

Public Document Pack



Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

Wednesday, 13 November 2024 6.30 p.m.
Town Hall, Runcorn

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'S. Young'.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Bill Woolfall (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Colin Hughes	Labour
Councillor Noel Hutchinson	Labour
Councillor Kath Loftus	Labour
Councillor Louise Nolan	Labour
Councillor Mike Ryan	Labour
Councillor Aimee Skinner	Labour
Councillor Gareth Stockton	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Sharon Thornton	Labour
Councillor Andrea Wall	Labour

*Please contact Kim Butler on 0151 511 7496 or e-mail
kim.butler@halton.gov.uk for further information.*

The next meeting of the Board is on Wednesday, 12 February 2025

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

Part I

Item No.	Page No.
1. MINUTES	1 - 6
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 18 September 2024 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), P. Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chair), Hughes, Hutchinson, K. Loftus, L. Nolan, Ryan, Stockton and Wall

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Skinner and Thornton

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, G. Ferguson, T. Gibbs, D. Cooke, A. Plant and Burrows

Also in attendance: Councillors Begg, Bevan, Bramwell, Garner, C. Loftus, Lowe, M. Lloyd Jones, Thompson, Wallace and Wharton. Two members of the public

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

	<i>Action</i>
EUR1 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.	
EUR2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
EUR3 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board relevant to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.	
RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.	
EUR4 ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24	
The Board considered a copy of the Annual Report from the Chair of the Environment and Urban Renewal	

Policy and Performance Board for 2023/24. The Board had met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out during the Municipal Year April 2023 to March 2024.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be endorsed.

EUR5 REGENERATION IN HALTON

Members of the Board received a presentation on regeneration in Halton which provided an update on the Runcorn Town Plan, the seven projects contained within it and details on the emerging proposals for the Runcorn long-term plan funding, which had been announced earlier in the year.

The presentation also provided an update on the key regeneration sites in Widnes, which included:

- Widnes Town Centre, including the Kingsway Quarter;
- Widnes Waterfront;
- Foundary Lane, Gorse Point Business Park and University of Liverpool partnership with Carpenters;
- the Multi Model Gateway 3MG;
- Liberty Park – potential development opportunity; and
- HBC Field, including the recently designated Freeport.

The following matters were raised:

- The Town Deal funding is focused on a particular area in Runcorn are there proposals for other areas in Runcorn? It was noted that information on projects in other areas of Runcorn would be presented to a future meeting.
- Clarification was sought on the work at the Camden Buildings;
- Consideration should be given to exploring the use of water taxis on the canal;
- Members were encouraged to attend stakeholder events. A link would be sent to members to enable them to provide feedback; and
- The possible development of a Merseygate Regeneration Plan for West Bank was discussed.

RESOLVED: Members to note the presentation.

EUR6 TOWN DEAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

Members of the Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the delivery and monitoring of the Town Deal (Reconnecting Runcorn) Programme.

The report provided an overview of the Programme, funding allocation and period, spend and progress to date on each of the following projects:

- Reconnecting Runcorn Programme;
- Runcorn Station Quarter Enterprise Hub (Elite House);
- Unlock Runcorn – landscaping and visitor centre and canal boat trip experience;
- Brindley Theatre Enhancements – extended café, new library and outdoor performance area;
- Creative and Digital Skills Centre;
- Town Centre New Homes – High Street and Rutland Street.
- Health and Education Hub; and
- High Street Connectivity.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the content of the report.

EUR7 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION AND THE PRIVATE RENTAL SECTOR - UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration and the Director of Public Health, which provided a progress update on the Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Action Plan which had been endorsed by the Board in February 2023. The report also updated Members on the development of policy relating to the wider private rental sector.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

The report set out the key findings which included:

- Tenure type and changes over time;
- Property standards;
- Energy performance;
- Complaint volumes and nuisance; and
- Houses in multiple occupation.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the progress made to date on the HMO Action Plan; and
- 2) endorse the proposal that further policy to control

and maintain standards in HMO's and the wider private rental sector is taken forward and considered during development of the Borough-wide Housing Strategy.

EUR8 STRAY DOG COLLECTION AND KENNELING SERVICE

The Board received a report from the Director of Public Health which outlined the changes to the stray dog collection and kennelling service, and the approach to procuring this service.

Halton had been part of a consortium of Local Authorities for the past ten years which had provided a kennelling service. However, in February 2024 the provider indicated that they no longer intended to bid for the contract which was due to expire on 31 May 2024. Due to this notice being less than 12 weeks, the Council was unable to procure a new contract under the usual tender process, which included scrutiny and approval via the Policy and Performance Board and Executive Board. Therefore, Acorn Kennels, based in Shropshire, was identified as a potential provider. The report outlined further information about this provider and explained the steps that were taken to ensure that it would offer a suitable service.

It was noted that approximately 60 stray dogs were collected in Halton each year and only 14 of those were reclaimed. The number had significantly reduced since the introduction of compulsory microchipping in 2016. If any dog cannot be returned to its owner, it would be taken to the licensed dog kennels in Whitchurch, Shropshire, which had been issued a 5 star rating by the Local Authority. It was acknowledged that the kennels are some distance from Halton and therefore, some changes had to be made to the fees charged in an attempt to reduce the number of dogs that need to be taken to the kennels.

Members were advised that previously, there was a £125 fee for dogs to be returned to the owners at their home address, by the contractor. Going forward, owners would now have the option to collect their dog from the kennels in Whitchurch, or for a fee of £20, the contractor will transport the dog back to the owners home.

It was noted that, by law, an owner must reclaim their dog within 7 days. After that period, the Council was allowed to gift the dog to an organisation that would be able to look after the dog. Acorn Kennels operate a re-homing service and therefore any unclaimed dogs would be gifted to

them after 7 days, with the expectation that as many dogs as possible would be found a new home.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EUR9 CONTROL OF FLY POSTING AND BANNER ADVERTISEMENTS

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, regarding its available powers under the Section 224 and 225 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to control fly posting and banner advertisements.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

Members were advised that Officers had been notified that there had been a proliferation of banner advertisements being fixed to highway furniture which could potentially cause highway safety issues and effect the amenity of the area.

The report outlined the available powers, their purposes and implications, in the event of them being exercised.

It was noted that the use of the power to remove advertisements could have a beneficial impact on the look and appearance of the Borough. However, due to limited resources, Officers would focus on being proactive in areas where a number of signs had been erected and were affecting the amenity of the area. Officers would work with colleagues in other departments e.g. Highways, Environment and Community Safety to carry out this work and at least 14 hours a month would be allocated to tackle this problem and take enforcement action.

RESOLVED: That the resource/priority implications of the approach and priority areas for action be identified and considered.

EUR10 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 4 OF 2023/24

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Reports for Quarter 4 of 2023/24.

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2023/24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as detailed below:

- Development and Investment Services;
- Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services; and
- Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services.

The reports 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 quarter 4 performance management reports be received and noted.

EUR11 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2024/25

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Report for Quarter 1 of 2024/25.

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2024/25 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as detailed below:

- Development and Investment Services;
- Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services; and
- Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services.

The reports 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 1 performance management report be received and noted.

Meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.

REPORT TO:	Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	13 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Public Question Time
WARD(S)	Boroughwide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE 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 **RECOMMENDATION: 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**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

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

6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

None identified.

6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

None identified.

6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

None identified.

6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

None identified.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None identified.

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	13 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Executive Board Minutes
WARD(S)	Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the relevant 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 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

None.

5.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None.

5.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None.

5.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None.

5.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None.

5.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

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.

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Environment & Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2024

EXB40	ADDITIONAL HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE ALLOCATIONS
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval to accept capital funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) in compliance with Standing Orders.

It was noted that in addition to the current capital funding arrangements through the LCRCA, the Council had received two Highways and Improvement Grants for £306,781.20 each and a Traffic Signal Maintenance and Improvement Grant for £44,394.12. The cost of works undertaken as part of these grant funding agreements would be met entirely from the approved budget allocations for this additional capital funding.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board approves the Director Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal be delegated to accept the Grant Funding Agreement and enable timely delivery of the agreement; and
- 2) the Director Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal be delegated to deal with any matters relating to procurement and operation of this agreement.

EXB41	A STRATEGY FOR HALTON'S TREES AND WOODLANDS
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval of an updated Halton Trees and Woodlands Strategy. A review of the Strategy had recently been undertaken as one of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan objectives ES10.

The Board was advised that there had been no material changes to the Council's Policy since the adopted Trees and Woodland Strategy was approved in 2018. A summary of the primary updates to the Strategy was detailed in the report and a copy of the Strategy was attached as Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the updated Trees and Woodland Strategy attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

N.B. Councillor Wharton declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the following item of business as he is a Non-Executive Director of Mersey Gateway Crossings Board and left the meeting for the duration of the item.

COUNCILLOR NELSON IN THE CHAIR

EXB42	MERSEY GATEWAY
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The Board considered a report of the Director – Legal and Democratic Services, that advised on the requirement to replace the existing Road User Charging Scheme Order (RUCSO) with a new RUCSO to reflect the need to increase toll charges on both the Mersey Gateway Bridge and the Silver Jubilee Bridge. The report also included details on proposed changes to Blue Badge Holders, Penalty Charge Notices and Local User Discount Scheme which would all be subject to consultation which would run for six weeks in November and December 2024.

It was noted that both bridges are described as being operated as tolled crossings, however motorists pay in the form of a road user charge under the Transport Act 2000. The charges are anticipated to remain on the crossing until the Mersey Gateway Bridge, improvements to the Silver Jubilee Bridge and other associated highway network improvements are paid for.

Since the tolls were introduced in 2017, they had remained unchanged and there was now a need to increase the tolls by 20% to ensure that in line with the original proposals the project remained financially robust without the need for additional local or central funding beyond that already agreed.

It was noted that the Mersey Gateway Project had continued to operate with a financial loss and had required Central Government grants. Details of the income and expenditure of the scheme from October 2017 to March 2024 were outlined in Appendix 2 of the report.

Following the consultation period a report would be taken to a meeting of the Council and if approved the updated RUCSO would come into effect from 1 April 2025.

Following a discussion, the Board agreed that the reference to proposed changes for Blue Badge holders would be deleted in the updated RUCSO before the document is subject to consultation.

RESOLVED: That the Board should

- 1) consult on making an updated RUCSO based on the working draft enclosed at Appendix 1 on the basis prescribed in this report, subject to the removal of the reference to changes for Blue Badge holders.
- 2) after full and proper consideration to any responses received, and having taken them into account, recommend the Council to make the updated RUCSO based on the working draft enclosed at Appendix 1 and delegate to the Director –

Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, the authority to make any non-material or consequential amendments as are necessary to give it effect; and

- 3) authorise the Director – Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to take all necessary steps to bring the RUCSO into effect, provided that any material amendments or considerations shall be considered by the Council and subject to its determination before the RUCSO is brought into effect.

REPORT TO:	Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	13 th November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director - Environment & Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Environment & Urban Renewal
SUBJECT:	Local Transport Plan 4 (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority)
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 A presentation will be given at the Board meeting to provide an overview of the draft Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and the consultation process.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the contents of the draft Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and associated consultation process is noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Consultation on the draft LTP's principle and policies opened on the 3 October 2024. The LTP, including all of its technical appendices, background materials and an online consultation form are all available online. This includes a 3-minute video by Simon O'Brien, to introduce the plan. The LTP consultation closes on the 15 December 2024.

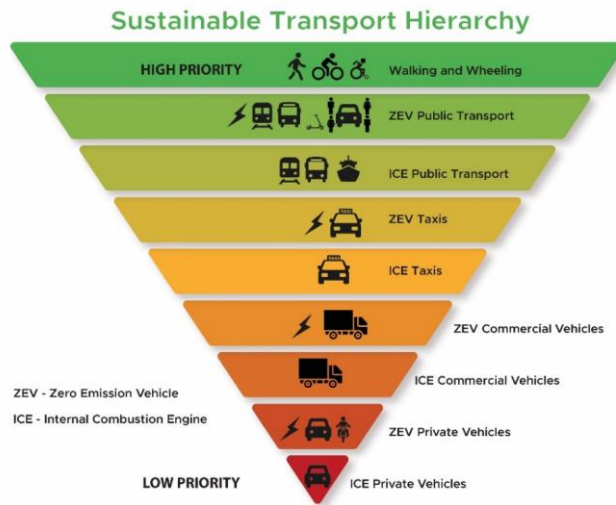
<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/local-transport-plan>

- 3.2 A mailshot has been sent to statutory and other stakeholders, such as constituent and adjoining local authorities, transport operators, special interest groups, transport agencies and Transport for the North. This will invite responses either via the portal or directly back to the LCRCA's Policy team at TransportPolicy@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

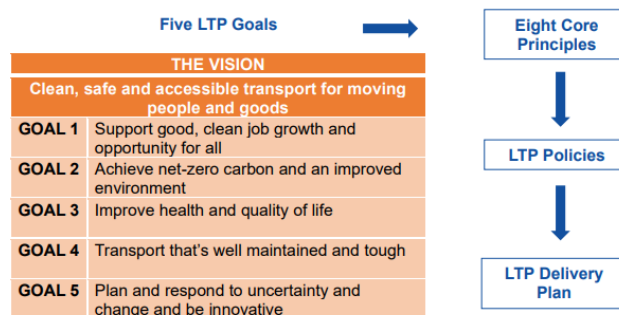
- 4.1 The LTP4 aims to provide transport choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable and low carbon. It also seeks to deliver connected infrastructure that links opportunity to needs.

4.2 The LTP’s movement hierarchy seeks to support these aims. The reallocation and prioritisation of road space or public space is how the hierarchy would be translated into action, in a practical sense.



4.3 The hierarchy applies equally to the movement of freight as it does to the movement of people. This means that the movement of freight by water or rail, for example, should be a higher priority than, and preferable to moving it by road using an HGV. Similarly, moving goods using an e-bike would be preferable to using a van, whether zero emission or diesel.

