

Public Document Pack



Corporate Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 24 January 2023 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite - 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 Kim Butler on 0151 511 7496 or email kim.butler@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is to be confirmed.*

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

Part I

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1. MINUTES	1 - 3
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 1 November 2022 in the Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Philbin and N. Plumpton Walsh

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, K. Butler, E. Dawson, P. Garnett, J. Hughes and L Pennington-Ramsden

Also in attendance: None

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

	<i>Action</i>
CS17 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 6 September 2022 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
CS18 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
<p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
CS19 CORPORATE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT 1.4.22-31.8.22	
<p>The Board was provided with a report from the Operational Director, Policy, Planning & Transportation, on the performance of health and safety management within the Authority from 1 April 2022 to 31 August 2022.</p> <p>The report highlighted health and safety incidents that had taken place over the past 4 months and as a result of those incidents proposed actions for the future. In addition, the report included information around the number of actual near misses, accidents that had resulted in over 7 day absences, together with significant accidents.</p> <p>The report also highlighted the following key points:</p>	

- following the pandemic, an expected rise in accidents and violent incidents could occur as services were returning to their pre-pandemic status and this would show over the next 6 months;
- registered users for lone working had decreased from the same period as last year whilst actual usage had increased. The decrease could be attributed to the pandemic and homeworking. Monitoring was now in place to encourage relevant staff to the system;
- there had been an increase in figures for risk assessments completed on the Corporate Risk Assessment system; and
- work on maintaining appropriate bomb and lockdown procedures in Council buildings was ongoing, with a number of exercises planned.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted including the recommendations and actions for 2022/23.

CS20 WIDNES MARKET - BUSINESS PLAN

The Board received a presentation on the proposed Widnes Market Business Plan which summarised its vision and strategy, marketing strategy, business priorities and actions and its financial information.

The Business Plan outlined the following key areas:

- the environment in which Widnes Market was operating;
- the key ingredients needed to continue to make Widnes Market successful;
- the priorities and actions;
- it provided financial information, including current levels of outstanding trader debt; and
- stall occupancy and footfall rates.

It was reported that Widnes Market had a current occupancy rate of 92% in comparison to the national average of 72%. However, according to NABMA (The National Association of British Market Authorities) the national average footfall in September 2022 had reduced by 6% compared to the pre-pandemic figures of September 2019. Halton's average for the same comparison was 22%. It was suggested that the introduction of car park charges

and bus strikes could have impacted on the reduction in footfall in Halton. The Board was reassured that work was ongoing to attract new customers and traders to the market and in October 2022, 4 new traders had opened up stalls in the market.

In early November 2022, the British Legion held their annual Poppy Event at the Widnes Market Event Space and positive feedback had been received.

The results of a survey completed by the public in November 2020 were reported. Members suggested that it might also be useful to undertake a 360 survey with market traders in the near future.

The Board noted their thanks for the presentation and the ongoing work to improve Widnes Market.

RESOLVED: Members considered the Widnes Market Business Plan and recommended it for approval at Executive Board.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

CS21 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND EXTENSION 1ST
OCTOBER 2022 - 31ST MARCH 2023

The Board received a report from the Operational Director, Finance, which updated Members on the progress of the delivery of the Government's Household Support Fund from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. This fund was intended to support vulnerable households with the pressures caused by the significantly rising cost of living.

Halton had been awarded grant funding of £1,297,880 and it was proposed to allocate £178,000 to the Discretionary Support Scheme. A Spending Plan had been prepared and attached as an appendix. This demonstrated how the grant funding might be utilised via a combination of Council departments and the Voluntary Sector to deliver help and assistance to vulnerable households over the six month period.

It was suggested that the Household Support Fund be promoted in various places e.g. schools and nurseries to ensure people are aware of its availability.

RESOLVED: That progress with delivery of the Household Support Fund be noted.

Operational
Director - Finance

Meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 24th January 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

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 identified.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None identified.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None identified.

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

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

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 24th January 2023

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.

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2022

EXB23	URGENT DECISIONS
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The Executive Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided information on the urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Board.

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

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

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

EXB24	PROCUREMENT OF PROPERTY TERM CONSULTANT SERVICES
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property, that notified Members of the intention to utilise the Matrix MM online market place to appoint Cassidy & Ashton as the main property term consultants for up to a four year period.

Cassidy & Ashton were the current term consultants and were appointed via the Chest in November 2018. The initial contract period was for three years and ended on 16 November 2021, a 12 month extension option was available which was exercised.

It was noted that during the past 4 years Cassidy & Ashton had consistently delivered a high level of service across all disciplines and it was considered desirable that the Council continued to engage with them going forward.

RESOLVED: That Members note the intention to utilise the Matrix MM online Market Place in order to appoint Cassidy & Ashton as our main property term consultants going forward for up to a 4 year period.

EXB25	2022/23 SPENDING AS AT 30 JUNE 2022
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The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 30 June 2022, together with an initial forecast outturn position. The report also included the financial

impact of Covid-19 with a summary of Government funding made available to the Council to date.

A summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 June 2022 was presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and these 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 £4.661m. It was noted that this figure was based on current service demand and forecast of future costs and income levels. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 June 2022.

The implications to the Council of the recently announced 1.25% increase in National Insurance contributions was discussed.

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 3.14.

EXB26

COUNCIL CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF GROCERY AND CHILLED GOODS (INCL FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND DAIRY)

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Community and Environment, which sought approval to commence a new procurement process for the supply of Grocery and Chilled Goods.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the preliminary estimates report be approved in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.3.4; and
- 2) Officers be authorised to undertake a call-off in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.4.1, Frameworks, accessing the TUCO Grocery, Frozen and Chilled Food, including associated goods of Fresh Fruit & Vegetables Framework for a 2 year period with the option to extend for a further two separate 12 month periods from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2026 with an estimated total expenditure of £4 million.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2022

EXB42

TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2022-23 HALF YEAR UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Half Year Report as at 30 September 2022.

These reports updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

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

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB43	MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023 TO 2026 - KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26.

The MTFS sets out a three-year projection of the Council’s resources and spending and was based on information that was currently available. The most recent Public Sector Spending Review was published at the end of October 2021 and covered the next three financial years. It was noted that details of the 2023/24 Local Government Finance Settlement were expected to be released in December 2022 on a provisional basis, with a final settlement expected in January 2023.

The Board was advised that the delay and uncertainty regarding 2023/24 financial resources meant the financial information included within the MTFS was based on a large number of assumptions and best estimates. The financial forecast would be updated as and when further information was known. Appendix 1 therefore detailed the MTFS from 2023/24 – 2025/26 using a prudent estimate of the financial conditions over the course of the next three years. Appendix 2 presented the Reserves and Balances Strategy.

The Board received an update from the Operational Director – Finance, on the Governments Autumn Budget Statement which was announced today:

- local authorities could increase Council Tax in April 2023 by 3% with an additional 2% increase - Adult Social Care precept;
- a Business Rates revaluation will take place in April 2023;
- proposed adult social care reforms would be deferred for 2 years; and
- there would be a 12 month extension of the Household Support Fund.

Reason for Decision

To seek approval for the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 to 2025/26.

Alternative options considered and rejected

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

Implementation date

The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 will be implemented from 1 April 2023.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;
- 2) the 2022/23 base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Strategy;
- 3) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved; and
- 4) the award of Council Tax Support for 2022/23 remains at the 2021/22 level of 21.55%

EXB44	2022/23 SPENDING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2022
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The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, advising of the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 30 September 2022, together with a forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 September 2022 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. It was reported that in overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by £7.586m. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 September 2022, highlighting the schemes which had been revised.

It was noted that the increased energy costs, pay award and high inflation rates would all have a serious negative impact upon the Council's financial position. There was no expectation that any increased Government funding would be received to help meet these pressures. Therefore, to address the pressures within the Council budget there was an urgency for all Departments to reduce, cease or defer any non-essential spending and to implement any proposed efficiencies as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the scale of the potential outturn overspend and the potential impact upon reserves, if no corrective action is taken, be noted;

- 2) all departments be requested to limit spending to only absolutely essential items;
- 3) all Departments be requested, to identify as a matter of urgency any areas where spending could be reduced or ceased for the remainder of the current financial year, or deferred until next year; and
- 4) Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.18.

EXB45	DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2023-24 - KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Finance, on the requirement for the Council to determine the Council Tax Base for its area and the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

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

Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 97% collection rate, the calculation for 2023/24 gave a base figure of 36,241 for the Borough as a whole. The Council Tax Base figure for each of the Parishes was noted.

Reason for Decision

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

Alternative options considered and rejected

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

Implementation date

The Council Tax Base 2023/24 will be implemented from 1 April 2023.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council set the 2022/23 Council Tax Base at 36,241 for the Borough and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency be so notified; and

2) Council set the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	668
Halebank	528
Daresbury	186
Moore	336
Preston Brook	370
Sandymoor	1,473

EXB46	TAXI LICENSING MATTER
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, which set out proposed amendments to the current Taxi Licensing Policy and Private Hire Operator Conditions.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) a new private hire operator licence condition on the use of passengers carrying vehicles be adopted; and
- 2) the temporary policy amendment relaxing the maximum age restriction on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles, which is due to expire on 25 February 2023, be extended for a further period of 2 years (i.e. until 25 February 2025) subject to the same two conditions requiring the vehicles benefiting from the extension to have 3 tests per year and on the basis that no vehicle taking advantage of the dispensation may be transferred to another proprietor.

EXB47	BUSINESS RATES ACTION AREAS
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director Economy, Enterprise and Property that provided information on the Business Rates Action Areas Scheme. The Scheme had been previously approved by the Executive Board at its meeting in July 2018 and the first five year pilot commenced on Astmoor in 2019. Other locations would follow when local circumstances were considered favourable.

It was noted that conditions were now favourable for access to the Business Rates Action Areas Scheme at 3MG at two sites occupied by Warburtons.

RESOLVED: That Business Rates Relief to Warburtons be agreed.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2022

EXB52	DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 2022 – 23
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Policy, People, Performance and Efficiency, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the second quarter period to 30 September 2022, for the People Directorate (Children and Young People; and Adult Social Care and Health); and the Enterprise, Community and Resources Directorate.

The Board was advised that the Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary of key issues arising from the relevant quarter for each Directorate and was aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council’s performance management arrangements and Executive Board had a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability. Performance Management would continue to be important in the demonstration of value for money and strengthening accountability.

RESOLVED: That the report, progress and performance information be noted.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 24 January 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

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 20 July 2022.

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 20th July 2022
held remotely via Microsoft TEAMS

Present: Councillors B. Gilligan, A. Lowe, A. Teeling, D. Thompson and P. Wallace.

Officers: K. Mackenzie and A. Scott.

Apologies for absence: Councillors V. Begg, J. Bradshaw, I. Bramwell, T. McDermott, M. Ratcliffe and T. Stretch.

MDG 7	NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING	
	The notes of the last meeting held on 10 February 2022 were approved as a correct record.	
MDG 8	APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON	
	<p>It was moved, seconded and agreed by the group that Councillor Angela Teeling be appointed as Chairperson of the Group.</p> <p>Members of the group noted that Angela had joined Kathryn on both dates of the new Member Induction on 11 and 12 May 2022. The new Members had provided very positive feedback and thanked all officers and Mentors for their time.</p>	
MDG 9	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 2022 was 54. MAPs had been given to all newly elected Members for completion. The other 51 Members would also be sent MAPs electronically for their annual review later on in the year.</p> <p>LOD3 – Percentage of Members attending at least one organised training event in the current financial year.</p> <p>Since May 2022, 39% of Members had attended at least one training and development event. The target was 100% for the year 2022-2023.</p> <p>Face to face and TEAMS training would resume later on in the year.</p>	
MDG 10	LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE	
	The Chairperson asked the Group what they felt Member Development involved. The group agreed it was keeping up to date with current issues and everyday learning as a Councillor, not just attending more formal training and development. Mentoring was discussed as a very important part of the programme in Halton. 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>Familiarisation visits to parts of the authority to see how they worked in practice were also welcomed by the group. A holistic approach of refresher courses and e-learning was welcomed for the future.</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. This included areas such as stress management, mindfulness, safeguarding for children and adults and unconscious bias.</p> <p>Members of the group noted that sessions had recently been held for Members as follows:</p> <p>Emergency Planning – 23 June via TEAMS Regulatory Committee training – 14 July Development Management Committee training – 11 July</p> <p>Local Government Finance would be held on 2 November at 5.30pm via TEAMS for all Members.</p> <p>Members were reminded of the North West Employers offer available with details on their website https://nwemployers.org.uk/ Members could find details of their seminars on offer and LGA workbooks.</p>	
MDG 11	ANY OTHER BUSINESS/MEMBER SUPPORT ISSUES	
	<p>Members were reminded to pass Kathryn training details she may not be aware of, which could be added to their personal record, for example school governor training.</p> <p>Kathryn would circulate the current Member Action Plan to the group, seeking any amendments/ updates for use later in the year.</p>	
MDG 12	DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING	
	RESOLVED: The next meeting to be held in October/November 2022 at a date to be arranged to be held remotely via TEAMS.	
	The meeting closed at 6.00pm	

REPORT TO:	Corporate Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	24 th January 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director – Finance
PORTFOLIO:	Leader
SUBJECT:	Household Support Fund 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023
WARD(S):	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a progress update regarding delivery of the Government's Household Support Fund from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That;

- (i) **Progress with delivery of the latest Household Support Fund, be noted;**
- (ii) **Preparations for administration of the extension of the Household Support Fund and the Energy Bills Alternative Funding Scheme, be noted.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 3.1 On 1st November 2022 the Board received a report which provided an update regarding delivery of the Government's latest Household Support Fund between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023. The Fund is intended to support vulnerable households with the pressures caused by the significantly rising cost of living.
- 3.2 Halton was awarded grant funding of £1,297,880, and any unspent grant as at 31 March 2023 must be returned to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 3.3 The DWP made a number of changes to its guidance for the latest scheme. The main change was that there will be no ring fence of any proportion of funding for any particular cohort of people. The second key change was a requirement for councils to operate at least part of their scheme on an application basis ie. Residents should have the opportunity to come forward and request support.

Spending Plan

- 3.4 In order to meet the requirement to operate part of the scheme on an application basis, £178,000 was allocated to the Discretionary Support Scheme, which has an existing telephone application process.
- 3.5 The DWP guidance stated that the latest Household Support Fund was intended to cover a wide range of low income households in need, including families with children, pensioners, and people with disabilities.
- 3.6 In order to provide assistance to vulnerable households with children, free school meal vouchers of £12 per week will be issued during the school holidays, which it is estimated will cost approximately £540,000.
- 3.7 To support vulnerable pensioner households, all pensioners currently receiving council tax reduction will be provided with an award of £100. It is estimated that this will cost £430,000.
- 3.8 The Benefits Division are co-ordinating use of the grant on behalf of the Council. In order to maximise the benefit of the grant funding for the Borough and ensure it is fully utilised, discussions have been held with colleagues across the Council. A Spending Plan was prepared as set out in Appendix A, regarding how the grant funding would be utilised via a combination of Council departments and the Voluntary Sector to deliver help and assistance to vulnerable households over the six month period.
- 3.9 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 also provides a basis for monitoring spending against the grant, to ensure it is fully utilised in accordance with the grant guidance by 31st March 2023.

