

Public Document Pack



Corporate Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 5 November 2024 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

S. Young

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Ged Philbin (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Sian Davidson	Conservative
Councillor Valerie Hill	Labour
Councillor Noel Hutchinson	Labour
Councillor Rosie Leck	Labour
Councillor Geoffrey Logan	Labour
Councillor Alan Lowe	Labour
Councillor Katy McDonough	Labour
Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh	Labour
Councillor Sharon Thornton	Labour

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

The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 21 January 2025

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

Part I

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

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 3 September 2024 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chair), Philbin (Vice-Chair), Davidson, V. Hill, Hutchinson, Leck, A. Lowe, McDonough, N. Plumpton Walsh and Thornton

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Logan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Butler, L. Coombes, E. Dawson, M. Reaney and S. Wilson

Also in attendance: None

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

		<i>Action</i>
CS9	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 4 June 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>Members requested an update on whether the Council's Direct Link now had access to contact emergency services.</p>	<p>Corporate Director - Chief Executive's Delivery Unit</p>
CS10	<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
CS11	<p>EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES</p> <p>The Board was presented with the Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board.</p> <p>One Member questioned why there was no electric vehicle charging point at Runcorn Town Hall. Officers agreed to confirm an answer in due course.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.</p>	<p>Executive Director Environment & Regeneration</p>

CS12 PROGRAMMES OFFICE UPDATE

The Board received a report on the work of the Programmes Office in securing external funding resources into Halton. This included an update on the key activities and priorities, as well as emerging issues in external funding and funding statistics for 2023-24.

The report outlined the following key priorities for 2023-24 had been:

- embedding the new Programme's Office function, including strategic work to develop a pipeline of regeneration projects and a system to support its delivery;
- supporting the delivery of the Government's levelling up agenda, including Towns Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF);
- the development of a funding plan to support the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan;
- delivering a "Destination Marketing Programme" which was part of a Liverpool City Region funded scheme to promote Halton's visitor economy and cultural assets; and
- support the development of the Council's Cultural Strategy and Heritage Open Days programme.

The report also described a number of key projects that the Programme's Office were being delivered/monitored:

- Destination Halton Marketing Programme;
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme; and
- Reconnecting Runcorn – Towns Fund Programme.

It was noted that Halton was the highest achieving Local Authority in the Programme and had received positive feedback from the LCR Programme Leads.

A Member of the Board raised a number of questions relating to external funding and it was agreed that these would be answered in due course.

Another Member asked if there was any available external funding that could be used to help bring back Halton's Vintage Car Rally and officers agreed to explore opportunities.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the report.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

Councillor Thornton declared a disclosable pecuniary interest for the following item due to her employment at CHI Community Café.

Councillor Hutchinson declared an other registrable interest for the following item as he is a Trustee of Unlock Runcorn.

CS13 WIDNES MARKET UPDATE REPORT

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on Widnes Market, following the implementation of the Business Plan, which had been endorsed by the Board in November 2022. The report also informed the Board of a change in the management structure at the market, with effect from June 2024.

Members were reminded that the Business Plan identified the priorities and actions to be undertaken by the Market Management Team to ensure the market remained a successful trading environment for the future. It included five main themes and the report provided an update on how these had progressed.

Members also noted that with effect from June 2024, the management and responsibilities of Widnes Market had transferred to the Communities and Greenspace Department. It had previously sat within the Economy, Enterprise and Property Department.

The following information was provided following discussions and arising questions from Members:

- The market had seen a slight decline in footfall following the introduction of car parking charges;
- Although opportunities had been explored to hold an Artisan market, there had been little interest from companies; and
- Officers agreed to explore WiFi opportunities for public spaces.

RESOLVED: that the Board note:

- 1) the progress on Widnes Market; and
- 2) the change in the management structure at Widnes Market.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

CS14 SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE – SERVICE CLOSURE

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration which provided an update on the current status on the cessation of the schools meals service provided by the Council.

In February 2023, the Council agreed to remove the provision of the schools meals service. Schools were allowed up to two financial years to either procure an alternative provider or opt to offer an in-house provision.

The report outlined the support that had been offered to schools. An open day was held in April 2024, which allowed providers who had expressed an interest, an opportunity to showcase their services. Schools were invited to attend DfE training sessions to assist them with a catering procurement package. To date, several schools had engaged with the DfE.

The Board was advised that to date, the Council's School Meals Service was still providing catering for 27 of the 47 schools. 14 schools had given notice to terminate their contract before 1 January 2025. 13 schools were still to confirm their new catering arrangements by 31 March 2025. Members of the Board to be provided with a list of these schools, for information.

Of those schools that had progressed alternative arrangements, 15 school had chosen Orian Solutions, 5 had chosen Edsentials Catering Services and 2 had chosen Mellors Catering Solutions.

Members were reassured that the School Meals Management Team would work with the 13 outstanding schools and contact them again early in the Autumn Term to establish their intentions. Any school that did not provide a transfer date by 1 October 2024 would be issued with a termination letter with effect from 31 March 2025.