4.4 Within the draft LTP4, there are five goals, and eight core principles, and these set out the detail of the policy approaches and interventions proposed across the range of transport challenges.



Eight Core Principles

- Principle 1:** A vision led approach
- Principle 2:** We will apply the five goals equally
- Principle 3:** Transport decisions based on clear need and evidence
- Principle 4:** Transport must support placemaking
- Principle 5:** Prioritise clean, healthy travel in all we do
- Principle 6:** Guided by our commitment to inclusivity, accessibility and social value
- Principle 7:** Work with others to promote and deliver the LTP
- Principle 8:** A rolling programme of innovative transport investment

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The LTP4 acts as enabler for Halton residents to engage in active travel to promote health and well-being and access the variety of open spaces and parks without the use of motorised vehicles. The delivery of LTP4 will provide greater opportunities to walk or cycle on those shorter journeys which are currently taken by car. A reduction in short car journeys will help reduce congestion and help improve air quality.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The LTP4 will support a well-connected Halton, reducing barriers to accessing employment and training, and by providing safe sustainable links to current and future opportunities.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The LTP4 will benefit the children and young people by improving sustainable, affordable access to places of interest whilst connecting communities.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The LTP4 will help reduce barriers to accessing training and employment and aims to provide schemes which provide inclusive mobility for all.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The delivery of LTP4 will provide greater opportunities to walk or cycle on those shorter journeys which are currently taken by car. A reduction in short car journeys will help reduce congestion and help improve air quality and reduce emissions.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

LTP4 has transport connectivity at its heart. Accessibility to Halton's local facilities, including shopping, employment and leisure, together with the wider city region will help connect communities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 It is recognised that there is a need to carefully communicate the inspiring messages within LTP4, for example:

- When it comes to schemes and measures, the need for “myth busting” (e.g. capital funds devolved to the Combined Authority for transport purposes cannot be used to pay for constituent

Local Authorities urgent revenue priorities, such as social care)

- The need to focus actions in spatially important areas where transport challenges exist.
- The need to engage as wide a range of people across age, diversity, and socio-economic backgrounds as possible.
- The importance of getting land use planning decisions right from the start so that walking and cycling measures don't need to be retrofitted later.
- The need for members of the Committee to be champions of the plan.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 A reduction in short car journeys will help reduce congestion and help improve air quality and reduce emissions.

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

LCR CA Draft Local Transport Plan October 2024

REPORT TO:	Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	13 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Environment and Urban Renewal
SUBJECT:	Halton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides an update on the recent completion of a Halton specific Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) document (which builds upon the broader City Region LCWIP produced in 2019) and requests Member endorsement. A DfT standard approach has been used to identify a network of future interventions for walking and cycling.

1.2 A map of the LCWIP network can be found in Appendix 1.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Board:

- 1) endorses the Halton LCWIP (which comprises the Halton Borough Wide LCWIP and East Runcorn Connectivity Programme documents). See link in paragraph 3.4; and**
- 2) notes the prioritised list of potential schemes set out in paragraph 3.6 and Appendix 1.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Members may recall that the Liverpool City Region LCWIP document was approved by the Combined Authority on 14 October 2019 and reported to this board on 26 February 2020. Since then, schemes identified in that (City Region) plan have been completed or are in the process of being taken forward including:

- Runcorn-Daresbury (complete)
- Runcorn Busway (being delivered in phases - Shopping City to Runcorn East Station/Whitehouse nearing completion)
- SJB to Sandy Lane/Knowsley boundary (complete)
- Wilmere Lane/Birchfield Road (subject to ongoing design/consultation and funding)

- 3.2 To enable a continuing pipeline of schemes to be developed, funding has been secured through East Runcorn Connectivity and Active Travel England Programmes to develop a more localised Halton specific LCWIP document. The LCWIP will set the structure and strategic direction to allow the development and delivery of a planned active travel network for Halton over a 10-year period, to help provide active travel infrastructure for its residents, workers and visitors.
- 3.3 A DfT standard approach has been used to identify a network of future interventions for walking and cycling.
- 3.4 The LCWIP reports can be found on the link [cycling and walking](#). The LCWIP identifies a network of strategic routes across the borough. These focus on key origin to destination routes that will be used by commuters and people cycling and walking as transport. The routes will be designed to offer a safe and convenient alternative route to private cars. The routes have been prioritised into a programme based on elements such as connectivity to new developments, existing population, employment and services, air quality issues and deliverability. Stakeholders were engaged at various stages of the process.
- 3.5 The LCWIP supports a number of national and local policies including the LCR's Local Journeys Strategy and Halton's Local Transport Plan, and Delivery and Allocations Local Plan. The LCWIP will deliver some of the local priorities to reduce transport emissions, and improve the health of the region by providing safe and direct cycle and walking corridors to encourage residents and visitors to Halton and the wider City Region to make more sustainable travel choices.
- 3.6 A collated table of the prioritised routes for both walking and cycling and their current status can be found at the end of the main Halton LCWIP document and are shown on plans in the document extract in Appendix 1. Walking routes are focussed around town centre 'core walking zones'. The higher priority routes are listed below and a number of these are currently at design stage or being taken forward for funding pipeline (in the 2nd round City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS2) period 2027/28-2031/32):

Cycling (and walking):

- Silver Jubilee Bridge to Shopping City (ERC) – consulted, implementation due via CRSTS2
- Runcorn East Rail station (ERC) – Barnfield Av to A56 – consulted, implementation due via CRSTS2
- Runcorn Station and town centre loop (inc Leiria Way) (ERC) – consulted, implementation due via CRSTS2
- Chester Road Daresbury (ERC)– consulted, partially

- complete along A56 (CRSTS1)
- Halton Brow, Main St, Norton La (ERC) – consulted, on hold
- Runcorn, Astmoor, Manor Park (ERC) – consulted, minor modifications to busway junctions on hold
- Chester Rd/Beechwood/Halton Station Rd – being considered in part through ‘Missing Links’ design project
- Boston Avenue – Heath Park
- Hough Green – Widnes south (via Dundalk Rd) – CRSTS2
- Ditton Road to Dans Road – due via CRSTS2
- North Widnes inc Widnes Rail Station to South Lane – Section 106/Developer

Walking:

- Widnes town centre routes – due via CRSTS2
- Silver Jubilee bridge routes

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The LCWIP delivers policy objectives contained in Halton’s Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3), Halton’s statutory Development Plan, and the priorities of the LCR Mayoral Transport Strategy and emerging LTP4.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No immediate financial implications as the report is for information/endorsement only.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The LCWIP acts as enabler for Halton residents to engage in active travel to promote health and well-being and access the variety of open spaces and parks without the use of motorised vehicles. The delivery of the LCWIP will provide greater opportunities to walk or cycle on those shorter journeys which are currently taken by car. A reduction in short car journeys will help reduce congestion and help improve air quality.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The LCWIP will support a well-connected Halton, reducing barriers to accessing employment and training, and by providing safe sustainable links to current and future opportunities.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The LCWIP will benefit the children and young people by improving sustainable, affordable access to places of interest whilst connecting communities.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The LCWIP will help reduce barriers to accessing training and employment and aims to provide schemes which provide inclusive mobility for all.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The delivery of the LCWIP will provide greater opportunities to walk or cycle on those shorter journeys which are currently taken by car. A reduction in short car journeys will help reduce congestion and help improve air quality and reduce emissions.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The LCWIP has been developed by considering accessibility to Halton's local facilities, including shopping, employment and leisure. It will help provide accessible modes of travel to reach these facilities and connect communities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The overall risks to this strategy are relatively low given the alignment with local and national policies to support a greener, sustainable and healthier environment. Programme and funding risks will be developed as these initiatives progress in the longer term.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The introduction of the LCWIP has no negative impacts on protected characteristics, seeks to be inclusive, and promotes community cohesion through enhanced connectivity

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The endorsement of the LCWIP will give a clear commitment to enable the continued forward planning of active travel as a key alternative mode of transport to the private car, and to allow significant investment using external (City Region) funding. This is in line with local policies and plans, including the Councils own Climate Change Action Plan

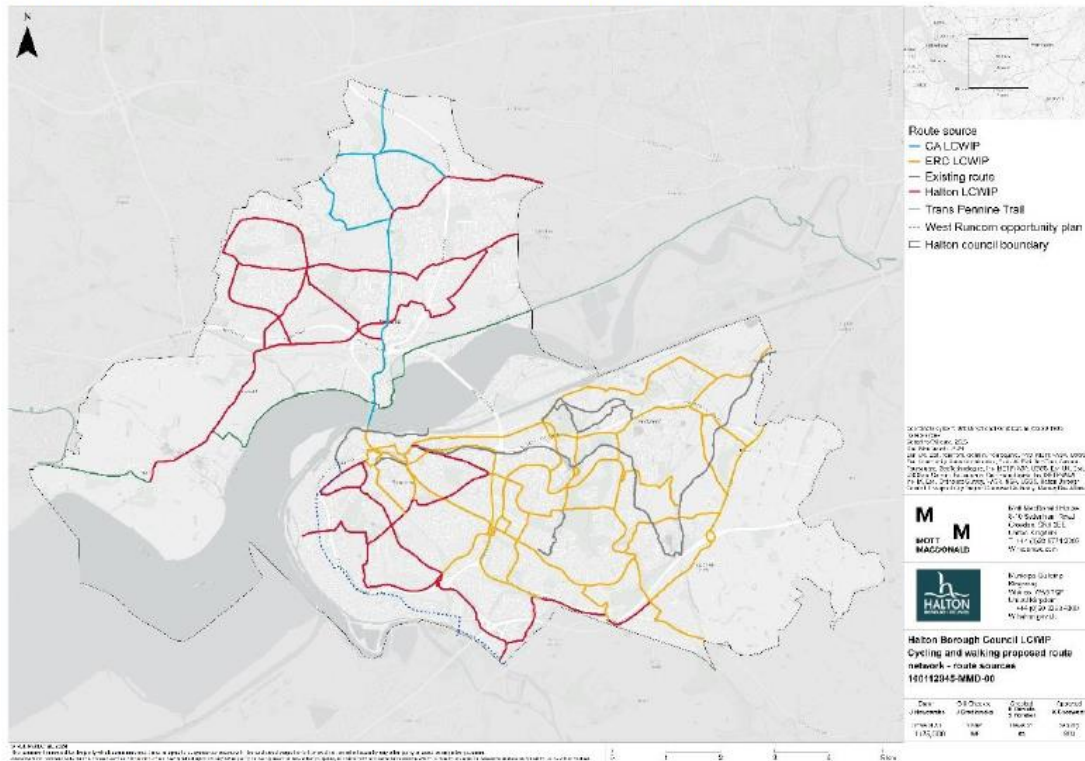
10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Liverpool City Region LCWIP - <https://api.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/LCR-LCWIP-Final.pdf>

Halton LCWIP documents – Municipal Building – Jonathan Farmer

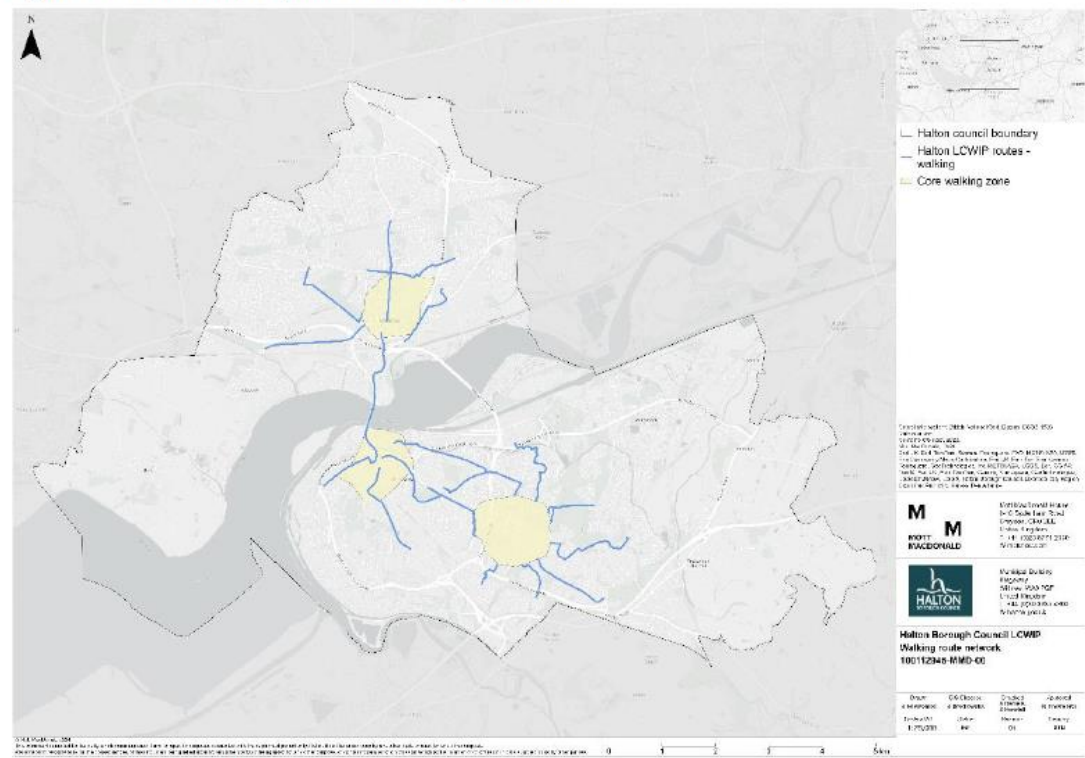
Appendix 1 LCWIP Document extract - Cycling and Walking Route Plans

Figure 7.4: Halton proposed cycling and walking network



Source: Mott MacDonald

Figure 7.5: Halton proposed walking network



Source: Mott MacDonald

REPORT TO:	Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	13 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director - Environment & Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Environment & Urban Renewal
SUBJECT:	Department for Transport Statistical Update 2023
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the latest road safety statistics released by the Department for Transport (DfT) through their publication of the 2023 Comprehensive Annual Report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- 1) The overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton over the past decade be noted; and**
- 2) The 2025/26 education, training, and publicity programme, and road safety scheme list be endorsed.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The latest figures (2023) for Halton show a small rise in overall casualty numbers mirroring last year's performance. This is in contrast with the national picture, where there has been a slight decrease in casualties of all severities over the previous 12 months. The DfT indicates that traffic flows are now comparable with pre-pandemic levels and therefore direct comparisons between 2023 and 2019 road traffic casualty numbers are valid. Looking at this longer-term evaluation, Halton has outperformed the national picture for casualty reductions across all categories. A summary of the data is as follows:

- Halton has achieved its performance targets, as set by the Department for Transport. (A KSI reduction of 40% by 2020 (based on a 2005-09 base average) was the target outcome). No new performance targets for English Local Authorities, outside London, have been set although there are indications that with the change in Government, the DfT will be setting explicit casualty reduction targets as a matter of policy.
- There were 158 road traffic collisions involving personal injury within Halton, 1 more than the year before. These incidents resulted in

195 casualties, a 4% increase on the 2022 figures, but 22% below 2019 when traffic levels were directly comparable.

