

# Public Document Pack



## Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board

Monday, 20 November 2023 at 6.30 p.m.  
Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

S. Young

### Chief Executive

### BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Eddie Jones (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Angela Teeling (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Angela Ball	Labour
Councillor Emma Garner	Labour
Councillor Stan Hill	Labour
Councillor Noel Hutchinson	Labour
Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh	Labour
Councillor Christopher Rowe	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Mike Ryan	Labour
Councillor Tom Stretch	Labour
Councillor Andrea Wall	Labour

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 or e-mail  
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The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 29 January 2024*

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

**Part I**

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

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

*At a meeting of the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 18 September 2023 in the Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), S. Hill, Rowe, Ryan and Stretch

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Ball, Garner, Hutchinson, C. Plumpton Walsh and Wall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, S. Saunders, S. Lowrie, K. Arrowsmith and M. Jones

Also in attendance: Four members of the public

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

	<i>Action</i>
<p>ELS10 MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 19 June 2023, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>Feedback relating to queries raised in ELS4 (The Big Conversation) would be emailed to Members following the Meeting.</p>	
<p>ELS11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.</p>	
<p>ELS12 HALTON LEISURE CENTRE - VILLAGE CHANGE FACILITIES</p> <p>The Board received details of an online petition received by the Council on 10 August 2023 titled '<i>Single Sex Spaces</i>', in relation to the village changing room plan for the new Halton Leisure Centre.</p>	

The report provided Members with detailed information on Halton Leisure Centre plans and the design process relating to the village changing rooms. It also included information on the main consultation events relating to the building facility mix and the subsequent advertising of the planning application, which was submitted in May 2020, where comments from the public were sought and received.

Officers referred to the risk assessments a pool operator was required to carry out and the requirement for the production of Pool Safety Operating Procedures (PSOPs), which included how changing rooms were to be operated, supervised and cleaned.

The Chair circulated copies of plans of the village changing area to Members (also available on the Council's website) and read out a statement of rationale provided by the Architect, as to why the changing village is the most appropriate option for the wet side change at the new leisure centre:

- *A changing village design is recommended by Sports England as being preferable to the single sex separate male and female open-plan changing rooms alternative. All the new pools we have designed have been based around village changing. All our remodelling and refurbishment projects have taken old-fashioned single-sex open plan changing and converted it to village changing;*
- *The changing village allows a male parent/carer to supervise a female child in changing before and after swimming, and a female parent/carer a male child. In the same way, helpers can accompany people with disabilities of the opposite sex. However, separate sex changing rooms discriminate against single parents and parents in a same sex relationship;*
- *Village changing offers greater flexibility to accommodate varying mixes of male and female users, including the flexibility of allowing family groups to change together;*
- *Village changing gives flexibility to allow staff of either sex to supervise, clean and maintain the area. All changing spaces and lockers are available to all users giving flexibility to accommodate any proportion of male and female users;*
- *There is nothing in the Moor Lane design to prevent*

*Active Halton from running single sex swimming sessions as part of their timetable. Glazed screens between the foyer and the pool hall will be equipped with blinds. The separate adjoining school swimming/team change is available as an area that can be closed off for privacy during adult swimming for sensitive groups and will have separate access to toilets, pre-cleanse showers and the pool water;*

- *The changing village will minimise any perceived sense of insecurity for sensitive users through being equipped with individual cubicles of various sizes giving privacy for changing: single person, two-person and four-person/family. It will also be equipped with separate shower cubicles for post-swim showers, again offering better individual privacy than single sex separate male and female open-plan changing.*

Members discussed the two options described in the report and agreed that option one was preferable, but made the following observations and suggestions to ensure extra safeguards:

- Although construction was underway, could changes be made to the partitions of the cubicles to ensure that the gap at the bottom was at a minimum – officers would send Members the current measurements of the cubicle doors and raise this with the Architect;
- A vertical split sliding door option was suggested which would offer more flexibility of the space – officers would discuss this with the Architect;
- CCTV was discussed – could this be installed in the communal corridor area of the changing village;
- The presence of staff was important to ensure that the rules of the Centre were complied with, this would instill confidence in the public to know they were in a safe environment;
- Signage must be robust enough to deter offending; this should include the penalties for rule breaking, ie prosecution;
- Signage to include no nudity in the changing village – cubicles are provided for changing;
- Signage to include warning against the use of mobile phones in changing areas; and
- It was felt that the changing village design would be more serviceable and practical for families and carers attending the pool.

It was confirmed that the Board would make a site

visit to the Leisure Centre following the meeting. Officers were also tasked with obtaining information from other leisure centres in the Country who operate the same village changing facility, so that these could be shared and offer reassurance to petitioners.

RESOLVED: That the Board recommends Option one as the preferred option, with consideration being given to the above suggestions, and contractors continue to proceed with the current design layout and program of works.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

*One Member of the public asked to put forward a question on the above item. The Chair advised of the Public Question Time procedure, as described in agenda Item 3. She was invited to submit her question following the meeting for a response.*

#### ELS13 LEISURE CENTRE WORKFORCE & OPERATIONS

The Board considered a report on the Council's Leisure Centre operations and received an update on the construction of the Council's new Leisure Centre.

The last update was provided to the Board at the January 2023 meeting, where it was reported that at the time recruitment was proving to be difficult, which was a regional problem being experienced in the leisure business; the report outlined the recruitment activities carried out since then. Members were advised that there was a significant improvement in the time taken to recruit to vacant posts, but that the service still experienced a high turnover of staff; the possible reasons for this were discussed, as well as the following:

- Funding for swimming instructors training and the caveat to pay this back if leaving employment of the Council within two years of completion;
- Casual contracts for swimming instructors and minimum hours required;
- The restructure of the service to ensure stabilisation;
- The development of a Leisure Centre app;
- Timings of the swimming lessons for babies/toddlers and confusion of information on the website – this would be checked; and
- The status of the 'Little Dolphins' group would be checked.

Leisure Centre attendance figures for 2022/23 were provided to the Board; these would be used as comparisons from one year to the next, to show any increases /

decreases for the service.

Members were advised that the construction of the new Leisure Centre was progressing well, and Officers gave updates in relation to this. The Active Halton website hosted a section dedicated to the new build, with pictures and regular updates were uploaded.

The Board was also advised that *Wates*, the contractor, had delivered many community activities, these were listed in the report in paragraph 3.7 and included events at Riverside College and Cronton Sixth Form College.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

ELS14 HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ADULT LEARNING ANNUAL POSITION STATEMENT 2022/23

The Board received an overview and accompanying presentation of the Halton Adult Learning Service performance for the Academic Year 2022/23.

It was noted that Adult Learning provision for 22/23 was funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB), devolved to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA). In addition to this, funding was also available for Test and Learn initiatives and for the City Region Wide Pathways to Teaching project, coordinated by Halton Adult Learning. The Board was advised that all budgets were managed and monitored through regular scrutiny and accountability meetings between the CA Relationship Manager and Senior service Leaders within Halton Adult Learning.

The report provided information on the Ofsted Inspection carried out on the Adult Learning Service and the 'Good' rating that was maintained. The Inspectors' report was presented via weblink within the report.

Information relating to the current position with funding; Pathways to Teaching, achievements in non-accredited adult learning and learner recruitment was also provided.

Following Members queries the following additional information was provided:

- Adult Learning was for clients aged 19+ so special schools were not routinely contacted as pupils did not

usually fit into this age group;

- It was suggested that the Adult Learning Team make contact with the Halton Young Carers Centre to market courses that young carers could aspire to;
- Recruitment of teachers was sometimes challenging due to the types of employment contracts on offer;
- Promotion of the Adult Learning Centre in colleges did already take place;
- The new marketing strategy would include more robust marketing methods;
- Members noted that most of the courses available were free for Halton residents; and
- The uptake of courses was recorded in a marketing log to show the Ward they came from.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ELS15 BUSINESS GROWTH PROGRAMME COMPLETION & BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICE LAUNCH

Due to the unavailability of the reporting officer, this item is deferred to the November meeting.

