programme was approved by the AMWG in January. The programme consists of numerous projects most of which are now complete, a couple have had to be deferred however the budget will be spent up at year end.

Corporate Maintenance programme 2022/23

The 2022/23 corporate maintenance programme has been drafted and is awaiting final approval which is expected in early April. The programme consists of numerous projects which will be completed throughout the year.

Mersey Gateway Handback Sites

The settlement deed, in respect of the remaining outstanding works on the handback sites has now been executed and signed by all parties so the majority of the land has been deemed to be handed back to the Council. There are some minor exceptions associated with land where third parties have an interest and where United Utilities are carrying out some remedial works on site A on Ditton Road, once complete this site also will have been handed back. All necessary outstanding work on the handback sites, mainly, Wigg Island and Spike Island will be completed by HBC using the funds set aside by the agreement.

71 High Street Runcorn- Refurbishment

Works started on site in late January with completion being due in late July. All works are progressing well and on programme.

Camden Buildings, High Street- refurb to create digital/creative hub

Design development works are on-going in respect of the above to ensure we meet the next stage of the Town Deal Funds requirements which requires the business case to be submitted by August 1st. RIBA stage 2 report provided indicating various options which are now being considered.

Decarbonisation scheme- Halton Stadium

£1.3m has been secured from the Government's decarbonisation fund for works at Halton Stadium, a further sum has also been approved, bringing the total funding to circa £1.7m. Works have progressed well on site, and whilst the delivery of the air source heat pumps was delayed, they did arrive in January and all works have now been completed.

Brookvale Rec- Proposed Artificial Pitches

The works have now been completed and the facility is now in use.

Pickering Pastures- Proposed new pavilion building

A revised feasibility study has been provided following close consultation with Open Spaces, funding options are now being considered.

Cavendish School - 2 class extension

A feasibility study has been provided, the budget cost being circa £500k. The project has been approved by Exec board and design development works are now progressing.

6 Church Street, Runcorn Old Town- Refurbishment to form HPIJ Offices

Works started on site in February with completion now being due in late April/early May

The Brindley- Proposed extension

Design development works are on-going in respect of the above to ensure we meet the next stage of the Town Deal Funds requirements which requires the business case to be submitted by August 1st. A preferred option has been agreed with a budget estimate of £2.9m.

Changing Places Facilities

Funding has been secured for 3 Changing Places facilities which will be in Victoria Park, Shopping City and the Stadium respectively. Design work has now started in respect of these and they will be delivered over the coming months.

2.15 Asset Management

Elite House, Shaw Street, Runcorn – the lease with Inflata Nation as terminated 8 March 2022 as the tenant went into liquidation

65 High Street, Runcorn – the acquisition of the property and lease back to the vendor was completed 10 March 2022

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:-

3.2 Financial Services

Benefits Division

Household Support Fund

On 1st April 2022 the Government announced an extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF) for the period 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022, for which Halton has been allocated funding of £1,297,880. The Government's guidance states that at least one third of the fund must be spent on vulnerable households with children, at least one third on vulnerable pensioner households and up to one third of the fund can be spent on other vulnerable households.

A spending plan is currently being developed, similar to that used for the Household Support Fund during the previous six months. This will involve a number of Council Departments and Voluntary Sector Partners, to deliver support to vulnerable households across the Borough.

3.3 Revenues and Financial Management Division

Energy Bills Rebate Scheme

On 03 February 2022 Government announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate Scheme to help households with rising energy bills. This included:

- A £150 non-repayable grant payment for households in council tax bands A to D, known as the Council Tax Rebate Grant.
- £144 million of discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who are in need but are not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate Grant, known as the Discretionary Fund.

The scheme provides some immediate relief for rising energy costs, while targeting those most likely to require support, the Government requires council tax billing authorities to provide a £150 one-off grant payment to liable council taxpayers for every household that occupies a property which meets certain criteria.

The Council Tax and Benefits teams are working on a process to enable payments to be made as soon as possible and in line with Government guidance. It is expected where the Council holds bank details these payments will start to be made during week commencing 02 May 2022. At the same time the team will be contacting households to request bank details (where none are held currently) to enable payments to be made.

The Council is also providing a discretionary scheme related to the Energy Bills Rebate Scheme, for which the eligibility criteria are currently being developed and approved by Executive Board.