- The figures in this report are once again adjusted to take into account a historic under-reporting of road traffic collisions and casualties and are more representative of the true picture. They also allow a more uniform reporting of casualty numbers over time and between different Police Constabularies and Local Authorities.
- A total of 39 KSI (killed or seriously injured) represents a decrease on the previous year, continuing the long-term downward trend.
- 38 of these casualties were classed as serious, and regrettably 1 person lost their life on Halton's roads (one fewer than the previous year).
- A total of 6 children were seriously injured (CKSI) which represents an increase, compared with 3 in 2022 (incredibly 4 of these casualties occurred on the same day in July 23).
- There was a marginal increase in the number of people of all ages being slightly injured (SLI), with casualty numbers up to 156 (from 146 in 2022).
- Casualty numbers for vulnerable road user groups (pedestrians and cyclists) have shown decrease this year and the 5-year rolling average shows a consistent decline.
- A total of 20 collisions occurred on Mersey Gateway controlled roads, resulting in 28 casualties, a substantial increase on 2022's figures (11 collisions, 16 casualties), this is comparable with pre-pandemic levels (23 collisions, 28 casualties in 2019).

3.2 Appendix A sets out the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in 2023, together with comparisons of figures for previous years. Halton's performance in relation to neighbouring Local Authorities is also presented.

3.3 Of those killed or seriously injured, the numbers of adult casualties decreased, whilst child casualties increased. However, due to the low numbers recorded annually in Halton, these numbers are expected to fluctuate from year to year. A 5-year rolling average for casualty numbers is a more effective way to judge relative performance, and encouragingly Adult KSI numbers continued its decline and Child KSIs remained static, although at a historically low level.

3.4 **National Position**

Nationally, road casualties (all categories) decreased by 2% in 2022, as set out in the Department for Transport 2023 Comprehensive Annual Report on Road Casualties available via:

[Reported road casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115222/Reported_road_casualties_Great_Britain_annual_report_2023_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

3.5 The Department for Transport (DfT) advises that comparisons with the previous years' figures should be interpreted carefully given that traffic levels continue to rise on U.K. roads, post-Covid and advise that focus should be made on this year's performance in comparison with 2019, given that traffic levels are now almost identical to then. Using this metric to gauge the success of our road casualty reduction programme relative to others, Halton is one of the better performing Local Authorities.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The work on casualty reductions is consistent with the policies and approaches incorporated in the Liverpool City Region's Transport Plan for Growth and Halton's Local Transport Plan 3 (2011 – 2025) and emerging LTP4. Halton continues to participate in the Merseyside and Cheshire Road Safety Partnerships to share best practice and collaborate beyond administrative boundaries.

4.2 The previous decade has seen incredible turbulence in traffic flows and traffic levels in Halton. The major reconfiguration of the Halton highway network associated with the building of the Mersey Gateway Bridge, the closure and re-opening of the Silver Jubilee Bridge, Runcorn delinking works, and the construction of Widnes Loops has made it incredibly difficult to compare intelligence to target road safety engineering works. In addition, the impact of the Covid pandemic: a succession of lockdowns and the growth in working from home has impacted on traffic levels (a fall in 2020, small bounce back in 2021 and 2022 and finally a return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023), has also made comparative analysis work difficult.

4.3 Given the Council's active policy interventions to date, there has been a noticeable modal shift towards walking (an 11% increase in pedestrian movements since 2022 and a 15% rise on pre-pandemic levels). With this in mind, special attention has been given to small scale schemes that improve our pedestrian infrastructure, especially near schools, as well as new active travel routes linking employment areas to further encourage walking and cycling. Collaborative working with external agencies continues to offer an effective use of resources, and the ongoing decline in casualty numbers, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, is testament to this.

4.4 Halton 2024/25 Programme Update

This programme reviews the work carried out in the previous 12 months and covers road traffic collision reduction schemes, road safety education, training, and publicity, as well as our engagement with Cheshire Police to target effective enforcement action. Halton's Traffic Management and Road Safety Team comprises four members of staff operating at 3.2 FTE (full time equivalent) and who also manage the School Crossing Patrol Service.

- 4.5 **Gyratory Red Light Camera.** In conjunction with the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, a red light / speed on green camera was installed at A557 Watkinson Way, a site with the highest density of collisions in the Borough. In addition to enhancing road safety, it is hoped that this device will improve traffic congestion during peak hours, with fewer 'red light runners', thereby increasing the capacity of this strategic junction.
- 4.6 **Speed Camera A562 (Speke Road).** The fixed speed camera on the westbound carriageway of A562 Speke Road has been upgraded with a vandal-resistant 'smart pole' housing for the camera. It was important to maintain speed management at this site following a fatal collision in recent years.
- 4.7 **"Smiley" SiDs** (speed indicative device / sign) remain ever popular with Halton residents. In addition to encouraging lower speeds, they also record the approach speeds of every vehicle. This information is shared with Cheshire Police when a particular speed problem is identified. The Team currently manages twenty-one of these devices around the Borough, many of them purchased by Area Forums and Parish Councils. We also operate a number of digital signs that flash either a speed limit roundel or road safety messages, should an approaching vehicle be travelling at excessive speed. Most of these signs are located at sites with a history of road traffic accidents and have helped reduce their collision rates since installation.
- 4.8 **Mobile Speed Camera Sites.** Working closely with Cheshire Police and the Cheshire Road Safety Group the Team is engaged in the maintenance and improvement of existing mobile speed camera sites as well as investigating and commissioning possible new locations for speed enforcement. Effective enforcement action encourages safer driver behaviour.
- 4.9 **Collision Sites.** Using STATS19 collision data supplied by Cheshire Police the Team identified junctions and lengths of road where collision density is higher than expected. Budget constraints have seen a focus on smaller-scale accident remedial schemes, rather than larger scale works. Many of these schemes were centred around schools or on routes to schools.
- 4.10 **Speed Limit Reduction.** The speed limits on Northern Lane and Hough Green Road, Widnes were reduced from 40mph to 30mph and improvements to pedestrian facilities here were made.
- 4.11 **Safer Active Travel.** In support of various policy objectives (tackling climate change, improving health and wellbeing; improving air quality; options to lower the cost of living) Halton has been undertaking a number of large-scale cycling / walking initiatives to link residential areas with employment areas. These schemes have been funded via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. A number of improvement

works that complement the Active Travel Strategy have included new pedestrian crossings, refuge islands, new lengths of high-friction anti-skid surfacing at controlled crossing points, and ensured uncontrolled crossings remain free from parked vehicles using physical features, including bollards, and lengths of pedestrian guard railing. To support some schemes, a reduced speed limits has been introduced at several sites where new cycleways have been created, in addition a signage strategy for these new cycleways has been put in place.

4.12 **Road Safety Audits (RSAs).** These are undertaken on all major schemes, to ensure that the safety of all road users is a priority.

4.13 **Education.** The Team has engaged with children and adults of all ages to deliver training and education:

- The 'Show You Care, Park Elsewhere' scheme to reduce congestion and promote road safety outside schools was delivered at reported hotspots.
- Junior Safety Officers scheme at 39 primary schools in the Borough. Their role is to promote safety messages to help keep everyone safe. They deliver various messages around road safety, personal safety, cyber safety, water safety to name a few. They do this by reading out bulletins in assemblies, displaying info on a notice board and running competitions across the school. They also promote safety campaigns such as encouraging no parking on zig zags around their schools.
- Over 2100 school children in Halton have had some form of cycle training in the previous academic year.
- 'Stepping Out' pedestrian crossing training for Year 3 pupils has been provided at almost every school.
- The Team has undertaken drink / drug driving campaigns with you adults in local colleges.
- In-car safety training for the very young and their parents and carers has been undertaken at numerous pre-schools and nurseries
- The School Crossing Patrol Service remains extremely popular with parents and children and every day out Patrols help almost 3000 children cross the road every day.
- Community family fun days at community and children centres have proved massively popular, with additional dates being added due to demand.
- Road safety training has been provided to refugees and asylum seekers in the Borough.

4.14 **Halton 2025/26 Programme**

- Given the focus on active travel, it is proposed to concentrate on interventions that enhance the safety of pedestrians and pedal cyclists (who still account for almost half of all KSIs). This activity also supports a number of policy objectives, including

encouraging modal shift.

- Collision analysis will be undertaken at sites with higher than expected collision histories. Work is then carried out at locations where improvements can be made, for example, the installation of refuge islands, improved cycleway signage and installed physical features to clear obstructive parking from pedestrian crossing points.
- Accident remedial measures and engineering measures to enhance safety at schools and routes to schools to continue to be prioritised.
- Extending mobile safety camera sites with Cheshire Police. Data from Smiley SiDs provides an indication of priority roads. Two new mobile camera van lay-by have already been at two known collision hotspots in Runcorn and a site in Widnes has been upgraded. It is expected that several more mobile sites could be added in Halton.
- Some of the Smiley SiDs and speed activated signs coming to the end of their effective lives and a programme of repair or replacement is underway.
- Education, training and publicity. The ETP programme will continue as highlighted under the current programme set out above (see 2024/25 update).

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implication resulting from the publication of these latest figures.

5.2 Funding for road safety initiatives is now derived from a number of sources. Since 2011 'ring-fenced' grants for road safety have been removed. Consequentially this means that the road safety programme must be prioritised against other urgent revenue spend areas, such as social care.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Any reduction in road casualties releases health resources to be focused on other areas.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Improving road safety can encourage people to access opportunities for work, especially via sustainable / active travel means.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

By helping to create a safer environment, road safety casualty reduction work assists in the safeguarding of children and young people and in the achievement of accessible services.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
Deprivation and road traffic collisions are linked. Improving road safety will improve the quality of life, including the most vulnerable.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future
There are benefits to the environment through encouraging active travel choices.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community
A safe and sustainable road system improves both the communities they serve and the wider environment. The work of the Traffic Management and Road Safety Team ensures that the highways infrastructure is as safe as possible for all road users.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The 2023 DfT statistics indicate that Halton is performing well in term of road safety and collision reduction. However, a reduction in dedicated road safety resources can impact negatively on road safety and associated road collision statistics.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 No direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Improving road safety encourages walking and cycling thereby reducing the number of cars on the road.

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

None

Halton 2023 Traffic Collisions Review

In 2023 Halton saw a slight rise in collisions and casualty numbers as traffic has risen and has finally reached pre-pandemic levels. The previous 12 months saw a marginal increase in the number of collisions, a narrow decrease in those seriously injured and a small increase in those seriously injured.

Given the impacts lockdowns had on both traffic levels and human behaviour, the Department for Transport advises against comparisons to periods which included the restrictions. Instead, they recommend that direct comparisons with 2019 casualty figures are now valid. Comparing this year's data with 2019, we can see that both casualty and collisions numbers are significantly lower now, something that should provide much encouragement.

All accidents reported to Cheshire Police, and which occurred within the adopted highway in Halton involving at least one motor vehicle, horse rider or cyclist, and where at least one person was injured, are included in this Review. Collisions that occur on private land (or driveways) and car parks, or do not result in personal injuries also excluded.

As for the previous year, the figures in this report for injured casualties are based on adjusting figures reported by the Police to take account of a historic under-reporting of road traffic collisions. These adjusted figures can reliably be used to compare trends over time across the country.

The Department for Transport has engaged with all Police Constabularies to ensure a uniform approach to STATS19 information gathering and in addition, changes to injury severity assessments have been made. Collisions are now more readily classified as 'severe' under these new rules. Historical data has also been re-examined and now the DfT is able to provide 10 years' worth of directly comparable data for every Police Force and Local Authority.