ELS16 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 4 OF 2022/23

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 4 of 2022-23 (1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these. It was noted that these reports were emailed to Members on 10 July 2023 after they were finalised.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2022-23 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

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

The report detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

RESOLVED: That the quarter 4 2022-23 performance management reports be received.

ELS17 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2023/24

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter one of 2023-24 (1 March 2023 to 30 June 2023) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2022-23 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

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

The report detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

The Board noted the improvements reported within the recruitment and HR processes for the Leisure Service and Adult Learning. A suggestion was made that the currently empty *Frankie and Bennie's* unit could be used by students for training; this would be put forward.

RESOLVED: That the quarter one 2023-24 performance management reports be received.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

*Meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.*

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

**DATE:** 20 November 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.

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

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

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

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

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

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

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

**DATE:** 20 November 2023

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive

**SUBJECT:** Executive Board Minutes

**WARD(s):** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Community 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 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None identified

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

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

## **Extract of Executive Board Minutes Relevant to the Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board**

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### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2023**

<b>EXB17</b>	<b>THE BRINDLEY THEATRE</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which set out the financial position of the Brindley since its opening and requested authority to delegate the full commercial programming of the Brindley Theatre to the Brindley Manager and Leisure Services Divisional Manager.

The Board was advised that the matter had been discussed in detail at the Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board meeting on 19 June 2023.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be approved; and
- 2) the Board delegates the full commercial programming of the Brindley Theatre to the Brindley Manager and Leisure Services Divisional Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Employment, Learning and Skills and Community.

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2023**

<b>EXB 34</b>	<b>LIBRARY STRATEGY</b>
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The Board received a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided a copy of the draft Library Strategy for 2023-28 and gave an update on the work of the Library Service for 2022/23.

The Board was advised that the current Library Strategy would expire in 2023 and a new draft Strategy document had been produced. A copy of the Strategy document was appended to the report for consideration.

The new Strategy had previously been considered and endorsed by the Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board at its meeting on 19 June 2023.

RESOLVED: That the Library Strategy be adopted.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Employment, Learning Skills and Community PPB
<b>DATE:</b>	20 November 2023
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Leader
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	The Corporate Plan - The Big Conversation Update
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough Wide

## 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To share with Employment, Learning Skills and Community PPB an update on 'The Big Conversation', which is integral to formulating a new Council Corporate Plan, to take effect from April 2024.

## 2.0 **RECOMMENDED: That**

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) that **Employment, Learning Skills and Community PPB continues to endorse the approach to facilitate 'The Big Conversation'**.

## 3.0 **Supporting Information**

### 3.1 Background

The Big Conversation is about engaging with the public so that they understand the challenges that the Council is facing.

It is an approach between the Council and those who live or work in Halton to work together in order to create an improved borough in all aspects of everyday life.

A Stakeholder Analysis together with a Communications Plan was developed in order to generate and establish as many opportunities as possible to involve all our stakeholders in many different and varied ways.

The Big Conversation consultation is open until November 30<sup>th</sup> 2023.

- 3.2 Breakdown of responses by source, as of October 4<sup>th</sup> 2023:

**Total Number of responses: 777**

No reply	41
Inside Halton	37
HBC Staff	220
Councillors	-
Comms Flyer	9
Comms Poster	-
Comms Desktop	-
Comms Outdoor	-
Comms Partner	-
Comms Short URL	5
Comms Media	43
Comms Banner	-
Comms School	-
Comms Staff Poster	-
Comms Bin Wagon	-
Comms Meta Advert	197
Comms Organic Facebook	94
Comms Organic X	9
Comms Organic Threads	1
Comms Organic LinkedIn	4
Comms Chamber Newsletter	-
Comms Business Improvement Growth	-
Comms Carers Centre	116
Comms Adult Social Care	-
Comms TUC	1
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>777</b>

**Promotion, Consultation & Engagement:**

## 3.3

## 3.3.1

Consultation opportunity has been targeted to the following places / groups as detailed below. The number indicates the potential responses available;

- Social Media Impressions: 234,487 (times the survey was delivered to feeds on Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, Threads, LinkedIn and X)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday Business Event: 60

- Active Ageing Get Together Forum: 115
- Grangeway Community Centre: 30
- Dementia Group: 15
- Halton Patient Participation Group: 24
- Heads of Primary Schools: 60
- Runcorn Shopping city (specific) Adults: 44, Under 16`s: 6
- Widnes Market (specific) Adults: 30, Under 16`s: 10
- School Circular: 100 staff (serving 18,388 pupils)
- HBC Employees: 3000

Note that it's difficult to put an exact figure on the actual footfall for Runcorn Shopping Centre and Widnes Market, but based on estimated weekly footfall a conservative best guess would be:  
Runcorn Shopping Centre: 500 – 1,000  
Widnes Market: 500 – 1,000

Specific Forums and Venues attended / Scheduled to attend:

3.3.2

- **HBC Workforce**  
Email to HBC Workforce: July 28<sup>th</sup>  
  
Stephen Young Video message: September 5<sup>th</sup>
- **General Public**  
Inside Halton Magazine: Summer edition
- **Businesses**  
Halton Chamber of Commerce Network Meeting: September 5<sup>th</sup>  
  
Halton & Warrington Business Fair: November 9<sup>th</sup>  
  
Sci-Tech Daresbury Business Breakfast: November 10<sup>th</sup>  
  
Newsletters - Halton Chamber of Commerce  
Business Improvement Growth
- **Partners**  
Halton Patient Participation Group: September 28<sup>th</sup>  
  
Halton TUC  
  
Newsletters - Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS  
Halton Patient Participation Group
- **Adult Services**  
Healthy & Active Ageing Event (Runcorn Shopping Centre):  
September 18<sup>th</sup>  
  
Dementia Group: Widnes (September 29<sup>th</sup>) and Runcorn

(October 11<sup>th</sup>)

Partners in Prevention Event (Widnes Market): September 21<sup>st</sup>

Healthy and Active Ageing Event Get Together: Runcorn (October 9<sup>th</sup>) / Widnes (October 17<sup>th</sup>)

Newsletters – Young Carers and Adult Carers

- **Children Services**

Primary Schools Heads Meeting: September 21<sup>st</sup>  
(with an email follow up: September 21<sup>st</sup>)

Children`s Provider Network Meeting: October 4<sup>th</sup>

Halton Youth Cabinet: October 12<sup>th</sup>

Family Hub Centres – Kingsway (October 12<sup>th</sup>) and Windmill Hill (October 24<sup>th</sup>)

Riverside College: October 17<sup>th</sup>

Newsletters – Schools e-circular: September 4<sup>th</sup>

**Emerging Themes:**

3.4 A reminder that the 5 suggested themes identified were:

- 3.4.1
- Tackling inequality, helping those who are most in need
  - Building a strong, sustainable local economy
  - Supporting children, young people and families
  - Improving health, promoting wellbeing and supporting greater independence
  - Working towards a greener future

3.4.2 Level of agreement to all of the 5 suggested themes is very high, with the highest level of agreement being: 'Improving health, promoting wellbeing and supporting greater independence', and the lowest being 'Working towards a greener future'.

3.4.3 In terms of how can the Council can support these themes, the top 3 identified so far are:

- 'Provide opportunities for young people to engage with their local community and do things that interest them, keep them safe and make them happy'.
- 'Create vibrant town centres for everyone to enjoy across the Borough'
- 'Continue to ensure local people are able to enjoy the Borough`s parks and green spaces'

3.4.4 In terms of the ways our stakeholders can support the identified themes, these were as follows:

- 'Spending money with local shops and businesses'
- 'Doing their best to stay healthy and active'
- 'Look out for children and the vulnerable'

3.4.5 Identifying other potential corporate themes, the top 3 were:

- Business / Regeneration / Employment
- Environment: litter / pavements / greenery overgrowth
- Crime / Police / Antisocial behaviour

3.4.6 Given only 1% of respondents were aged between 16-24 years to-date, the current desires and commitments could change significantly when we have engaged with a greater number of young people. Nationally, younger people appear to be more concerned about the climate change agenda, and therefore the lack of support for green spaces and recycling efforts may change in December once the final sum of raw data is available.