Following discussions and arising questions from Board Members, it was confirmed that:

- Any school that did not make any necessary arrangements by the deadline, would have to employ in-house catering staff; and
- Schools and their Governing Bodies were responsible for ensuring that school meals were provided for their pupils.

RESOLVED: The Board noted:

- 1) the current position regarding the withdrawal from the provision of school meals; and
- 2) the actions required to achieve the deadline of 31 March 2025.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

CS15 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2024/25

The Board received the Performance Management Report for Quarter 1 of 2024/25. The reports related to the following functional areas which reported to the Board and 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:

- Finance;
- Operational HR Division, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit;
- ICT and Administrative Support;
- Legal and Democracy;
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services; and
- Property Services.

Members of the Board reported that they had received a rising number of enquiries/complaints in relation to housing matters but they found it difficult to contact Registered Social Landlords (RSL). It was the view that Councillors felt a disconnect as many RSL's now have "Arms Length Companies" operating on their behalf. It was noted that housing association regulators had advised that Local Authority nominated representatives were no longer required as Board Members. Therefore, there were concerns that the Council would lose their seats on the Halton Housing Trust Board and therefore, no longer be involved in any decision making. However, a Halton Housing Seminar was scheduled to take place on 4 October 2024 and Members had been invited to attend.

Following discussions, it was noted that:

- Two members of staff had recently been appointed in the Debtors Team to help with recovery of arrears;
- Members requested a breakdown of reasons why people are ringing the Contact Centre;
- A Member of the Board requested that any reports regarding the approval to vacate the Municipal

- Building, be brought to Full Council;
- £0.240m had been generated in additional business rates income; and
 - Members requested some additional information on how the recruitment of agency staff had led to an increase in commercial rental income.

RESOLVED: That the Quarter 1 Performance Management report be noted.

Corporate
Director - Chief
Executive's
Delivery Unit

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

Meeting ended at 7.50 p.m.

REPORT TO:	Corporate Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	5 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: Corporate Policy & Performance Board
DATE: 5 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**

None under the meaning of the Act.

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2024

EXB24	TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24
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The Board considered a report from the Director – Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Annual Report 2023-24

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

Information was provided on the economic outlook, interest rate forecast, borrowing and investments, budget monitoring, new long-term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. The Council's approved Treasury and Prudential Indicators for 2023-24 were set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and was attached as Appendix one.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB25	2024/25 SPENDING AS AT 31 JULY 2024 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST
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The Board received a report from the Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position as of 31 July 2024, together with a 2024/25 forecast outturn position. The report also included an update on the Council's medium term financial forecast over the four years to 2028/29 (Appendix 5).

A summary of spending against the operational revenue budget position as at 31 July was presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and these provided detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms net spending as at 31 July 2024 was £6.561m over budget. The outturn forecast for the year estimated that net spend would be over the approved budget by £19.777m. It was noted that the forecast position is of great concern and without action the Council would not be in a position to provide a balanced budget by financial year-end.

The report detailed a review of the Council General Reserve as at 31 July 2024. The current balance of reserves is £11.581m and this was well below that required to help provide a balanced budget position.

Members were advised that Council had previously approved the Capital Programme for 2024/25 at its meeting on 6 March 2024. Since then, the Capital Programme had been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles and funding as schemes had been developed. Appendix 3 presented the Capital

Programme as at 31 July 2024. Appendix 4 outlined the saving measures against the budget for the two year period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 together with information on action to date to achieve the target saving.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) Executive Directors continue the urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year, or additional funding secured;
- 3) Council be requested to approve the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 3.21; and
- 4) the updated Medium Term Financial Forecast included at Appendix 5 is noted.

REPORT TO:	Corporate Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	5 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Corporate Director – Chief Executive’s Delivery Unit
PORTFOLIO:	Resources
SUBJECT:	Corporate Accident / Incident Report 1.4.24 to 31.8.24
WARD(S)	All

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To report on the performance of health safety management within the Authority for 1st April 2024 to 31st August 2024.

2.0 **RECOMMENDED: That the Board notes the contents of the report including the recommendations and actions for.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

3.2 It highlights health and safety information.

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

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

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

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications.

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

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

- A healthy Halton;
- A safer Halton; and
- Efficient and Effective Delivery of Service.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

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

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

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

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.



**CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT
MANAGEMENT TEAM
1st April 2024 to 31st August 2024**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 clearly places responsibility on those who create the risk to manage it. The new HSE Strategy “Protecting People and Places 2022 to 2032’ allows for the HSE to adapt and respond to a changing landscape. It also allows it to continue to support the delivery of wider government priorities including the move towards net zero and improving the health of the nation.

The HSE now also has added responsibilities, such as becoming the appointed ‘Building Safety Regulator’ and also has an extended role in chemical regulation following Brexit.