Year	Collisions	All casualties	Adult Deaths / Serious Injuries (adjusted) (AKSIs)	Child Deaths / Serious Injuries (CKSIs)	Slight Injuries All Ages (SLI)
2013	267	347	57	3	307
2014	279	376	68	4	325
2015	224	304	47	2	272
2016	257	353	61	6	308
2017	241	303	43	4	275
2018	194	230	42	6	202
2019	190	249	46	2	208
2020	149	181	32	4	159
2021	148	176	28	2	158
2022	157	188	39	3	146
2023	158	195	33	6	156

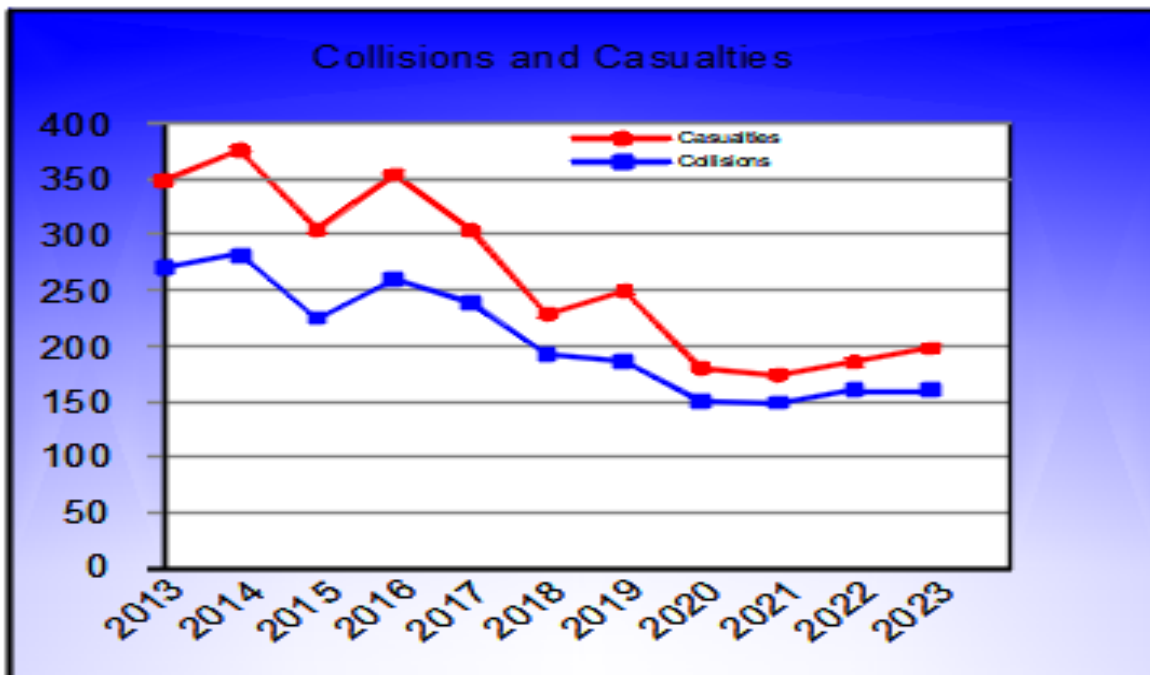


Figure 1 – Collisions and casualties (all categories) 2013 – 2023

Killed and Seriously Injured, All Ages (KSI)

2023 saw a decrease in the number of all-age casualties killed or seriously injured (KSI) in Halton, from 42 in 2022 to 39 in 2023. Sadly, one person lost their life on Halton's roads in 2023, one fewer than the year previously.

The DfT advises that comparisons with previous three years' figures should be interpreted with caution, given the dramatic changes in traffic levels associated with Covid lockdowns. However, they do confirm that road traffic is now at a level last seen pre-pandemic and advises that Authorities should make direct comparisons with 2019 figures. Halton, in comparison with other Authorities within the Cheshire Constabulary area and Liverpool City Region was an average performing Local Authority when comparing figures with 2022. However, when following the DfT's recommendations to only compare with 2019's casualty numbers, Halton remains one of the top-performing Local Authorities.

Given the small numbers involved and their inherent volatility, it is more advantageous to use a rolling average, taken over a number of years. Despite plateauing in recent years, encouragingly the five-year rolling average has declined again (down to 39 from 40.8). However, influencing factors such as the new Mersey Gateway Bridge and associated road system being outside Council control; reductions in budgets and the focus on small scale marginal gains; and changes to the Police serious injury reporting system have meant that opportunities to drive significant improvements are increasingly limited.

This year's fall in KSI numbers (all ages) was somewhat unexpected, given the rise in traffic levels, and it will be interesting to see if the historic downward shift in the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads can be maintained.

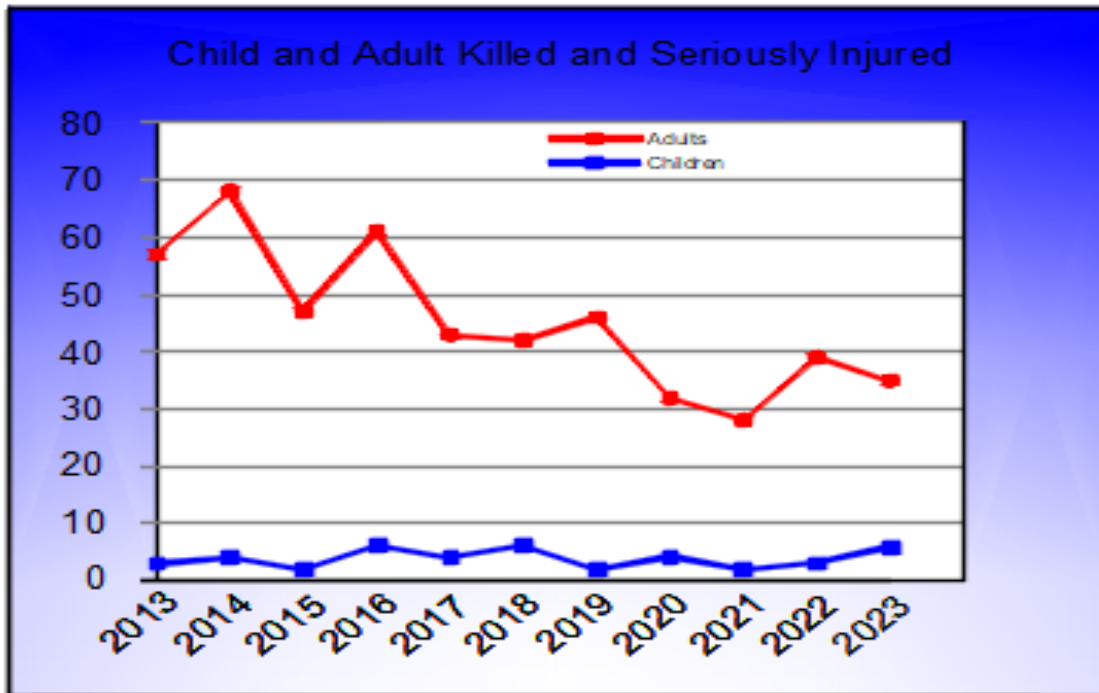


Figure 2 – Killed and Seriously Injured (Adults and Children) 2013 – 2023

Children (u16s) Killed and Seriously Injured (CKSI)

In 2023, six children were KSI (killed or seriously injured) in Halton, an increase of three in comparison with 2022. Due to the numbers being so low, this annual total is traditionally very prone to variations, year on year. The five-year rolling CSKI average has remained static at 3.4, an historically low number.

It will be interesting to see if this year's increase is start of an upward trend or a temporary blip in the numbers.

Slight, All-Age Casualties (SLI)

In 2022 there was a slight increase in people of all ages slightly injured in Halton, up to 156 from 146. Comparison with pre-pandemic levels makes better reading, with Slight, All-Age Casualties showing a 25% reduction on the 2019 figures.

Compared with neighbouring Local Authorities, over a longer timeframe Halton is ranked at the top.

The number of collisions on the Borough's roads increased slightly but are still significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels.

For almost three decades (1983-2010), the UK Government set ambitious casualty reduction targets. These targets were seen as “fundamental” to the substantial reductions in death and injury that followed.

However, in 2010, policy changed, and explicit targets were abandoned. Instead in 2011 the Coalition Government introduced a strategy for Road Safety that set out an advisory outcomes framework designed to help Local Government, local organisations and citizens to monitor progress towards improving road safety and decreasing the number of fatalities and seriously injured casualties.

The framework included six key indicators relating to road deaths. These were intended to measure the key outcomes of the strategy, but in Halton, given the low number of fatalities, and the consequent fluctuations, it was proposed to use KSI rates instead. However, the Government did not have any road casualty reduction targets by the late 2010s.

Since then, the Department for Transport have not advised Local Authorities of any new targets or strategies to reduce casualty numbers on our roads although it is understood that with the recent change in Government, this is now under consideration.

Looking at overall casualty numbers, despite a small uptick in in the last couple of years, Halton is outperforming many neighbouring Authorities and the national picture. Although traffic levels have returned to pre-pandemic levels, casualty numbers in Halton have not, which is a source of encouragement. Locally, only Manchester City Council and Warrington Borough Council have performed as well as Halton over the past decade.

All casualties	2015-2019 average	2021	2022	2023	2023 change over 2022	2023 change over 2014 – 2019 average
Cheshire East	980	738	821	718	-13%	-27%
Cheshire West & Chester	931	646	707	645	-9%	-31%
Halton	288	176	188	195	+4%	-32%
Knowsley	329	172	295	273	-7%	-17%
Liverpool	1323	1071	1193	1119	-6%	-15%
Manchester	1168	902	868	807	-7%	-31%
St Helens	355	262	290	299	+3%	-16%
Warrington	589	385	382	398	+4%	-32%
GB	170,464	128,209	135,280	132,977	-2%	-22%

With regards those killed or seriously injured, the situation is very similar, as there was a small increase in KSIs (all ages) for 2023, as compared with the year previously. However, following the DfT’s recommendations to compare with 2019 casualty numbers, Halton’s KSI performance shows a reduction compared with Local Authorities in both the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire. KSI numbers in Halton are low, it is prone to wilder statistical fluctuations than larger Local Authorities, underlining the importance of examining longer-term trends than year on year variations. In the current economic climate Local Authorities operate under severe financial constraints, lacking the resources to engage in new, large-scale casualty reduction strategies.

KSI (adjusted)	2014-2019 average	2021	2022	2023	2023 change over 2022	2023 change over 2014 – 2019 average
Cheshire East	195	140	180	154	-14%	-21%
Cheshire West & Chester	156	136	121	126	+4%	-19%
Halton	45	27	38	39	+3%	-13%
Knowsley	61	39	66	55	-17%	-10%
Liverpool	281	265	264	293	+11%	+4%
Manchester	235	188	180	189	+5%	-20%
St Helens	78	62	64	59	-8%	-24%
Warrington	88	65	54	72	+33%	-18%
GB	31,625	27,095	29,700	29,711	+0%	-6%

When engaged in a casualty reduction programme it is vital to know who is involved and the causes behind these collisions. These, and other long-term trends should also be examined to inform decisions and better enable us to target resources.

Casualty numbers (all severities) by road user type								
Year	Pedestrian	Pedal Cyclist	Motorcyclist	Car Occupant	Bus Occupant	Van Occupant	HGV Occupant	Other Veh Occupant
2013	43	26	31	235	3	7	0	2
2014	34	51	41	229	4	14	3	0
2015	45	24	29	185	3	8	7	3
2016	43	39	36	181	36	14	1	3
2017	41	37	28	175	14	7	1	0
2018	32	37	20	126	3	9	3	0
2019	36	21	25	155	3	4	4	1
2020	26	35	21	91	1	5	2	0
2021	17	26	19	102	1	5	4	2
2022	22	29	24	101	0	8	0	4
2023	20	23	20	114	4	7	6	1

It is positive that the three most vulnerable road user types (pedestrians, cyclists and powered two-wheelers) all saw a decline in casualty numbers last year.

In recent years Local Authorities have been actively encouraged to increase the number of people walking and cycling, through the construction of new pedestrian and cycle-only routes, re-allocation of road space and other initiatives to boost 'active travel'.

Walking is currently the only mode of transport where average trips per person are above 2019 levels and it is very satisfying to see a significant reduction in pedestrian casualties, both medium and long-term. Indeed, KSI figures for pedestrians are currently half the number they were in 2019 and is testament to the number of pedestrian-focused engineering measures and road safety initiatives Halton Borough Council has engaged with, in recent years. Indeed, last year our Road Safety team delivered 'Stepping Out' pedestrian training to Year 3 children at almost every primary school in the Borough.

The casualty rates for cycling have fallen but remain stubbornly constant. It is anticipated that with the construction of new, strategic traffic-free cycle routes in the Borough these numbers may begin to subside. To encourage cycling and good practice, Halton Borough Council delivered cycle training to over 2000 children in Halton, and cycle safety talks and independent travel training was provided to Years 5 & 6 children.

All the collision data we receive from Cheshire Police is via the STATS19 recording system. The forms the Police use provide almost 100 possible causation factors as well as information regarding casualty types, weather, road conditions etc. This information is vital to properly direct a road casualty reduction programme although it is disappointing that too often Cheshire Police do not provide causation factor details to Local Authorities, only the Department for Transport.

Looking at the latest STATS19 data for Halton we can see that the overwhelming majority of collisions are caused by some form of driver error. Only a handful of collisions detailed issues with the road surface or layout as an accident cause and most of these related to temporary measures at roadwork sites. Below is a table illustrating the most common causation factors on Halton's roads last year:

Motor vehicles / cyclists – all casualties			
Causation factor	2015-2019 average	2022	2023
Driver or rider error or reaction	157	86	96
Driver / rider failed to look properly	86	52	51
Injudicious action	52	32	41
Impairment or distraction	30	28	31
Behaviour or inexperience	35	28	39
Driver / rider failed to judge other person's path or speed	48	24	28
Driver / rider careless, reckless or in a hurry	18	20	23
Loss of control	27	18	28
Exceeding speed limit	12	16	9
Distraction in vehicle	6	15	8
Driver / rider impaired by alcohol	10	9	6
Driver / rider impaired by drugs	1	3	10
Pedestrians – all casualties			
Pedestrian only	22	8	12
Pedestrian failed to look properly	16	4	10
Pedestrian failed to judge vehicle's path or speed	4	2	3
Pedestrian impaired by alcohol	2	2	3
Crossing road masked by stationary or parked vehicle	3	2	3

Most factors have shown a decline over time, though there have been a worrying rise in collisions involving drivers exceeding the speed limit or being distracted in the vehicle. Of even greater concern is the raising in collisions with 'drug-driving' as a causation factor. Halton Borough Council continues to engage with Cheshire Police with regards speed enforcement and last year a fixed speed camera on A562 Speke Road had an upgrade and a red light / speed on green camera was installed at A557 Watkinson Way gyratory, a collision 'hot pot'. In addition, we work continuously with the Cheshire Road Safety Group to identify new mobile camera sites at locations experiencing speeding issues. It is encouraging that this year, two new sites have been commissioned at roads with severe collision histories.