Progress Update

- 3.10 At the end of December 2022 free school meal vouchers have been issued for the Autumn half term (24th – 28th October 2022), and for the Christmas holidays (22nd December 2022 – 3rd January 2023) representing a total value of £258,228.
- 3.11 By the middle of December 2022, 4,181 vulnerable pensioners have been awarded a £100 payment, and this represents a total value of £418,000. In addition, for the period 1st October 2022 – 31st December 2022 the Discretionary Support Team have paid £77,785 from the Household Support Fund and this has helped 421 households.
- 3.12 Appendix B outlines the spend for the period 1st October 2022 – 31st December 2022 which includes free school meal vouchers, vulnerable pensioner assistance and Discretionary Support assistance mentioned above. In addition, Appendix B also includes expenditure from partner organisations including Halton Citizens Advice Bureau, Holiday Activity Food programme, Foodbanks & Halton Voluntary Action.

- 3.13 Progress with delivery of the Household Support Fund will continue to be reported to the Board.

Household Support Fund Extension

- 3.14 In the Chancellor's Autumn 2022 statement it was announced that the Household Support Fund is to be further extended from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. The Government has given no indication of the amount of funding available for individual councils or any guidance as to how the funding can be spent.

Alternative Support for Household Energy Bills this Winter

- 3.15 The Government is already providing support to consumers with their energy costs this Winter. This support is mainly being delivered directly as a credit to electricity bills and as a reduction to the unit cost of gas and electricity. The Government believes there to be around one million households across the UK that will miss out on the above mentioned support as they do not directly contract with a domestic electricity supplier. This group of households will instead qualify via the Energy Bills Alternative Funding Scheme.
- 3.16 The Government is asking local authorities to act as the delivery bodies for the Alternative Funding Scheme. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will be arranging a delivery model through a single application form on Gov.UK, which should centralise as much of the data gathering and validation as possible. BEIS will then share applications with local authorities, whose primary role will be to verify applicants' addresses once they have passed through the application portal, and to transfer the relevant financial support to successful applicants. The amount of support will be £400 paid direct to an applicant's bank account.
- 3.17 BEIS are expecting to issue guidance to councils in mid-January 2023 and for the scheme to go live from the end of January 2023. No indication has been provided yet of the estimated numbers of households we may need to make payments to.
- 3.18 From the eligibility criteria suggested for the scheme, BEIS would expect most members of the following groups to be eligible:
- Care home residents (provided they in some way pay towards their care);
 - Park home residents;
 - Households in caravans and houseboats on fixed/registered sites;
 - Social and private tenants who get their energy through a commercial supplier (e.g. a landlord);
 - Heat network customers not already covered by main EBSS (private wire/CHP);
 - Farmers in domestic farmhouses, as well as others in domestic residences with a commercial supply;
 - Homes off the grid.

Conclusions

3.19 Good progress is being made with the distribution of the latest Household Support Fund. Of the total £1,297,880 available grant allocation, £785,105 has to date been paid to eligible households.

3.20 Preparations are being made to administer the extension of the Household Support Fund from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and also the new Energy Bills Alternative Funding Scheme, once Government guidance and grant allocations are received for each.

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None identified.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None identified.

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None identified.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None identified.

5.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

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 31 March 2023, 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

**Household Support Fund
Spending Plan 1st October 2022 – 31st March 2023**

Total grant allocation	1,297,880
Less administration costs (5%)	64,894
Available grant funding	1,232,986
1. Vulnerable Households with Children	£540,000
<p>Free school meal vouchers for school holidays: Autumn half term 24th – 28th October 2022 (1 week) Christmas holidays 22nd Dec 2022 – 3rd Jan 2023 (2 weeks) Spring half term 20th – 24th February 2023 (1 week) Easter holidays 3rd – 14th April 2023 (2 weeks)</p> <p>Based on 7,500 children entitled to FSM Paid for 6 weeks £12 voucher per week</p>	
2. Vulnerable Pensioner Households	£430,000
<p>Number of pensioners on council tax reduction = 4,300 Award £100 per pensioner</p>	
3. Discretionary Support Scheme	£177,986
By application	
4. Other Vulnerable Households	£85,000
<p>Distributed via;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAB £40,000 • Widnes Food Bank £10,000 • Runcorn Food Bank £10,000 • Holiday Activity Fund £5,000 • Affordable Warmth – Energy Projects Plus £10,000 • Halton Voluntary Action £10,000 	

Household Support Fund
Spend for the period 1st October 2022 – 31st December 2022

Total grant allocation	£1,297,880
1. Vulnerable Households with Children	
Free school meal (FSM) vouchers provided for:	
Autumn half term 24 th – 28 th October 2022 (1 week)	£86,076
Christmas holidays 22 nd Dec 2022 – 3 rd Jan 2023 (2 weeks)	£172,152
2. Vulnerable Pensioner Households	
4,181 pensioners on council tax reduction Award £100 per pensioner	£418,100
3. Discretionary Support Scheme	£77,785
4. Other Vulnerable Households	
Distributed via;	
• Citizens Advice Bureau (energy/fuel support)	£15,322
• Runcorn Food Bank	£10,000
• Widnes Food Bank	*
• Affordable Warmth	£2,000
• Holiday Activity Fund	*
• Halton Voluntary Action	£3,670
Total spend	£785,105

*Spend figure not available at the time of writing this report.

REPORT TO:	Corporate Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	24 th January 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Chief Executive
PORTFOLIO:	Climate Change
SUBJECT:	Energy / Carbon Reduction Update
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide an update on related activities aimed at reducing the Council's impact on the environment and CO2 emissions from Council activities.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the report and the ongoing work be noted.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Carbon Footprint

3.1 Since it started to measure its carbon emissions in 2006/2007, overall emissions have reduced in the Council's operations from 26,338 tonnes of CO2 to 9,327 tonnes.

3.2 The Council was given guidelines by the Government in 2009 that public bodies would aim to reduce their carbon emissions by 30% of their 2009 carbon emission baseline by 2020. The Council calculated its baseline carbon emissions in 2009 as 26,825 carbon tonnes. In reporting year 2020, the Council had reduced its carbon emissions to 11,354 carbon tonnes. This was a reduction of 57%.

3.3 In 2017, the Government reset the baseline in the expectation that public bodies would reduce their carbon emissions by 50% by 2031. The Council's 2017 baseline was 14,811 carbon tonnes. In reporting year 2021/22, the Council had managed to reduce its carbon emissions to 9,327 tonnes. This is a reduction of 37%.

3.4 In 2020/21, emissions were 9770 tonnes of CO2. For 2021/22, the overall emissions have reduced to 9327 tonnes, a further reduction of 4.5%.

3.5	Emission from specific Sectors CO2 (Tonnes)	
	Fleet Transport	1181
	Business Mileage	170
	Street Lighting	1203
	Corporate & School Buildings	6773

4.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN**

4.1 In April 2022, the Council adopted an update Climate Change Strategy. The Action Plan covers the period 2022-2027 and provides a clear direction for the Council over the coming years. It sets a target to be carbon neutral by 2040, which includes both short-term and longer-term actions. It provides an initial focus on decarbonising energy use by buildings, transport, waste and enhancing the Borough's blue/green infrastructure. It also seeks to embed climate change in council decision-making and develop partnership working as a lead into a borough-wide approach to tackling climate change. Whilst the Council has successfully implemented a range of actions aimed at reducing its carbon footprint capacity, the financial resources to implement projects remains a key challenge.

5.0 **KEY PROJECTS COMPLETED OR COMMENCED DURING 2022**

5.1 **Buildings**

5.1.1 Work was completed at the DCBL Stadium, to replace the current gas boilers with air source heat pumps, replacing existing lighting fittings with new energy efficient LED lighting, and installing additional insulation.

5.1.2 The Council has approved plans to extend the existing Solar Farm at the former St Michael's Golf Course, connecting it to the new Leisure Centre in Moor Lane, Lower House Lane and Municipal Building. The project is also looking to provide EV charging infrastructure at the Depot and will allow Air Source Heat pumps to be installed at the Leisure Centre, which will significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the building. The Council has approved funding and consultants have been appointed to support the development of a planning application for the extension and to undertake design work to enable bids to be invited during 2023.

5.1.3 The existing 1MW solar farm and roof top solar schemes at the DCBL Stadium, Brookvale and Rutland House continue to operate within expectations.

5.2 **Transport**

5.2.1 Following on from a successful 'Phase 1' implementation of 29 charge points (Appleton Village, Routledge St, Albert Rd, Halton Rd,

Wellington St) in 2020/21, a 'Phase 2' is in the advanced stages of bid preparation.

5.2.2 This is for a further 28 on-street chargers at proposed locations (Ashridge St, Wharford Lane, Mersey Rd, Thomas St, Hough Green centre).

5.2.3 At Council buildings, an upgrade programme to install 22kw 'pay as you go' operated units is in progress. The network of private sector deployed chargers is also increasing with additions at workplaces/retail/leisure destinations/residential, with many of these secured through the planning process.

During 2022/23 analysis of how best to decarbonise the municipal fleet continued with the aim of reporting the way forward for the municipal fleet by December 2023. Given the significant costs involved and trends in the market, a considered approach was felt appropriate.

5.2.4 The LCR has its own Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) adopted in 2018, this has helped to inform how the LCR invests in cycling and walking across the region. Schemes are focussed on reducing the amount of short journeys made by car and replaced with cycle and walking journeys. The Strategy supports the transformation of local areas: change, which will tackle congestion, change which will extend opportunity to improve physical and mental health and change which will support the local economy. Halton has currently over 25km of cycle way / pedestrian surfacing. Officers are now preparing its own localised LCWIP plan to inform/advise the LCR and developers of the improvements and requirements to meet the growing needs of the borough following guidance from Active England. This plan will enable a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks, over what will at least a 10-year period, and help to increase the number of trips made by bike or on foot.

5.3 **Climate Change Awareness**

5.3.1 The Council has set out to embed climate change in its decision making process in a range of ways, this includes:

- The appointment of a Portfolio Holder for Climate Change on the Council's Executive Board.
- The establishment of a Climate Change Advisory Group of officers has been established to advise the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change.
- From February 2023, all Board reports will include a climate change implications section.

- The Council's climate change action plan includes a number of actions in Procurement, which will address how purchasing & contracts need to adjust to help tackle climate change.

5.3.2 The Council's Training Team is in the process of developing an e-learning Climate Change course for Officers and Members. The short course is divided into short modules covering the global and local impact of climate change, what action Halton is taking, and what can staff and members do to help?

5.3.3 The training is designed to be interactive and encourage staff and members to consider small changes in behaviour to help them reduce their own carbon footprint and to better perform their duties as elected members or officers in tackling Climate Change. It is envisaged as resources permit, that further training will be developed along existing sources of information or training via the Local Government Association, professional bodies etc.

5.3.4 To help keep people better informed on the Council's efforts to address climate change, a dedicated space within the Council website was implemented towards the end of 2022. The aim is to provide a single location on the Council website where actions on climate change can be found and where wider engagement can be encouraged in the future. The Civic Magazine "Inside Halton" and other media are also being utilised to inform the Halton community.

5.4 **Open Spaces**

5.4.1 The Big Halton Forest Project was launched during 2022. Addressing carbon sequestration is a long-term process, so it was agreed to initiate a step increase in tree planting as early as possible in the Action Plan. The result was the concept of The Big Halton Forest.

5.4.2 Up to 2030, the aim is to plant an additional 130,000 new trees across Halton above the regular annual planting of circa 1,500 trees. This will include Council owned land and other partners, including eventually the wider community.

5.4.3 The first planting season will be the Autumn/Winter 2022/2023. The assembly of the funding and management of the project is underway, with the first year's proposals expected to be met. To date the Council has secured around £300k towards the projects from the following sources:

- LCR Community Environment Fund - awarded circa £30k for planting trees and bushes at Factory Lane, Widnes and the new adjacent cemetery.
- INEOS Environment Fund - secured £120k to be spent over 5

years as general support for the project.

- DEFRA Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (WCAF). The fund is to enable more trees to be planted, particularly in winter seasons 2023/24 and 2024/25. Awarded £150k to be spent across those 2 years to meet staffing costs for 1.5 FTE Officers to support the project.

5.4.4 Securing applicants for the staffing of some posts will be challenging given trends in the landscaping/woodlands sector, but efforts are also being made during 2023 to include climate change apprenticeships within this part of the Council as part of a wider application of apprenticeships within the authority and external partnership working.

5.4.5 Tree planting discussions began in 2022 with some external partners who have land and/or resources of their own to further increase tree planting and these will continue in 2023. Local housing providers and schools are obvious examples where increases in tree cover can be secured, along with other external partners and every relevant planning application will be considered for improvements as well, alongside bio-diversity nett gain. Further external funding is planned to ensure this 8-year project will be successful.

5.5 **Planning and Development**

5.5.1 It was agreed as part of the Council's climate change action plan, to review and prepare new climate change related guidance for developers to address planning applications. This will continue during 2023, with a view to having the guidance in place by summer, 2023. This will include encouraging Bio Diversity Nett Gain until the relevant government legislation is in place.

5.6 **Street Lighting**

5.6.1 The Street Lighting LED upgrade programme is continuing. There are 2500 columns remaining to upgrade, with around 90% of the Borough now completed. Orders have been raised and work is in progress for around 600 of these columns, which will be completed before the end of March 23. The remaining 1900 columns will be carried out during the 23/24 financial year.

6.0 **BOROUGH-WIDE PROJECTS BEYOND COUNCIL OPERATIONS**

6.1 There are a number of projects that the Council Working in partnership with the Liverpool City Region Combines Authority) is facilitating to help address Climate Change relating to private and social housing, these include:

6.1.1 **Green Homes Grant**

This grant had an initial value of £0.728 million, which was increased to £1.04 million (in March 2022) with a target to improve 129 homes (mainly homeowners and private rental sector). Delivery commenced in October 2021, closed to new applications 31 March 2022, with completion of all improvement measures by end of September 2022. The final estimated grant spend being £0.913 million, with 103 properties improved. In terms of a delivery update, energy refit outputs include:

- 75 building fabric measures installed, including insulation to loft (52), underfloor (9), cavity walls (3) and windows and doors (11).
- 94 renewable energy technologies installed including solar panels (76) and air source heat pumps (18).

6.1.2 **Sustainable Warmth Fund**

This will pay for work on improving the energy efficiency of around 570 homes in Halton to make them warmer, help cut carbon emissions and reduce energy costs. £4.65m secured to improve 442 homes (solely homeowners and private rental sector). The Scheme launched for applications by Halton residents on 27th August 2022, with completion of all improvement measures by (current BEIS deadline) end of March 2023.