It remains the same that the fundamental principle of health and safety law is that those who create risks are best placed to manage them. The expectations and evidence suggest that most workplaces have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to manage safety for themselves.

1.2 Health and Safety Management System

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

LEAD INDICATORS

Proactive action taken and any outcomes

KPI

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

REACTIVE [Lagging] INDICATORS

Reactive action taken in response to accidents/incidents

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

Rationale – identify incident trends and actions required to prevent similar

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

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

occurrences. Encourage all staff to report incidents to give a true picture and enable appropriate mitigations to be put in place.

National and Local Information together with performance gaps and incident trends form the basis for the Recommended Actions for 2023/2024.

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

2. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Summary

Reportable and significant accidents for Halton Employees are currently at a total of 1 across all five directorates plus 4 near misses covering the period that this report refers to.

Violent Incidents corporately are showing currently as 24 verbal, 15 physical incidents, 9 threat of violence, and 1 sexual harassment . Within schools for this period there were 6 physical incidents, nil verbal, 1 threat of violence and nil sexual harassment.

Lone Working Contact Centre Monitoring update – A replacement system is currently going through testing so no data at this time..

Risk Assessments completed on the corporate risk assessment system are 1081 for all directorates. Some are currently subject to reviews and so a fuller picture will be available in the annual report.

The HSE recently released their annual statistics which includes 138 workplace fatalities (Construction, Agriculture and Manufacturing are the top 3 workplace categories, the same as the previous year).

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill aka Protect Duty or Martyn's Law, was mentioned in the recent Kings speech. As yet there is still no movement or new guidance on preparation for its inception. It is suspected that there will be a requirement for key members of staff to attend accredited training . Full details are still to be made public.

2.2 Recommendations 2024/25

The following recommendations are as a result of the accident analysis data for the first half of 2023 from 1st April and will be actioned during the period 2023/24.

No.	KPI No.	ACTION	RATIONALE	RESPONSIBLE
1.	1	All managers and assessors to ensure risk assessments on the corporate risk assessment system across all areas are reviewed and up to date as per safety bulletin 2021 8.	Position statements, section 7 below.	All managers and assessors
3.	3	Ensure staff follow Safe Systems of Work (SSOW) to reduce likelihood of involvement in an accident.	Reduction of accidents, suffering and associated financial implications.	All managers - ongoing

GENERAL ACTIONS

Action a series of Lockdown/Bomb Threat Exercises across main Council buildings, some tabletop exercises, some full exercise	Ongoing	Health and Safety Team
Review and update Health and Safety policies (Corporate & Schools) requiring timescale or legislation reviews	Ongoing	Health and Safety Team
School Audit and Health check visit programme	Ongoing	Health and Safety Team
Programme of departmental audits actioned and ongoing for all corporate areas	Ongoing	Health and Safety Team and Team Managers.

3. INFORMATION

3.1 Local/National Information

National (Source HSE website):

Key figures for Great Britain (2022/23)

- **1.8 million** working people suffering from a work-related illness, of which
 - **875,000** workers suffering work-related stress, depression or anxiety
 - **473,000** workers suffering from a work-related musculoskeletal disorder
- **2,257** mesothelioma deaths due to past asbestos exposures (2022)
- **138** workers killed in work-related accidents (2023/24)
- **561,000** working people sustained an injury at work according to the Labour Force Survey
- **60,645** injuries to employees reported under RIDDOR
- **35.2 million** working days lost due to work-related illness and workplace injury
- **£20.7 billion** estimated cost of injuries and ill health from current working conditions (2021/22)

Local:

On 1st October 2023, fire regulations changed following Grenfell incident in 2017 and as an employer HBC has had to register a responsible person in each building with the enforcing body (of which up to now has not been named, but will more than likely be the HSE).

Equally, The Protect Duty, (Martyn's Law) is still with Parliament for consultation and again this will force legal duties on employers to have responsible persons in place in buildings with robust procedures for emergencies in the event of an incident.

It is already written in law under the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 under section 2 which places a duty on employers to protect employees whilst at work including in emergency situations.

The Management of H & S at Work Regulations 1999 also states under regulation 8 that employers have a duty to have in place procedures for serious and imminent danger.

Halton Borough Council, as an employer, works with managers and staff to work towards legal compliance in the above areas.

4. LEAD INDICATORS

4.1 . Number of risk assessments completed on corporate systems

4.1.1 An electronic risk assessment system, based on the Intranet, has been 'live' since September 2011.

- Actual number of assessments completed up to 31/08/24 are:

- Adult Services Directorate – 199
- Chief Executives Directorate – 351
- Childrens Services Directorate - 247
- Environment & Regeneration Directorate - 225
- Public Health Directorate - 57

See section 7 for position statements and comparisons.

4.2 Number of Near Misses

4.2.1 The number reported in the last 3 years are:

2021/22	2022/23	2024/25
10	2	4 (to date)

From the 1st April 2024 to 31st August 2024 there have been 4 near misses reported on the corporate accident/incident system.