Nevertheless, there is evident support for the provision of learning and skills services that nurture young adults and provide sustainable career opportunities for the whole borough; which is subsequently supported by the desire of a strong local economy – which residents are willing to invest in.

### 3.5 **Gaps and actions required:**

3.5.1 Demographic – there is a clear gap in the 16 - 24 year olds age bracket.

Actions:

- Target young adults at Riverside college/post 16 education settings
- Planned visits to Family Hubs (Kingsway and Windmill Hill)
- Sharing the Big Conversation on forms of social media which would target specifically this age group, eg Instagram and Messenger.

3.5.2 Geographical areas – analysis has shown that response has been low in 4 wards, 2 in Widnes, (Ditton, Hale Village and Halebank and Bankfield) and 2 in Runcorn, (Halton Lea and Norton South and Preston Brook)

Action:

These areas will targeted by iWalkers on Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. Ward members will be advised that this will be taking place.

3.5.3 Work on-going in terms of indenting specific stakeholder groups that we haven't actively engaged with as yet, such as Faith groups and the visually impaired.

3.5.4 The introduction of iWalkers, who wear screens that can feature

multiple images and videos, as well as pass out flyers and collect information. On the day they will also add someone to a Whatsapp group and send images for social media and updates about the days progress.

**3.6 Timeline:**

- Mid-October onwards – gaps identified and addressed
- November 30<sup>th</sup> 2023: Consultation ends.
- December 2023: Analysis undertaken – key priorities identified.
- January – February 2024: Summary developed / shared with stakeholders via drop-in sessions within council buildings and open engagement at community spaces.
- March 2024: Corporate Plan finalised and approved at key forums.
- April 2024: the New Corporate Plan is launched.

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no specific policy implications at this stage; however ultimately there will be a new contemporary and relevant Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan.

**5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There will be a potential financial implication around the engagement of 2 iWalkers, at a cost of £1,200 per day for 8 hours.

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

6.1 The Corporate Plan is Halton Borough Council's key strategic document. This plan sets out the main vision, themes and values of the Council.

'The Big Conversation' will help to determine the Council's new set of priorities, which will be translated into the plan.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The major risk is that we do nothing and roll out the same priorities as we have done in previous years. To this end the current Corporate Plan is a losing relevance and doesn't fully engage with either the workforce or the people of Halton in the contemporary environment.

- 7.2 The Council is serious about ‘Reimagining Halton’, aligned with that commitment, this is a perfect opportunity to undertake a meaningful piece of work which will engage the people of Halton and together with our workforce determine a set of new priorities, which will make a difference and take Halton forward over the next 3 – 5 years.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 Equality and Diversity may well be a specific Corporate Plan priority, but if not then it will certainly underpin the Plan. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the policy development process.

The consultation process has been designed to be inclusive.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 At this stage there is nothing specific to highlight within the context of this report; however there is a distinct possibility that as a result of ‘The Big Conversation’ climate implications will form one, or a key part of on, of the Council’s key priorities.

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

- 10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	20 November 2023
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Business Growth Programme Completion and Business Support Service Launch
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough-wide

## 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To update members about the performance and closure of the Business Growth Programme phase three and introduce the Business Support Service funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

## 2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That**

the report be noted and receive a further update with the progress of the Business Support Service in six months' time.

## 3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Business Growth Programme is a business support initiative that has been running in three phases since 2014. The programme was funded partly by Halton Borough Council to draw down European Regional Development Fund monies. As part of the process of leaving the European Union the allocation of structural funds to the UK ended. In July of 2022, the UK Government announced the replacement for European funding which is the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

### **Progress of Business Growth Programme (Phase Three) up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

- 3.2 The aim of the Business Growth Programme was to provide a range of business support services at no cost to the client, designed to build both on the capacity and the confidence within those SMEs reluctant to engage with existing business support providers. This reluctance might have been for many reasons, possibly because of

lack of knowledge, understanding or simply because they are reluctant to pay for, or did not perceive the value of, existing commercial provision.

- 3.3 The Business Growth Programme Manager undertook an intensive business diagnostic with all businesses and produced an action plan. The action plan focused on the main key area/s that the business required to help it grow and develop, and throughout the Covid-19 pandemic also helped businesses to remain sustainable.
- 3.4 Halton Borough Council offered one to one specialist support of up to a maximum of 24 hours in Phases 1 & 2. The number of hours reduced in Phase 3 down to an average of 18 hours; the 18 hours could be extended if it was deemed that there was a good enough reason, for example where support had been split into two areas and we didn't want the advice to be too diluted, or that the business showed growth potential.
- 3.5 Some businesses went on to engage with the supplier post Business Growth Programme (BGP) support, and feedback from the businesses indicated that they did not initially envisage just how beneficial the support would be.
- 3.6 The aims of the project have been met in respect of the engagement with businesses that would not necessarily seek out specialist support, and that the businesses have embraced and valued the support offered. Some of the businesses who are able, have gone on to engage with the specialist following on from the support received through the programme.
- 3.7 Phase 3 of the BGP faced an unprecedented environment, which businesses could not have foreseen, and were then faced with Brexit and the new rules and regulations regarding import/export paperwork, the energy crisis and on top of that the surge in the cost-of-living increase. Businesses have had to evolve to survive and develop new strategies to enable them to remain competitive within the market. When the businesses initially came out of lockdown, there was a rush for them to 'make up for lost time' and gain some normality. Some of the SMEs appeared 'too busy' to engage with specialist support as they felt it would take up too much of their time and did not always consider the investment of their time, or the long-term benefits it could bring.
- 3.8 The challenges mentioned above impacted on SMEs in terms of the job market and creating new jobs, although we are now hearing that some of the SMEs are slowly starting to create jobs again. The job market has also changed dramatically, and it has brought with it demands from prospective employees and changes to the way in which people work.

### **Achievements of the Business Growth Programme**

- 3.9 The net result of achievements of programme are as follows - supporting 267 businesses with their growth plans as opposed to a target of 258. This is a performance of **7% above target**, which is quite remarkable given that the programme was significantly impacted by several COVID lockdowns. For example, in 2021 there were considerable lockdowns where businesses were accessible and contact between client and business were encouraged by Government advice to be kept to a minimal and this also covered restrictions with staff delivering the programme.
- 3.10 Employment targets were not met however we believe this is largely as a result of general economic nervousness with employers concerned about committing to costs long term. We will demonstrate in the explanation of the new business support service that this has been reflected in the new targets for that programme.

### **Business Support Service September 2023 to March 2025 (UKSPF)**

- 3.11 The Halton Council's Business Investment and Growth Team, together with the other LCR local authorities, LCR Growth Platform and LCR Combined Authority will work in partnership to deliver Placed Based Business Support, building on activities and lessons learned from the ERDF Business Growth Programme. The work aligns with the LCR Plan for Prosperity and Halton Economic Strategy.
- 3.12 The aim is to deliver business support at the local level through direct, commissioned delivery and by linking businesses into the wider Shared Prosperity Funded (SPF) programmes and other support initiatives in the City Region.
- 3.13 The Business Support Service will provide an important function in assisting SMEs (predominantly) by providing direct support but will also be the principal access point for businesses to access all the other SPF programmes. In Halton's case this also includes Town Centre support, a separate but linked, UKSPF intervention which Halton Council's Business Investment and Growth Team will also deliver.
- 3.14 While there is a strong focus on SMEs and new enterprises, support will also be available to Halton's larger and foreign owned companies in partnership with Government providers and Growth Platform as part of wider inward investment activities.
- 3.15 With UKSPF in mind, the Business Investment and Growth Team at Halton Borough Council underwent a restructure to ensure that the

administrative burden of the programme would be shouldered by Halton Council, freeing up Government funding for direct delivery.