3.4 Audit, Procurement & Operational Finance Division

Income Collection

During 2021/22 there continued to be a notable change in the way that customers make payments to the Council. The value of payments taken through the payment kiosks has now fallen by over 66 percent when compared to pre-pandemic levels. This is largely due to an increasing number of customers electing to pay via Direct Debit. Customers wishing to pay in cash also now have the option to make payments at approximately 60 PayPoint outlets located across the Borough.

Early Payment Scheme

The Council currently operates an Early Payment Scheme for supplier invoices in partnership with Oxygen Finance Ltd. Under the Scheme, suppliers benefit from having their invoices paid ahead of the Council's standard payment terms in exchange for a small rebate on the invoice value.

The Council's five-year contract with Oxygen expires in August 2022 at which point the Council will take the Scheme fully in-house. This will provide the Council with more control and also ensure that 100% of the rebate generated from the Scheme is retained by the Council.

3.5 Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

Further to references in previous reports, there remains an absence of clear direction in legal terms on the matter of holiday pay entitlement resulting from voluntary overtime. Whilst further advice has been awaited from Local Government National Employers, none has been forthcoming. The HR service will need to address this issue and the matter will be considered during Q1/Q2 of 2022/23. The aim will be to develop an approach that is within the spirit of fairness whilst protecting the Council from any future legal challenge.

As reported in Q3, in another significant legal case, the Supreme Court heard an appeal in the case of Brazel – v- Harpur Trust on 9th November 2021. This case led to changes to the holiday pay calculation for employees on Term Time Only and Part-Year contracts of employment. The Council (and many other Council's) currently has a number of Employment Tribunal claims pending in the tribunal system, which were stayed pending a judgement from the Supreme Court. That judgement has not yet been published. The Council cannot act until it is, and the judgement will determine how the Council will need to deal with those claims.

The outcome of government consultation from summer 2021 on measures to restrict 'Special Severance Payments' is still awaited.

The continual need to engage agency workers to meet increased service demand in several service continues. There has also been significant amount of COVID related agency spend as the Borough's testing centres were resourced through agency staffing arrangements. It is the case however that spend on agency workers for the financial year 2021/22 has totalled £8.3m. This is an unprecedented amount and contrasts starkly with the reduction to £2.2m which was achieved following Efficiency Review in 2015/16.

There are two key cost drivers within the agency area; the first being a large number of vacancies being covered in the Council's Care Homes (80+), and also in the Council's Child Protection Service (31 Social Work vacancies at the time of writing). Whilst the budget attached to the vacancies covers a large proportion of the agency cost, it does not cover it all. Nor does it promote stable workforce arrangements. To tackle these issues, a coordinated recruitment exercise is to be delivered by the Recruitment & Resourcing team in conjunction with the Care Homes Division in May 2022 with the aim being to fill as many vacancies as possible with permanent staff, and then to rationalise agency supply arrangements as far as is possible. The Children's Social Work issue is more complex as there are several factors restricting the supply of permanent social workers to all Councils, namely workers leaving the profession, or leaving established local government employment to work on an agency basis – this commands a higher income for the individual and the agencies placing social workers have become involved in a 'bidding war' to achieve the highest rates for their placements. This has resulted in an overheated market and it is now not unknown for a Children's social worker placement to be offered to a Council by an agency at a rate in excess of £40 per hour. The Directors of Children's Services in the North West are considering this matter, however options are limited because demand outstrips supply by a fair margin so market forces have taken over.

One strand of the Council's Organisational Development Strategy is the engagement and development of apprentices. A redirection of resources with the Policy area to deal with more pressing matters, combined

with the continuing impact of Covid-19, have both played a role in this being a very quiet year, which has had a knock on effect in terms of our overall levy spend reducing and our expired levy increasing. As referenced in the Key Developments section above, the work around succession planning will bring forward a number of proposals to utilise apprenticeships more as an opening to a career pathway in the Local Authority. In the 2022/23 financial year a further six opportunities have been identified as follows; Heavy Vehicle Service & Maintenance Technician x 1, Children's Services x 2, Cemeteries officer apprentice x 1, Finance Services x 2.

The 2020/21 NJC pay claim was finally agreed nationally in March. The timing of the agreement was very close to the payroll deadline, however the service worked hard to ensure that the pay award was processed so that staff received it in the March payslip.