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

4.3.1 Lone Working – No available data for this period. New system still being commissioned for use.

5 REACTIVE ['Lagging'] INDICATORS

5.1 Number of Significant and RIDDOR Reportable Accidents

5.1.1 The number of significant accidents and RIDDOR reportable to the HSE for each Directorate excluding schools that took place from 1st April 2024 to 31st August 2024 is 1

Directorate	Specified Injury	> 7-Day	Significant
Adult Services Directorate	0	0	0
Chief Executive Directorate	0	0	0
Childrens Services Directorate	0	0	0
Environment & Regeneration Directorate	0	1	1
Public Health Directorate	0	0	0
TOTAL 2024 / 2025	0	1	1
TOTAL 2023 /2024	1	0	4
TOTAL 2022/2023	0	0	6

5.2 Number of Violent Incidents

5.2.1 From 1st April 2024 to 31st August 2024

Directorate	Verbal	Physical	Threat of Violence	Sexual Harassment
Adult Services Directorate	23	4	2	1
Chief Executives Directorate	2	0	4	0
Children's Services Directorate	0	6	1	0
Environment & Regeneration Directorate	1	5	1	0
Public Health Directorate	0	0	1	0

Directorate	Verbal	Physical	Threat of Violence	Sexual Harassment
TOTAL 2024/25	26	15	7	1
TOTAL 2023/24	21	14	Recording of this category commenced 2024	Recording of this category commenced 2024
TOTAL 2022/23	10	7	Recording of this category commenced 2024	Recording of this category commenced 2024
TOTAL 2021/22	12	0	Recording of this category commenced 2024	Recording of this category commenced 2024

Areas of highest recorded incidents: Leisure , Care Homes Leisure services have seen a jump in the school holiday period, where a common theme appears to be groups of young users showing off to each other. Care homes have seen an increase from family members who have raised questions with regard to how their relative is being care for. Advice has been issued.

5.2.2 Schools

From 1st April 2024 to 31st August 2024 there have been 7 total incidents in schools. This is a slight overall reduction.

Schools	Verbal	Physical	Threat of Violence	Sexual Harassment
TOTAL 2024/25	0	6	1	0
TOTAL 2023/24	4	7	Recording of this category commenced 2024	Recording of this category commenced 2024
TOTAL 2022/23	3	14	Recording of this category commenced 2024	Recording of this category commenced 2024
TOTAL 2021/22	2	16	Recording of this category commenced 2024	Recording of this category commenced 2024

6. BREAKDOWN OF NEAR MISSES & ACCIDENTS

6.1 Near Misses

Division	Cause	Incident/Action
Community and Greenspace	During routine inspection of 3G playing area, IP finds knife hidden under one of the benches	Staff made aware and extra vigilance to be in place. Police made aware.
Community and Greenspace	IP receives unsolicited mail from service user, making the IP feel uneasy	Customer has apologised for his behaviour and he didn't also realise the employee was so young.
Community and Greenspace	IP (Service User) suffers panic attack in centre of swimming pool.	No measures required Risk Assessment/PSOP procedures for emergency action worked as should.

Community and Greenspace	Service user in Leisure Centre becomes aggressive towards staff when challenged over nonpayment of entry fee.	Male escorted from centre. Review by manager undertaken.

6.2 Adult Services Directorate

Division	Cause	Incident/Action
Adult Services Directorate – All Departments.	None	None

6.3 Chief Executives Directorate

Division	Cause	Incident / Action
Chief Executives Directorate - All Departments.	None	None

6.4 Childrens Services Directorate

Division	Cause	Incident / Action
Children's Services Directorate – All Departments	None	None

6.5 Environment & Regeneration Directorate

Division	Cause	Incident / Action
Policy, Planning & Transportation – Road Safety	Struck by Vehicle	<p>Significant – IP (School Crossing Patrol) was stepping out into the road when a user of mobility scooter was coming from the school. IP took 3 steps into the road after checking there were no cars there and as he was his third step the lady lost control of the mobility scooter and ran IP over. IP hit the ground landing on their lollipop stick, and the user kept on driving over IP as user couldn't stop the scooter. User hit IP in the back of the legs and fell flat on their face and damaged their ribs when they landed on the lollipop stick.</p> <p>Injury to legs requiring hospital treatment..</p> <p>Manager reviewed situation and reminded staff to be alert when engaged on duty.</p>
Community and Greenspace	Manual Handling	<p>>7 Day– IP engaged on cemetery work. As IP physically lifts kerb edge, loss of grip occurs causing IP who tried to continue hols to suffer back starin.</p> <p>Manager reviewed safe systems of work and manual handling training.</p>

6.6 Public Health Directorate

Division	Cause	Incident / Action
Public Health Directorate – All Departments	None	None

6.7 Schools**6.7.1 Teaching Staff**

Division	Cause	Incident / Action
Children's Services - HBC Schools	None Reported	None