3.16 Halton Council's Business Investment and Growth Team is the enterprise, business support and inward investment service of Halton Council, it leads on business engagement and supports new and existing businesses and investors in Halton to increase economic growth in the borough. Halton Council's Business Investment and Growth Team is also the council's business support and investment delivery brand, working closely with partners across the Liverpool City Region including the Combined Authority, Growth Platform, Local Enterprise Partnership and a range of business membership organisations and networks to help maximise the benefits of the support offered by these organisations. The overall aim is to make Halton an attractive and easy place for businesses to start, operate, grow, and thrive. The team delivers the local business, growth, enterprise and inward investment objectives of the council's Halton 2030 Vision and Economic Strategy. It also delivers current European Regional Development and Government funded business growth projects, including Growth Hubs and UKSPF.

3.17 Halton Council's Business Investment and Growth Team services include:

- General business advice and guidance via triage service - any business, any size, any sector.
- Managed referral to specialist start-up support.
- One-to-one advice and support for businesses seeking to grow.
- Free business events and workshops including Halton Economic Forum; Halton Huddle (networking group for digital, creative & tech businesses); Financial and Professional Networking Group
- Production of business diagnostic and action plans.
- Help accessing finance including grants and loans.
- Finding sites and premises to start, expand or relocate businesses in Halton.
- Accessing new business markets and export.
- Supporting new inward investment.
- Development of key business sectors.
- Business consultation.
- Regular updates on our website and social media pages with any relevant business news or info
- Point of contact and referral system to other council departments where appropriate

### **Targets**

3.18 Number of businesses receiving non-financial support **67**

Number of new businesses started **16**

Number of jobs created **54**

### **Benefits**

3.19 The project will support in the region of 1,000 businesses including the 67 mentioned in the target agreed with the Liverpool City Region Mayoral Combined Authority.

Target of 16 business starts is ambitious however an additional benefit of this target is we will introduce a business start service in Halton specifically for Halton businesses, which we've not had before.

The jobs target is a little more difficult to achieve as it has not been achieved historically and we'll be working specifically with ambitious SMEs who are looking to recruit in the local area as part of their expansion plans.

### **Funding**

3.20 The administration of the programme will be delivered by the HBC Business Investment and Growth Team, and direct delivery will be funded by UKSPF and reclaimed on a quarterly basis.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The programme fits with the overall ambitions highlighted in the economic assessment and Halton 2030 it will deliver the business support highlighted in those documents.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The funding for the programme is not borne by Halton Borough Council and will be claimed on a quarterly basis from the UKSPF from the Liverpool City Region Mayoral Combined Authority, who are the accountable body.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Programme has the potential of providing employment services for all communities and groups in Halton.

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

The project will provide opportunities for people seeking support and self-employment support in Halton.

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Business and employment opportunities will help to promote a better quality of life locally.

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

None

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are limited risks associated with this programme as the service has been providing similar support for more than a decade and the model has proved to be successful. One of the drawbacks of the previous programme was limited marketing and communications opportunities. Part of the restructure, which will enable the business support service to deliver in a way that will, now includes a marketing strategy accessing and using all platforms and media.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Programme is to provide equality and opportunity at all junctures to all groups to ensure access to those opportunities are enjoyed by all.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The major climate change implication of this programme is ensuring that training and business support is provided locally thereby reducing the need to perform unnecessary journeys as part of business and training transactions during the normal course of business.

One of the business support strands specifically is aimed at carbon

reduction, which is split into two parts, first being about reducing overall carbon emissions and the second looking at new and innovative methods of carbon reduction introduce the market.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director, Environment & Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Halton People into Jobs – transition from engaging with Unemployed Halton residents to Economically Inactive residents
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the current services provided by Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ) and our future focus to engage with more Economically Inactive residents for Ways to Work and the new Work and Health Pioneer Programme.

To provide opportunities to members to raise any questions with regards to us supporting Economically Inactive/Unemployed residents.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Halton People into Jobs has delivered a range of DWP Welfare to Work Programmes since 2011 including the Work Programme, Ways to Work, the Work and Health Programme, JETS and more recently the Work and Health Programme Pioneer Support Programme. All of these programmes have supported unemployed Halton residents with looking for and sustaining employment. Recent funding streams focus more on engaging with and supporting Economically Inactive residents into work.

Ways to Work has been delivered by HPIJ since January 2016. It was funded by ESF/DWP up until October 2023 when ESF funding ceased. Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) has been allocated to cover the gap between ESF ending on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) starting on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. The focus for both SIF and UKSPF is to engage with Economically Inactive.

### **Definition of Economically Inactive for SIF/UKSPF is:**

Economically inactive individuals are those not in work and not actively seeking work (unlike unemployed individuals who are actively seeking work).

Not all economically inactive individuals claim benefits. For those that do, this would include those claiming either “legacy” benefits or those within specific conditionality regimes in Universal Credit: The former includes Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support (IS). The latter includes claimants within the Preparation Requirement or Work Focused Interview Requirement conditionality regimes. There is no length of time on inactivity required. People count if they are 16+.’

In October 2023 Halton Borough Council entered into a subcontracting arrangement with the existing Work and Health Prime (WHP) Contractor (Ingeus) who had been tasked with delivering the Department for Work & Pensions WHP Pioneer Support Programme until September 2024.

**Definition of Economically Inactive for DWP/WHP Pioneer is:**

Inactive customers will be defined as customers who are not in UC intensive work search regime or income based JSA at point of referral. The following will therefore qualify:

- Universal Credit - Work Preparation
- Universal Credit – Work Focused Interview Only
- Universal Credit – No Work-Related Requirements
- Universal Credit – Light Touch Out of Work
- Universal Credit – Conditionality Unknown
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Employment and Support Allowance Contributory (ESAC)
- Incapacity Benefit (IB)
- Income Support (IS)
- Passport Incapacity Benefit (PIB)
- Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)
- Training Allowance (TA)
- Not in receipt of any “out of work” benefit.

- 3.2 Both of the above contracts are voluntary programmes for individuals that meet the respective Economically Inactive criteria and are looking to start work in the immediate future.

Ways to Work is grant funded and quarterly claims will be submitted to the LCRCA for costs associated with delivering the contract. The WHP Pioneer programme offers ‘Payment by Results’, which are received on achievement of sustained job outcomes. Performance is measured against sustained outcomes being met (meeting the earnings threshold of approx. £4000).

Participants can access the WHP Pioneer programme for up to 15mths. They are supported by their Advisor/Employment Specialist throughout the duration of the programme. Ways to Work will be funded through SIF (Oct 23 – Mar 24) and then UKSPF (Apr 24 – Mar 25). Discussions are being held with the LCRCA regarding future funding to continue the Ways to Work service beyond March 2025.

### 3.3 Breakdown of Economically Inactive in Halton (NOMIS):

Economic inactivity (Jul 2022-Jun 2023)				
	Halton (Level)	Halton (%)	North West (%)	Great Britain (%)
<b>All People</b>				
Total	17,100	22.2	23.2	21.4
Student	#	#	26.1	26.7
Looking After Family/Home	3,600	21.1	16.8	19.5
Temporary Sick	#	#	2.3	2.3
Long-Term Sick	6,600	38.4	31.2	26.6
Discouraged	!	!	#	0.3
Retired	1,700	10.2	12.7	13.1
Other	#	#	10.6	11.6
Wants A Job	4,200	24.4	16.4	17.6
Does Not Want A Job	12,900	75.6	83.6	82.4

### 3.4 Performance/achievement

#### Ways to Work (Oct 23 – Mar 24)

- 94 starts on programme (between Oct 23 and Mar 24)
- 32 job starts (between Oct 23 and Mar 24)
- 34% into work

#### WHP Pioneer Programme (Sep 23 – May 24)

- 83 starts on programme (between Sep 23 and Sep 24)
- 44 job starts (between Nov 23 and May 25)
- 28 paid job outcomes (between May 24 and Feb 26)
- 53% into work
- 63% of those in work to reach a sustained outcome

### 3.5 Income and expenditure

WHP Pioneer Programme – income is generated from job outcome payments (paid when the participant earns £1,000. Notification is received from HMRC when they achieve this) and sustained job outcome payments, whilst customers remain in sustainable employment.

Ways to Work – income is generated through quarterly claims to cover the associated costs of the service plus a 15% management fee.