The 2022/23 pay claim has yet to be submitted by the 3 trade unions involved in the national negotiations, despite the fact that it should be effective from 1st April 2022. Should this round of pay negotiations also prove to be protracted, it has the potential to frustrate the budgeting process, reduce the level of confidence that staff have in the collective bargaining process, and add to the recruitment issues of the sector as advertised salaries are even less competitive than they should be.

The unfortunate unfolding of military conflict in Ukraine, and the UK Government response to that in the form of the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme has led to the Department's Partnerships Officer taking on a coordinating role for that programme in Halton. This is proving quite challenging as the interface between potential sponsors, the immigration system (Home Office), the funding regime (Dept for Levelling-up, Communities and Housing), and local authorities is not sufficiently mature to operate efficiently. This Department has supported the design of processes and procedures, local decision making, and the DBS element of the sponsor checks, to try and ensure that the process runs as smoothly as possible for potential sponsors and Ukrainian nationals seeking refuge. This remains an ongoing project. Additional resource is likely to be required in the medium term to support its coordination.

3.6 ICT and Administration

Third party software licensing:

Unfortunately we are coming to the end of the negotiated three year **Microsoft licensing agreements** - now renewed in March 2022/Go-Live June 2022. Negotiations completed for this considerable contract with "new" annual costs of £800'000 per annum for the use of Microsoft Office and associated services such as email and SharePoint together with essential Server based software packages, up from £680'000 previously.

This considerable negotiation impacts upon all ICT related systems and solutions as many of these packages form the base platform for all electronic services and packages used across the whole authority.

Negotiations have focused upon the delivery of improved and innovative Hybrid working solutions that will enhance the current experience and allow for innovative changes into the future as working practices and organisational demands evolve. This will involve the role out of the Office 365 E5 cloud based licensing solution encompassing Teams Telephony and the removal of Skype as the authority's telephony solution by September this year, enabling enhancements to the authorities Contact Centre and changes to the look and feel of the operational desktop simplifying accessibility and integrating systems such as SharePoint further within the experience for all Members and Officers.

The service had been negotiating the high value service contracts for the VMware software packages that managed our desktop estate, these negotiations hit an impasse due to the astronomical prices expected by the supplier of £480'000 per annum, up from £70'000 per annum. The supplier expected the authority to relinquish ownership of the current licencing bundle to move into a considerably more expensive revenue based external cloud solution, based upon a leased licensing arrangement.

This offer was firmly refused, the authority still retains ownership of the current set of licenses as of the 31st December 2021. The department will continue to look at on-premise options with VMWare if no solution is realised over the coming months the authority as noted still owns the asset in question and over the next 24 – 30 months will review the product set and look to alternate software solutions to manage the on-premise Halton Cloud facility.

In summary **3rd party software licensing** in some cases is no longer an asset but subject to named user pay as you use subscription models this is increasingly becoming the case with the more obvious and essential system providers such as Microsoft, OLM for Social Care, and potentially VMware into the future. This will lead to increased costs as staffing numbers churn and the increased use of external and Agency staffing increases as all licences and associated services are charged by the 3rd parties on a named basis with, in some cases 3 month changeover periods levied per user depending upon the services and the licenses used. A recharging proposal is being developed in line with the new licensing and service use proposals levied upon the council.

OLM and the Eclipse software package currently being implemented within Children's Services, Following on from numerous technical and operational meetings it was agreed that OLM would provide a breakdown of some of the Major deliverables identified within a proposed plan of enhancements that has been drawn up for Halton and the wider user community.

Considerable discussions have surrounded updating the plan to show those actions that have already been completed, breaking down the larger enhancements into incremental changes to show what can be delivered when and highlighting which actions weren't achievable within the timeframes specified and why, pointing out the dependencies at each stage.

Sticking points such as the proposed changes, have been pushed back as a requirement during a meeting with Divisional and Operational managers, it was felt early Q1 was not a realistic timeframe for the majority of the other proposed changes, ideally the proposals made will come to some kind of compromise around this development, again looking at incremental changes to improve the experience and to try and deliver the customisation Halton care management require with some immediacy.

3.7 Legal and Democracy

Work continues on preparations for the local elections in May, and the subsequent induction of new Members. The work carried out by officers across Merseyside and Cheshire will result in new joint scrutiny arrangements for health being brought before Council in May.

Major projects will continue to demand considerable involvement from Legal Services.

Recruitment to key posts will continue within the Department.