Since the Covid19 pandemic there has been a noticeable shift in traffic patterns, with less acute peak hours but more traffic on roads during traditional daytime off-peak periods. Changes in work and shopping

patterns (more people working from home and the rise in shopping delivered to home) may account for some of this, but it is also clear that traffic associated with the 'school run' continues to grow, bringing its own related road safety issues.

Engineering measures designed to enhance safety around schools continue to be a priority and our Road Safety team continue to engage with schools and Police on a weekly basis to encourage safer behaviour from all road users and discourage inconsiderate parking, which often negatively impacts road safety.

In addition, our brilliant School Crossing Patrol service, celebrating 70 years in the U.K., continues to provide children with safe places to cross. Last year almost 3000 children in the Borough crossed the road each day with the help of our Patrols.

Lack of resources mean a scaling back of engineering interventions but in recent years a greater number of small-scale engineering schemes have been devised to improve safety and accessibility for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. Add to that the sterling work of our Road Safety team in their education, training and publicity programmes, together with a greater engagement with Cheshire Police in targeted enforcement campaigns, there is no reason why further gains cannot be made in ensuring the safest road network possible.

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 13 November 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Environment & Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Environment & Urban Renewal

SUBJECT: Petition for Regent Road to become one-way

WARD(S) Appleton

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on the receipt of a 36 name petition requesting that Regent Road be made a one-way street as a measure to reduce traffic flows and increase public safety.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the request as set out in the petition is not supported for the reasons given in the report.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Regent Road is a residential street in the Appleton Ward of Widnes. It starts / terminates at Appleton Village to the west and to the east runs into Cooper Street, which terminates at Albert Road (itself a one-way street running south to north). It is approximately 170m in length and has a constant carriageway width of 6.3m.

3.2 The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and is currently traffic calmed using 6 no. 37mm high full width speed thumps laid out at 30m spacings. This series of thumps continue into Cooper Street. There are 49 residential properties (mainly terraced) fronting the road, as well as a large electricity substation. Other than the odd exception, no properties have any off-street parking amenity, and cars are parked on both sides of the street. The footways on both sides are wide (averaging 2.2m), kerb heights are low, and people routinely bump up onto the footway to park their vehicles, thereby leaving sufficient carriageway width to allow other vehicles to pass without obstructing the footway.

3.3 STATS19 road traffic collision data, as supplied by Cheshire Police, indicates that between January 1990 and December 2023 there have been two recorded injury collisions (both slights) along the entire length of Regent Road, with the last occurring in 1995.

3.4 In September 2022, traffic signals were installed at the crossroad

junction of Appleton Village / Leigh Avenue / Deacon Road / Frederick Street. The lights were installed to increase connectivity, especially for pedestrians, between residential areas, Victoria Park and adjacent schools and doctors' surgeries. Since then, the petitioners allege that traffic levels have increased on Regent Road as road users seek to avoid queueing at the traffic lights. A review of correspondence regarding the traffic lights indicate that since their implementation, the Council has received one complaint from a member of the public, and this was unrelated to queue lengths, increase in journey times or migration of traffic.

- 3.5 Although undated, it should be noted that the petition was received at a time when the section of Appleton Village, between Regent Road and Deacon Road, was closed for an extended period in July and August, to allow emergency utility works. This road closure undoubtedly caused some traffic to migrate onto adjacent roads, including Regent Road.
- 3.6 On receipt of the petition, it was arranged for automatic counters to be installed on Regent Road, Cooper Street and Appleton Village, once the recent road works were complete, to determine current traffic levels and speeds and gauge the impact of any new one-way system on neighbouring roads. In addition, site inspections were undertaken on three separate dates to observe driver behaviour and establish the amount of available on-street parking amenity.
- 3.7 The traffic counts, undertaken independently using lighting column mounted radar units, indicate that on average 305 vehicles traverse Regent Road in an eastbound direction each day, with 300 cars travelling the other way. Average speeds for both directions were 16.3mph. On Cooper Street, flows were even lower, with 243 vehicles recorded travelling eastbound and 168 vehicles moving westbound each day. Two-way average speed was 16.6mph. Morning and afternoon peak hours for each road were between 34 vehicles per hour (both directions) and 57 vehicles per hour (both directions). These figures rather confirm what was observed on site: these roads are very quiet with traffic traversing them at appropriate speeds. Flows on Appleton Village were much higher, averaging 1141 northbound and 1040 southbound. Southbound speeds were higher than those for northbound (14.6mph and 13.0mph) indicating that queueing at the traffic lights is not significant.
- 3.8 A one-way street can only be imposed as part of a legal Traffic Regulation Order requiring statutory consultation with all frontages and organisations such as the Police and other emergency services, and it is essential to gain their support for the proposals. After writing to Cheshire Police to ascertain their opinion regarding a one-way TRO here, they have indicated they would not support such a change for the following reasons:
 - Vehicles speeds will increase, as there will be no opposing

flow of traffic.

- Roads in the immediate vicinity will see an increase in traffic.
- Response times for emergency vehicles will increase.

3.9 All the evidence indicates that there is no requirement to make Regent Road a one-way street. There is no recorded injury collision history and traffic flows are low and slow, with no evidence of traffic migrating here to avoid the Deacon Road traffic signals. Some residents would undoubtedly have to access their street by an alternative and less convenient route which will involve the use of other neighbouring streets (adding approximately 1km to journey lengths) and traffic speeds may increase. In addition, all residents of Cooper Street would be inconvenienced by this measure, none of whom have asked for it. Evidence from other roads with short lengths of one-way running indicate they are likely to be contravened by some drivers, thereby requiring police enforcement.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

None identified.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None identified.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None identified.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None identified.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

One-way system will increase journey times and lengths for many residents and may encourage an increase in traffic speeds, both of which will increase traffic-related air pollution.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

One-way working may see traffic speeds increase due to drivers' perception that there is no opposing traffic, thereby increasing the risk of serious collisions, especially with vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Any one-way Traffic Regulation Order would undoubtedly increase journey times and lengths, and traffic speeds may see an unwelcome increase. All of this would contribute to an increase in CO₂ emissions and other forms of traffic-related air pollution in a highly residential area.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	13 th November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director - Environment & Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Environment and Urban Renewal
SUBJECT:	Environmental Fund Update
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update the Board on the expenditure of the Environmental Fund.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board notes the wide range of projects that have benefited from the fund, as set out in Appendix 1.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Planning permission for the Runcorn Energy from Waste (EfW) Plant was granted in September 2008. The Plant is subject to a legal agreement entered into under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3.2 The legal agreement contains a provision that the owner of the Plant agrees to pay the Council an annual lump sum payment for every tonne of fuel received and processed. The legal agreement states:

“that the lump sum payments shall be used by the Council to fund environmental matters as may be specified from time to time by the Council within the Borough of Halton for the benefit of its residents generally and which may include measures to improve public transport, highway network improvements, travel plan monitoring, waste recycling and wider community improvements such as landscaping and nature conservation measures.”

3.3 The fund has been in operation since 2015, and over that period has generate £6,909,919.76.

3.4 A number of projects have been funded and implemented and these set out in Appendix 1. These provide a number of interventions, for example, improvements to open space, (Town Park in Runcorn and Runcorn Hill). These improvements not only provide visual improvements and open up access, but also can have wider health benefits, encouraging people to use their local spaces more. Other projects have included the

implementation of walking and cycling routes.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The fund seeks to advance the Council’s environmental priorities. It adds considerable value by acting as matched financing for external funding bids.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None identified.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

6.1 All bids to the environment fund must support at least one of the following Council’s priorities:

- Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence
- Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
- Supporting Children, Young People and Families
- Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
- Working Towards a Greener Future
- Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

6.2 As shown in Appendix 1, the Fund finances projects that benefit all priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the subject of this report.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Fund finances projects that help tackle climate change for example contributions to the solar farm, walking and cycling routes, and tree planting / open space enhancement schemes.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
S106 Legal Agreement	Municipal Building	Andrew Plant

INEOS Energy From Waste Projects	Grants Agreed	Drawdown
Runcorn Hill Park - works to refurbish features inc Boating Lake etc	£135,537.00	£135,537.00
Dukesfield Garages - provision of skips etc for clearance of fly tipping	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
Community Payback - funding of supervision team	£193,746.00	£149,651.00
Weston Point Library - temporary closure	£5,510.19	£5,510.19
Runcorn Town Centre Community Garden - maintain / improve garden area	£24,000.00	£24,000.00
Runcorn Hill Park - creation of trail walking / running track	£7,239.60	£7,239.60
Air quality monitoring	£32,600.00	£32,600.00
Runcorn Locks Restoration - funding of feasibility survey	£30,000.00	£30,000.00
Wood Lane Pond - improvement of public open spaces facilities	£17,279.33	£17,279.33
Runcorn Town Hall Park - install traditional fencing to improve security	£118,159.28	£118,159.28
Runcorn Hill Park / Highlands Road - improvements to park boundary	£56,043.40	£56,043.40
Beechwood - provision of new children's playground	£37,327.16	£37,327.16
Town Park - car park improvements to improve visitor access	£130,000.00	£130,000.00
Renewable Energy - installation of solar farm at former St Michael's golf course	£250,000.00	£250,000.00
Weston Point Laybay - permanent closure	£6,416.46	£6,416.46
Town Park Team - funding for on site environmental maintenance team	£350,000.00	£350,000.00
Major Routeways - funding of two person team for litter / maintenance	£300,000.00	£240,000.00
Prescot Road Playing Fields - boundary and car park improvements	£136,816.00	£136,816.00
Canal Links SJB to Daresbury - walking / cycling route along Bridgewater Canal	£40,000.00	£40,000.00
Runcorn Station to Heath Business Park - walking / cycling route	£20,000.00	£20,000.00
Victoria Park Glasshouse - restoration of Victorial style structure	£30,000.00	£30,000.00
Sewer Destructor - restoration and information boards	£1,218.60	£1,218.60
Environmental Contingency Fund - funding for small works eg graffiti removal	£17,090.00	£2,090.00
Halton Lodge Play Area - improvements to play area / equipment	£12,500.00	£12,500.00
Widnes SUD - reconstruction of Victoria Park Cycle Path	£205,652.54	£205,652.54
War Memorials - conservation works to memorials in Hale, Runcorn and Widnes	£48,958.00	£48,958.00
Hale Lighthouse Access - improved access for disabled / pedestrian / equestrian users	£15,474.00	£13,873.75
Runcorn Station Piazza design fees and initial works	£25,155.00	£25,155.00
Runcorn Hill Park Bowling Green - improved pedestrian access and amenity	£52,507.00	£51,654.25
Barrows Green Widnes - improvements to site infrastructure / access etc	£187,899.00	£154,630.65
Runcorn Hill Park footbridge installation of replacement footbridge	£21,266.00	£21,266.00
Town Park Southern Park improvements to path infrastructure and landscaping	£209,000.00	£209,000.00
Rooftop Garden and Community Kitchen Garden at Halton Lea (Shopping City)	£6,867.00	£6,867.00
Madeline McKenna Home	£15,165.00	£15,165.00
Runcorn Cemetary Seafarers and Covid	£198,818.64	£128,299.57
St Michael's GC Wildlife Garden	£97,000.00	£97,000.00
Brindley Green	£3,995.00	£3,995.00
Arley Drive Pitches	£80,669.00	£75,958.46
Town Park Palacefields Avenue	£330,735.00	£330,735.00
Westfield Pre School AQM	£21,400.00	£21,400.00
CCTV Cameras	£50,000.00	£0.00
Halton Micro Grid Project	£60,000.00	£0.00
Upton Rocks Park Access	£91,904.50	£0.00
Wilmere Lane Mary Twigg Walk	£35,000.00	£0.00
Halton Air Quality	£40,649.00	£40,649.00
Hale Park Dog Exercise Area	£28,306.50	£28,306.50
Waterfront Promenade to TC Green Link Runcorn	£17,500.00	£17,500.00
Sankey Canal Enhancement	£500,000.00	£185,296.23
Litter Bin Replacement	£75,000.00	£0.00
Halton Big Forest	£120,000.00	£20,000.00
Responding to Ash die back	£70,000.00	£0.00
Veterans Environmental Campaign	£120,000.00	£0.00
Mary Twigg Peace Walk Wilmere Lane	£78,940.00	£0.00
HMO Research Project	£40,000.00	£25,000.00
Town Park Holt Lane to Palacefield Improvement	£525,285.00	£13,130.98
Pickerings Pasture - MRP for Café	£612,500.00	£0.00
Neighbourhood Patrol Officers	£149,730.00	£0.00
	£6,089,359.20	£3,574,380.95
FUNDS RECEIVED		
From Ineos March 15	£154,027.35	
From Ineos May 16	£510,092.82	
From Ineos May 17	£616,258.56	
From Ineos May 18	£757,884.26	
From Ineos June 19	£703,306.87	
From Ineos May 20	£730,170.90	
From Ineos July 21	£753,589.06	
From Ineos June 22	£809,790.72	
From Ineos June 23	£889,349.46	
From Ineos	£985,449.76	
	£6,909,919.76	

REPORT TO:	Environment and Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	13 th November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Environment and Urban Renewal
SUBJECT:	Performance Management Report for Quarter 2 of 2024/25
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and to raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the second quarter period to 30th September 2024.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2024-25 were agreed by Members for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
- Development and Investment Services.
 - Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services.
 - Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services.
- 1.3 The report details progress made against objectives and milestones and performance targets and provides information relating to key developments and emerging issues that have arisen during the period.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The board receives the quarter 2 performance management report;**
- 2) Considers 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 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

All Key Performance Indicators relate directly to the following Council's priorities:

- Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence
- Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
- Supporting Children, Young People and Families
- Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
- Working Towards a Greener Future
- Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

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 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None identified.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

Environment & Urban Renewal PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report Q2

Reporting Period: 1st July to 30th September 2024

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 2024 / 25 for service areas within the remit of the Environment and Urban Renewal Directorates (EUR) Policy and Performance Board.