7. Risk Assessment Position Statements

<u>Directorate</u>	<u>Expected Number of Risk Assessments</u>	<u>Number of completed Risk Assessments</u>	<u>Percentage Completed.</u>
Adult Services Directorate	311	199	63.9
Chief Executives Directorate	442	352	79.6
Children's Services Directorate	438	247	56.3
Environment & Regeneration Directorate	331	225	67.9
Public Health Directorate	81	57	70.3

Colin Hill CMIOSH
Principal Health and Safety Advisor,
Risk and Emergency Planning
1st September 2024

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 5 November 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Finance

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Progress Updates regarding the Household Support Fund 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024, and the latest Household Support Fund for the period 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide the final position regarding delivery of the Government's Household Support Fund for the period 1st April 2024 – 30th September 2024, and to report the spending plan for the Household Support Fund for the period 1st October 2024 – 31st March 2025.

2.0 RECOMMENDED That:

- (i) The final position regarding the Household Support Fund for the period 1st April 2024 – 30th September 2024 be noted;**
- (ii) The spending plan for the Household Support Fund for the period 1st October 2024 – 31st March 2025 be noted.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Household Support Fund No.5

3.1 A report was presented to the Board on 4th June 2024 detailing the spending plan for the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 for the Household Support Fund. This report provides an update setting out the final spend position for the six month period 1st April 2024 – 30th September 2024.

3.2 Since the last report the final spend position for the Household Support Fund for the period 1st April 2024 – 30th September 2024 is as follows:

- Vulnerable pensioners, those entitled to Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction, have been awarded a payment of £70. This payment was made in August 2024, and 4,079 pensioners received this award representing a total value of £285,530.
- The Discretionary Support Scheme has paid out £53,728, which covers emergency support and community support.
- Expenditure on free school meal vouchers for the school holidays is now £624,324 which represents 7 weeks of school holidays.

- Public Health have spent £39,594 helping vulnerable residents.
- Halton Citizens Advice Bureau have spent £60,000 on a range of support for vulnerable residents such as fuel vouchers, food vouchers, and kitchen equipment.
- Children's Services have spent £40,000 on care leavers.
- Public Health have assisted families with pre-school age children who are flagged on the income deprivation index affecting children by providing food vouchers with a total value of £40,000.

Appendix A details the final spending position for the Household Support Fund for the period 1st April 2024 – 30th September 2024.

Household Support Fund No.6

- 3.3 On 24th September 2024 the Government issued guidance and announced the allocation of £1.3m, for the continuation of the Household Support Fund for a further six months from 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- 3.4 The Fund has operated since October 2021 in either six or twelve month tranches, however, this latest allocation covers a six month period. The Fund is intended to support vulnerable households with the pressures caused by the continuing cost of living crisis.
- 3.5 The Government guidance for this latest allocation of the Fund remains broadly unchanged, requiring that part of the funding must be distributed on the basis of an application process. However, the Council can still proactively target particular groups of households.
- 3.6 Discussions have been held with colleagues in Council Departments and Voluntary Sector Organisations, who previously supported the delivery of the Household Support Fund to residents.

Discretionary Support Scheme – Application Process

- 3.7 In order to meet the requirement to operate part of the scheme on an application basis, it is proposed to allocate £75,000 of the funding to the Discretionary Support Scheme administered within the Benefits Division, which has an existing telephone application process.
- 3.8 The DWP guidance once again states that the Household Support Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low income households in need, including families with children, pensioners, and people with disabilities.

Free School Meal Vouchers

- 3.9 In order to provide assistance to vulnerable households with children, it is proposed to once again allocate funding to low income families with children, by issuing free school meal vouchers of £12 per week during the Autumn half term, Christmas holidays, and Spring half term holidays.

- 3.10 It is estimated that the free school meals vouchers will cost approximately £360,000 in total. This will provide approximately 7,500 children with free school meal vouchers during the three holiday periods.

Pensioner Households on Council Tax Reduction

- 3.11 To support vulnerable pensioner households, it is proposed that all pensioners currently receiving council tax reduction (CTR) will be provided with a one-off award of £130.
- 3.12 It is estimated that 4,200 pensioner households on CTR will benefit from this award, at a total cost of £546,000.

Public Health and Care Leavers

- 3.13 Public Health will be allocated £40,000 in order to target support to vulnerable households who may fall outside those areas covered by the rest of the Spending Plan. Details of how it is proposed to utilise this funding is being developed.
- 3.14 Public Health are also proposing to target support to families who have pre-school age children and are flagged on the Income Deprivation Index affecting children. In addition, families who have disabled pre-school age children will be targeted for support. It is proposed to allocate £40,000 to Public Health for this particular project.
- 3.15 Colleagues in Children's Services are proposing to continue to provide support for care leavers with the following: energy bill support, household packs to assist with keeping warm, saving energy and cooking, and emergency food and hygiene packs. It is proposed to allocate £40,000 to Children's Services to provide the above mentioned support.