6.1.3 **Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund**

This fund is focussed on upgrading the energy performance of social rented housing stock, with delivery via Registered Providers. Though Wave 1 of the fund, £1.47 million has been secured to improve 147 homes. Delivery has commenced, with completion by March 2023. Examples include:

- Grangeway, Halton Housing £0.180m grant for showcase scheme of 18 homes in three flatted blocks;
- Murdishaw, Onward Homes £1.29m grant for eco-makeover of 129 bungalows as part of wider estate renewal strategy.

In November 2022, a collaborative city-region bid was submitted to Wave 2, with 76 homes included within Halton. Separately one Registered Provider submitted a Wave 2 bid, which included approximately 140 homes in Halton. Government decision on this grant is anticipated in March 2023.

6.1.4 **Solar Together**

This is a 'group purchase' arrangement to reduce the costs of buying photovoltaics, battery storage and EV charging points for householders, SMEs and community groups. The scheme launched at the end of August.

As at December 2022, 536 Halton residents had registered for the scheme with 91 agreeing to install solar PV.

7.0 **GREEN GROWTH PROJECTS**

7.1 The Council is working with the Liverpool City Region on the Hydrogen Strategy for the Region and with the Hynet project, which includes looking at carbon capture. As part of this, the Council made representation to The UK Net Zero Hydrogen Fund consultation to promote the strengths, assets and potential of the Borough to contribute to the UK Government Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution.

7.2 Work began in 2022 to develop links with partners such as Halton College and housing providers to try to develop local solutions to the skills and other capacity issues Halton and the wider region face in addressing climate change, particularly in the construction & energy sectors. This work will continue during 2023.

7.3 If there is to be an accelerated programme of housing & building retrofitting and maintenance of new builds, increasing the skills capacity locally has to be improved. Addressing skill shortages and the retraining of existing workforces will include the contribution of a programme of climate change apprenticeships. An evaluation of this will be undertaken as part of both council workforce needs and wider external partnership working during 2023.

8.0 **UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF)**

8.1 Halton's Delivery Plan against the UKSPF allocation includes a Green, Safe, Resilient Communities strand. Halton has been allocated funding for this strand of £301,059 over the next three years.

8.2 The UKSPF fund will help to deliver some key actions in the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, drawing in local communities:

- Improving the Borough's green / blue infrastructure through the Big Halton Forest Initiative.
- Encourage local groups and residents to participate in and deliver grassroots, sustainable initiatives leading to the

development of a Community Climate Partnership.

- Building Healthy Homes through food security and energy advice and improvements and contributing to a Green Growth Business Alliance to secure the local economic benefits from the transition to Net Zero.
- Accelerating the uptake of sustainable modes of transport into our Town Centres.

9.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The approach and policies adopted to date are consistent with overall objective in the Corporate Plan.

10.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Investment in energy efficient measures has the potential to reduce the Council's energy costs, reduce carbon emission and generate future income streams for the Council.

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

11.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

None identified.

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

Encouraging investment in energy-efficiency will benefit from lower carbon emissions, job creation, supply chain development and increased competitiveness and security of energy supply.

11.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Reducing CO2 can bring about improved air quality.

11.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

11.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The transition to a low carbon economy can support the development of the local economy. Ensuring that future economic growth is decoupled from the consumption of fossil fuels and the inevitable carbon emissions.

12.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

12.1 Individual schemes would have to be assessed on an individual basis to develop risk registers for each measure.

13.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

13.1 None identified.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Corporate Services Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	24th January 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Chief Executive
PORTFOLIO:	Leader
SUBJECT:	Corporate Complaints
WARDS:	All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide statistical analysis of the Corporate Complaints received during the 2021 – 2022 financial year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the content of the report be considered.

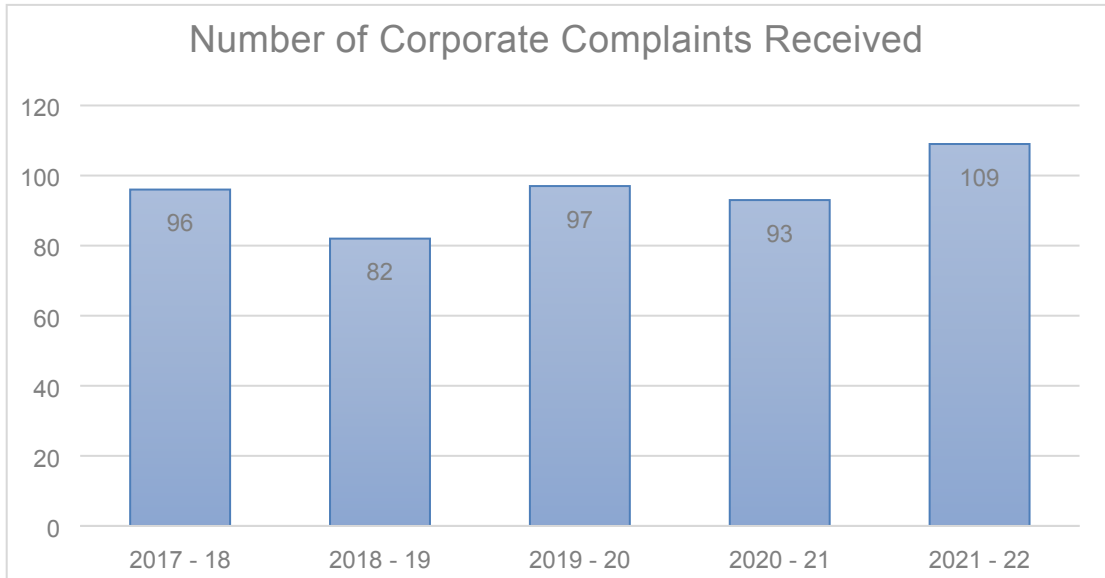
3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Context

- 3.1 The Council presently administers a 2-stage procedure to deal with corporate complaints whereby the public can seek redress if they believe Council departments have failed to deliver a satisfactory level of service.
- 3.2 When complaints are received that have not been raised previously, in the first instance, they are normally directed to the relevant department for matters to be investigated and a response to be provided by a Senior Officer from the service.
- 3.4 Should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the initial response or outcome to their complaint they may request an internal review of the Council's actions and position in relation to their complaint. Such reviews are undertaken independently of the service by an appointed Investigating Officer.
- 3.5 If the Council cannot resolve matters to the complainant's satisfaction individuals are advised that they can refer matters to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or relevant Professional body or, in the case of complaints relating to Freedom of information requests that are considered by the Council's Information Governance Team, to the Information Commissioners Office.

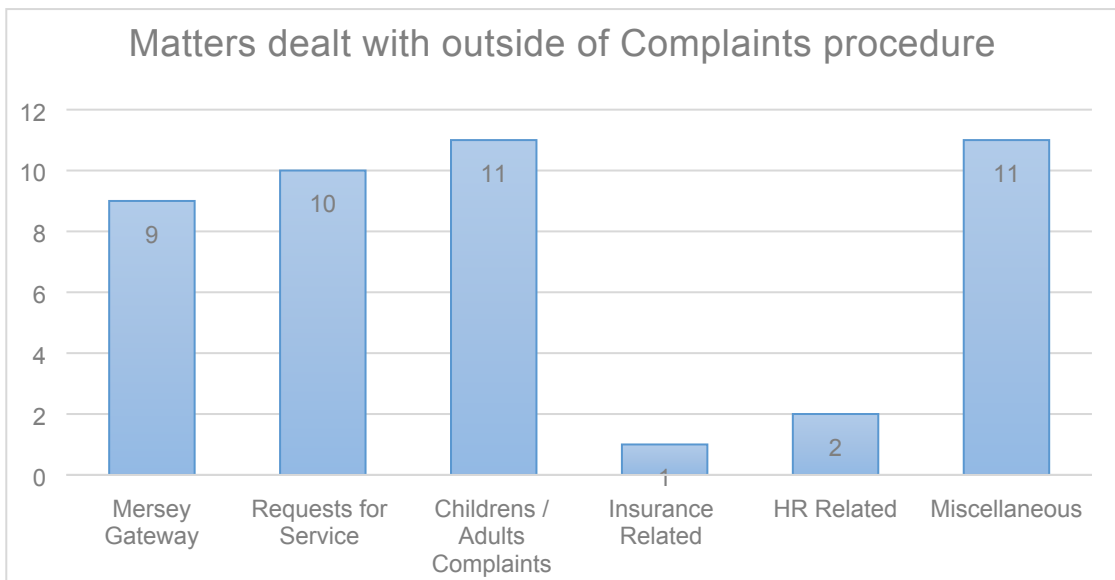
4.0 CORPORATE COMPLAINTS TREND ANALYSIS 2021 - 22

- 4.1 The chart below provides a breakdown of the number of corporate complaints received for each of the preceding 5 financial years from April 2017 to March 2022.



4.2 As the chart illustrates the number of complaints have remained relatively stable over this period.

4.3 Of the 109 complaints that were received in 2021 – 22, a total of 44 complaints that had been received could not be dealt with through the Council’s Corporate Complaints Procedures (CCP). The chart below illustrates the primary nature of those complaints.



4.4 Some of those complaints were dealt with through other process such as the Adults and Children’s Statutory procedures or via the Mersey Gateway process. Others were considered as requests for service i.e. where the Council had not previously been aware of an issue, or given the opportunity to address matters.

- 4.5 Presently, the Council aims to respond to complaints dealt with at stage 1 of the Corporate Procedure within 10 working days and those dealt with at stage 2 within 28 working days.
- 4.6 The tables below shows the number of complaints that were received and dealt with at each stage during the year and the success rate for responding to complainants within the relevant target timeframe for 2021 – 22 and the preceding year. When compared to the previous year, the number of stage 1 complaint responses provided within 10 working days had reduced slightly.

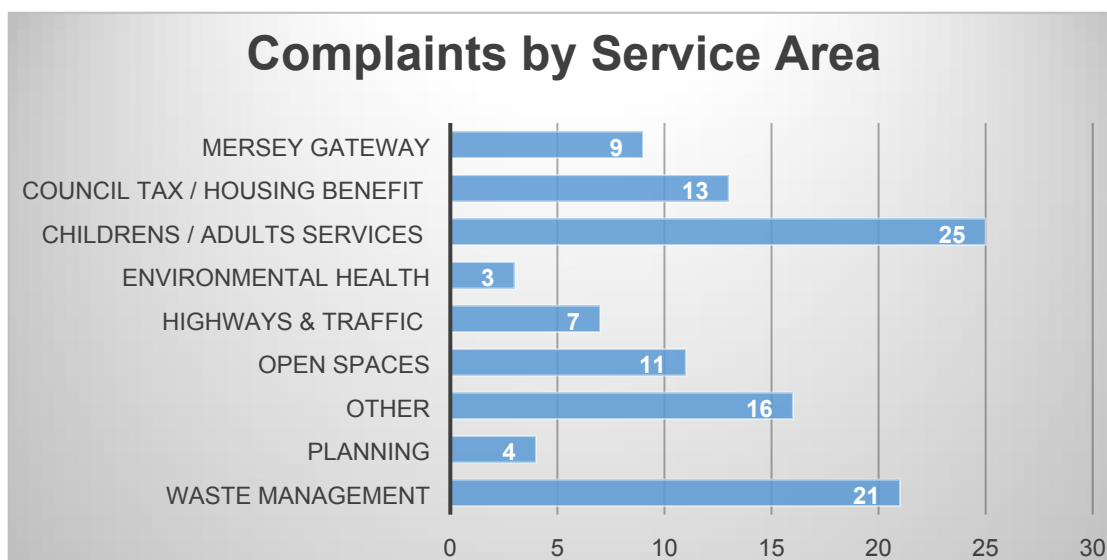
Number of Stage 1 complaint responses				
Financial Year	2020-21		2021-22	
	57		58	
Within 10 days target timeframe	46	80%	41	71%
Within 15 days	2	4%	6	10%
Within 20 days	3	6%	3	5%
20 days +	6	10%	8	14%
TOTAL	57		58	
% of all ST1 & ST2 responses per year		74%	89%*	

Number of Stage 2 complaint responses				
Financial Year	2020-21		2021-22	
	20		7	
Within 28 days target timeframe	11	55%	6	86%
Within 33 days	4	20%	0	0%
Within 38 days	2	10%	0	0%
38 days +	3	15%	1	14%
TOTAL	20		7	
% of all ST1 & ST2 responses per year		26%	11%*	

- 4.7 Less complaints were considered at stage 2 as compared to the previous year but the response time has improved.
- 4.8 A number of complaints were dealt with outside of the target timeframe and this primarily related to staffing availability and in some cases resulted from the complexity of the issue in hand and / or the need to review preceding communications between the Council and the complainant. There was no specific service area that was subject to delays occurring and it remains standard practice that where possible, complainants are advised in advance should it be likely that target timeframes will not be met.
- 4.9 The determination of target response timeframes remain discretionary and it is the case that some local authorities choose to adopt longer timescales than those currently applied in Halton. However, in taking account of the continued capacity pressures being faced by the Council it is considered that the

timeframes currently in place strike an appropriate balance between the availability of resources and the reasonable expectations of complainants.

- 4.10 The nature of corporate complaints received covered a relatively wide range of Council services as illustrated within the chart below.



- 4.11 The service areas of Open Space Services, Waste Management, and Council Tax / Housing Benefits represented the highest number of complaints received during the year.
- 4.12 The table below provides an overview of the outcome of complaints that were received during 2021 – 22.

Corporate Complaint Outcome				
65				
Outcome	Stage 1		Stage 2	
Complaints Upheld	15	26%	2	29%
Complaints Partially Upheld	3	5%	1	14%
Complaints Not Upheld	31	53%	4	57%
Undetermined	9	16%	0	0%
TOTAL	58		7	

- 4.13 In a small number of cases it was not possible for the Council to retrospectively determine what events may have occurred. For example complaints concerning the alleged behaviour of staff, or the nature of interactions between two parties, where the Council has no objective means of corroborating either parties recollection of events. In such circumstances, the Council provides an appropriate explanation of the circumstances and, where relevant, would apologise for any injured feelings that the complainant had experienced.

- 4.14 As can be seen from the table above, 26% of complaints were upheld at stage 1. This would seem to suggest that service managers are not dismissive of complainants or consider complaints in a defensive manner but rather that they recognise and are willing to acknowledge, where service provision may have fallen below an acceptable standard and act to put things right.
- 4.15 A smaller number of complaints that were considered at stage 2 were upheld or partially upheld. This would seem to provide assurance that the actions taken at a service level had been proportionate and appropriate to the circumstances.
- 4.16 In all cases where a complaint was not upheld at stage 1, the Council explained the reasons for its position and confirmed that should they remain dissatisfied the complainant could request that matters be escalated to stage 2 of the complaints procedure.
- 4.17 Those complaints that were upheld were not confined to any specific service area and broadly reflected the categorisations of complaints as detailed earlier in this report.
- 4.18 In all cases where a complaint was upheld or partially upheld, the Council offered an apology and took action to remedy the situation and where possible provide a suitable form of redress.
- 4.19 An analysis of the complaints received during the course of the year does not indicate that any one service is disproportionately represented and this provides assurance that there have been no systemic weaknesses within existing procedures and the ongoing delivery of services across the organisation.

5.0 LOCAL GOVERNEMENT OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 The following table provides a summary of the numbers of complaints and enquiries that were received by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman during 2021 - 22.