3.8 Property Services

External Funding

Bids to the value of £6.1 million are currently being developed by the Team, including:

- Ineos hydrogen bid to the CA for £3.4m
- Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Museum – bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund for £800k
- St Berteline's Church Windmill Hill – reconfiguration of the church to accommodate community use £100k
- Open 360 – Reaching Communities Fund bid - £250k

The team continues to lead on the following:

Delivery of the Celebrating Halton's Heritage project funded through National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of the Borough of Culture celebrations; this runs to September 2022.

Delivery of the Welcome Back Fund programme for Halton – due to complete by the end of March 2022

Lead for the Visitor Economy for Halton at LCR level and delivering a Destination Marketing programme funded by SIF and worth £115k

Sit on the LCR Culture Working Group and input to the delivery of two schemes currently – The World Reimagined and Bridge2Bamboo

Continue the monitoring of a number of schemes, including Ways to Work employment programme and Town Deal.

Supporting the Council's Climate Change Action Plan by producing a complementary funding plan

3.9 Property Services Operations

Energy Supplies

Wholesale energy costs have risen over the past 12 months. Halton procures its gas and electricity via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) framework arrangements and as we are on a fixed rate contract we have been protected from any price increases in 2021/22. From the 1st April 2022 however the rates have gone up dramatically, the price of gas has increased by 207% and electricity by 64%. Based on the above percentage increases our energy costs for our corporate buildings will increase by circa £1.76m in 2022/23. As a result of the dramatic rises CCS have introduced a contract with a 24 month purchase window to help reduce the impact of volatile markets in the future as such Halton will be moving to those new arrangements in future.

Carbon emission targets

A Carbon Strategy Board was established following the assessment APSE carried out last year, and a Climate Change Action Plan has now been produced and approved by Exec Board. This sets out the Council's intentions over the coming years in respect of embedding carbon reduction in to decision making but also sets a target of the Council's own emissions being carbon net zero by 2040 in line with the Liverpool City region. Government have brought into law a new carbon emissions reduction target of a 78% reduction over 1990 levels by 2035. This brings forward the previous target and will have the effect of speeding up the need to switch away from fossil fuels to heat and provide hot water to our buildings and move to electrically run options such as heat pumps.

Agile working/return to the office

COVID-19 necessitated the need for home working which in the main has proved successful. As life returns to something a bit more near to normal this shift in working arrangements has presented us with the opportunity to embrace more flexible working arrangements on a more permanent basis in the future. This in turn could enable us to make better and more cost effective use of our accommodation and potentially enable us to vacate space and generate more income from renting that space out to other organisations, hence it is important that this opportunity is acted upon. The COVID reset group will be looking at arrangements going forward and setting out guidance on how the opportunity presented can be best acted upon

Asset Management

Commercial Rent (Coronavirus) Act 2022 – has come into force bringing a new arbitration process to resolve certain pandemic related rent debt.

Regeneration – Town Centres

Due to the status of the Runcorn Towns Fund £23.6m currently the team is focused on the full business case deadline submission of 3rd August 2022. This limits the short term capacity to look at other potential Town Centre Projects

4.0 High Priority Equality Actions

- 4.1** 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.
- 4.2** The Councils latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives is published on the Council website and is available via:


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

5.0 Performance Overview

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

Financial Management

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
FS 01a	Report 2022-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board - November 2021.	

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
FS 01b	Report 2022/23 revenue budget, capital programme and council tax to Council - March 2022 .	
FS 02c	Provide quarterly monitoring and forecasting reports on the overall budget to Executive Board.	
FS 03a	Publish the Statement of Accounts following external audit and the Annual Governance Statement by 30th September 2021 .	
FS 04a	Establish Treasury Management Policy and report to Council - March 2021 .	
FS04b	Provide monitoring reports to Executive Board on a bi-annual basis .	
FS 05a	Establish and report prudential indicators to Council - March 2021 .	

Supporting Commentary

FS 01a

Medium Term Financial Strategy was reported to Executive Board on 18 November 2021. The financial forecast continues to be regularly updated.

FS 01b

2022/23 revenue budget, capital programme and council tax was reported to Council on 02 March 2022.

FS 02c

Quarter 3 monitoring report on the overall budget was reported to Executive Board on 17 February 2022.

FS 03a

The Council's External Auditor (Grant Thornton UK LLP) commenced with the audit of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts in November 2021 which resulted in the deadline not being met. This was primarily due to a lack of staffing resources on their part. The Statement of Accounts and Audit Findings Report were however reported to Audit and Governance Board on 23 March 2022.