Voluntary Sector Partners

- 3.16 It is once again proposed to ask Voluntary Sector Partners to assist the Council with the delivery of this support to residents. The allocations made for the previous six month period, to Citizens Advice, Food Banks, Affordable Warmth etc. have been continued for the coming six months. Each organisation will provide a detailed proposal of how it intends to utilise the funding, and throughout the year will provide the Council with monitoring information for submission to the DWP.

Delivery Co-ordination, Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

- 3.17 The Benefits Division will once again co-ordinate use of the grant on behalf of the Council. In order to maximise the benefit of the grant funding for the Borough and ensure it is fully utilised, discussions have been held with colleagues across the Council and Voluntary Sector Partners. A proposed spending plan has been prepared as set out in the Appendix B, regarding how the grant funding might be utilised via a combination of Council Departments and Voluntary Sector Partners to deliver support to vulnerable households over the six month period.

- 3.18 The Spending Plan is intended to provide clarity of what actions are required of the relevant Council departments and Partner organisations, with lead officers being identified. It will also provide a basis for monitoring spending against the grant, with periodic submissions required to the DWP and to ensure it is fully utilised in accordance with the grant guidance by 31st March 2025.
- 3.19 If the grant is not fully spent by 31st March 2025 and/or is not spent in accordance with the grant guidance, it will be clawed back by the DWP. Initially, a balance of £36,986 remains unallocated as a contingency in case of overspends. Once the actual numbers and costs of items are known, the contingency will be re-allocated to provide additional support.
- 3.20 In order to commence delivery of the Household Support Fund, the Spending Plan requires the approval of the Executive Board. However given the urgent need to procure free school meal vouchers for the Autumn half term school holidays, the Chief Executive has approved the plan using delegated urgency powers. Thereafter, it is proposed that regular monitoring reports will be presented to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board.

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

None identified.

5.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None identified.

5.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None identified.

5.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

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

5.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None identified.

5.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None identified.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 If the grant allocation from the Household Support Fund, is not fully utilised in accordance with the DWP guidance by the deadline date of 31st March 2025, any remaining grant funding will be clawed back by the DWP.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Household Support Fund 2024 Allocations	DCBL Stadium Lowerhouse Lane Widnes	Paul Garnett

Household Support Fund
Spend for the period 1st April 2024 – 30th September 2024

Total Grant Allocation	£ 1,297,880
Less Administration Costs (5%)	64,894
Available Grant Funding	1,232,986
Expenditure	
1. Vulnerable Households with children	624,324
Free school meal vouchers provided for 7 weeks.	
2. Vulnerable Pensioner Households	285,530
Paid £70 to 4,079 pensioners in August 2024.	
3. Discretionary Support Scheme	53,728
Spend for period 1 st April 2024 – 30 th September 2024	
4. Public Health	39,594
Spend for 1 st April 2024 – 30 th September 2024	
5. Public Health – pre-school age	40,000
Spend for 1 st April 2024 – 30 th September 2024	
6. Care Leavers	40,000
Spend for 1 st April 2024 – 30 th September 2024	
7. Other vulnerable households	
Citizens Advice Bureau	60,000
Widnes Foodbank	10,000
Runcorn Foodbank	10,000
Holiday Activity Food programme	5,000
Affordable Warmth – Energy Projects Plus	10,000
Halton Voluntary Action	10,000
Total Expenditure	1,188,176

**Household Support Fund
Spending Plan 1st October 2024 – 31st March 2025**

	£
Total Grant Allocation	1,297,880
Less Administration Costs (5%)	64,894
Available Grant Funding	1,232,986
1. Vulnerable Households with Children	360,000
Free school meal vouchers for school holidays: Autumn half term, 28 Oct 2024 – 1 Nov 2024 (1 week) Christmas holidays, 23 Dec 2024 – 3 Jan 2025 (2 weeks) Spring half term, 17 Feb 2025 – 21 Feb 2025 (1 week) Based upon estimated 7,500 children entitled to FSM Paid for 4 weeks at £12 per voucher per week	
2. Vulnerable Pensioner Households	546,000
Based on 4,200 pensioner households receiving CTR/HB Award of £130 per pensioner	
3. Discretionary Support Scheme	75,000
Accessed by application	
4. Public Health – Other Vulnerable Households	40,000
Contact – Jayne Hardman	
5. Public Health - Pre-school Age Children	40,000
Contact - Matt Hancock	
6. Care Leavers	40,000
Contact – Emma Wright	
7. Other Vulnerable Households	
Halton Citizens Advice Bureau	50,000
Widnes Food Bank	10,000
Runcorn Food Bank	10,000
Holiday Activity Food Programme	5,000
Affordable Warmth – Energy Projects Plus	10,000
Halton Voluntary Action	10,000
8. Contingency	36,986
Total Allocated	1,232,986

REPORT TO:	Corporate Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	5 th November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit
PORTFOLIO:	Corporate Services
SUBJECT:	Performance Management Reports for Quarter 2 of 2024/25
WARD(S)	Boroughwide

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:
- Finance
 - Operational HR Division, Chief Executives Delivery Unit
 - ICT and Administrative Support
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
 - Property Services

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

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the Policy & Performance Board:**

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 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.