LGO Complaints			
13			
Service Area Split		Upheld	Not Upheld
Adults and Care Services	2	1	1
Education and Childrens Services	1	1	
Planning and Development	3		3
Corporate and Other	1		1
Highways and Transportation	1		1
Benefit and Tax	1		1
Housing	1		1
Environmental Services	1		1
Mersey Gateway	2	1	1
Total	13	3	10

- 5.2 Further information concerning the outcome of the LGSCO enquiries will be presented to members of the Board during the course of the meeting.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Complaints provide essential information and inform the development of Halton Borough Council services and policies. The Corporate Complaints Procedure is reviewed periodically to ensure it continues to conform to best practice and remains fit for purpose.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Improvement and quality assessment agendas increasingly consider the robustness of complaints procedures and how they are demonstrably used to inform and drive change.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 8.1 It is important for the Council to have robust complaint procedures in place to improve service delivery and ultimately help the achievement of all of its six strategic priority areas.

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 9.2 An inefficient or ineffective complaints system will fail individuals who want to use it and prevent the organisation from learning from complaints. Whilst complaints can result in positive changes for individuals, they are also a key source of intelligence, which can be used to influence the design and delivery of services that the organisation provides and commissions.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 10.1 All complaint forms are issued with a separate form for monitoring diversity of complainants with regard to age, disability, ethnicity and gender. Unfortunately, the majority of corporate complainants choose not to return the monitoring form with their complaint so information collected is extremely limited. However, upon the basis of available evidence there is no indication that any specific social groups are over or under represented by age, gender, disability etc. which suggests that the complaints process remains accessible on an equitable basis.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Corporate Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	24 th January 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Performance Management Reports for Quarter 2 of 2022/23
WARDS:	Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and to raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the second quarter period to 30th September 2022.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2022-23 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
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
 - Property 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 second quarter performance management report;**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification; and**
- 3) Highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be reported at a future meeting of the Board.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Departmental service objectives and performance measures are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The introduction of a Thematic Priority Based Report and the identification of business critical objectives/ milestones and performance indicators will further support organisational improvement.
- 6.2 Although some objectives link specifically to one priority area, the nature of the cross - cutting activities being reported, means that to a greater or lesser extent a contribution is made to one or more of the Council priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 At the time at which Annual Business Plans are developed Directorate Risk Registers are also refreshed and updated.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 Not applicable.

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

Not applicable

Corporate Policy and Performance Board– Priority Based Monitoring Report

Reporting Period: **Quarter 2 - 1st July 2022 – 30th September 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 second quarter of 2022 / 23 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

Processing Times

At 30th September 2022 processing times for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction were as follows: new claims 25.50 days and changes in circumstances 14.10 days.

Universal Credit Implementation

The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) statistics indicate at 8th September 2022 there were 15,509 people within Halton claiming Universal Credit. On 25th April 2022 the government made an announcement that all claimants on legacy benefits will be transferred to Universal Credit by the end of 2024.

Currently there are six areas in England where claimants on legacy benefits are being invited by the DWP to migrate to universal credit, and they are Bolton, Falmouth, Harrow, Medway, Northumberland, and Truro.

Household Support Fund

As mentioned in the Monitoring Report for Q1 a spending plan for the Household Support Fund (HSF) covering the period 1st April 2022 – 30th September 2023 was developed. The Council has now spent the HSF by supporting vulnerable families with children by issuing free school meal vouchers in the school holidays and helping pensioners who are receiving council tax reduction by making a £120 payment. In addition local partners including the Halton Citizens Advice Bureau, Runcorn and Widnes food banks, and Halton Voluntary Action have assisted residents from the HSF.

2.3 Audit, Procurement & Operational Finance

Invoice Payment Performance

As at the end of quarter two, 90.6% of the Council's supplier invoices had been paid within 30 days of receipt.

Early Payment Scheme

The Council's contract with an external provider to deliver an early payment scheme for supplier invoices expired in August 2022. The scheme is now being delivered without any external support, which ensures that any rebate generated by paying supplier invoices early will be retained in full by the Council.

Income from the scheme amounted to approximately £50k in 2021/22. Income for 2022/23 is expected to exceed £60k.

Income management

The Council is currently in the process of upgrading its systems for receiving web-payments in order to ensure that Mastercard payments can continue to be taken after January 2023. Once the new web-payments module is implemented, the Council's system for receiving telephone payments will then be upgraded to ensure that the arrangements are compliant with the requirements of the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCIDSS). PCIDSS is an information security standard designed to reduce payment card fraud by increasing security controls around the security of cardholder data.

Financial assessment tool for Adult Social Care

Work is underway to provide adult social care service users with the facility to complete their financial assessment applications via a secure online portal. The system is easy to use and includes a range of animations to explain to the individual why certain questions are being asked. Providing this reasoning, especially around some of the financial questions, helps to take away the worry many service users currently experience when being asked to share personal information.

The portal will give an instant indication to the user about how much they would need pay towards a care package. Providing this upfront estimate allows the service user to make a much more informed decision when considering their care options. Assistance with completing the online form will be given to anyone that requires it.

The new process will result in financial assessments being completed more quickly. This will allow timelier invoicing of care fees and the sums invoiced will not be a surprise to the service user. As a consequence, there are likely to be fewer invoice queries for the Council to investigate and ultimately more invoices being paid promptly.

The initial phase of implementation has been completed with the first version of the system available for testing due by mid-November. It is anticipated that live roll-out of the portal could begin early in the new year.

The system will also help the Council to better manage the increased volume of financial assessments that will result from the Government's proposed cap on care costs due to be implemented in 2023.

2.4 Revenues and Financial Management Division

2022/23 Quarter 1 Spending

For the financial year to 30 June 2022, overall Council operational net spending was £22.4m against a budget of £21.2m, resulting in an overspend position to date against budget of £1.2m. The forecast position for the year to 31 March 2023 was an estimated overspend of £5.4m.

Capital spending at 30 June 2022 totalled £5.6m, which is 116% of the planned spending of £4.8m at this stage. This represents 16% of the total Capital Programme of £33.9m (which assumes a 20% slippage between years).

The updated financial forecast and picture of net spending to 30 September 2022 will be reported to Executive Board on 17 November 2022.

Council Tax and Business Rate Collection

Council tax collection for the 2nd quarter of the year is 54.45%, down 0.13% on this point last year. Cash collection for the year to date is £40.4m, this includes £1.2m collected in relation to previous year debts.

Business rates collection for the second quarter of the year is 61.54%, up by 6.78% on this point last year. Cash collected for the year to date is £33.2m. The in-year collection rate has been helped by credits placed against accounts following awarding of 2021/22 rate reliefs funded by the Government Covid Additional Relief Fund.

Energy Bills Rebate Scheme

The energy bills rebate scheme (excluding discretionary payments) ended on 30 September 2022. This included a £150 non-repayable grant payment for households in council tax bands A to D, known as the Council Tax Rebate Grant. In total 51,489 grants were awarded totalling £7.723m.

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. The scheme ended on 30 September 2022, rate relief of £2.935m was provided to eligible businesses within the borough.

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

The three services within the HR Service Centre (Resourcing & Recruitment, Payroll & Pensions and Employment Relations) remain under significant pressure in the current year. Additional demand persists across all areas. The current service configuration is now being examined and consideration given to how the Council's HR service may need to be re-shaped to deliver what is now required by the wider Council. This will be informed by work within the emerging Transformation programme.

Despite significant challenges in terms of volume, the service has delivered positive results in the recruitment and initial pay administration of a large number of new recruits across Halton schools in time for the start of the academic year, as well as maintaining a flow of recruitment and pay administration to new starters in the Council. The Employment relations function has proactively supported a number of restructures across the organisation, whilst continuing to balance a higher than average volume of HR casework.

The service has supported the People Directorate to recruit to the vacancies of Operational Director Children's Social Care and Operational Director Education, Inclusion and Provision. Two successful appointments were secured, delivered collaboratively with North West Employers.

The Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) qualification level 3 that began in April 2022 has now been completed and 12-employees have now successfully completed the qualification. The successful employees attended a celebration event where the CEO presented the employees with their ILM certificates of achievement,

This demonstrates the value the organisation places on learning and enhances our commitment to continuous professional development. A further cohort commenced in September 2022 with 9-employees undertaking the qualification that covers Understanding Leadership and Solving Problems and Making Decisions.

The Leadership & Management Framework (LMF) continues to be delivered across the organisation, however, concerns still remain regarding attendance. The LMF is now mainly delivered via face to face sessions with only the Developing Resilience Module being delivered via MS Teams. The latest attendance figure, of 25%, is a result of only 4 out of 13 managers attending. A full review of the content and the delivery method will be undertaken in quarter 4 to ensure the programme is still meeting the needs of the organisation.

The team delivered the Coaching for Performance programme within this quarter and received very positive feedback for this programme

2294 e-learning modules have been completed in the quarter, demonstrating that this is now mainstreamed and effective method for the delivery of a broad range of learning.

Much of the Partnership working undertaken during the quarter has focused on the supporting of individuals from Ukraine, and those within the scope of the Asylum Seeker and Refugee community. The service has continued to support the coordination of the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme within Halton.

2.6 ICT and Administration

Staff returning to the office locations, a large proportion of the ICT, Administrative and Customer Services staff throughout the COVID periods have rotated through the offices or have been in many cases permanently based within the offices; the proportion of staff that have been primarily based at home are now rotating through the office locations on a team-by-team basis or as part of a 40% Rota system. This is working well, and all staff are supportive of the return with a 100% return linked to home working to maintain the hybrid working process across all teams.

The ICT teams **covered all emergency** calls 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.

Information Governance process update:

Due to changes within the support plan within the authority and legislative process: update as of October 2022 as follows:

Required Roles & Definition:

- a. Information Governance Management (Legislative Requirement) – Nominated SIRO - Simon Riley – required to formally report to Corporate Management Team/CEO – in place
- b. Information Governance (Info Gov) Team & Data Protection Officer – In Place, operationally providing Data Protection (DP) and FOI management/advisory function – administers IMG, deals with ICO, investigates complaints – internal arbitration –

Jon Greenough, Jeff Profit, Scott Middlehurst, Janet Johnson - in place

- c. Admin Support RMU – Operational data management/document management systems and process linked to data/paper file retrieval. – In Place
- d. Access to Records Officer – Post needs to be created, primarily focused within the care environment as specialist skills and qualification required - report with Children’s – TBC
- e. Caldicott Guardian – Children’s Directorate – Need to name an individual ultimately responsible for national register – TBD
- f. Caldicott Guardian – Adults Directorate – Need to name an individual ultimately responsible for national register – TBD

2. Freedom of Information (FOI):

a. Publication Scheme – this is now under review:

- i. Need to update transparency webpages:
Action: IG team to liaise with web team to establish owners of content
- ii. Publish recurring/common FOIs on HBC website – reduce overhead in responding.

Action: IG team to liaise with web team and service areas, Service areas are seen as responsible for arranging publication of datasets and maintaining up to date information, therefore reducing the number of FOI requests received.
- iii. Publishing FOIs from the system directly – the data has been released to the public, need to publish what has been released.

Action: IG team to liaise with internal developer/web team to develop forms and digital process.

b. Policy awareness & current process:

- i. All FOI requests are received into the One Stop Shop’s, logged into the corporate tracking system, then allocated to OD/OD’s.
- ii. Refresh managers on the FOI Policy/requirements – authorisations of requests can be delegated to DMs or equivalent (bottle neck with authorisations)

Action: communicate via SMT/managers within services – it is proposed a member of the IG team attends departmental DMT/SMT meetings quarterly. Refreshing services’ understanding of requirements with deadlines – statutory legislation
Action – communicate via SMT/managers within services

c. Overdue requests update:

- i. IG Service undertaking contact with requesters for overdue FOI requests received pre-June 2022. Requests identified as still requiring action to be responded to by service without delay

- ii. Rutland House Admin Team, once request data and authorisation is received from allocated teams, are working through to send and close FOI requests. Delays with authorisations contributes to overdue requests.

3. Subject Access Requests (SAR's) Processes:

a. Current process:

- i. Incoming SARs once verified and the type of information to be collated established, then logged by the One Stop Shop - allocated to the OD, then assigned to the appropriate manager to fulfil. This is managed within the corporate tracking system.
- ii. For Children's SARs currently this coordination is completed by Policy and Performance Children's.

The manager or social worker/case owner completes a retrieval form to RMU detailing the information and subject information that is to be retrieved.

RMU gather this information from CF6, Eclipse, paper records – preparing the information as PDFs and upload to a SharePoint site.

For small amounts of information retrieved, this is usually completed by the Officer/Case Owner tasked with the redaction, and there is no involvement with RMU.

- iii. The Officer/Case Owner is notified by RMU that all PDFs are ready to be redacted.
- iv. The Officer/Case Owner redacts the PDFs and discloses information with covering letter using the appropriate method (as indicated on the original SAR request) either secure email or printed then posted.
- v. A copy of the disclosed information is retained by HBC within the corporate tracking system.
- vi. The case is then closed.

b. How it is being improved:

- i. Consolidate the system that supports the admin side of the SAR process (information gathering, preparing PDF files for redaction, and the method of disclosing them to the applicant), within the Corporate Tracking System.

This is currently delivered through a SharePoint site using Info Path forms and workflows. Having all elements in a single system is desirable to simplify and standardise the end-to-end process.

Action: IG to liaise with Policy team/social care and ICT Development team. Then create workflow and system.

- ii. Advocate the creation of an Access to Records Officer post to reduce SAR response times, improve quality of service, and free up social worker time.
A Business Case has already been circulated to SMT Children's.

4. Data Breaches:

Data quality:

Root causes of data breaches are often inaccurate address data sets held with in back-office systems, inadequate training/induction processes for new staff, and a lack, or absence of checking addresses and content of emails and letters with clients.

Proposals and improvement plan:

- i. Use of the authorities CRM to check and verify an address to verify the right person is identified.

In the event of a mismatch, an independent investigation will be triggered to confirm the person's correct address.

Action: IG to liaise with Benefits and Contact Centre.

- ii. Standardise address formats used by the Council by incorporating Royal Mail PAF / LLPG as appropriate.

Action: IG to liaise with service areas and ICT development/GIS team.

- iii. Implement Data Loss Prevention technology available as part of our Microsoft EA.

This will apply security classification labels to emails instigating a 'stop and check' mindset when users attempt to send an email externally.

Action: IG to liaise with ICT/O365 rollout teams.

b. Postal Services - Hybrid Mail/Managed Print Service:

Approximately 80% of all letters are submitted through the Council's Hybrid Mail solution which delivers a saving versus franked mail, but still represents a considerable cost to the Council.

During 2020/21 Admin/IG teams reduced the number of franking machines across the council to a single machine, consolidating all postal services to the RMU (exception: - Democratic Services). Further improvements include:

- i. Replacing paper mail with new electronic delivery methods and expanding existing ones such as Council Tax e-service platform for e-billing which currently only has a 17% take up.

This forms part of the wider digital online service delivery initiative.

Action: IG to liaise with RMU/Support Services, Revenues & Benefits, and other departments where potential to switch from paper to digital is identified.