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

Where possible, access to other available services and/or funding streams are maximised to support the delivery of the Ways to Work and WHP Pioneer Programme contract and their challenging targets.

### 3.6 **Key Successes**

WHP Pioneer Programme – mobilisation and implementation plan was achieved within a short timescale ensuring that the contract 'go live' date was met on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023. HBC are the only local authority that delivers WHP and the WHP Pioneer Programme across the LCR.

Ways to Work – successful close down of the ESF funded programme 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and transition to new SIF funded programme from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023. 2328 Halton residents were supported through the ESF/DWP funded Ways to Work programme between January 2016 and September 2023 of which 1061 were supported into paid employment (45% into work).

### 3.7 **Key issues**

Two similar programmes running parallel to each other potentially trying to engage with the same customer group. However, HPIJ is well placed to utilise funding streams effectively so that customers and employers get the best out of each programme.

The number of Inactive referrals from Jobcentre Plus will need to be maintained. HPIJ will need to effectively market both contracts to meet the contracted (indicative) profiles/targets for both contracts.

### 3.8 **Concluding comments**

Performance across programmes for the unemployed has been strong. We acknowledge the transition from supporting unemployed residents to economically inactive will be a real challenge but the team will continue to work hard and will strive to achieve the targets set out.

## 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified at this stage.

## 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 DWP/LCRCA contracts are closely monitored to ensure sufficient income is being generated to cover the full delivery costs of provision.

HBC internal audit conduct annual audits on externally funded provision across the Employment, Learning and Skills Division.

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

### **6.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

Some HPIJ customers engage with other projects across Halton that complement each other in supporting local residents and their families with a range of issues.

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

The fantastic achievements that have come out of the various Work Programmes delivered by Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning and Skills Division getting so many people into work are a very positive outcome for the local economy. Many of the individuals that have accessed the programme have also gained vital maths, English, IT and employability skills along the way, in addition to sector specific qualifications such as FLT, Digital Skills, Food Hygiene, CSCS etc. Signposting to partner organisations to support individuals furthest away from the labour market has been a key part of the programme. Delivery of the Ways to Work and WHP Pioneer Programme will continue to build on the success we have had previously.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

HPIJ customers will be signposted to various health and wellbeing initiatives that are delivered by Halton Borough Council and other external agencies including the Health Improvement Team to support individuals with a range of complex health barriers.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

None

### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The management of these contracts has been meticulous and close monitoring both internally and externally ensure any risks identified are carefully mitigated, with clear action plans in place to address any underperformance, quality and compliance factors.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

None

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

None identified.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Employment Learning & Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	20 November 2023
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director Environment & Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Halton's 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough wide

## 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 A verbal update on the activities and events planned for Halton's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will be provided at the meeting.

2.0 **RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.**

## 3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Halton was formed on 1 April 1974, it will be 50 years old on 1 April 2024. To recognise this momentous occasion, there are plans for HBC, external organisations and groups to hold activities and events throughout 2024. The aim is to involve as many schools, local community groups, individuals as possible and small grants will be available to assist in the planning and delivery of activities.

3.2 A temporary externally funded Culture Officer post has been created, utilising UK Share Prosperity Funding. This Officer will assist in the preparations for Halton's 50<sup>th</sup> Celebrations, working alongside colleagues in Leisure Services.

3.3 To provide the Board with the very latest information, the update will be provided at the meeting.

## 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The ethos behind the 50<sup>th</sup> Celebrations is that it is for Halton's residents, community groups and businesses. The grants will only be available to those who satisfy a strict Halton based criteria.

## 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities and events managed by Halton

Borough Council will be funded using a grant already secured from the UK Share Prosperity Funding, a small amount of Council funding from the existing Events budget and from applications to external funders such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, should they be successful. No additional funding will be sought from the Council. Grants will be offered to groups to assist in their activities and other Cultural organisations such as Norton Priory and Hazlehurst Studios will host and fund their own events as their contribution to mark the occasion.

- 5.2 The Council will seek sponsorship from the private sector and in return their brands will be promoted at any event they support.

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

### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

All primary schools will be encouraged to get involved and training will be provided to teachers for specific activities such as the 'tile' project.

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

There will be opportunities to develop skills and build capacity within community groups.

### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Increasing the opportunities for local people and providing access to local activities and events, will increase the opportunities for wellbeing and healthier living.

### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

All large-scale Council led events will be required to submit an Event Plan to the Halton Events Safety Advisory Group and Risk Assessments will be undertaken for smaller scale activities and events.

### 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

## 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 Given the cost-of-living crisis there may be some opposition to spending money on activities and events. This has been the case with the boroughs Fireworks display in 2022 and 2023. However, given there is a cost-of-living crisis, providing a number of activities and events that are free and providing support to local community groups with grants, can only benefit the local community directly.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Everyone is invited to get involved and with the diversity of activities and events planned, we expect there to be something for everyone. Also, other activities and events can be added to the 'What's On' guide throughout the year if suggestions are provided.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Activities and Events will give due consideration to Climate Change and some events, such as Ecofest and activities such as 'Rubbish Science' will proactively support and engage the local community on Climate matters.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director – Environment & Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Performance Management Reports for Quarter 2 of 2023/24
<b>WARDS:</b>	Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider, and raise, any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the second quarter period to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023 - 24 were agreed by Members for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
  - Enterprise, Employment and Skills
  - Community and Environment

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

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board**

- 1) Receive the 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, both local and national are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. 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 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Not applicable

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

10.1 Not applicable

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

Reporting  
Period:

1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### 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 2023 / 24 for service areas within the remit of the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023 - 24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy & Performance Board i.e.
- Employment, Learning and Skills
  - Library and Culture and Leisure Services
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 7 of this report.

### 2.0 Key Developments

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

#### 2.2 Employment, Learning and Skills

##### Divisional

The first desk top exercise to test out the updated Kingsway Learning Centre Lockdown & Evacuation Plan was undertaken in Q2 with all agencies based within the building. This was a key priority given the impending Protect Duty (Martyn's Law) and Halton's preparedness for implementation of this. All HBC staff in the centre have been mandated to undertake the Protect Duty e-learning module to raise awareness of the Duty. The centre is awaiting the installation of a Public Address System in Q3, which will make implementation of the Lockdown & Evacuation Plan much more straightforward.

##### Halton People into Jobs

A redesign of the long-standing Ways to Work programme continues to be worked up with the Combined Authority as a result of European funding ending and being replaced by SIF and then UKSPF; this will be very different from the existing programme as it will focus on working with inactive residents rather than unemployed (which make up the majority of the current Ways to Work customer base). Inactive residents are much more of a challenge to engage with. The unemployed cohort we currently work with will no longer be eligible for Ways to Work under UKSPF.

HPIJ is a subcontractor of Ingeus, the Prime Contractor for the DWP Work & Health Programme. Ingeus have been asked to manage a new pilot programme called 'Pioneer' focusing on inactive customers and Ingeus asked HPIJ to be the provider in Halton. This was commercially confident until the end of August meaning Halton could not discuss this new provision with the CA. Additional recruitment is required.

### **Adult Learning**

A full review of the Adult Learning full/part time tutor contract was undertaken in Q2 and was rubberstamped by Steering Group, with implementation from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023. The original contract needed to be updated to reflect changes to Ofsted’s inspection framework and HBC policies and procedures.

Halton Adult Learning received its first Ofsted inspection for the first time in 6 years in June 2023. The inspection was challenging but very successful, with Halton maintaining its ‘Good’ status. This was a great outcome not only for Halton adult learners and adult learning staff but also for the Council as a whole.

### **Halton Employment Partnership (HEP)**

In September 2023, members of HEP were invited to attend a site visit to the new Widnes Leisure Centre being constructed by Wates. Members were given a detailed presentation about the scheme and were then walked around the site to be able to see progress for themselves. Wates personnel attend all HEP meetings to report on progress against any social value or employment/skills key performance indicators they are working towards with local groups etc. So the site visit was a great opportunity to see some of these come to life (e.g. cleaner on site referred by HPIJ; Widnes young person now on work experience on site).