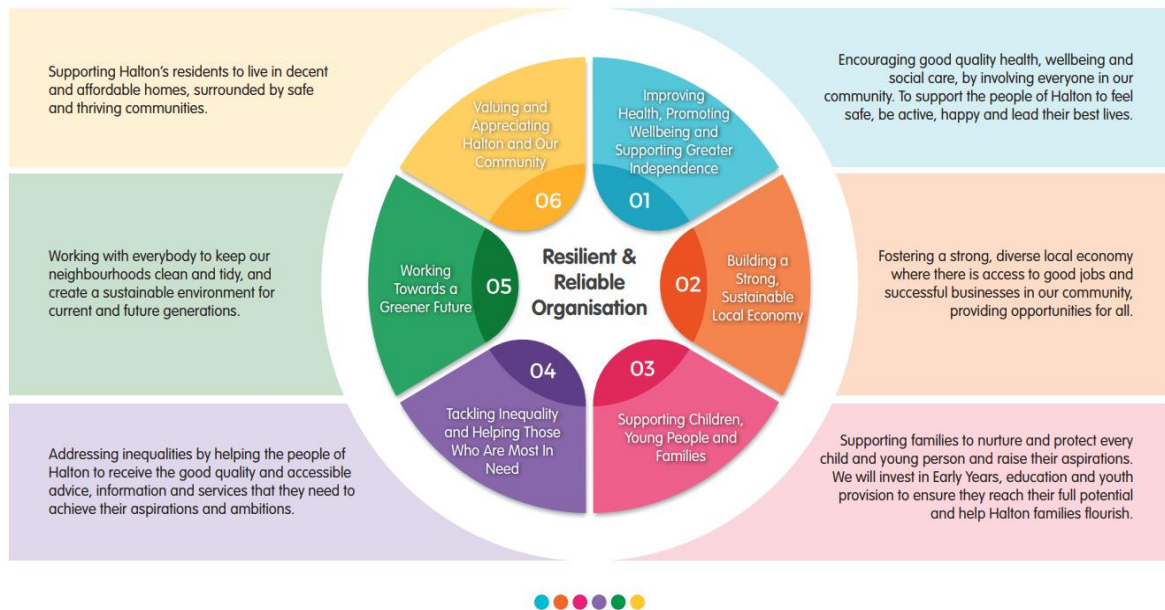
Corporate Services – Priority Based Monitoring Report Q2

Reporting Period: 1st July – 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 Corporate Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 It covers key priorities for development or improvement in the various functional areas reporting to the Board in relation to the Council's priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency i.e.:
 - Finance
 - Operational HR Division, Chief Executives Delivery Unit
 - ICT Infrastructure
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
 - Property Services
- 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

- 3.1** Key Performance Indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate.
- 3.2** It should be noted that given the significant and unrelenting downward financial pressures faced by the Council there is a requirement for Departments to make continuous in-year adjustments to the allocation of resources in order to ensure that the Council maintains a balanced budget.
- 3.3** Whilst every effort continues to be made to minimise any negative impact of such arrangements upon service delivery they may inevitably result in a delay in the delivery of some of the objectives and targets contained within this report.


Key Objectives / milestones

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
FS01	Higher proportion of council tax income due for the year to be collected compared to the previous year


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the in-year collection rate will be compared to the same point of the previous year		<p>Council tax collection through to the end of September 2024 is 53.82% which is 0.11% lower than the collection rate at the same point last year.</p> <p>Debt relating to previous years continues to be collected, the Council utilises powers through charging orders and attachment to earnings/benefits to secure debts. £1.44m has been collected in relation to previous years' debt.</p> <p>No comparable 2024/25 council tax collection information has yet been published, to compare the Council's in-year performance against other councils.</p> <p>For 2023/24 the Council's in-year council tax collection rate was 93.78% which compares to the national collection rate of 95.9%. Council tax collection rates are heavily impacted by deprivation, where it is evidenced that the higher the deprivation the lower the collection rate. Despite this Halton out-performs a number of unitary and metropolitan authorities who have a better deprivation ranking.</p>

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
FS02	Higher proportion of business rates income due for the year to be collected compared to previous year

Milestone	Progress	Supporting Commentary
------------------	-----------------	------------------------------

	Q2	
On a quarterly basis, the in-year collection rate will be compared to the same point of the previous year		<p>Business rate collection through to the end of September 2024 is 58.76% which is 2.41% higher than the collection rate at the same point last year.</p> <p>£1.343m has been collected in relation to previous years' debt.</p> <p>No comparable 2024/25 business rate collection information has yet been published to compare the Council's performance against other councils.</p> <p>For 2023/24 Halton's in-year adjusted business rate collection was 97.7% compared to an in-year comparator average of 97.2%.</p>