1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2024 - 25 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to Environment and Urban Renewal Directorates (EUR) Policy & Performance Board i.e.

- Economy, Enterprise & Property extracts for **Development & Investment Services including Regeneration and External Funding**
- Policy, Planning & Transportation extracts for **Highways & Transportation, Logistics & Transport Management (incl. Road Safety), and Building Control & Contaminated Land.**
- Community & Environment extracts for **Waste & Environmental Improvement Open Spaces (including Cemeteries & Crematoria)**

1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 5 of this report.

1.4 Corporate Priorities



2.0 High Priority Equality Actions

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The Council's latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives is published on the Council website and is available via:
<http://www4.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/Equality-and-Diversity.aspx>






3.0 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.




Development & Investment Services including Regeneration and External Funding

Key Objectives / milestones





Corporate Priority	Priority 2 – Building a strong sustainable local economy. Regeneration
ERD 01	Regeneration of Widnes Town Centre



Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Secure Liverpool City Region (LCR) capacity funding by June 2024		Approved in principle, waiting for the legal agreement from LCR.
Develop & agree project brief by the end of June 2024		This was concluded at end of July 2024 after the identification of additional budget.
Start procurement process in July 2024		This was slightly delayed due to time required to develop brief and secure additional funding. A new member of staff starting 1 st August picked up this work which is now completed.
Agree first draft of Framework - March 2025		On Track
Present Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework to Town Panel by March 2025		On Track

Corporate Priority	Priority 2 – Building a strong sustainable local economy Regeneration
ERD 02	Regeneration of Runcorn Town Centre




Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Board member submission to DLUHC by 1 st June.		Information submitted to DLUHC. Currently waiting for feedback and approval confirmation which has been delayed due to the General Election.
Submission to DLUHC by 1 st November 2024		Arcadis and PLACED have been appointed to provide consultancy support and conduct public engagement work on behalf of the board. We are waiting for revised information on the submission requirements and deadline from Government
Agree 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan by March 2025		On Track




Corporate Priority	Priority 2 – Building a strong sustainable local economy Regeneration
ERD 03	Support development & growth at Sci-tech Daresbury

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Assist JV to secure funding from the CA by July 2024		Ongoing discussions with the CA in relation to development appraisal and costs. Have agreed to submit Outline Business Case in Q3 for review.
Secure Investment Zone funding by September 2024		Funding is secured in principle subject to Full Business Case. Anticipate funding to be secured in Q4.
Commence delivery of Project Violet Phase 2 – October 2024		Due to increase in the viability gap, the project has been re-appraised. As a result, further funding is required to deliver the scheme and the procurement exercise will be restarted. A start anticipated for August 2025.
Confirm funding arrangements for long term expansion by December 2024		The use of the Enterprise Zone Funding mechanism is likely to be able to support the costs of the land acquisition for the long-term expansion of the campus.







Report to Exec Board Q3 2024-25		Work is ongoing to compile all the necessary supporting information with an aim to submit a detailed report in Q3.
Agreed funding package for Project Violet by September 2024		As stated, the viability gap increase means that the project has been re-appraised and further work is required to confirm the funding package for delivery.

Corporate Priority	Priority Six – Valuing and Appreciating Halton and our Community Regeneration
ERD 04	Providing new homes that meet Halton’s needs


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Sign the MOU by August 2024		Achieved - At its meeting on 11 th July 2024, Executive Board approved entering a Strategic Place Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with partners, leading to production of a Business Plan and new governance arrangements to be established. See Report: Liverpool City Region Strategic Place Partnership.pdf (halton.gov.uk)
Agreeing Halton’s Place Priorities by September 2024		Achieved - At meeting on 11th July 2024, Executive Board provided delegated authority to the Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Climate Change, to agree details for the formation of the Strategic Place Partnership and finalise Halton’s Priorities. Halton Place Priorities were presented as a draft ‘Place on a Page’ to Executive Board. The Strategic Place Partnership Interim Business Plan, including Halton’s Place Priorities, were approved at the Housing and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) first meeting of Strategic Place Partnership Board. This was held on the 13 th September 2024.
Establish Place Group by October 2024		Achieved - The Halton Place Group is an Officer level meeting held quarterly with representation from the LCR CA and Homes England (HE). The Council lead is the Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property. Council Officer representation on the Halton Place Group has now been agreed.






		The LCR CA have confirmed the first meeting of the Place Group is scheduled to be held in October 2024.
Produce a housing project pipeline, in line with Halton Place Priorities, by March 2025		Housing project pipeline will reflect the priorities identified within the Halton 'Place on Page'. Pipeline drafting has commenced, awaiting information requirements from LCR CA to progress. This will form part of the Halton Place Group which is scheduled to be held in October 2024.
Secure first draft of Housing Strategy by March 2025		At its meeting on 18 th April 2024, Executive Board approved production of a new Borough wide Housing Strategy and supporting evidence base. See Report: ProductionofBoroughwideHousingStrategy.pdf (halton.gov.uk) Following a formal procurement process, specialist housing consultancy Arc4 were appointed in September 2024. The timeline for production is currently being finalised and it is anticipated that a first draft of the Housing Strategy will be prepared by March 2025.
Production of Housing Strategy by March 2025		Production of the Housing Strategy commenced in September 2024. The first stage of the production process is preparing the evidence base for the Strategy. The evidence base includes producing a Housing Needs Assessment, supported by survey of households in Halton. The whole production process for the Housing Strategy is anticipated to take 12 months, including stakeholder and public consultation. The final Housing Strategy being published in September 2025.

Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy Business Investment & Growth
ERD 05	To provide support to all Halton’s businesses and encourage start-ups.



Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Deliver four sector network events and two business events by March 2025		Two sector networks operational by Quarter 2 2024 - 2025 (Green Growth and Logistics) Advanced Manufacturing due to progress by the end of Quarter 3 and ICT by the end of Quarter 4
Carry out 150 diagnostics by March 25		More than 100 diagnostics have been arranged by the end of Quarter 2 2024 – 2025.
Provide support to forty-seven town centre businesses by March 25		Programme progressing well. The first two stages are finalised (diagnostic design and audit) with support now being delivered to town centre businesses.
Provide support to 67 Halton businesses by March 25		As of the end of Quarter 2 2024 – 2025 49 businesses have received support from the Business Support Service.
Provide support to 114 businesses across the Borough by March 2025		On track to achieve this target as illustrated by the two measures above. 114 will be supported by March 2025.
Support sixteen business startups by March 2025		Six businesses have started up and four are due to start trading in October. Therefore, we forecast the additional six to achieve the target will be achieved over the 5 remaining months.

Corporate Priority	Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence Programmes Office
ERD 06	Maximise new external funding opportunities and effectively manage and monitor existing funding programmes


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Produce monthly funding bulletins.		Monthly bulletins produced and widely distributed; additional climate change funding bulletin produced to support the climate change action plan steering group. Review to be undertaken to ensure all managers in the Directorate receive and cascade the bulletins.

Deliver quarterly training sessions for colleagues.		This has been put on hold due to gaps in staffing; this will be a priority for Quarter 3 to pick this up again and develop a programme of sessions to March 2025.
Submit compliant claims for all grant programmes		All claims submitted on time and compliant; substantial work is being undertaken to ensure compliance on some of the UKSPF strands
Report annual financial position to Corporate PPB in July 2024		This was taken in September as the agenda was too full in July. Report well received and subsequent queries responded to.
Produce a pipeline of future regeneration projects to maximise the potential to secure future funding by October 2024		Delayed due to discussions on project types and status; at the end of the quarter 20 out of 34 project profiles had been submitted. These will be uploaded to a central spreadsheet.
Agree pipeline with members and the CA by March 2025		See item above; pipeline needs to be agreed internally and then presented to members and CA




Corporate Priority	<p>Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.</p> <p>Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy.</p> <p>Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families.</p> <p>Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need.</p> <p>Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future.</p> <p>Priority Six - Valuing and Appreciating Halton and our Community</p> <p>Planning & Development</p>
ERD 13	Create and maintain statutory plans, generated through community consultation, that guide decisions on future development proposals and address the needs and opportunities of the area

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Delivery during the plan period (2037)		Local Development Strategy agreed 6 SPDs identified within the work programme and quarterly updates given
As per Local Plan Monitoring Framework & Annual Monitoring Report		Annual AMR reporting to Environment and Urban renewal PPB reported on time.


Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong Sustainable Local Economy. Planning & Development
ERD 14	Providing new homes that meet Halton’s needs

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Granting of planning permission for housing and other forms of accommodation		A total of 4 applications have been approved for residential development for a range of application types such as Outline, Full and a S73 applications.

Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong Sustainable Local Economy. Planning & Development
ERD 15	Provide an efficient Planning service that supports business investment in Halton



Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
60% major determined within 13 weeks (or agreed extension)		100% - 6 of 6 Applications therefore above target
70% minor application determined in 8 weeks (or agreed extension)		87.5% - 14 of 16 Applications therefore above target
70% other application determined in 8 weeks (or agreed extension)		98% - 51 of 52 Applications therefore above target

Corporate Priority	Priority Five - Working Towards a Greener Future Planning & Development
ERD 16	Provide improvements to Biodiversity




Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
The amount of BNG secured as part of planning applications.		Applications have been received that are expected to be liable for BNG, but none yet determined




Highways & Transportation, Logistics & Transport Management

Corporate Priority	Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. Logistics
ERD 17	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon


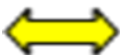
Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Percentage number of public transport journeys on-time at intermediate timing points Baseline 87% Target 95%	 85.55	Although the indicator has still not achieved the baseline target it has remained stable against Q1. Further liaison with the bus operators is required to identify a way forward to improve the performance.
Percentage number of public transport journeys departing the terminus on-time Baseline 96% Target 97%	 100	This indicator has performed exceptionally well this quarter achieving 100% compliance.

Corporate Priority	Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. Logistics
ERD 18	Maintain Corporate Fleet Availability


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Number of vehicle maintenance & safety inspections completed within the statutory timeframe.		All safety inspections completed within the scheduled planned maintenance program that ensures compliance with the statutory requirements of the Council's Operator's Licence. 100% achieved in reporting period.
Number of litres of diesel consumed.		107,640 amount of diesel used for the period 01/07/2024 to 30/09/2024
Number of Community Meals delivered within the two-hour timeframe.		9177 total number of hot/cold meals delivered to vulnerable individuals.


Number of student passenger journeys		20,863 Calculated on actual school days in period (down on last period due to summer holidays)
Number of school transport routes		160 averages of total during reporting period.
Cost of externally contracted school transport		£430.711, total cost for period (down on last period due to summer holidays)

Corporate Priority	Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Logistics
ERD 19	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon.







Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Number of referrals for travel training and number of successful uptakes from the referrals.	 11(8)	11 referrals during the reporting period with 8 individuals (72.7%) taking up the travel training offer.
Number of students who engage in group classroom and outdoor tailored practical sessions.	 57	57 individuals have taken part in weekly classroom-based sessions, 5 have taken part in weekly outdoor practical group sessions and 17 individuals have taken part in 1-2-1 ITT sessions in the same time frame.

Corporate Priority	Priority Five - Working Towards a Greener Future Highways
ERD 20	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon








Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Securing and Investing funding in Travel schemes		Same as last quarter in terms of securing funding. A consultation was carried out during June on a proposed Wilmere Lane Birchfield Rd Active travel scheme (likely to be CRSTS funded with design work to date funded by ATE capability funding streams). Also, the Halton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) documents have now been completed (which will be reported to PPB for endorsement in due course)

Length of schemes implemented / delivered.		312m of Cycle route on the Runcorn Busway utilising ATF3 funding completed

Corporate Priority	Priority Five - Working Towards a Greener Future Highways
ERD 21	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon



Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Securing and Investing funding in highway maintenance to protect the asset.		Three GFA's at Octobers Exec Board for acceptance and investment in the Highway asset
Total length of highway asset		Same as last quarter
Length of maintenance schemes implemented / delivered.		492m Prescott Road resurfacing and footway works. 146m Kingsway footway works
Value of insurance claims for highways defects		£17,949 paid out over the last quarter including solicitor's costs, damages and disbursements
Number of bridges and structures maintained		Underside of SJB bridge deck painting works due to complete end of October.
Number of streetlights maintained		138 Streetlights with maintenance works, not bollards or illuminated signs

Corporate Priority	Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence Traffic
ERD 22	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Programme of education relating to road safety		<p>KS14x Summer road safety workshops in 2 x Community Centres. Very well attended by children, mainly KS1 / KS 2</p> <p>KS2Ped training x 6 classes in schools</p> <p>Junior Safety Officers initiative launch - approximately 30 primary schools on board tally up in process.</p> <p>KS3Enrichment Week x 2</p> <p>Joint working day Morrisons Widnes - tyre safety - mixed ages gen public came to chat. Traffic / pedestrian counts at all SXP sites undertaken, to determine priority list etc.2 road safety days in local colleges, Training of 2 new SXPs</p>
Safety cameras and speed indication devices		16 SiDS, 24 speed activated signs. 3 SiDs currently not operating and options for repair / replacement being explored. Currently 13 No. mobile camera site and 8 No. static cameras in the Borough.
Analysis of collision sites		A number of sites have been identified and accident remedial schemes being drawn up. A number of smaller scale works already complete as well as work on new and upgraded mobile speed camera sites.
Road safety audits for new schemes		No new RSA undertaken in Q2
Number of school crossing patrols		<p>21 school crossing patrols</p> <p>1 mobile</p> <p>1 casual</p>
Number of bike-ability training sessions delivered		364, plus 64 cycle training sessions delivered by HBC Road Safety during school holidays
Number of safety cameras		Currently 13 No. mobile camera site and 8 No. static cameras in the Borough.