- ii. Reducing the amount of the more expensive franked mail with hybrid mail in the absence of an electronic alternative. This will be completed by conducting a postal audit across all departments using franking and hybrid services, liaising with departments to encourage behavioural change.

Action: IG to liaise with RMU / Support Services

- iii. Working innovatively with our Hybrid Mail supplier to develop electronic delivery routing of mail submitted through their systems. Examples include using AI technologies that scan

letters for a valid email addresses or mobile numbers, when identified, delivers the letter using these much cheaper methods.

Action: IG to liaise with Hybrid Mail supplier.

5. Required policy changes:

The way we manage policies is undergoing a full review in order that the Council is provided with a framework of information governance where risks are identified and treated more effectively, and compliance is defined and embedded in processes to meet our local requirements and our obligations from ICO and other regulators specific to business areas.

Contact Centre

Service Area	Contact Centre cases	Percentage
Adult Social Care	5626	19.43%
Waste Management	5556	19.19%
Council Tax	5473	18.91%
EDT	2945	10.17%
Childrens Social Care	1943	6.71%
Corporate Processes	1316	4.55%
Registrar	929	3.21%
Benefits	777	2.68%
Environmental	729	2.52%
Highways	631	2.18%
Housing Solutions	421	1.45%
Open Spaces	386	1.33%
HBC - OOH Procedures	328	1.13%
Unknown	280	0.97%
Finance and Support Services	200	0.69%
Halton Housing Trust	199	0.69%
Education	188	0.65%
Planning and Building Control	176	0.61%
Property Services	161	0.56%
Transportation	148	0.51%
Revenues	140	0.48%
Community And Leisure	136	0.47%
HDL - internal procedures	94	0.32%
External Agencies	70	0.24%
Legal and Licensing	39	0.13%
Families Information Service	16	0.06%
Economy	11	0.04%
ICT Services	11	0.04%
Risk and Emergency Planning	10	0.03%
Human Resources	7	0.02%
Fleet Management - MOT	1	0.00%
OLD SHPS - no longer used	1	0.00%
Grand Total	28948	

One Stop Shops

Service Area	HDL HaltonLea	HDL Widnes	Grand Total	Percentage
Council Tax	2150	2259	4409	27.50%
Adult Social Care	1447	1682	3129	19.52%
Finance and Support Services	1130	1109	2239	13.97%
Waste Management	429	647	1076	6.71%
Corporate Processes	401	337	738	4.60%
Benefits	382	294	676	4.22%
Housing Solutions	280	230	510	3.18%
Childrens Social Care	307	74	381	2.38%
Highways	158	223	381	2.38%
Open Spaces	187	186	373	2.33%
Education	184	173	357	2.23%
Environmental	176	158	334	2.08%
Transportation	162	122	284	1.77%
Planning and Building Control	64	89	153	0.95%
Human Resources	73	60	133	0.83%
Property Services	57	75	132	0.82%
Community And Leisure	64	51	115	0.72%
Revenues	38	68	106	0.66%
HDL - internal procedures	43	58	101	0.63%
Registrar	48	37	85	0.53%
External Agencies	35	44	79	0.49%
Halton Housing Trust	44	20	64	0.40%
Unknown	13	46	59	0.37%
Legal and Licensing	24	24	48	0.30%
Economy	14	22	36	0.22%
Families Information Service	3	8	11	0.07%
HBC - OOH Procedures	3	5	8	0.05%
Tourist Information	2	3	5	0.03%
EDT	2		2	0.01%
HHT OOH	1	1	2	0.01%
Risk and Emergency Planning	2		2	0.01%
Youth Services		2	2	0.01%
Grand Total	7923	8107	16030	100.00%

2.7 Legal and Democracy

The arrangements for the new Merseyside and Cheshire Joint Scrutiny Committee were approved by Council in July, which also endorsed an associated protocol. Halton's two Members of the new Joint Committee were invited to an induction event in Knowsley, which took place in September.

The final appointment in the Democratic Services team was made in October, meaning that the team is at full strength again.

A start date was agreed with the new Licensing Enforcement Officer, who will join us early in Quarter 3.

The Communications & Marketing and Democratic Services team made an important contribution to the Council's part in Operation London Bridge.

2.8 Catering, Stadium and Registration Services

School Meals Service

School meals has seen an increase in uptake on FSM, Paid and UIFSM. This will be monitored thought out the year as we normally see drop offs when year 11 finish there exams.

An internal audit report has indented several areas for improvement which will be addressed by the end of December 2022.

Food prices have risen with the last 12 months by up to 20% which has a negative effect on the forecasted outturn.

The service is not operating at full staffing capacity currently with 10+ vacancies on the structure to fill.

Civic Catering

A decision was made by Members to close the Civic Catering function at Municipal Building and Halton Lea Library. This decision was made quite swiftly and as result all the staff where put at risk of redundancy and given the opportunity to apply for positions left in the new structure for Civic Catering and also any other HBC positions. Unfortunately two employees left the authority and took voluntary redundancies.

DCBL Stadium

- All community groups i.e. Boxing Club, Table Tennis and Kick Boxing are all now paying the correct community hire charge.
- The stadium hosted the Halton and Warrington Children of the Accent Music Hub, which seen in excess of 500 local school children perform to over 1000 family members.
- The Halton Chamber of Commerce business awards returned to the stadium for the third year running. Which saw 440 local business guests come together to celebrate business in Halton.
- Everton Ladies academy approached the stadium to use the facilities on a more frequent basis which would include training and academic programmes relocate to the stadium an agreement has now been drafter and agreed.
- Widnes Vikings season ended with varying performances resulting in a downturn in attendances and therefore having a detrimental effect on turnover on match days.
The total attendance for the season was 26,818 over 13 matches which averages 2063 per match. With the last 3 matches averaging 1,550.
- Weddings and events have started to return to the stadium steadily since covid restrictions have been completely lifted. However the meetings and conferences are some way off the pre-pandemic levels.
- The management team are liaising closely with HBC Communications and Marketing division to develop a marketing plan/strategy which will see more in house events to generate additional income and also promote the current offering. The first of which was the Mayors Charity Soul night.
- The Rugby Football League chose the stadium to host a prestigious Origin Academy Match (Lancashire v Yorkshire). The feedback was very positive and we hope to work with the RFL more in the future.
- Widnes FC have started a new season and unfortunately have had a bad start to the campaign and sit 20th in the league.
- The British Drum Corp Championships was unfortunately cancelled for 2022 due covid disruption throughout the season, however they have booked for the following for year.
- The decarbonisation programme was completed which will result in reducing the stadium carbon footprint and energy consumption/costs. This project has also been shortlisted as heat pump project of the year by the Chartered Institute of Building Surveyors.
- The Stadium hosted its second pop concert that saw Bryan Adams perform in front of over 7,000 people.

- Supported the legal democratic services in opening the book of condolence and provided staff for kings proclamation readings held at Runcorn Town Hall and Municipal Building.

2.9 Property Services (Operations)

St Patrick's Nursing Home Redevelopment

Design development works ongoing in respect of proposals to build a new 16 bed extension and refurbish remaining accommodation. Works planned to be carried out in 2 phases with an estimated works cost of £2.6m, anticipated start on site in April 2023

St Luke's Nursing Home Refurbishment

Design development works ongoing in respect of proposals to refurbish existing accommodation in 4 phases, estimated works cost of £1.1m, anticipated start on site in April 2023

Proposed New Leisure Centre Moor Lane

The CPO has now been completed, vacant possession of the site being obtained on August 24th. The contractors have completed their updated tender exercise. A report will be presented to the Executive Board in October seeking final approval. Site mobilisation is due to start on early November with a main works start date of 28th November. Some enabling works are ongoing mainly service diversion works.

Education maintenance programme 2022/23

The 2022/23 Education maintenance programme was approved by Council In March. The programme now consists of 13 separate projects with an estimated cost of circa £780k. 9 projects were completed across the summer holiday period, the remaining 4 will be completed over the next few months working in conjunction with the schools so as to cause as little disruption as possible.

Corporate Maintenance programme 2022/23

The 2022/23 Corporate maintenance programme has been approved by the Asset Management Working Group. A number of projects have now been completed, others are on site or at the design development stage, all the budget is anticipated to have been spent by year end.

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. UU have completed all remedial works on site A & C, and these sites 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 have now been completed and the building handed over and is ready for occupation by the tenants.

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

Design development works have progressed to a stage which allowed the Town Deal business case to be submitted in August. It is anticipated that the outcome of the submission will be known In late October following which it is hoped that design works will continue to bring the scheme to tender stage.

Brookvale Rec- Proposed Refurbishment works

A feasibility study is currently being carried out in respect of possible redevelopment and refurbishment works to the leisure centre, the study is due prior to the end of September.

Pickering Pastures- Proposed new pavilion building

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

Cavendish School - 2 class extension

The project has recently been out to tender and the evaluation is still be undertaken. The planning application has still to be approved. It is anticipated that works will commence on site in the October half term break.

The Brindley- Proposed extension

Design development works have progressed to RIBA stage 3 and the business case in respect of the Town Deal fund has been submitted. The preferred option has been agreed with a budget cost estimate of £5.6m.

Runcorn Library redevelopment

Design development works ongoing to create an NHS Health & Education hub. The feasibility study has been completed and circulated for comment, budget cost £1.8m.

Elite House- Redevelopment

Design development works ongoing to create starter units for the high tec. business sector. RIBA stage 1 feasibility report issued by architects for comment and feedback.

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. Works on the stadium facility started in late September, completion being due in November, the others will follow in due course.

Decarbonisation Projects

Following completion of the decarbonisation works at the stadium further feasibility studies have now been undertaken in respect of carrying out further work at buildings subject to funding. Funding opportunities are currently being explored as such it is anticipated further bids will be submitted in due course.

Asset Management

5 Granville Street, Runcorn – new lease commenced 1 July 2022

Hair Essentials vacated premises Moor Lane Widnes – 24 August 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 Benefits

Household Support Fund 3

The government have extended the Household Support Fund (HSF) to cover the period 1st October 2022 – 31st March 2023. The Fund is intended to support vulnerable households with the pressures caused by the significantly rising cost of living. The DWP has changed its guidance relating to the distribution of the funding in two areas, firstly there will be no ring fence of any proportion of funding for any particular cohort of people. The second change is a requirement for all local authorities to operate at least part of the scheme on an application basis i.e. residents should have the opportunity to come forward to ask for support.

A spending plan has been developed that includes allocating £178,000 to the Discretionary Support Scheme, which has an existing telephone application process, and this will meet the requirement to operate part of the HSF scheme on an application basis. The Council will also provide assistance to vulnerable households with children by issuing free school meal vouchers of £12 per week during the school holidays. In addition vulnerable pensioner households who are receiving council tax reduction will be assisted by being awarded a payment of £100. Also local voluntary

organisations including Halton Citizens Advice Bureau, Runcorn and Widnes food banks, Energy Projects Plus, and Halton Voluntary Action have been given an allocation from the HSF.

3.3 Audit, Procurement & Operational Finance

Insurance

The cost of the Council's insurance arrangements is likely to increase in 2023/24 as a result of the uncertain UK and global economic outlook and the impact of the current inflationary pressures. The Council's property insurer is recommending that sums insured are increased by at least 20% in line with the Building Cost Index (BCI), which tracks the costs being incurred by contractors in the course of their business. Increasing the value of the sums insured will have a commensurate effect on the premium cost.

Motor premiums are also anticipated to increase by approximately 10% in 2022/23. Increases are being driven largely by claims cost inflation. Increased labour and utility costs are a significant factor. Additionally, the supply chain to the motor industry has also been impacted by the UK's withdrawal from the EU and the war in Ukraine. This is leading to delays in the completion of some repairs and increased vehicle hire costs.

No indication has yet been received regarding potential renewal terms from the Council's liability insurer.

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

Harsh labour market conditions continue to create challenges in the resourcing of many service areas. This matter was the subject of a comprehensive report to the Corporate Policy & Performance Board on 6th September 2022. In response to this ongoing issue, the service is progressing work around the re-engineering of the recruitment process, the setting up of specific recruitment campaigns for blocks of vacancies – i.e. Adult Care, and Planning. At the time of writing, there are 195 Council Vacancies in the recruitment workflow, 185 vacancies pending action, and 90 school vacancies in progress. Additional resources are being drafted into the team to support recruitment work over the medium term. Sub-regional economic data shows that paid employment in the Liverpool City Region is at an all-time high, thus it is clear that labour market challenges are set to remain for some time to come.

Linked to the issue above, the use of agency workers continues to be high. A reduction in usage will come about as Children's Services amend their resourcing model during Q3, however a significant reduction can only occur as the recruitment issues outlined above are resolved.

The Local Government sector pay claim for 2022/23 remains unresolved. In response to the national joint trade union claim for the current year, Local Government employers made an offer of £1925 per FTE. This equates to an increase of circa 10% for the lowest NJC grades and 4.4% for the highest. Trade Unions have balloted their members, however an agreement has not yet been reached. National employers and trade unions are due to meet on 1st November to consider ballot outcomes. It should be noted that the level of pay increase is unprecedented in recent times and will put extreme pressure on the Council budget. The claim for 2023/24 has not yet been made, however given prevailing national economic conditions and the rate of inflation, it is expected to be of a similar magnitude to the 2022/23 claim.

A watching brief is being kept on employment relations issues across the sector. It is anticipated that teaching staff in some trade unions will be balloted on action related to pay awards.

The retained EU law (revocation and reform) Bill was published on 22 September 2022. EU derived law will expire on 31 December 2023 unless by then the Government has decided to retain it (it can extend deadline to 31 December 2026), and at this stage it is unclear what this will mean for current UK HR legislation. This situation will be monitored and reported in future reports as appropriate.

3.5 ICT and Administration

The rollout of M365 (Office 365) is well underway. Allowing the IT teams the opportunity to evolve the on premise-based services and start to utilise the new and powerful cloud-based systems and services associated with the E5 licensing agreement from Microsoft.

This new licensing agreement now encompasses telephony in the form of Teams, together with a multitude of additional services that will be incrementally introduced to our user base over the next 12 – 18 months.

As you may have noticed the 1st part of this development was to migrate our vast email estate over to the Microsoft cloud this introduced a small number of issues to just over 100 people but in comparison to date over 2000 accounts have moved seamlessly without issue or any change to our client's user experience. This is a major task for the teams involved and should be noted given the considerable efforts and out of hours work undertaken to complete this.

Now the base level has been completed with our Directory Services and Email moved to M365, the next considerable task ahead of the team will be to integrate and move SharePoint service and all associated data sets and My Document Folders – again this is a considerable task and is currently within the planning stage – this will link all users with their data sets and then allow the new and innovative services associated with Teams and SharePoint to be introduced to the user base.

As noted, Teams will over the coming months become the main telephony system as at some point Skype will be decommissioned and all users will be moved over to the M365 cloud-based telephony solution Teams. Issues with a Virgin Media SIP Trunk installation project set to deliver a connection within key network locations for the authority, now 3 months late because of delays at the supplier end, contributing to the delays associated with the decommissioning of Skype.