## **Community & Environment**

### **2.3 Culture - Brindley Theatre**

The Brindley extension obtained planning consent on 31 July and the procurement is underway to find a contractor.

### **2.4 Community Centres**

Day Services left Murdishaw Community Centre on 1 September. Officers are trying to attract a new tenant.

### **2.5 Library Service**

The Library Strategy for 2023-2028 was considered by Employment Learning & Skills & Community PPB on 19 June and adopted by Executive Board on 14 September. Summer Reading Challenge went exceptionally well and we saw more completers than in previous years.

## **3.0 Emerging Issues**

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

### **Employment, Learning & Skills**

#### **3.2 Employment, Learning & Skills**

##### **HPIJ**

The new Ways to Work programme will be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 focusing primarily on inactive customers. The approach will be quite different to the other employment programmes HPIJ deliver, which focus mainly on unemployed residents.

HPIJ is working with the CA on a proposal linked to the Metro Mayor’s Young Person’s Guarantee. This proposal will need to go to the SIF Panel for review. If successful, HPIJ will be able to offer a number of wage incentive work placements for young people aged 18-24 who require more intense employment support.

##### **Adult Learning**

Following the introduction of the revised Adult Learning Tutor Contract, an overhaul of the Tutor Handbook is required. Adult Learning managers will work with HR to produce this key guide for tutors.

**Community & Environment**

**3.3 Culture Services**

**Brindley Theatre**

As part of the budget savings, the Brindley reduced its Monday – Friday opening hours to 11am – 3pm for the Box Office and Café from 1 September.

**3.4 Community Centres**

Old Police Station – MP Mike Amesbury is moving into the 3 vacant rooms in December 2023. This will bring us to maximum capacity in the building.

Halton Day Services will result in a loss of income for Murdishaw. We are currently looking for new customers to take over the space.

**3.4 Library Service**

Changing Places facilities installation in Halton Lea library commenced hoping the works will be complete in November followed for a launch to the public.

**4.0 High Priority Equality Actions**

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

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

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

**5.0 Performance Overview**

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

**Employment, Learning & Skills**

**Key Objectives / milestones**

Ref	<p><b>Objective: To facilitate &amp; create employment</b>                  To deliver a range of local/national externally funded employment programmes to increase the number of unemployed and economically inactive Halton residents to gain employment. To support local employers with sourcing local people for local jobs.</p>
EEP 01	<p><b>Employment Learning and skills</b></p>

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
To deliver year 3 of the Supported Internship programme by <b>September 2023</b>		There are currently 8 learners registered on the Supported Internship programme for the academic year 2023-24.
To achieve the required outputs and customer service standards on the DWP/G4S Restart Programme contract to cease the Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP by <b>June 2023</b>		Referrals have remained low which has impacted on job start and sustained job outcome performance this quarter. The Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP was extended (progress is reviewed monthly with G4S).
To review HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy and implement improvements by <b>June 2023</b> .		Review of the HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy commenced this quarter. Due to staffing issues this will be implemented next quarter.
Implementation of new contracts within required deadlines (UKSPF/Home Office Refugee Programme if contracts secured) by <b>July 2023</b> .		The new DWP/Ingeus Pioneer programme (an extension of the Work and Health Programme contract) went live on 13 <sup>th</sup> September. Pioneer will focus on supporting Economically Inactive residents.
To deliver a Pathways to Teaching programme, which will create adult learning tutor employment opportunities by <b>September 2023</b>		The first year of the Pathways to teaching project is complete, with 34 learners across the CA completing the programme. The project has been approved for another year of delivery for 23/24; promotion of this has begun.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objective: To promote access to learning to those who need it most</b> To provide a curriculum offer designed on intent, which is effectively marketed and implemented and has maximum impact on Halton's adult residents.
<b>EEP 02</b>	<b>Employment Learning and skills</b>

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
To deliver an Adult Learning Marketing Strategy by <b>April 2023</b>		The Adult Learning strategy was delivered in the academic year 22/23, with 3yr targets carried into 23/24. Marketing Strategy targets have been built into termly quality monitoring meetings to ensure clear accountability for targets and clearer alignment to overall service targets

To review the Quality Assurances processes within the Adult Learning Service by <b>July 2023</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quality Assurance processes reviewed and implemented from September '24. Observations for the academic year 23/24 have started using the new format and the new Performance Management procedure has been implemented with all tutors
To review the adult learning tutor contracts by <b>July 2024</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The adult learning tutor contract has been reviewed, updated and agreed by steering group and relevant senior managers. We are now awaiting details from HR regarding sharing new contracts with staff and awarding the associated back pay. Contract came into play 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2023. The sessional tutor contract will be prioritised next for an overhaul, in line with the full time/fractional contract.

#### Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

#### Community Services

#### Community Services

Ref	Objective
CE 01	To manage a successful Theatre for the benefit of Halton residents and the sub region.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Report received by PPB and it was agreed it could be forwarded to Executive Board.
Programming report to Executive Board July 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Report has been submitted.

Ref	Objective
CE 02	Develop a new library strategy for 2023-2028.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Report received by PPB and it was agreed it could be forwarded to Executive Board.
Programming report to Executive Board September 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Report to be submitted in August.

CE 03	Increase the occupancy levels at the Old Police Station
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Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Improve the accessibility of the building <b>June 2023</b> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good progress is being made by the contractor.
Negotiate with new tenants to secure a tenancy agreements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Soft marketing testing underway. Six submissions received on 30 June 2023. Officers will review.

## Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/ 23	Actual 2022/ 23	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Direction of Travel
CE LI 01	% occupancy of tenants at Old Police Station	93%	100%	93%			We expect the position to remain static until December 2023 when the new tenant moves in.
CE LI 02	Brindley - Total number of tickets sold	74,962	100%	30,844			Tickets are purchased in advance for shows so they will fluctuate depending on when a show goes on sale.
CE LI 03	Brindley - Total number of days Hired days	182	100%	109			Figures in line with expectation.
CE LI 04	Brindley - Total number of Council Promotions	120	100%	39			Figures in line with expectation.
CE LI 05	Footfall for all libraries:  Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library	Total 320,600	Total 320,600	Total 131,140  10,507 38,987 25,049 56,597			55,875 in total in Quarter 2. There is a trend of footfall reducing and digital issues increasing. The service is trying to buck this trend. Based on the first and second quarter, we are below where we want to be.
CE LI 06	Library Digital issues	1,350,119	1,500,000	1,900,897			Target met by end of Quarter 2. Correlates with the reduction in person visits and issues.
CE LI 07	Library Issues in branch:  Ditton Widnes Runcorn Halton Lea	Total 203,595	Total 203,595	Total 113,146  3,729 21,266 3,634 23,945			Improvement in Quarter 2 with issues of 60, 572 in total. On track to meet target. There is a trend of footfall and in person issues reducing and digital issues increasing.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	5,311	2,666	2,633	33	65
Repairs & Maintenance	1,940	983	990	(7)	(11)
Premises	122	110	116	(6)	(10)
Energy & Water Costs	1,768	680	570	110	207
NNDR	793	684	645	39	39
Rents	170	127	128	(1)	(1)
Economic Regeneration Activities	37	3	3	0	0
Security	509	187	202	(15)	(30)
Supplies & Services	356	183	190	(7)	(14)
Supplies & Services - Grant	962	262	262	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	105	53	53	0	0
Capital Finance	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	38	38	38	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,111</b>	<b>5,976</b>	<b>5,830</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges Income	-840	-409	-449	40	81
Rent - Commercial Properties	-906	-356	-334	(22)	(43)
Rent - Investment Properties	-44	-22	-20	(2)	(5)
Rent - Markets	-852	-429	-406	(23)	(46)
Government Grant	-1,229	-318	-318	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-990	-413	-416	3	6
Schools SLA Income	-300	-284	-235	(49)	(49)
Recharges to Capital	-251	-63	-70	7	14
Transfer from Reserves	0	-732	-732	0	1
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-5,412</b>	<b>-3,026</b>	<b>-2,980</b>	<b>(46)</b>	<b>(41)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>6,699</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>2,850</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	2,006	1,003	1,003	0	0
Transport	23	12	12	0	0
Central Support	1,710	856	856	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-7,728	-3,864	-3,864	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-3,985</b>	<b>-1,993</b>	<b>-1,993</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>2,714</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>204</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

Budget monitoring is undertaken on a monthly basis with budget holders to ensure that unapproved overspends are avoided, developing action plans to achieve efficiencies and address areas of budget pressure.