Waste, Open Spaces, Cemeteries & Crematoriums
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Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 27	Provide a clean, safe, and attractive environment

Milestone: Carry out Land Audit Management Surveys (LAMS) to assess the standard and quality of the Council's Parks, Cemeteries and Public Realm.	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Ensure that, as a minimum, inspections are carried out bi-monthly throughout the year with results uploaded to the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) for benchmarking purposes.		45 inspections on sites chosen at random have been completed during August and September 2024. 10 Grade A, 31 Grade B, 4 Grade C
Quality Standard Scores - reported Annually to the relevant PPB.		Training completed on 2 nd May



Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 28	Safety within Parks and Open Spaces

Milestone: Carry out planned equipment and safety inspections at playgrounds and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) in the Council's parks and public open spaces.	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
% of playgrounds, play equipment and MUGAs inspected in accordance with planned safety inspection schedules		In Q2, a total of 1072 inspections were carried out. This is against a scheduled target of 960. The completion rate is over 100% and is due to carrying out further inspections when revisiting sites to complete repairs on equipment.


Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 29	Increase the Council's recycling rate and reduce the amount of waste produced per household

Milestone: Quarterly updates on progress and annual performance data statistics to be reported to the relevant PPB by 31st March 2025.	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Kgs of waste produced per household and % of waste recycled – reported annually to the relevant PPB.	U	Waste production is subject to seasonal variation. This is an estimated figure, but it does show that waste levels per household in Q2 (310kgs) are slightly higher than those in Q2 in the previous year (302kgs). This is an estimated figure, but it does show that recycling levels in Q2 (39.1%) are slightly higher than in Q2 in the previous year (38.8%).


Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 30	Development plans for council's Cemeteries & Crematoria

Milestone: To develop plans for the future provision of the Council's Cemeteries and Crematoria	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Developing a plan for replacing the current crematorium with an improved new facility, in a new location, to meet future regulations and service demands. As well as providing a facility which can be adapted for additional offers to produce a financially sustainable business.		It was reported in Q1 that a project is underway to secure a suitable site and begin a feasibility study to define project parameters. It was also reported that an outline project programme will begin to be developed in Q2. Work on this, as well as securing a suitable site, is progressing in conjunction with colleagues in Legal and Property Services.
Identify a future cemetery site for Runcorn. The existing Runcorn Cemetery extension has capacity for possibly up to 10 further years and, as such, a new suitable cemetery site is required.		This work is in progress and on-going.

Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 31	Safety within Cemeteries & Crematoria

Milestone: Carry out planned equipment and safety inspections at playgrounds and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) in the Council's parks and public open spaces.	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>Memorials affected by adjacent burial excavations to be inspected and actions recorded on burial forms/cemeteries database system.</p> <p>Progress integration of ALLOY asset management system to record memorial safety testing (5 year rolling programme to fully survey).</p>		<p>ALLOY integration is being established with a joint HBC/ALLOY Project Team established and initial project team meeting held.</p> <p>Ahead of full ALLOY implementation, inspections around new burials will continue to be carried out to ensure safety to staff and public.</p>

Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 32	Increase standards of service within Cemeteries & Crematoria

Milestone: Ensure high standard of service is maintained throughout the cemeteries; ensuring good upkeep.	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>The general quality of cemetery grounds will be assessed and scored for quality, for grass cutting, weed control and overall management using the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Land Audit Management System (LAMS) system scoring.</p>		<p>Staff training completed and LAMS system now in use. Reporting this quarter identified Zone 2 areas at a good standard.</p>

4.0 Financial Statements

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget at 30 September 24

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	4,805	2,549	2,390	159	329
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	154	(154)	(320)
Agency - in addition to establishment	0		0	0	0
Repairs & Maintenance	1,706	917	967	(50)	(99)
Premises	136	119	119	0	0
Energy & Water Costs	1,247	471	417	54	107
NNDR	690	670	660	10	10
Rents	173	92	89	3	7
Economic Regeneration Activities	21	0	0	0	0
Security	544	251	278	(27)	(55)
Supplies & Services	555	194	186	8	17
Supplies & Services - Grant	1,931	367	367	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	59	59	59	0	0
Capital Finance	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	185	185	185	0	0
Total Expenditure	12,052	5,874	5,871	3	(4)
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-833	-396	-427	31	63
Rent - Commercial Properties	-872	-233	-223	(10)	(20)
Rent - Investment Properties	-38	-19	-19	0	0
Government Grant	-2,311	-1,041	-1,041	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-148	-76	-73	(3)	(6)
Schools SLA Income	-227	-201	-197	(4)	(8)
Recharges to Capital	-295	-198	-201	3	5
Transfer from Reserves	-1,120	-1,120	-1,120	0	0
Total Income	-5,844	-3,284	-3,301	17	34
Net Operational Expenditure	6,208	2,590	2,570	20	30
Recharges					
Premises Support	2,074	1,037	1,037	0	0
Transport	30	14	14	0	0
Central Support	1,947	973	973	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-7,927	-3,963	-3,963	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,872	-1,939	-1,939	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,336	651	631	20	30

Comments on the above figures

Finance communicates with the department on a regular basis to manage and analyse spending, identifying potential savings that could support current and future priorities. In an era of constrained budgets, achieving these goals is essential. The above report indicates that the department net spend will be under budget by £0.030m at year-end, compared to the month 4 projection of £0.025m under budget.

Supporting Information

The department consists of 139fte, of which 69fte are externally funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.126m. The employee figures in this report incorporate the projected pay award for 24/25.

Through diligent account monitoring and the success of utilising grant and external funding to alleviate pressure on the core budget is evident in employee expenses. Specific projects have been identified, and staff time has been allocated accordingly. Always ensuring that the Council is compliant with the grant conditions. This approach will continue throughout the year.

To fulfil statutory and contractual obligations and support the borough's regeneration, maintaining a complete staff establishment is essential. However, the challenge of filling surveyor and project manager roles, even with a market supplement, has resulted in a lack of suitable candidates. Consequently, the engagement of agency personnel has been necessary, anticipated to cost £0.320m this financial year. Without these personnel, the borough's regeneration efforts would be hindered, potentially leading to a loss of business rates and council tax. Where possible, these costs are reimbursed through capital and external funding grants.

The recruitment of agency staff has increased commercial rental income by enabling the completion of pending rent reviews. All units at The Hive are now tenanted, although a rent-free period was provided to secure lease completions, resulting in a £0.019m shortfall.

A reconciliation of service charges at Rutland House and the relocation of Connect to Halton to the Municipal Building have increased the fees and charges income. As a result, the department is forecasting an overachievement against the income target of £0.063m by year-end. Managers have asked to identify and implement measures to reduce unnecessary spending, whilst also ensuring the needs of the service are met leading to the department's projecting a positive variance amounting to £0.017m within supplies and services.

A recent exercise was conducted to determine the costs associated with empty properties within the Borough. Consequently, a new cost centre was established to monitor these expenses. In addition to the loss of rental income whilst the properties remain vacant, the Council also incurs costs for utilities, repairs, and maintenance. As of the end of September, the total cost related to these properties amounts to £0.182m. To reduce the expense, action needs to be taken to accelerate the leasing or explore temporary uses for properties, such as short-term rentals or community projects, which will generate some income and reduce costs.

The Department highlighted the necessity of expert advice to advance regeneration projects. Additionally, the change in Government highlighted the need for an up-to-date Housing Strategy for the Borough. Following a meeting with the Director of Economy, Enterprise, and Property, it was decided to use the Department's reserves to cover these one-off costs. Seeking external advice will assist with future grant funding requests from the LCR and Government and enable the department to fulfil its obligations regarding the borough's regeneration strategy.

Although the Council has seen a significant increase in energy costs over the last few years, it is anticipated that costs this financial year will be £0.185m lower than in 2023/24, representing a decrease of over 14%. The department is forecasting that it will be £0.107m under budget by year-end. Since contract prices are fixed until March 2025, projections are based on 2023/24 usage, using the unit price quoted by the supplier. However, if usage increases as more staff return to the office, these prices may rise. Due to a delay in securing a new security contract, the current provider has been granted a one-year extension. Based on spending over the last six months, spend is projected to exceed budget by £0.055m by the end of the year.

The Repairs and Maintenance program is under continuous review to ensure it stays within budget. This financial year is particularly challenging because the 2024/25 budget did not include an inflation adjustment and was further reduced by 10%. An exercise was conducted with the service to distinguish between capital and revenue expenditures, and the budgets have been adjusted accordingly. Despite these adjustments, revenue expenditure is projected to exceed the budget by £0.098m by the end of the year.

Similar to previous years, the school cleaning service's level agreement (SLA) is not meeting its financial targets due to the employment of agency for covering absences and leave, as well as the anticipated pay award. A reassessment of the SLA charges is in progress in preparation for the forthcoming budget year. Additionally, the demand for the service is declining as more schools transition to academy status

Approved 2024/25 Savings

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

APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EEP4	Cleaning Services – Council Buildings	580	Review cleaning arrangements, with a focus on only emptying bins and cleaning toilets daily.	100	0	U	A review of the cleaning service is underway with some positions removed from the structure. The full savings will not be achieved until the accommodation review is complete.
EEP2	Caretaking & Security Services	641	A review and restructuring of caretaking arrangements.	52	0	U	The restructure can now take place following the retirement of a member of staff. The full saving will not be made until financial year 25/26
Total Economy, Enterprise & Property Department				152	0		

Capital Budget at 30 September 24

Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation £000	2024/25 Revised Allocation £000	Q1 Spend £000	Q2 Spend £000	Q3 Spend £000	Q4 Spend £000	Total Spend £000	Allocation remaining £000
Environment & Regeneration Directorate								
Economy, Enterprise & Property								
3MG	134.5	134.5	0.0	0.0			0.0	134.5
Murdishaw redevelopment	21.2	21.2	5.4	0.0			5.4	15.8
Waterloo Building	0.0	75.0	46.0	66.0			112.0	-37.0
Equality Act Improvement Works	293.2	93.2	8.7	17.6			26.3	66.9
Foundary Lane Residential Area	1,160.0	1,160.0	1.8	464.8			466.6	693.4
Property Improvements	360.2	460.5	4.3	131.1			135.4	325.1
Town Deal	11,352.9	11,552.9	174.9	261.8			436.7	11,116.2
Runcorn Station Quarter	484.7	484.7	0.0	60.5			60.5	424.2
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	178.2	178.2	0.0	0.0			0.0	178.2
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	484.7	268.7	8.6	122.9			131.5	137.2
Changing Places	24.1	24.1	2.5	0.1			2.6	21.5
Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet	2,200.0	2,200.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	2,200.0
Port of Weston	0.0	3,960.0	0.0	1.3			1.3	3,958.7
Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition	0.0	750.0	0.0	30.7			30.7	719.3
Total EEP	16,693.7	21,363.0	252.2	1,156.8	0.0	0.0	1,409.0	19,954.0

Comments on above figures**3MG**

3MG is in its final stages for development with HBC Field being finalised this year and developments for Liberty Park and the Mound not presently forthcoming. No significant levels of expenditure this quarter.

Foundry Lane

Resolving some of the site and financial issues remains the main focus of the work of this project in the quarter resulting in minimal expenditure with a view to being back on track in the next quarter.

Murdishaw

The allocation has been brought forward to continue work to improve the amenity at Murdishaw Community Centre as part of the wider community project. Work has been completed to provide allotment space and further work is due to be undertaken to provide secure and accessible spaces, enhancing the allotment offer. It is intended to allocate and spend the remaining balance within the financial year. The improvements are part of the wider Murdishaw community regeneration scheme which has supported the delivery of the Tea Tree community café, improvements to bungalows on the estate and environmental improvements.

Sci-Tech Daresbury Project Violet

Project Violet is currently being reviewed and a full business case is in development. As a result of increased costs, the development appraisal is being reviewed and the funding requirements being reviewed. The programme anticipates a procurement exercise in the next quarter and the revised delivery programme proposes a 26 month build with construction commencing in August 2025 and completion in Q4 2026

Waterloo Building

All works complete, site now sold, retention monies left to pay in March 2025 circa £2.5k

Equality Improvement Works

All budgets will be spent by year end, £0.200m allocated to The Brindley.

Property Improvement- The budget has been adjusted to accommodate two new unforeseen projects: replacing the platform lift at Kids Planet and fully refurbishing the public lift at Halton Lea.

Changing Places

Works all complete, Grant money fully spent, some retention monies left to pay circa £5k.

Runcorn Station Quarter

The Runcorn Station Development Project will formally be passed over to the CA Rail team as a Merseytravel project from 30th September.

A final invoice is estimated to be submitted during quarter 3 2024 period for Network Rail Project Management fees.

This is estimated to be no more than £10k. Once this has been paid and claimed, the CA Investment Team will formally end Halton's GFA. Halton's role will continue as strategic partner and actively be involved in the design process.

Town Deal

Although at different stages work is progressing with all Town Deal funded projects. The Brindley started on site mid-August and the next phase of the Creative and Digital Skill centre started on site in September. The Health Hub design work is completed, and the next stage is to tender the work. Design work progresses on the remaining projects.

Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development

A contractor for the demolition works was appointed in March 2024, with Planning Consent gained in May 2024. Following a period of services disconnections and liaison with Halton Housing (who's adjoining building Church Mansions is connected to Churchill Hall), the demolition works commenced in mid-July 2024. The main demolition works are now completed, with practical completion anticipated in mid-Oct 2024. This will bring to a close the Council capital element of the project. The Council continues to work on developing residential proposals for the site in partnership with Halton Housing, community consultation is anticipated in Winter 2024.

Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition

Preliminary work is underway, with a submission of an application for demolition works to the Local Planning Authority and the procurement of the demolition contractor both anticipated to commence in Autumn 2024. The demolition works are on track to commence in Spring 2025, following relocation of the Leisure Centre and period of decommissioning of the building

Port of Weston

An outline business case has been developed and finalised which demonstrates the viability of the Port of Weston as a business location with a mixture of uses including high-barn warehousing and a business park.