Key changes this quarter:

Schools email is now being removed out of the corporate system with a new solution dedicated to the delivery of all email and systems requirement – this is a highly complex and time-consuming process but will allow for school's compliance with Corporate security compliance and to utilise their own email account names rather than the current HBC /. sch, address.

Changes to corporate mobile device management solutions - all users of corporate devices will be contacted and set up with the new systems.

Training will form a large part of this roll-out with on-line resources being made available to all users as well as the creation of "Super Users" who will be offered additional training to support their colleagues from within the teams. Admin will form the main base for our training plan as well as other users that may come forward for the additional training allowing a wider training resource rather than a bottle neck at the helpdesk as we only have 2 people within this area.

In addition to the M365 changes considerable efforts are also underway to upgrade and update the desktop experience, this will bring with it additional and essential security update and management systems that will secure and support our corporate devices from Mobile Phones, iPads, and Laptops.

Linked to this upgrades and updates will be introduced to the VDi environment support M365 together with new security systems offering greater levels of security compliance.

Policy Revisions Information Governance:

Technical policies (for example: passwords, patch management policies etc.) and organisational policies (those that directly impact users – AUP, data classifications, sensitivity labels, retention etc) are to be brought to together and managed by the IG team under a single [framework](#) to consolidate, remove duplication, and create awareness around the distinction between the two types.

3.6 Legal and Democracy

Key officers throughout the department will continue to support the transformation programme. Significant pressures continue in the Children's Social Care team in Legal Services, due to increasing workload. The Legal team is continuing to provide advice in respect of Major Projects and Adult Social Care on important issues. The welcome arrival of the new Licensing Enforcement Officer will enable greater visibility and effectiveness.

3.7 Community & Environment

School Meals Service

With the food costs continuing to rise this puts significant pressures on achieving budget.

The cost of living crisis is impacting paid meals served at KS2, KS3 and KS4.

Civic Catering

Civic Catering is no closed with only a café facility at the Brindley.

DCBL Stadium

Meetings and conferences have returned but as budgets are tight for everyone we have noticed catering requests are on the decline.

Events have been planned in up until the end of March 2023, these will be carefully monitored.

A review of staffing will commence in quarter 3 to reflect the new business needs.

3.8 Enterprise Community & Resources

Property Services (Operations)

Accommodation review/Agile working/return to the office

COVID-19 necessitated the need for home working which proved very successful. As all COVID measures have been removed and life returns 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. In parallel with this a review of our office accommodation is currently being undertaken, the aim of which is to present options for how this can be more effectively used in the future to help generate revenue savings.

Rising Construction Costs

Construction costs have been rising significantly in the recent past which is having an impact across all projects. Whilst all sectors in industry have been affected by inflation, the construction industry appears to have been hit particularly hard with certain sectors, such as steelwork production, seeing increases in costs of up to 100%. The future outlook at present is that tender prices are unlikely to fall in the short to medium term.

Carbon emission targets

Halton's Climate Change Action Plan has set a target for the Council's own carbon emissions to reach net zero by 2040 in line with the Liverpool City region. The first phase of feasibility studies in respect of decarbonising our buildings has been undertaken, and additional funding opportunities are being explored, the intention being to apply for additional funding when the next round of the Decarbonisation fund goes live.

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

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



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	Objective
FS 01	Set the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Recommend Council Tax.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Report 2022-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board - November 2021.		On target to report the Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board in November 2022. The financial forecast is being regularly updated.
Report 2022/23 revenue budget, capital programme and council tax to Council - March 2022.		Work has commenced with Management Team and Budget Working Group to develop budget proposals for 2023/24 onwards.

Ref	Objective
FS 02	To effect financial prudence by assisting managers to control their budgets by monitoring spending and providing timely and accurate financial reports.



Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Provide monthly financial reports to budget holders within 8 days of month end.		Reports all issued on schedule to date.
Provide quarterly financial monitoring reports to Operational Directors for inclusion in Performance Monitoring Reports.		Quarter 2 reports have been finalised and will be shared with Operational Directors for inclusion in Performance Monitoring Reports.
Provide quarterly monitoring and forecasting reports on the overall budget to Executive Board.		Quarter 2 monitoring report on the overall budget will go to Executive Board on 17 November 2022.

Ref	Objective
FS 03	Provide for public accountability by reporting the Council's stewardship of public funds and its financial performance in the use of resources by preparing the statutory Statement of Accounts in accordance with the latest accounting standards.



Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Publish the Statement of Accounts following external audit and the Annual Governance Statement by 30th September 2021.		The draft accounts were published and shared with the External Auditor on 13 July 2022, ahead of the deadline of 31 July. The audit is taking longer than anticipated although it is in the process of being finalised and it is planned for findings to be reported to Audit and

		Governance Board by the end of November 2022.
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Ref	Objective
FS 04	Make best use of cash resources available to the Council and meet its statutory responsibility by setting, implementing and monitoring the Treasury Management Policy.






Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Establish Treasury Management Policy and report to Council - March 2021.		Treasury Management Policy reported to Council on 02 March 2022
Provide monitoring reports to Executive Board on a bi-annual basis.		On track to report to Executive Board in November 2022.

Ref	Objective
FS 05	Ensure that the Capital Programme is affordable, prudent, and sustainable by setting and monitoring prudential borrowing indicators.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Establish and report prudential indicators to Council - March 2021.		Prudential indicators reported to Council on 02 March 2022
Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board on a bi-annual basis.		On track to report to Executive Board in November 2022

Key Performance Indicators







Ref	Description	Actual 2021 / 22	Target 2022 / 23	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
FS LI 01	Receive an unqualified external audit opinion on the accounts	Yes	Await ed	N/A		N/A	External audit not expected to provide audit opinion before the end of November at the earliest.
FS LI 02	Receive an unqualified VFM opinion	Yes	Await ed	N/A		N/A	The Council's External Auditor is expected to provide the VFM opinion by 30 November 2022.

	from the Council's External Auditor						
FS LI 03	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected	94.14 %	94.25 %	54.45	U		This is down by 0.13% compared with the same point last year. Adversely impacted by resource being allocated to the energy rebate scheme at the expense of undertaking on-going recovery action.
FS LI 04	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received	96.18 %	97.50 %	61.54	U		Business rates collection for the second quarter of the year is 61.54%, up by 6.78%% on this point last year. The in-year collection rate has been helped by credits placed against accounts following awarding of 2021/22 rate reliefs funded by the Government Covid Additional Relief Fund
FS LI 05	Average time for processing new claims (Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction)	16.22	18	25.50	U		The Benefits Team is experiencing long term staff sickness absence and maternity leave during the current financial year, and this is having a significant impact on processing performance.
FS LI 06	Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances	4.82	8	14.10	U		The Benefits Team is experiencing long term staff sickness absence and maternity leave during the current financial year, and this is having a significant impact on processing performance.
FSLI 07	Proportion of all supplier invoices paid within 30 days (including disputed invoices)	92.6%	93.0%	90.6%	U		Invoice payment performance can vary over time due to a range of factors. Performance at the end of quarter two has however dipped slightly when compared to performance in 2021/22.

Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Service



Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective
PPPE 01	To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of corporate training opportunities through the design and implementation of appropriate learning interventions, to include the development of bespoke Learning & Development offerings to individual service areas.




Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy June 2022		This is on target with all themes being given attention. The lag in some activity due to restrictions in 2020 and 2021 means that the strategy will likely be augmented and rolled forward at the end of 2022/23 to become the 2023 – 26 strategy.
Review and refresh annual training calendar September 2022.		Complete
Regular engagement with service managers to identify areas of challenge and develop appropriate bespoke solutions April, September, December 2022, and March 2023.		Ongoing and on target. Refer to Key Developments for further information.
Embed knowledge and skills gained from Senior Leadership and Management Development Programmes (MBA / MSc) December 2022.		On target. Engagement with acquired learning will contribute to the Council's Transformation Programme.
Complete delivery of in-house modular Leadership and Management development activity March 2023.		On target.
Monitor the embedding of knowledge and skills gained in-house modular Leadership and Management development activity. Ongoing and report in March 2023.		On target.

Ref	Objective
PPPE 02	Implement the Apprenticeship Policy to support the establishment of apprenticeships across the Council, and optimise return on the Apprenticeship Levy.



Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
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Establish 10 new apprentice placements within Council services, compliant with the requirements of apprenticeship legislation March 2023.		On target. 8 apprentice opportunities advertised July 2022 and 6 recruited to. Opportunities to be re-advertised December.
Establish 20 new existing employee apprenticeships to enable up-skilling in a range of business areas, compliant with the requirements of apprenticeship legislation March 2023.		On target

Ref	Objective
PPE 03	Optimise the use of the Agency Worker contract across Council services, to secure ongoing reductions in the incidence and cost of agency usage, and to ensure that correct and appropriate resourcing solutions are being deployed across Council services.




Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Review and consider most appropriate resourcing mix in collaboration with service management in areas of highest agency usage December 2023.		Work ongoing in this area and will form a workstream in the Council's Transformation programme.
Implement resourcing plans with service management in appropriate areas December 2023.		As above.
Ongoing monitoring of agency usage and spend April, September, December 2022, and March 2023.		In place. Currently high spend. Actions to be taken to step down. Refer to Emerging Issues above for more information.

Ref	Objective
PPE 04	Work with high demand service areas to develop and implement effective recruitment programmes, optimising labour market engagement to attract high quality candidates.




Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Identify service areas with highest consistent recruitment demand, turnover, and low attraction rates September 2022.		A more programmed approach will be taken to this given the changing labour market conditions. Refer to Emerging Issues for more detail.
Implement project based recruitment plans with service management in appropriate areas December 2022.		A more programmed approach will be taken to this given the changing labour market conditions. Refer to Emerging Issues for more detail.

















Corroborate out-turns of linked KPI's to assess effectiveness of approach to resourcing June, September, December 2022, and March 2023.	U	Market conditions making resourcing difficult across many areas, thus effectiveness of service may appear sub-optimal.
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Ref	Objective
PPE 05	Develop and implement an organisation wide change programme – The Future Work Programme - to evaluate and introduce revised working practices following to meet the requirements of the changing labour market and employee expectation in the post-pandemic environment (to include use of accommodation, HR policy and practice, wellbeing support, application of technology)

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Identify programme priorities and develop accommodation review workstream (in conjunction with EEP Dept) June 2022.		Accommodation review workstream in progress.
Mobilise programme workstream groups and commence baselining and evaluation work. October 2022.		On target
Conduct evaluation and feasibility work to inform design of new policy and practice in Council workplaces March 2023.		On target

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2021 / 22	Target 2022 / 23	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
PPPE LI 01	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	12.94 (Days)	9.5 (Days)	5.96	U		Slightly above target profile as we go into Autumn. Prevalence of endemic COVID-19 remains a factor. Increase over same period last year. Staff absence has returned to pre-COVID levels.
PPPE LI 02	Percentage of Employees without sickness	68.19	70.00	77.2			On target but worse than same time last year, however the impact of COVID measures in 2021/22 will have skewed the figures to some degree.
PPPE LI 03	Total Full Time Equivalent Staffing Establishment	3,250	For information Only	3,190	For information Only	For information Only	Reported for information purposes only.







	(Indicator for information only)						
PPPE LI 04	Total Staff (head count) (Indicator for information only)	4,233		4,122			
PPPE LI 05	Total Agency Worker Usage (number of placements – year to date)	919	650	481			Q2 outturn is driven by high usage in Children's Services. Target will inevitably be missed. Associated narrative included in Emerging Issues section above.
PPPE LI 06	Total Agency Worker Cost (cumulative gross cost – year to date)	£8.3m	£5.0m	£4.122 m			Q2 outturn is driven by high usage in Children's Services. Target will inevitably be missed. Associated narrative included in Emerging Issues section above.
PPPE LI 07	Number of apprenticeship placements established in the Council. (Cumulative – year to date)	2	10	0			8 new placements established – 6 recruited to so far this year.
PPPE LI 08	% of training delegates attending as proportion of places reserved:	100	95	83			Capacity to attend training is commonly cited as a reason why not all employees booked on training actually attend. Concerns to be investigated further. Significant concern around attendance levels at virtual sessions. Under investigation.
	Face to face	95	95	25			
	Virtual						
PPPE L109	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are:						Positive movement on component indicator (a), which follows improvement in last 2 years.
	a) Women	64.2%	55%	61.9%			
	b) From BME communities	2.67%	2.0%	2.7%			
	c) With a disability	1.25%	8.0%	0%			It should be noted that recruitment in to the top 5% of earners is generally limited, and as such scope for significant change is low.
PPPE LI 10	No of staff declaring that they meet the definition of disability within the Equality Act	1.25%	10.00 %	1.28%			Fluctuation exists due to turnover and the indicator outturn reflects self-declaration. The 10% target

	2010 as a % of the total workforce.						reflects the wider Halton community. Despite the mismatch, it is important that this indicator continues to be monitored.
PPPE LI 11	Minority Ethnic community staff as % of total workforce.	0.99%	1.00%	1.18%			Shows improvement however fluctuation exists due to turnover and outturn tends to hover around target level.
PPPE LI 12	Average time to recruit (Applicant Tracking System reported figure)	19 Days	15 Days	17 Days			Stable outturn, particularly in context of consistent increased demand.





ICT and Administrative Support Services

Key Objectives / milestones


Ref	Objective
ICT 01	Constantly evaluate and improve the usability, resilience, control and flexibility of the Council's Data Communications Network, Hardware and Software Infrastructure.



Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Continued Enhancement of the virtualization platform to enhanced or new technologies - March 2023.		Enhancements to the Halton Cloud platform continues at pace with the integration of Vendor Horizon 8 cloud-based systems and services within our own platform.
Further development of Cloud Services Platform - March 2023.		Enhancement planned in line with vendor software release and licensing restrictions to enhance functionality and the user experience
SharePoint and Records Management enhancements through the E5 licensing model - March 2023.		Enhancement planned in line with vendor software release to enhance functionality and the user experience
Continued development of Interactive Web Services, Enhancement and further SharePoint Integration - March 2023.		Enhancement planned in line with vendor software release to enhance functionality and the user experience
Further development of commercial ICT opportunity within desktop, hosting and DR provision - March 2023.		This will always remain a focus together with the development of existing client opportunity. Mersey Travel, LCR and Sefton together with the Cemeteries system deployed to a 3rd party. Other opportunities for the deployment of Agresso together with other systems are currently under discussion.
Continued compliance with Central Government and NCSC Security guidelines and compliance requirements – March 2023.		Changes and enhancements are managed on a daily basis as the ever-changing security landscape evolves and threats change on a daily basis – compliance with NCSC regulations and corporate and client needs remain a focus as detailed within this report.

Ref	Objective
ICT 02	The implementation of a range of new corporate wide facilities including Web services, records & document management, business process workflow, corporate desktop portal and GDPR process.









Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Continuing improvements, enhancements and commercial use of Cloud system - March 2023.		All of the authorities' internal and external clients now successfully utilise this solution – delivering HBC services to partners, clients and internal users. With M365 becoming the focus as we deliver the E5 licencing suite within the Microsoft cloud.
Continuing workflow implementation together with a centralised and online postage systems - March 2023.		Continuing to support the technology developments as well as administrative process across the authority. This will evolve and enhance as part of the technology developments ahead.
Improvement and enhancement of all web-based customer interfaces - March 2023.		This continues to be a primary focus with content and facilities evolving monthly, in line with the ICT development programme and business requirement. A review of the design solution has taken place with development tools constantly being assessed. Linked the SharePoint development strategy and links to the M365 suite currently in development.
Continued development of document management and distribution services - March 2023.		The Records Management Unit is central to the development of the multitude of projects associated with data governance, digitisation of paper records and the development of many services such as centralised post and print – with the Hybrid Mail project under development - this focus will remain.

Ref	Objective
ICT 03	The implementation of a range of new corporate wide facilities including cloud and web service solutions, records & document management enhancement, business process workflow, corporate desktop portal.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Continual development of the I Want Admin/Finance/HR Portals - March 2023.		Through enhancements linked to the Records Management Unit and the proposed procedural evaluation of the service developments will evolve in line with business need, together with technical developments

		underway through our own in-house systems development team.
Develop and enhance operational Records management Unit Services - March 2023 .		This is a constantly evolving process, and one that is now attracting and taking advantage of commercial opportunity.
The continued development of corporate administrative and customer service procedural services and support solutions March 2023 .		This is a constantly evolving process for the teams supporting our client departments and teams through to the customer service deliverables within the contact centre and the increasing face to face requirements of our residents through the One Stop Shop's within Runcorn and Widnes.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2021 / 22	Target 2022 / 23	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
ICT LI 01	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	99.98	99.00	99			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 LI 02	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	99.97	99.00	99			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 LI 03	School Support SLA: % of calls responded to within <u>agreed</u> target*: Priority 1 Priority 2 Priority 3 Priority 4	 100 100 100 100	 85.00 90.00 95.00 95.00	 100 100 100 99			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.
ICT LI 04	Average working days from delivery to	5 (Days)	5 (Days)	1			New procedures are in place, with the advent of a full VDi

completion of a new PC.							based workforce all desktop's can be replaced the same day – a process is in place for home workers to drop off and collect a new device again a same day service.
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Legal & Democracy

Key Objectives / milestones











Ref	Objective
LD 01	To ensure that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information and are kept informed of changing legislation and responsibilities.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Review constitution - May 2021.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The revised constitution was approved at Annual Council

Ref	Objective
LD 02	To provide efficient and effective Democratic Support Services that provides Elected Members, as key decision makers, with the necessary information, support and training opportunities to fulfil their individual potential and management and governance role effectively.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting where desired.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All Members have been offered a MAP induction
To induct all new members by October 2021.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All new Members have been inducted

Key Performance Indicators









Ref	Description	Actual 2021 / 22	Target 2022 / 23	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
LD LI 01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total).	54 (100%)	54 (100%)	54 (100%)			All Members are offered a MAP. All newly elected Members completed an initial MAP in May 2022.
LD LI 02	Percentage of Members attending at least one organised Training Event.	51 (94%)	54 (100%)	21 (39%)			All Members are offered a hybrid development programme via in-house officer training and e-Learning via the L&D Portal. It is, of course, a matter of personal choice for Members
LD LI 03	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days).	10 (Days)	10 (Days)	10 (Days)			The target has been met.
LD LI 04	Average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department (working days).	3 (Days)	3 (Days)	3 (Days)			The target has been met.
LD LI 05	% of Executive Board minutes published within 5 working days after the meeting.	100%	100%	100%			The target has been met.

Community & Environment**Key Objectives / milestones**

Ref	Objective
CE 01	Increase the number of Pupils having a school lunch, to raise awareness and increase levels of healthy eating.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Deliver a promotion and educational campaign - September 2020 and January 2021 .	NA	Not applicable due to Covid-19


Key Performance Indicators





Ref	Description	Actual 2021 / 22	Target 2022 / 23	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
CE LI 01	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Primary Schools.	71.42 %	75%	76.11 %			On target.
CE LI 02	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Secondary Schools.	56.29 %	65%	62.02 %			On target as this includes school leavers in year 11. This should realign
CE LI 03	Take up of school lunches (%) – primary schools.	57.81 %	60%	60.90 %			On target
CE LI 04	Take up of school lunches (%) – secondary schools.	50.10 %	55%	55.95 %			On target

Property Services







Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective
EEP 03	Corporate

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Commence Construction of new Leisure Centre on site by 31st October 2022		Subject to Exec Board approval a full start on site will be late November however works have already commenced with site diversion works

Commence Construction of Extension to St Patrick's Nursing Home by 31st Dec 2022		Anticipated start on site date put back to April 2023, design development works continuing and consultation process to be undertaken
Deliver agreed programmed maintenance programme to Corporate Buildings by 31st March 2023.		Budget on track to be spent by year end
Deliver agreed programmed maintenance programme to schools by 31st March 2023.		9 out of 13 projects already delivered others to be completed prior to year end
Complete refurbishment of 71 High Street, Runcorn by 30th September 2022		Works complete.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2021 / 22	Target 2022 / 23	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
EEP LI 03	Commercial and investment portfolio – rent receivable against the budget to monitor receipt of income of rents and service charges.	Investment £44,300 Commercial £574,916	Investment £53,467 Commercial £663,613	Investment £31,317 Commercial £262,552			Other vacant units, former Frankie and Bennies unit at the Hive. A shortfall of income is predicted over the year of £116,000 to exclude the income from the lease of no 29 – 31 Moor Lane, Widnes (Enterprise) which ended 14 June 2022.
EEP LI 04	Occupancy rates of commercial and investment portfolio.	100 % Investment 89% Commercial	100 % Investment 90% Commercial	100 % Investment 93% Commercial			There are 7 vacant properties which will be on the market or where negotiations have not been concluded. Negotiations are underway with a potential tenant for no 71 High Street and the former bus depot Moor Lane Widnes.
EEP LI 05	Occupancy of Widnes Market Hall.	95%	96%	89%			Difficult trading conditions and the impact on the Market following the introduction of parking charges are having an effect 4 traders having left since April 1 st 2022.

7.0 Financial Statements

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2022

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,955	2,928	2,781	147	353
Proposed Pay Award 2022/23	328	0	0	0	0
Insurances	894	668	642	26	0
Supplies & Services	415	288	278	10	7
Rent Allowances	35,500	15,661	15,661	0	0
Non HRA Rent Rebates	70	35	28	7	0
Discretionary Social Fund	106	60	60	0	0
Discretionary Social Fund Household Support	579	579	594	(15)	0
Discretionary Housing Payments	300	150	127	23	0
Covid Isolation Scheme	0	0	-9	9	0
Concessionary Travel	1,898	574	509	65	130
LCR Levy	2,241	2,241	2,241	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	17	0	0	0	17
Bad Debt Provision	77	0	0	0	(78)
Total Expenditure	48,380	23,184	22,912	272	429
Income					
Rent Allowances	-34,900	-13,473	-13,336	(137)	(406)
Non HRA Rent Rebate	-70	-35	-87	52	0
Housing Benefit Recovery	-400	-100	-71	(29)	0
Burdens Grant	-60	-60	-87	27	27
Dedicated schools Grant	-111	0	0	0	0
Discretionary Housing Payment Grant	-300	-125	-91	(34)	0
Housing Benefits Admin Grant	-515	-257	-257	0	0
Universal Credits	-5	-5	-5	0	0
Council Tax Admin Grant	-204	-204	-211	7	7
Household Support Fund Grant	-579	-144	-144	0	0
Covid Isolation Grant Income	0	0	36	(36)	0
Council Tax Liability Order	-502	-251	-265	14	0
Business Rates Admin Grant	-155	0	0	0	0
VEP Grant	-9	-9	-9	0	0
Council Tax Rebate Scheme Admin Gra	0	0	-79	79	79
Schools SLAs	-278	-278	-280	2	5
LCR Reimbursement	-2,241	-2,241	-2,241	0	0
Other Fees & Charges	-264	-130	-164	34	31
Reimbursements & Other Grants	-111	-56	-58	2	71
CCG McMillan Reimbursement	-82	0	0	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-461	-119	-119	0	(43)
Total Income	-41,247	-17,487	-17,468	(19)	(229)
Net Operational Expenditure	7,133	5,697	5,444	253	200
Recharges					
Premises Support	227	113	113	0	0
Central Support	2,518	1,259	1,259	0	0
Recharge Income	-5,753	-2,877	-2,877	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,008	-1,505	-1,505	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	4,125	4,192	3,939	253	200

Comments on the above figures

The net Department spend is £0.253m under budget at the end of Quarter 2. It is forecast the department outturn net spend will be £0.128m above the approved budget at year-end.

Employee costs are forecast to be under budget at year-end by £0.353m this is due to vacancies within Financial Management and Audit, Procurement & Operational Finance divisions. Delays on recruitment has been reflected in projections but these could change dependant on when posts are filled.

The 2022/23 pay award has yet to be agreed but the additional cost to the department over and above the approved budget is forecast at £0.328m. The cost of which will be funded from Council reserves. This figure being based on 153 full time equivalent staff.

Insurance costs are currently projected to match the 2022/23 budget, although this is dependent on the claims received and the excesses paid out during the year, and could change by year-end.

Concessionary travel costs are projected to underspend against the approved budget by £0.130m. Passenger numbers are still significantly below the levels seen prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, although operators are currently being supported at the same rates. Strike action by one of the local bus operators has led to a reduction in payments and increased forecast outturn variance from Q1.

Bad Debt provision relates to an estimate of possible non-return of Housing Benefits overpayments in this financial year.

Rent Allowance income is showing a significant shortfall of £0.406m against the budgeted income target due to an increase in the costs of supported accommodation. Sixty percent of these costs are funded from housing benefits, with the balance falling to the Council.

£27k of additional grant funding in relation to DWP legislative changes and the Housing Benefit Accuracy Initiative has been received. Additional funding has also been received in year for the administrative costs relating to the Council Tax Rebate Scheme, whereby households in Council Tax bands A-D received £150 to assist with energy bills.

Reimbursements & Other Grant income is projected to overachieve by £0.071m due to procurement card income and Early Payment Scheme discounts received.

All savings applied to the 2022/23 budget will be achieved.

POLICY, PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE & EFFICIENCY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at September 30 2022

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	2,162	1,048	987	61	175
Proposed Pay Award 2022/23	53	0	0	0	0
Employees Training	123	66	68	(2)	(4)
Apprenticeship Levy	300	151	155	(4)	(9)
Supplies & Services	144	86	93	(7)	(14)
Agency Related Expenditure	11	0	3	(3)	0
Total Expenditure	2,793	1,351	1,306	45	148
Income					
Fees & Charges	-132	-100	-102	1	(2)
Schools SLA	-448	-448	-452	4	4
Transfer from Reserves	-70	-17	-17	0	0
Total Income	-650	-565	-570	5	2
Net Operational Expenditure	2,143	786	736	50	150
Recharges					
Premises Support	72	36	36	0	0
Central Support	1,037	518	518	0	0
Recharge Income	-3,252	-1,626	-1,626	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,143	-1,072	-1,072	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	0	-286	-335	50	150

Comments on the above figures

At the close of the second quarter, Policy, Performance, People and Efficiency net spend is below the budget profile to date by £0.050m, the forecast position through to the end of the year is for net spend to be £0.150m below the approved budget.

Employee's expenditure is below budget. The majority of this is in relation to the budget for apprentices. There have only been a few apprentices in post but there are expected to be further apprentice's taking up posts across different service areas soon.

The 2022/23 pay award has yet to be agreed but the additional cost to the department over and above the approved budget is forecast at £0.053m. The cost of which will be funded from Council reserves. This figure being based on 47 full time equivalent staff.

All budget savings applied to 22-23 budget will be achieved

ICT & ADMINISTRATION

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2022

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employee	7,288	3,645	3,615	30	(82)
Proposed Pay Award 2022/23	485	0	0	0	0
Supplies & Services Expenditure	1,012	506	498	8	(14)
Capital Finance	78	5	1	4	33
Computer Repairs & Software	1,257	1,150	1,151	(1)	30
Communication Costs	13	13	9	4	0
Premises Expenditure	99	85	77	8	(27)
Transport Expenditure	3	2	1	1	1
Transfer from Reserves	15	0	0	0	15
Total Expenditure	10,250	5,406	5,352	54	(44)
Income					
Fees & Charges	-624	-260	-252	(8)	178
Schools SLA Income	-565	-480	-475	(5)	(83)
Contribution from Reserves	-485	0	0	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	0	0	-6	6	7
Total Income	-1,674	-740	-733	(7)	102
Net Operational Expenditure	8,576	4,666	4,619	47	58
Recharges					
Premises Support	389	195	195	0	0
Transport Support	19	12	12	0	0
Central Support	1,592	796	796	0	0
Asset Rental Support	1,494	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-13,112	-6,556	-6,556	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-9,618	-5,553	-5,553	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	-1,042	-887	-934	47	58

Comments on the above figures

In overall terms net spend is below the budget profile by £0.047m at the end of the second and forecast to be below the approved budget by £0.058m at the end of the financial year.

Employee's costs are £0.030m under the approved budget at the end of Q2. The Admin department is projecting spend to be lower than budget which is reduced departmentally by an overspend against budget in staffing within the IT Division. The majority of the overspend within the IT Division is due to not achieving staff turnover saving targets. It should be noted the projections in Admin are based on maintaining current staffing levels which include a level of vacancies. If this level of staffing continues then the additional £0.529m staff turnover savings target and efficiency budget targets that are part of the Admin budget can be met. However, if staffing levels increase this will have an impact on outturn. Admin staffing usually has high staff turnover so it is at times a volatile budget to project.

The 2022/23 pay award has yet to be agreed but the additional cost to the department over and above the approved budget is forecast at £0.485m. The cost of which will be funded from Council reserves. This figure being based on 240 full time equivalent staff.

Supplies and services projected costs within the Admin division are based on historical spend pre pandemic as this is best indication of projected spend now that services has resumed and staff returning to offices. These can be projected more accurately as the year progresses and managers can confirm spend.

Computer repairs and software and communication costs are based on managers projections and is predicted to be underspent against budget at year end.

Premises costs are predicted to overspend against budget at year end due to the well-publicised increases in gas and electricity prices.

SLA income from the SLA matrix is showing as marginally unachieved compared to budget for Q2 and this trend is expected to continue through to financial year-end.

Fees and charges income budget relates to external client income for traded services. This is for Agresso implementation and continued support and the income is marginally unachieved against budget for Q2 but is expected to overachieve at financial year-end.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2022

Capital Expenditure	2022/23 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
ICT Rolling Capital Programme	700	123	123	577
Total Capital Expenditure	700	123	123	577

Comments on the above figures.

It is expected that the full capital allocation will be spent at Outturn.

LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT**Revenue Budget as at 30th September 2022**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	1,913	956	898	58	48
Proposed Pay Award 2022/23	29	0	0	0	0
Supplies & Services	322	149	159	(10)	(20)
Civic Catering & Functions	39	11	2	9	17
Legal Expenses	218	73	121	(48)	(96)
Legal Expenses Locums	360	183	183	0	0
Transport Related Expenditure	10	7	4	3	6
Total Expenditure	2,891	1,379	1,367	12	(45)
Income					
Land Charges	-84	-41	-37	(4)	(6)
School SLA's	-85	-84	-82	(2)	(2)
Licence Income	-263	-114	-129	15	30
Fees & Charges Income	-65	-32	-34	2	2
Transfer from Reserves	-406	-200	-200	0	0
Total Income	-903	-471	-482	11	24
Net Operational Expenditure	1,988	908	885	23	(21)
Recharges					
Premises Support	58	29	29	0	0
Central Support	351	175	175	0	0
Recharge Income	-1,895	-947	-947	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-1,486	-743	-743	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	502	165	142	23	(21)

Comments on the above figures

In overall terms net spending is marginally under the budget profile by £0.023m at the end of Q2 and expected to be £0.021m above the approved budget at the end of the financial year.

Employee expenditure is forecast to be £0.048m under the approved budget at financial year-end due to a number of vacancies within the departmental structure. Some of these vacancies are being covered by legal locums, forecast cost of which are £0.360m through to year-end and are to be funded from Council reserves.

The 2022/23 pay award has yet to be agreed but the additional cost to the department over and above the approved budget is forecast at £0.029m. The cost of which will be funded from Council reserves. This figure being based on 39 full time equivalent staff.

Civic catering and functions projections are based on historic expenditure, before Covid restrictions These could therefore change dependant on number of events through to the end of the financial year.

Legal expenses are projected to largely overspend. These projections are only an estimation, these costs are dependent on complexity and number of cases so difficult to forecast accurately. It has been advised that increased case numbers and case complexity will mean increased barrister costs and the need to use outside legal services. It seems prudent therefore to project spend will be significantly higher than the approved budget through to the end of the last financial year.

Land and license Income is dependent on demand for property searches and license applications, so variable and difficult to project.

All budget savings applied to 22-23 budget will be achieved.

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2022

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	15,412	7,300	6,966	334	303
Proposed Pay Award 2022/23	640	0	0	0	0
Premises	2,543	1,272	1,317	(45)	(90)
Supplies & Services	1,398	750	800	(50)	(100)
Hired & Contracted Services	890	44	156	(112)	(225)
Book Fund	140	108	93	15	30
Food Provisions	404	817	801	16	32
School Meals Food	1,872	925	721	204	409
Miscellaneous Transport Costs	115	47	49	(2)	(3)
Other Agency Costs	156	92	69	23	(51)
Other Expenditure	0	2	5	(3)	(5)
Waste Disposal Contracts	6,538	3,269	3,268	1	2
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	67	16	41	(25)	48
Grant to Norton Priory	172	172	174	(2)	(1)
Rolling Projects	0	10	20	(10)	(20)
Capital Financing	0	4	4	0	0
Total Expenditure	30,347	14,828	14,484	344	329
Income					
Sales Income	-1,309	-678	-608	(70)	(141)
School Meals Income	-4,958	-2,275	-2,086	(189)	(378)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,546	-3,318	-3,298	(20)	(41)
Rental Income	-205	-75	-75	0	0
Government Grant Income	-359	-500	-664	164	329
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-597	-214	-149	(65)	(130)
Catering Fees	-88	-44	-45	1	2
Internal Fees Income	-247	-30	-38	8	16
Capital Salaries	-173	-46	-46	0	0
Transfers From Reserves	-742	-26	-24	(2)	0
Total Income	-14,224	-7,206	-7,033	(173)	(343)
Net Operational Expenditure	16,123	7,622	7,451	171	(14)
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,496	748	748	0	0
Transport	2,324	1,144	1,196	(52)	(104)
Central Support	4,449	2,225	2,225	0	0
Asset Rental Support	146	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-511	-255	-255	0	0
Net Total Recharges	7,904	3,862	3,914	(52)	(104)
Net Departmental Expenditure	24,027	11,484	11,365	119	(118)

Comments on the above figures

The net department spend is £0.119m under budget at the end of Quarter 2 with the estimated net spend for the year being forecast at £0.118m over the approved budget.

Net employee spend is below the budget to date by £0.303m, due to the number of vacancies within the department resulting from delays and difficulty in recruitment.

The 2022/23 pay award has yet to be agreed but the additional cost to the department over and above the approved budget is forecast at £0.640m. The cost of which will be funded from Council reserves. This figure being based on 425 full time equivalent staff.

Premises costs are £0.045m over budget at the end of Quarter 2. Savings were identified at Q1 due to NNDR bills remaining the same as in previous years, however, the forecast outturn position is currently projected to be £0.090m over budget due to significant increases in both electricity and gas costs. This has impacted all of the sites managed by the Department, especially at Leisure Centres. Runcorn swimming pool has closed but premises costs will continue while the building remains under Council control.

Additional premises costs are expected for Brookvale Leisure Centre and Halton Lea Library. A £0.020m feasibility study (Brookvale) and £0.030m building works (remove Café and re-instate as library) have not been budgeted for.

Spend on Supplies and Services is currently £0.050m over budget and spend on Hired Services is £0.112m over budget. This includes £0.050m domestic violence contribution to Sanctuary Scheme, £0.025m cemetery and crematory re-saleable spend which is offset by income from Sanctum Vaults purchases, £0.020m for the decommissioning of a temporary cremator, and £0.043m equipment including £0.008m/month for container hire. Some of this spend will be offset by Government Grant income where possible.

Invoices for 2021/22 waste disposal contracts are still to be received, expected during the next quarter. Whilst costs were estimated at financial year-end, any variance in the actual cost when invoices are received will impact on this year's financial position.

No invoices have yet been received for the waste disposal contracts in 2021/22. Estimated expenditure is therefore calculated based on the average cost per tonne in 2020/21 plus estimated additional tonnage in the current year. Any changes to these costs could have a large impact on the Department's outturn position.

The cancellation of certain events, such as the Vintage Rally means that the associated income targets will not be achieved, while some costs for these events have already been incurred.

Transport recharges are expected to be higher than budgeted due to fuel and other cost increases resulting in a forecast net overspend against budget at year-end of £0.104m.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2022

Project Title	2022/23 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	37	10	9	28
Halton Leisure Centre (Moor Lane)	6,296	950	938	5,358
Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment	70	40	38	32
Stadium decarbonisation scheme	0	0	117	(117)
Open Spaces Schemes	450	130	128	322
Children's Playground Equipment	80	5	2	78
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13
Crow Wood Park Play Area	39	10	10	29
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	0	0	340
Runcorn Town Park	256	110	110	146
Widnes Crem - Replacement Cremator	200	200	234	(34)
Spike Island / Wigg Island	60	0	0	60
Litter Bins	20	0	0	20
Totals	7,861	1,455	1,586	6,275

Comments on the above figures**Moor Lane Leisure Centre**

The estimated cost of the new leisure centre has increased significantly due to the current levels of inflation, scarcity of materials etc. A report has been issued to the Executive Board detailing the increased costs and a decision is imminent. It is likely that the decision will be to continue with the project as there are wider implications for the regeneration of the whole Kingsway area. The draft report indicates the increased annual revenue cost of borrowing from £1m to £2m given the construction cost and interest rate rises.

Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment

The scheme is now complete. There is a retention payment that may be held until Quarter 4 (% of Football Foundation funding grant is held until all conditions met/discharged) but the remaining spend will be in the current financial year.

Stadium Decarbonisation Scheme

Grant-funded project to reduce the DCBL Stadium's carbon footprint. This involved replacing the gas boilers with air source heat pumps and installing LED lighting and additional installation. The scheme is currently over budget by £0.117m, the cost of which will have to be funded through capital receipt reserves or increased borrowing.

Open Spaces

This covers spending on a variety of externally funded projects, including Arley Drive/Halton Housing Trust and Fairfield History projects.

Children's Playground Equipment

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

Crow Wood Park

Project to include replacement park building and upgrade to paths. The main contract for new park building has ended but a small amount of work to the building is required and will be done separately along with a small landscape contract to complete paths. This is still delayed due to team workload. Possibly will run to end of 2022/23.

Landfill Tax Credits Schemes

Currently used to support improvements for a rolling programme of existing playgrounds/open space schemes across the Borough. There are no projects currently identified and minimal spend if any against this code is anticipated in 2022/23.

Runcorn Town Park

Project to renew park infrastructure. Works from INEOS funding 2021/22 has not yet completely spent. The works are behind schedule due workload/capacity issues within D&D Team due to RSQ project taking priority. For 2022/23 there will be another major INEOS funding bid to continue the infrastructure replacement works, Bid has not yet been submitted but it is anticipated that next phase will carry over to 2023/24 assuming bid is successful.

Widnes Crematorium replacement Cremator

Installation works on site are progressing to programme. The new unit commissioned and fully operational with staff trained to us new systems. The final cost is £0.234m (increase due to a change of supplier plus some small additional works to the building in order to accommodate the new unit).

Wigg/Spike Island Recovery Works

Projects are at the commencement stage. The extent of works and exact split for works contracts is being assessed.

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**Revenue Operational Budget as at 30 September 2022**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employee Related Expenditure	5,159	2,529	2,609	(80)	60
Proposed Pay Award 2022/23	220	0	0	0	0
Repairs & Maintenance	2,306	1,216	1,216	0	0
Premises	92	90	90	0	0
Energy & Water Costs	919	284	387	(103)	(207)
NNDR	533	533	535	(2)	(2)
Rents	179	102	99	3	5
Economic Regeneration Activities	37	0	0	0	0
Security	485	211	211	0	0
Supplies & Services	494	398	398	0	6
Supplies & Services - Grant	1,192	415	415	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	113	72	72	0	0
Capital Finance	30	30	30	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	254	127	127	0	0
Total Expenditure	12,013	6,007	6,189	(182)	(138)
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-864	-144	-144	0	0
Rent - Commercial Properties	-842	-297	-235	(62)	(124)
Rent - Investment Properties	-53	-31	-31	0	0
Rent - Markets	-797	-391	-382	(9)	(18)
Government Grant	-690	-412	-412	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-1,451	-351	-351	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-410	-381	-345	(36)	(36)
Recharges to Capital	-237	-36	-36	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-1,717	-1,174	-1,277	103	207
Total Income	-7,061	-3,217	-3,213	(4)	29
Net Operational Expenditure	4,952	2,790	2,976	(186)	(109)
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,474	737	737	0	0
Transport Support	27	13	13	0	0
Central Support	2,082	1,041	1,041	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-6,258	-3,129	-3,129	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,671	-1,338	-1,338	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,281	1,452	1,638	(186)	(109)

Comments on the above figures

To date the Department is reporting net spend to be over the approved budget by £0.186m. The longer term forecast through to the end of the year estimates net spend will be above the budget by £0.109m.

By carefully monitoring the accounts, the department is utilising grant/external funding where possible to try and relieve the pressure on the core Council budget. This is reflected in employee expenses this quarter where various projects have been identified and staff time has been charged accordingly. All vacancies in the department have been put on hold to help achieve the staff turnover saving target of £0.099m.

The 2022/23 pay award has yet to be agreed but the additional cost to the department over and above the approved budget is forecast at £0.220m. The cost of which will be funded from Council reserves. This figure being based on 184 full time equivalent staff, although some of these will be grant funded.

Due to the ongoing rise in utility bills, expenditure for energy and water costs are projected to be over budget at the end of the financial year. Latest forecasts show an increase of 207% increase in Gas Costs and 64% electricity costs and this is reflected in the forecast. Increase in forecast energy costs will be met through Council reserves.

As the economy looks to recover from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic the financial challenges of commercial property rent present a significant financial challenge. As the working from home environment continues there is less need for office accommodation. The savings put forward to provide additional office space for external agencies at Rutland House will not be achieved this financial year.

In previous year's repairs and maintenance expenditure has been under budget to help the Department achieve an overall balanced position. An assessment has been carried out on forecast spend for the current year and the maintenance programme is showing the budget will be utilised in full.

The School Cleaning Service Level Agreement (SLA) is not covering its costs this financial year due to the need to employ agency staff in order to cover sickness and leave. A review of SLA charges will be undertaken ahead of the next financial year.

The department is projecting to under achieve on market rental income targets this financial year. During the last few months the occupancy rate has dropped to 92%. This may be linked to the introduction of customers having to pay for parking outside the market. There is a slight improvement on quarter 1 projections due to one off events held on a Sunday.

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Capital Projects as at 30 September 22

	2022-23 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure				
3MG	164	6	6	158
Property Improvements	213	169	169	44
Equality Act Improvement Works	300	34	34	266
Widnes Market Refurbishment	6	6	6	0
Broseley House	21	7	7	14
Woodend - Former Unit 10 Catalyst Trade Park	500	21	21	479
Solar Farm Extension	11	0	0	11
Murdishaw Redevelopment	31	0	0	31
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2,117	932	932	1,185
Astmoor Regeneration	14	10	10	4
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	36	0	0	36
St Paul Mews	500	500	515	(15)
Halton Lea TCF	388	353	353	35
Runcorn Town Centre Redevelopment	2,089	959	959	1,130
Runcorn Station Building Development	530	77	77	453
Total	6,920	3,074	3,089	3,831

3MG - Spend will be back-ended in the financial year, the largest of which is HBC field where the completion has been put back to Feb 2023. A more comprehensive forecast will be presented at the end of quarter three."

Property Improvements- All the budget will be spent by year end. There are a number of projects against this code including Reroofing the Fitness suite at the Stadium, lift replacement at Kingsway Learning Centre, and reroofing 73 High Street. There will also likely be some roofing works done at the Municipal Building against this budget.

Equality Act Budget- There are a number of access type schemes using the equality act budget this year so the department is anticipating the budget will be fully spent at year end.

Widnes Market Refurbishment - All Capital works have now been completed and all retentions paid

Broseley House - All works are complete on site, the only outstanding payment is the retention monies of circa £5,000 due in December 2022.

Woodend Unit 10 Catalyst Trade Park - No further spend is likely until the last remaining tenant vacates the property then the department will progress with demolition work.

Solar Farm Extension - It has now been operational for 2 years. No major issues have been identified. The system is performing in line with expectations in terms of energy produced and income.

Murdishaw - Work is ongoing to develop proposals for a community garden in the outdoor space at Murdishaw Community Centre. Funding is allocated to the project as match funding with a potential Awards for All bid to

be submitted in the next quarter. Environmental Improvements are ongoing in partnership with Onward and Riverside Housing.

Foundry Lane – There has been a delay in finalising the Development Agreement due to summer holiday leave commitments. The land will be transferred to the developer very soon. It is anticipated that the allocation will be spent in full this financial year.

Kingsway Learning Centre Improvement Works – Majority of the refurbishment works completed; redecoration works to the meeting rooms to be carried out.

St Paul Mews - No further spend is likely until the last remaining tenant vacates the property then the department will progress with the demolition work.




Halton Town Centre Fund - This LCR funded programme is now complete

Runcorn Town Centre Redevelopment - Options reports for the seven Towns Fund projects are now complete. Business Cases for four of the projects were submitted early August. The remaining business cases will be submitted at the beginning of November.





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.