FS04b









Treasury Management monitoring reported to Executive Board on 18 November 2021

FS 05a

Prudential indicators reported to Council on 03 March 2021

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 01	Receive an unqualified external audit opinion on the accounts.	Yes	Awaited	Awaited		N/A
FS LI 02	Receive positive comment (annually) from the External Auditor relating to the financial standing of the Council and the systems of internal financial control.	Yes	Awaited	Awaited		N/A

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 03	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected	94.14%	94.25%	94.15%		
FS LI 04	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received	96.18%	97.50%	97.38%		
FS LI 05	Average time for processing new claims (Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction)	16.22	18	16.71		
FS LI 06	Proportion of all supplier invoices paid within 30 days (including disputed invoices)	92.6%	93.0%	92.6%		

Supporting Commentary

FS LI 01

Due to a national issue on accounting for Infrastructure Assets the external auditor is not yet in a position to provide an unqualified external audit opinion.

FS LI 02

The Council is awaiting the value for money conclusion from the external auditor.

FS LI 03

Proportion of council tax collected to 31 March 2022 is 94.15%. This is up marginally by 0.01% compared with the same point last year.

FS LI 04

Proportion of business rates collected to 31 March 2022 is 97.38%. This is up by 1.2% compared with the same point last year.

FS LI 05


The average time for processing is marginally lower than the previous year, primarily due to the increased numbers of applications received following the Covid 19 pandemic.

FS LI 06

Payment performance in respect of Council invoices was maintained at the same level as for 2020/21.

Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Service

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
PPPE 01	Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy June 2021	

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
PPPE 02	Embed knowledge and skills gained from first phase of Senior Leadership and Management Development Programme (MBA) December 2021.	
PPPE 03	Establish 20 new existing employee apprenticeships to enable up-skilling in a range of business areas, compliant with the requirements of apprenticeship legislation March 2022	
PPPE 04	Implement resourcing plans with service management in appropriate areas December 2021.	
PPPE 05	Ongoing monitoring of agency usage and spend April, September, December 2021, and March 2022.	

Supporting Commentary

PPPE 01

This is progressing well.

PPPE 02

On track. Projects delivered in Autumn 2021 by Cohort 1 will be evaluated and assessed. Themes and outputs will be reported and utilised corporately.

PPPE 03

11 conversion apprenticeships have commenced since April 2021. Refer to commentary

PPPE 04







Refer to narrative in Emerging Issues section above.

PPPE 05

Refer to narrative in Emerging Issues section above.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
PPPE LI 01	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	10.02 (Days)	9.5 (Days)	12.94 (Days)		
PPPE LI 02	Percentage of Employees without sickness	73.74	70.00	68.19		
PPPE LI 03	Total Agency Worker Usage (number of placements – year to date)	746	650	Refer to comment		
PPPE LI 04	Total Agency Worker Cost (gross cumulative cost – year to date)	£3.7m	£2.5m	£8.3m		
PPPE LI 105	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are: ¹ a) Women	63.1.9%	55.00%	64.2%		

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
	b) from BME communities	2.78%	2.00%	2.67%		
	c) with a disability	0.89%	8.00%	1.25%		
PPPE LI 06	Average time to recruit (Applicant Tracking System reported figure)	11 days	13 Days	19 Days		

Supporting Commentary

PPPE LI 01

This figure has been difficult to predict, and manage, during the current year given the prevalence of COVID-19 and the fluctuating social restrictions applied by government outside of the workplace. Please refer to Key Developments above for more contextual information.

PPPE LI 02

Largely positive, and aligned with anecdotal information elsewhere in report (was 77.45% at this time last year)

PPPE LI 03

Target has been missed. Please refer to Emerging Issues section above for relevant narrative. Year-end placement totals not yet available as some have been procured off contract where corporate contract has not been able to deliver.

PPPE LI 04

Target has been missed. Please refer to Emerging Issues section above for relevant narrative around total spend.

PPPE LI 05


It should be noted that recruitment in to the top 5% of earners is generally very limited, and as such scope for significant change is low.





PPPE LI 06

This outturn is to be expected in the face of escalating demand. Whilst the team make every effort to complete recruitment as quickly as they can, service degradation is inevitable when the balance of demand versus available resources shifts as it has done.