Finance works closely with the department to manage and analyse underspending to identify potential savings that could help meet current and future years' priorities.

## Comparison to Previous Quarter

Economy, Enterprise & Property outturn has improved from a forecasted outturn of £0.125m over budget to £0.204m under budget at the end of the financial year with a current figure of net spend being £0.100m under budget for the second quarter of the year. A positive variance of £0.329m.

## Supporting Information

The Department consists of 154fte of which 66fte are core funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.134m. There has continued to be delays in recruiting across the department, and so the projection is currently that the department will be under budget by £0.065m at financial year-end.

By carefully monitoring the accounts, the department has utilised 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. This process will continue throughout the year. As in Quarter 1 it is important to note that forecasts include an allowance for the 2023/24 pay award.

As inflation is running much higher than originally predicted at the time of budget setting, the department will be expected to absorb any price increases that may arise from within the budget allocations made. This is proving difficult for repairs and maintenance due to the continued increase in the price of materials. The Repairs and Maintenance programme is constantly under review to keep within budget. However, there is a risk that unexpected events may occur which require expenditure to be incurred, that has not been allocated for.

The Asset Management Service has incurred one off expense this year, due to the vacant unit at The Hive, that was previously occupied by Frankie & Benny's. Costs relating to NNDR, Repairs and Maintenance and Service Charges have had to be paid by HBC until the unit is leased.

Due to the energy costs budget increasing significantly in 2023/24, the department is forecasting that it will be £0.207m under budget in year as costs have not risen as much as expected, but costs are still predicted to be £0.502m higher than 2022/23, which is an increase of over 50%. The forecast will change over the following two quarters depending on the change in energy usage over this time.

This financial year has witnessed an increase in the security costs. This is due not only to inflation, but the need for additional security in Halton Lea, due to anti-social behaviour. The need for security at all locations is reviewed on a regular basis and if necessary, advice is provided from the Police.

As in previous years, and the long recovery from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the financial challenges of commercial property rent continue to present a significant financial challenge, though the second quarter of the year has seen an increase in the amount of commercial property income. This is due to Agency Staff within Asset Management being able to focus predominantly on the rent reviews and licence fees. There is also a focus within the team to fill the vacant properties within the portfolio. The current projection is that the income target will not be achieved by £0.046m. This is a £0.144 lower than the figure projected in Quarter 1

Due to adverse trading conditions in the retail sector which have been made worse due to inflation and increased utilities costs, the department is projecting to under achieve on market rental income targets this budget year. The occupancy rate is approximately 89%.

The School Cleaning Service Level Agreement (SLA) is not covering its costs this budget year due to the need to employ agency staff to cover sickness and leave and the pay award. A review of SLA charges has been undertaken ahead of the next budget year. The demand for the service is also decreasing as schools move to Academies.

**ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT****Capital Projects as of 30 September 23**

	<b>Capital Allocation £'000</b>	<b>Allocation to Date £'000</b>	<b>Actual Spend £'000</b>	<b>Total Allocation Remaining £'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
3MG	151	12	12	139
Murdishaw	30	0	0	30
Equality Act Improvement Works	282	84	84	198
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	36	0	0	36
Halton Lea TCF Roof Top Garden	35	0	0	35
Property Improvements	223	23	23	200
Waterloo Building Runcorn	93	0	0	93
Woodend - Former Unit 10 Catalyst Trade Park	200	161	161	39
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2634	1303	1303	1331
Police Station Demolition	406	0	0	406
Runcorn Station Building Development	515	30	30	485
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	17	0	0	17
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	291	0	0	291
Changing Places	212	52	52	160
Town Deal	2,740	585	586	2154
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>7,865</b>	<b>2,250</b>	<b>2,251</b>	<b>5,614</b>

**Murdishaw** – The department has worked in partnership with Onward Homes to develop a community scheme which includes the establishment of a new CIC who will run a new venture from the former boxing club. A scheme of environmental improvements has been initiated across the estate with some signage improvements completed. Discussions are ongoing with Community Development and Murdishaw Community Centre to make improvements to the external space and refurbish the allotment space to allow for the local community to develop its allotment project.

**Equality Act Budget**- It is anticipated that the equality act budget will be fully spent by year end as the department have a number of projects that are currently on site or have yet to start which should be complete by year end.

**Kingsway Learning Centre** - There are plans for a PA system to be installed in October.

**Property Improvements**- It is anticipated that the Property Improvement budget will be fully spend by year end, the department have a number of projects which have been allocated to that budget, some of which are on site some of which have yet to commence on site nevertheless they will be complete by year end.

**Waterloo Centre** - Approval has now been obtained to demolish the building, as such works will commence prior to Christmas with the demolition. Final costings will be known during quarter 3.

**Woodend** - All works are complete except for the installation of the new gas supply which has been ordered and will hopefully be done prior to Christmas. The cost of the gas supply is circa £40k.

**Foundry Lane** – Project progressing on schedule with all ground remediation works now complete. Slight underspend against projected expenditure at 2022/23 year-end due to remediation works delays incurred during Q2 and Q3. Expenditure will fall back into line in 2023.

**Police Station Demolition** – Legal are in the process of finalising the overage payment for Cheshire Police

**Runcorn Station Building Development** –A detailed delivery programme up to Approval In Principal stage has been produced and is 3 weeks ahead of schedule. A sponsor’s instruction has also been sent to partners to be signed off.

**UKSF** – Halton submitted an Investment Plan to the CA for three strands of its UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme – Town Centres; Local Culture, Arts and Heritage; Green, Resilient, Safe Communities. This amounts to £608k up to March 2025 and is a mix of capital and revenue.

**Runcorn Waterfront Development** - Preparation work is currently ongoing in respect of getting all the tender documentation ready to go through a procurement exercise in respect of the demolition of both Belvedere and Churchill Hall. It is hoped that the tender documents will be issued via the Chest in November with a realistic start on site not being until the New Year.

**Changing Places** - The changing places facility at the Stadium is now complete and operational. Works are progressing well on site at Victoria Park with completion due in late October. Works have also started on site at Halton Lea Library, completion being due by the end of November.

**The Town Deal programme** –. The Town Deal programme covers a number of projects to strengthen the town centre economy, including Brindley Theatre Enhancement, Creative and Digital Skills Centre, Health and Education Hub, High Street Connectivity, Town Centre New Homes, Station Enterprise Facility, and Unlock Runcorn. Business cases for all projects have been submitted and approved. Work will continue on site for the next 3 years.

## ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

## APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EEP1	Capital Works Team	N/A	Increase the level of fee income by increasing the percentage charged or charging by time, including those works not currently charged for.	10	0	0		On target.
EEP4	Cleaning Services – Council Buildings	580	Review cleaning arrangements, with a focus on only emptying bins and cleaning toilets daily.	0	100	0		Until the accommodation review is complete, only limited savings will be made in 2024/25
EEP2	Caretaking & Security Services	641	A review and restructuring of caretaking arrangements.	0	52	0		Restructure will take place in 24/25. It is anticipated the full saving will not be met in year.  Cannot achieve savings for security due to anti-social behaviour in Halton Lea. Police have advised security is kept on site until this is resolved.
			Reduce security cover at Halton Lea to provide opening/closing and then static guarding 7.00am to 7.30pm Monday to Friday, and 9.30am to 3.00pm on Saturdays to cover the opening hours of Halton Direct Link.	35	0	0		
EEP5	Corporate Buildings	927	Generate additional rental income by providing additional office space for external organisations at Rutland House, by letting out the remaining three floors.	120	0	0		Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP6	Facilities Management	165	Restructure the team in light of an expression of interest for retirement.	44	0	0		Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP8	Technical Support & Market Team	392	Restructuring of the team	98	0	0		Reflected in 2023/24 budget.