Within the quarter a full business case was commissioned with a view to carrying out a green book assessment to secure the funding for site purchase and development.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Work has commenced at The Brindley. The allocation for the education room will be reflected in the forecast. The allocations for the High Street solar panels and Church Street works are projected for the end of the financial year.

Planning, Provision and Transportation Department**Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,545	2,688	2,530	158	295
Agency - covering vacancies	110	93	120	(27)	(54)
Agency - in addition to establishment	24	12	57	(45)	(48)
Efficiency Savings	-150	-75	0	(75)	(150)
Premises	193	119	96	23	47
Hired & Contracted Services	59	29	36	(7)	(180)
Planning Appeal Provision	0	0	0	0	(500)
Supplies & Services	144	35	158	(123)	(246)
Street Lighting	1,609	358	337	21	42
Highways Maintenance - Routine & Reactive	1,772	648	587	61	122
Highways Maintenance - Programmed Works	1,851	252	107	145	290
Fleet Transport	1,455	703	654	49	98
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	23	19	15	4	8
Bus Support	498	249	390	(141)	0
Agency Related Expenditure	8	7	8	(1)	(2)
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	31	31	31	0	0
NRA Levy	74	73	73	0	1
LCR Levy	1,059	529	529	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	359	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	14,664	5,770	5,728	42	(277)
Income					
Sales & Rents Income	-96	-78	-88	10	20
Planning Fees	-826	-409	-274	(135)	(268)
Building Control Fees	-245	-122	-128	6	12
Other Fees & Charges	-908	-456	-610	154	307
Grants & Reimbursements	-153	-90	-90	0	0
Government Grant Income	-111	-39	-39	0	0
Halton Hopper Income	-24	-12	-2	(10)	(19)
Recharge to Capital	-365	-91	-91	0	0
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-1,059	-529	-529	0	0
Contribution from Reserves	-1,036	-1,036	-1,036	0	0
Total Income	-4,823	-2,862	-2,887	25	52
Net Operational Expenditure	9,841	2,908	2,841	67	(225)
Recharges					
Premises Support	560	280	280	0	0
Transport	749	390	383	7	13
Central Support	1,534	767	767	0	0
Asset Rental Support	851	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-5,129	-2,561	-2,718	157	314
Net Total Recharges	-1,435	-1,124	-1,288	164	327
Net Departmental Expenditure	8,406	1,784	1,553	231	102

Comments on the above figures

Financial Position

The current position for the PPT department is £0.231m under budget with a projected full financial year outturn of £0.102m under the approved budget.

Supporting Information

As in previous years budget holders are working closing with the Finance Officers to ensure a balanced budget is achieved. Wherever possible, capital expenditure is being prioritised in order to relieve pressure on the revenue budgets.

Employee expenditure is predicted to be under budget at the end of the financial year due to the following:

- There is now a more accurate projection of current vacant posts and when they are likely to be filled, this includes vacancies that have not been filled after going out to advert
- There is expected to be a small saving on staffing costs due to Logistics reducing the number of casual drivers and moving to contracted staff instead.
- There are 3 members of agency staff which are now shown separately from employee costs. 2 of these are covering for existing posts which are vacant, the remainder is an additional post

Efficiency savings for PPT are not expected to be met and more information is provided about this further down the report.

Supplies and services and contracted services are projected to be over budget as in previous years due to the following:

- Halton has a contract with MEAS (Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service) which is hosted by Sefton LA. This is used to provide Halton with advice in relation to ecology, waste, environmental impact assessments and local plans. Although the expenditure on the contract is over the allocated budget, it would cost Halton considerably more to provide this advice in house.
- Legal fees are projected to be over budget due to external legal advice being required in the Planning section.
- £0.109m of the overspend against supplies and services is in relation to software licences and maintenance of systems required but there is no budget available.

For a number of years has held a contingent liability on the balance sheet relating to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, whereby participants in planning appeals can apply for costs against other parties. The Council has recently had one application awarded against them, a prudent figure of £0.5m has been included within the current year accounts to cover the liability. No actual costs have yet been awarded but it is necessary to provide for the estimated cost at this stage. This is in relation to the Pavilions public enquiry; such an award highlights the need for robust planning decisions otherwise expenditure relating to costs and appeals can be a significant unplanned cost to the Council.

Street lighting expenditure is projected to come in slightly under budget. Various actions have been taken to decrease the amount of power being used such as lights being turned off 12am – 6am on some routes and over 80% of HBC owned street lighting stock of around 20,500 columns have been upgraded to LED. This is a volatile budget and could change as we draw into the dark and wintry months.

For the purpose of this report the projected figure is based on the previous financial years outturn in terms of energy costs. This is the simplest way to project expenditure due to actual usage fluctuations year upon year which cannot be predicted. There has also been a reduction in the street lighting budget which has been taken into account.

Highways maintenance budgets are projected to be under budget. Capital is again being utilised where appropriate. The report is again broken down into routine and reactive schemes and programmed works so the various areas can be looked at in more detail.

Fleet transport has seen an increase in costs across fuel and parts which reflects the projected outturn and was also evidenced in the 23/24 financial year. However, there has been a concerted effort to ensure expenditure is only accrued when absolutely necessary. Every effort is being made to prolong fleet replacements, but this also has a negative impact on the cost of repairs as they then increase.

Planning income is again projected to be under achieved. Following on from the 23/24 financial year there is a downturn in the number of applications being received. Although, Government increased Planning Fees rates towards the end of last year this has offset the lack of large development agreements we've had in previous years. This forecast is based on the income that has been received so far, this financial year and what is likely to be achieved going forward.

Building Control income is now projected to achieve slightly more than its income target. This will continue to be monitored closely in year.

Fees and charges income is projected to exceed its income target based on the last few financial years. This is an ever changing area as it is fully dependent on the amount of permit applications etc that is received.

Transport income recharges will be over on its income target, but these are offset by overspends in the other departments as mentioned in the above fleet transport costs.

Approved 2024/25 Savings

Savings that were put forward for 2024/25 can be seen in Appendix A at the end of this report

Risks/Opportunities

Across the whole department inflation has significantly driven costs up and every division is bearing the cost of this. Budgets have also been top sliced in order to help balance the overall council budgets. The Highways / Traffic and Logistics divisions are seeing the largest impact of this when purchasing materials / fuel / parts for vehicles etc.

Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation £000	2024/25 Revised Allocation £000	Q1 Spend £000	Q2 Spend £000	Q3 Spend £000	Q4 Spend £000	Total Spend £000	Allocation remaining £000
Environment & Regeneration Directorate								
Policy, Planning & Transportation Dept								
Bridge and Highway Maintenance	0.0	2,265.6	281	313			593.8	1,671.8
Runcorn Busway	0.0	0.0	227	80			307.4	-307.4
ATF3 Murdishaw to Whitehouse	0.0	3,000.0	175	363			538.3	2,461.7
ATF4 Widnes Town Centre Accessibility	0.0	114.5	0	0			0.0	114.5
A56 Reconstruction (Delph Lane)	0.0	943.7	351	0			351.1	592.6
Dukesfield ATL (Waterloo Bridge)	0.0	0.0	1	0			1.1	-1.1
LCWIP Phase 2 Daresbury	0.0	3,861.7	629	56			685.3	3,176.4
Additional Pothole Funding	0.0	429.1	0	0			0.0	429.1
CRSTS	5,288.6	5,288.6	1,656	884			2,540.0	2,748.6
Street Lighting - Structural Maintenance	1,025.6	1,025.6	0	37			37.0	988.6
Street Lighting - Upgrades	969.4	969.4	0	0			0.0	969.4
East Runcorn Connectivity	5,851.7	5,851.7	453	207			659.5	5,192.1
Risk Management	597.8	597.8	5	0			4.9	592.9
Fleet Replacements	4,927.4	4,927.4	1,082	455			1,536.8	3,390.6
Total PPT	18,660.4	29,275.0	4,860.2	2,395.0	0.0	0.0	7,255.2	22,019.8

Comments on the above capital figures

Talks are still ongoing with the Liverpool City Region for funding to offset the expenditure against Runcorn Busway and Dukesfield ATL (Waterloo Bridge). Both of these were grant funded and the full amount has been utilised, LCR are looking at funding the gap.


CRSTS (City Region Sustainable Travel Settlement) replaced the historical grant funding from the DfT. It is broken down into various areas such as carriageway maintenance, footway maintenance, street lighting and structures. Halton has recently been informed by the Combined Authority (CA) that the underspend from 23/24 will be carried forward into 24/25.

The East Runcorn Connectivity (ERC) scheme is on track and additional funding from LCR has been secured. The grant funding agreement has now been signed off by both parties and claims are currently being completed.

The A56 project is in support of the new junction completion for the Redrow development which overlaps with the ERC scheme mentioned above. Progress is not being made on this and will continue over the summer period.

LCWIP Phase 2 (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) Runcorn to Daresbury is currently underway on Long Benton Way. A change request has been submitted to LCR as expenditure is not projected to reach the original budget of £5.7m, but a response hasn't yet been received.

**POLICY, PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
APPENDIX A**

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
PPT6	Traffic	N/A	Consider introducing civil traffic enforcement for traffic violations. Employ private sector civil enforcement officers to issue fines and generate income. It would take 12 months to apply for powers from the DFT and put the scheme in place. The Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board will consider this via a Topic Group.	150	0		Not currently viable, therefore no income will be generated in the current year as the traffic enforcement will not be carried out.
Total Policy, Planning & Transportation Department				150	0		

COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	17,358	8,358	7,845	513	1,024
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	124	(124)	(249)
Agency - in addition to establishment	0	0	134	(134)	(268)
Premises	3,521	1,609	1,644	(35)	(60)
Supplies & Services	2,108	987	1,032	(45)	(90)
Hired & Contracted Services	510	418	418	0	0
Book Fund	128	80	80	0	0
Food Provision	388	213	195	18	37
School Meals Food	1,960	693	716	(23)	(45)
Transport	117	14	18	(4)	(9)
Other Agency Costs	441	247	247	0	0
Other Expenditure	0	0	58	(58)	(60)
Waste Disposal Contracts	7,002	1,598	1,470	128	255
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	64	32	18	14	29
Grant to Norton Priory	172	87	87	0	0
Transfers to Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	33,769	14,336	14,086	250	564
Income					
Sales Income	-1,373	-755	-734	(21)	(44)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,470	-3,091	-3,129	38	83
Rental Income	-235	-108	-123	15	30
Markets Income	-910	-462	-437	(25)	(50)
Government Grant Income	-1,165	-1,165	-1,165	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-703	-323	-323	0	0
School SLA Income	-1,313	-404	-404	0	0
School Meals Income	-3,598	-1,383	-1,283	(100)	(200)
Internal Fees Income	-286	-29	-59	30	60
Capital Salaries	-173	-43	-33	(10)	(20)
Transfers from Reserves	-15	-15	-15	0	0
Total Income	-15,241	-7,778	-7,705	(73)	(141)
Net Operational Expenditure	18,528	6,558	6,381	177	423
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,675	837	837	0	0
Transport	2,257	1,097	1,111	(14)	(28)
Central Support	3,897	1,949	1,949	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-1,148	-574	-574	0	0
Net Total Recharges	6,880	3,309	3,323	(14)	(28)
Net Departmental Expenditure	25,408	9,867	9,704	163	395

Comments on the above figures

The net Departmental Expenditure is estimated to be £0.395m under the approved budget at the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

The largest contributor to the underspend is in relation to spend on Employees, this is currently forecast to be £1.024m under the approved budget profile by the end of the financial year. There are several restructures taking place across the Department, in order to facilitate these, a number of vacancies arising are being held vacant for the current financial year until the new structure is implemented, the most notable being the new structure being realised when the Halton Leisure Centre is opened.

Agency spend is currently sitting at £0.258m for the first half of the 2024/25 financial year. As the Department offers a number of front-line services, including waste collections, in order to continue operations in the event of staff sickness, there is a reliance on agency to reduce the impact on residents within the borough.

Spend on premises costs is forecast to be £0.060m over budget in 2024/25, the new leisure centre is now expected to hand over within this financial year and will begin to incur costs within 24/25. The original plans were for the leisure centre to utilise the solar farm however the extension required to provide energy to the leisure centre has only recently been submitted for planning, so there is a potential budget pressure next year as the energy will have to be supplied from elsewhere until the solar farm extension is functioning.

Supplies and services are forecast to show an overspend against budget of £0.090m, primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years, if the Council were to contain these costs within the budget profile there would be a reduction in the service provided.

School Meals food costs have been severely impacted by the high rate of inflation on food, due to the winding up of the service, the department is likely to see an underspend in regard to its expenditure, however this will be net against a reduction in income.

Waste Disposal Contract costs are forecasted to be £0.255m under the approved budget during 2024/25. Costs are likely to increase slightly from 2023/24, although as invoices are not received until later in the financial year it is difficult to fully indicate what the outturn position will be at this stage. It is also complicated due to reconciliation adjustments for prior year costs being received several months into subsequent financial years. There is scope to further drive down these costs with an increased push to recycle more, when sorted at source the processing costs are reduced.

Income across the Department is expected to be below the approved budget profile within 2024/25 by £0.141m, these are offset against reductions in forecasted expenditure for the year in particular the staffing costs, as the staff are not in place to generate the income, however the full impact of changes of this nature will be realised following the cessation of the School Meals service as this budget pressure absorbs any underspend generated. In comparison to month 4, there is increased confidence in achieving several income targets, thereby reducing the shortfall across the department.




Budget Savings**COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT**

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
COMM3	Sport & Recreation	471	Restructuring the roles and responsibilities of the Sports Development Team	36	0		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restructure is currently underway
COMM5	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	12		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The cessation of the service is underway with the majority of schools ending their contracts by the end of the calendar year.
Total Community & Environment Department				36	12		





5.0 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 unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</u></i>

Direction of Travel Indicator

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