ICT and Administrative Support Services

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
ICT 01a	Continued Enhancement of the virtualization platform to enhanced or new technologies - March 2022	

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
ICT 01b	Further development of Cloud Services Platform - March 2021.	
ICT 01c	SharePoint and Records Management enhancements - March 2021.	
ICT 01d	Interactive Web Services Enhancement and further SharePoint Integration - March 2021.	
ICT 02a	Continuing improvements, enhancements and commercial use of Cloud system - March 2021.	

Supporting Commentary

ICT 01a

Enhancements to the Halton Cloud platform continues at pace with the integration of Vendor cloud-based systems and services within our own platform.

ICT 01b

Enhancement planned in line with vendor software release up to and inclusive of the 31st December 2021 to enhance functionality and the user experience

ICT 01c

Enhancement planned in line with vendor software release to enhance functionality and the user experience







ICT 01d

Enhancement planned in line with vendor software release to enhance functionality and the user experience

ICT 02a

This will remain a focus together with the development of existing client opportunity. Mersey Travel, Sefton and now the Cemeteries system deployed to a 3rd party. Other opportunities for the deployment of Agresso together with other systems are currently under discussion.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q3=4 Progress	Direction of travel
ICT LI01	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	99.98%	99.00%	99%		
ICT LI02	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	99.97%	99.00%	99%		
ICT LI03	School Support SLA: % of calls responded to within <u>agreed</u> target*:					
	a) Priority 1	100%	85.00%	85%		
	b) Priority 2	100%	90.00%	90%		

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q3=4 Progress	Direction of travel
	c) Priority 3	100%	90.00%	95%		
	d) Priority 4	100%	95.00%	95%		

Supporting Commentary

ICT LI01

Remains in line with target and SLA, linked to Halton Cloud Data Centre configuration. A real achievement given the considerable levels of work undertaken over this period mainly out of hours.

ICT LI02




Remains in line with target and SLA. Inclusive of planned down time out of hours. Especially during these times of new working arrangements when connectivity to the centre is key.

ICT LI03

Again, this has been an unusual time with schools impacted by the pandemic and the support required evolving to support our clients within the boundaries of the SLA. New working practices are now in place to safeguard staff and clients – these service solutions will be retained as our clients prefer the new working models.

Legal & Democracy

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
LD 01	Review constitution - May 2021 .	
LD 02a	To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting where desired.	
LD 02b	To induct all new members by October 2021 .	

Supporting Commentary

LD 01

The revised constitution has been approved









LD 02a

All Members have been offered a MAP meeting.

LD 02b

All Members have been inducted.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 /21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
LD LI 01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (54 Total).	48 (89%)	54 100%	48 89%		
LD LI 02	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days).	10 (Days)	10 (Days)	51 94%		
LD LI 03	Average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department (working days).	3 (Days)	3 (Days)	10 (Days)		
LD LI 04	% of Executive Board minutes published within 5 working days after the meeting.	100%	100%	100%		

Supporting Commentary**LD LI 01**

All Members have been offered a PDP. It is a matter of personal choice.

LD LI 02

51 of 54 Members have attended at least one organised training event. Training is provided using Teams, ELearning portal and face to face where appropriate. The very high target was almost reached, but it is a matter of personal choice, and all Members have been invited.

LD LI 03

The target has been met.

LD LI 04

The target has been met.









Community & Environment**Key Objectives / milestones**

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
CE 0 1a	Deliver a promotion and educational campaign (school meals) - September 2021 and January 2022 .	N/A

Supporting Commentary**CE 0 1a**

Not applicable due to Covid-19






Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 01	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Primary Schools.	Data unavailable	75%	72.15%		
CE LI 02	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Secondary Schools.	Data unavailable	60%	57.60%		
CE LI 03	Take up of school lunches (%) – primary schools.	Data unavailable	60%	54.27%		
CE LI 04	Take up of school lunches (%) – secondary schools.	Data unavailable	50%	45.84%		

Supporting Commentary**CE LI 01 - CE LI 04**

Although the figures are not on target COVID impacted the uptake and school numbers in general during the last 12 months.

Property Services**Key Objectives / milestones**

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
EEP 02a	Proposed new Leisure Centre, Moor Lane- Commence works on site by 31st March 2022	
EEP 02b	Crow Wood Lane, Assisted residential development- commence on site by 31st December 2021	
EEP 02c	Deliver agreed programmed maintenance programme to Corporate Buildings by 31st March 2022.	
EEP02d	Deliver agreed programmed maintenance programme to schools by 31st March 2022.	
EEP 02e	Deliver agreed decarbonisation works to Stadium by 31st December 2021.	