<b>Total Economy, Enterprise &amp; Property Department</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>0</b>		
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**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE DEPARTMENT****Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2023**

	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Budget to Date</b>	<b>Actual Spend</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend)</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	17,085	7,607	7,428	179	358
Premises	3,685	1,483	1,479	4	8
Supplies & Services	1,598	837	882	(45)	(90)
Hired & Contracted Services	607	231	286	(55)	(111)
Book Fund	140	86	86	0	0
Food Provisions	371	117	181	(64)	(127)
School Meals Food	1,965	841	858	(17)	(32)
Miscellaneous Transport Costs	117	55	68	(13)	(26)
Other Agency Costs	601	182	209	(27)	(53)
Other Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Disposal Contracts	6,885	106	57	49	98
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	67	18	14	4	8
Grant to Norton Priory	172	86	87	(1)	(1)
Capital Financing	201	41	0	41	83
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>33,494</b>	<b>11,690</b>	<b>11,635</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Sales Income	-3,962	-1,950	-1,402	(548)	(1,095)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,752	-3,488	-3,614	126	251
Rental Income	-221	-98	-108	10	19
Government Grant Income	-695	-646	-774	128	256
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-665	-383	-389	6	12
SLA Income	-2,391	-2,260	-2,139	(121)	(242)
Internal Fees Income	-592	-96	-176	80	161
Capital Salaries	-173	-46	-46	0	0
Transfers From Reserves	0	51	51	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-14,451</b>	<b>-8,916</b>	<b>-8,597</b>	<b>(319)</b>	<b>(638)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>19,043</b>	<b>2,774</b>	<b>3,038</b>	<b>(264)</b>	<b>(523)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	1,825	913	913	0	0
Transport	2,046	1,027	1,047	(20)	(41)
Central Support	3,856	1,933	1,933	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-540	-274	-274	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>7,386</b>	<b>3,599</b>	<b>3,619</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>(41)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>26,429</b>	<b>6,373</b>	<b>6,657</b>	<b>(284)</b>	<b>(564)</b>

**Comments on the above figures****Financial Position**

The net department spend is £0.284m over budget at the end of Quarter 2 and the estimated outturn overspend against budget for 2023/24 is £0.564m.

Net employee spend is estimated to be under the approved budget at the end of the financial year. The forecast outturn includes the pay increase proposal of £1,925 for all grades (a 3.5% increase for DM and above scales has already been agreed).

Whilst the proposed pay deal is over what had been included within the budget this is mitigated by the number of vacancies within leisure services and reduced casual usage in line with 2022/23 actual data.

Food Provisions is overspent due to the increasing inflationary food costs from suppliers.

Whilst it is currently forecast that waste disposal spend will be within the approved budget for the year this comes with a certain amount of caution. Waste disposal forecast cost is based on estimated tonnage of waste and the department is still waiting on invoices to be presented for previous years.

Sales income for the year is expected to underachieve compared to the budgeted income target. Shortfalls in income at the Stadium, school meal sales plus a reduction in room hire at Community Centres and Libraries are forecast to contribute towards lower income levels.

Additional grant Income has been received from Sport England under the Swimming Pool Support Fund initiative to ensure the continued provision of leisure centres in the Borough.

School Meals SLA income is forecast to underachieve over the course of the year, but this will be mitigated by reduced staffing costs.

Trade Waste fee charges are expected to overachieve with the increased uptake of green waste collections.

### **Approved 2023/24 Savings**

Please see Appendix A for details of progress towards achieving budget efficiency savings agreed by Council in February 2023.

**Capital Projects as at 30 September 2023**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000</b>	<b>Allocation to Date £'000</b>	<b>Actual Spend £'000</b>	<b>Total Allocation Remaining £'000</b>
Stadium Minor Works	34	17	18	16
Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment	28	14	13	15
Halton Leisure Centre	15,056	7,528	8,014	7,042
Open Spaces Schemes	851	426	137	714
Children's Playground Equipment	105	53	15	90
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12	2	1	11
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	30	0	340
Runcorn Town Park	284	142	106	178
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,023	512	20	1,003
Pickerings Pasture Café	520	250	0	520
Litter Bins	20	5	0	20
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18,286</b>	<b>8,978</b>	<b>8,324</b>	<b>9,962</b>

**Comments on the above figures****Halton (Moor Lane) Leisure Centre**

The project is making good progress and on track. Total project cost has increased slightly due to increase in provisional sum items. Totals costings for the project are continually being reviewed.

**Open Spaces**

This covers spending on a variety of externally funded projects: Birchfield Gardens refurbishment, Upton Rocks access works, The Big Halton Forest, and some small minor works contracts. Spending is behind target due to capacity issues.

**Children's Playground Equipment**

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

**Upton Improvements**

Open space improvement works undertaken. Work has been delayed due to capacity issues.

**Crow Wood Park**

The main contract is now completed, outstanding balance will cover final and retention payments.

### Landfill Tax Credits Schemes

Currently used to support improvements for a rolling programme of existing playgrounds/open space schemes across the Borough.

### Runcorn Town Park

Project to renew park infrastructure. Project is ongoing with 2 contracts on site. Carry forward to complete work in season and for contingency payments. INEOS funding of £300k was deferred - £10k each to 2023/24 & 2024/25 plus £280k to 2025/26.

### Wigg/Spike Island Recovery Works

The programme was slightly behind due to staff capacity issues. However, a consultancy is in place and have begun site investigation works ahead of finalising designs/contract documentation for tender.

### Pickerings Pasture Café

Creation of Café Facility at Pickerings Pasture, a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), which would be operated as a franchise. The Council has been asked to include £520k within the Council's Capital Programme to fund the construction of the café facility. Funded over seven years, the capital financing cost would be £87,500 per annum. This sum could be realised through a bid to the Environment Fund (paying £87,500 pa for seven years). Once completed and opened the café would generate income for the Council from the franchise rental, which could be used to offset the running costs of Pickerings Pasture.

## COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE DEPARTMENT

### APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
COMM 1	The Brindley Theatre	64	Reduce Box Office opening hours from 10am-5pm Monday-Friday to 10am-2pm. Currently 80% of tickets are purchased online or by telephone and this is increasing each year.	10	0	0		Box Office core opening hours were reduced to 5 hours (Mon – Fri) 10am – 3pm. They will be realigned to 4 hours daily 11am – 3.00pm (Mon – Fri) from 1 September onwards.
			Replace all non-LED lighting in the building. This is estimated to reduce on-stage energy costs by 75%.	10	0	0		No LED lighting has yet been installed but is planned for later in the financial year.
COMM 3	Sport & Recreation	471	Restructuring the roles and responsibilities of the Sports Development Team	0	36	0		On track to meet savings identified for 2024/25.

Ref.	Service	Net	Description of Saving	Savings Value			Current	Comments
COMM 4	Stadium & Catering Services	751	Franchise the concourse only catering services to an external operator.  An organisational restructure is currently being implemented for Stadium & Catering Services to reflect recent service changes.	50 40	0 0	0 0		
COMM 6	Area Forums	170	Reduce the base budget provision to £50k temporarily for one year, with all unspent monies in 2022/23 (currently £120k) being carried forward to be spent by the relevant Area Forums in 2023/24. The base budget position will then be reviewed for 2024/25.	120	-120	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Implemented in 2023/24 budget setting.
COMM 5	Stadium & Catering Services – School Meals	12	Cease to deliver the school meals service, which has made significant losses of over £200,000 for a number of years and is forecast to make a similar loss by year-end. Work would be undertaken with schools over the next two years to support them to secure an alternative means of delivery, whether in-house or via an external provider.	0	0	12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Work underway in school meals being delivered through alternative means

## 7.0 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 <b>is better</b> as compared to the same period last year.
Amber 	Indicates that performance <b>is the same</b> as compared to the same period last year.
Red 	Indicates that performance <b>is worse</b> as compared to the same period last year.
N / A 	Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year.