Supporting Commentary**EEP 02a**

The CPO has delayed the start date which is now likely to be August 2022, with completion by September 2024

EEP 02b

This project has been put on hold by the Intermediate Care and Rehabilitation Service hence has not progressed

EEP 02c

The majority of projects were delivered, there was a slight underspend on the budget however, as a couple of projects were deferred.













EEP 02d

The majority of projects were delivered, there were a couple of projects deferred by agreement with the schools.

EEP 02e

The project was completed by 31st March 2022

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 01	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions indicator (Tonnes CO ₂ e).	9770	9675	N/A		
EEP LI 02	Capital receipts	£614,532, 82% of the target achieved	£1.5m based on an estimate for the amount and timing of receipts as at 20/5/2021	£280,000		
EEP LI 03	Commercial and investment portfolio – rent receivable against the budget to monitor receipt of income of rents and service charges.	Investment £39,325 Commercial £319,573	Investment £44,740 Commercial £609,270	Investment 44,300 Commercial £574,916		
EEP LI 04	Occupancy rates of commercial and investment portfolio.	100 % Investment 90% commercial	100 % Investment 90% commercial	100 % Investment 89% commercial		
EEP LI 05	Occupancy of Widnes Market Hall.	93%	94%	95%		
EEP LI 06	Unit Costs – office accommodation (reported annually).	1069sqm	1058sqm	1317sqm		

Supporting Commentary

EEP LI 01

The emissions for 2020/21 were 9,770 tonnes which equated to a 13.9% overall reduction on the 2019/20 emissions. Energy consumption in buildings actually fell by 7.6%, but with reductions in each of the other sectors together with a reduction in the kw/h-CO₂ conversion factor due to the increasing mix of renewal energy being generated the overall CO₂ emissions have reduced by almost 14%.

COVID had a significant impact on CO₂ emissions in 2020/21 with reductions across all sectors. Clearly the majority of staff have been homeworking and some buildings were closed for a period of time during lockdown. Fleet transport and business mileage were also significantly down due to homeworking.

The breakdown is as follows:- School Buildings 2798t, Corporate buildings 4385t, Unmetered supply 1502t, Fleet Transport 937t, & Business Mileage 148t. The target for 2021/22 has been set at 9672 tonnes CO₂e, a 1% reduction, this will be difficult to achieve given the very unusual circumstances in 2020/21 as a result of Covid.

The annual figure for this indicator is a year behind and therefore only reported in the following year, figures for 2021/22 are expected to be reported in the 1st quarter 2022/23.

EEP LI 02

Transactions underway of Linner Cottage and outbuildings and yard, Widnes; ; 50 Halebank Road Widnes; land Croft St Widnes is remarketed. Sales completed 4/5 Dock Road, Widnes and land adjacent to Aldi Widnes

EEP LI 03

The income received has been affected by request from a number of occupiers for further rent holidays and non-payment of rent due to Covid situation. Asset management are working with colleagues in income recovery. The tenant of no 5 Granville Street has vacated and the unit is on the market. Other vacant units are, 6 Church Street Runcorn to be used for HPIJ and the former Frankie and Bennies unit at the Hive.

It is unlikely that the units will be re-let before end Q4 . The rent figures included are rents invoiced

EEP LI 04

There are 11 vacant properties which will be on the market or unable to market until refurbishment works eg 71 High St Runcorn or clarifying planning status eg the former bus depot Moor Lane Widnes have been completed. Elite House, Shaw St Runcorn is included although will be converted into a business centre and the land at Croft St Widnes is on the market as the discussions with the potential occupier over a lease fell through.

EEP LI 05

Occupancy levels have increased over the past 12 months during lockdown and reached 93% at year end. At present this has increased to 95% which is up on the same period last year.

EEP LI 06

There are 2 main reasons the figure has increased, firstly last years' figures included a significant period when we were in lockdown so expenditure was reduced and secondly we have had a programme of LED lighting upgrades this year at the 3 main office buildings, The Municipal Building, Rutland House & Runcorn Town Hall, which has resulted in a spike in spend.




7.0 Financial Statements

*Not currently available at this time.





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.