Corporate Priority	Priority 4 - Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
FS 03	Reducing the average time for processing new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims by 1 day, compared to the previous year, to an average of 21.65 days.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target</p> <p>Q1 20.83 days</p>		<p>Q2 2023-24 24.79 days Q2 2024-25 19.58 days Q1 2024-25 20.83 days</p> <p>Processing new claims performance has improved by over 4 days compared to Q2 last year, and the main reason for the improvement is less staff sickness this year. There is a 1 day improvement for Q2 2024-25 compared to Q1 2024-25 which can be explained in part by more staff doing overtime recently.</p> <p>Q1 2024-25 New claims processing figures for a number of the Greater</p>


		Manchester Councils (latest figures available).																						
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Council</th> <th>Processing days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Halton</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blackpool</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bolton</td> <td>32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bury</td> <td>36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cheshire East</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Salford</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stockport</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tameside</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trafford</td> <td>46</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warrington</td> <td>38</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Council	Processing days	Halton	21	Blackpool	13	Bolton	32	Bury	36	Cheshire East	22	Salford	29	Stockport	17	Tameside	27	Trafford	46	Warrington	38
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Corporate Priority	Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
FS 04	Reducing the average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction by 1 day, compared to the previous year, to an average of 8.55 days.


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target</p> <p>Q1 13.70 days</p>	<div style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">U</div>	<p>Q2 2023-24 20.05 days Q2 2024-25 15.62 days Q1 2024-25 13.70 days</p> <p>Processing changes in circumstances has improved by over 4 days compared to Q2 last year. Lower levels of staff sickness this year has helped improve the performance. Performance in 2024-25 for Q2 compared with Q1 has worsened by nearly 2 days. This can be attributed to a significant increase in</p>

		<p>Department for Works and Pensions notifications related to the “managed migration” of housing benefit claimants to Universal Credit which commenced in May 2024.</p> <p>Q1 2024-25 Changes in circumstances processing figures for some Greater Manchester Councils (latest figures available).</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="900 551 1337 1032"> <thead> <tr> <th>Council</th> <th>Processing days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Halton</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blackpool</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bolton</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bury</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cheshire East</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Salford</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stockport</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tameside</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trafford</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warrington</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Council	Processing days	Halton	14	Blackpool	5	Bolton	11	Bury	4	Cheshire East	2	Salford	2	Stockport	16	Tameside	27	Trafford	16	Warrington	11
Council	Processing days																							
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Corporate Priority	Priority Two - Building a strong, sustainable, local economy
FS 05	Ensuring 90% of all suppliers’ invoices are paid within 30 days, including those which are disputed invoices.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>On a quarterly basis, the proportion of suppliers’ invoices paid within 30 days will be assessed</p> <p>Q1 92.28%</p>		<p>During the period 1 April to 30 September 2024, the Council paid 26,566 supplier invoices. 91.44% of these invoices were paid within 30 days. These figures exclude invoices paid under SLAs with the Council’s schools</p>


Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
FS 06	Higher proportion of historic sundry debt to be collected compared to the same point the previous year

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the collection rate for the total outstanding historic debt (balance as at the previous year-end) will be compared to the same point the previous year		Total outstanding historic debt stood at £17,460,981 as at 31 March 2024. By 30 September 2024, 55.01% of this debt had been collected. The collection rate for historic debt was 42.85% at the same point last year.


Operational HR Division, Chief Executives Delivery Unit

Key Objectives / milestones


Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
CXDU 01	Reduction in Sickness absence across the Council - Review and amend policy to focus on attendance, train and empower managers to apply procedure timely.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
24/25 -12.5 FTE days average lost		3.03 Q1 3.69 Q2



Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
CXDU 02	Promote increased stability of the workforce across the organisation - Improve the Employer value proposition of HBC to Attract and retain talent and become an Employer of choice.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Improve the Employer value proposition of HBC to Attract and retain talent and become an Employer of choice. 24/25 – turnover 13% stability 88%		Turnover: 330 leavers / 2391 employees * 100 = 13.80% Stability: 2132 employees 12m in post / 2389 employees * 100 = 89.24% Stability above target and turnover slightly under target however improvement from Q1 which was 15.29%

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
CXDU 03	Reduce flexible workforce (agency) spend and deployment across the organisation

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
24/25 – 11m		Q1 - £3,397,163.09 Total spend Total Agency Worker Usage (number of placements – year to date) - 556 <i>placements plus 27 off contract</i> Total Agency Worker Cost (cumulative gross cost – year to date) £7,385,900.17 (both on and off contract) Q2 Q2 - £3,988,737.08


Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
CXDU 04	To increase the number of post filled 1st time To reduce the proportion of vacancies required advertisement

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
To reduce the proportion of vacancies required advertisement 23/24 – 78% -current 24/25 – 13.5% 25/26 – 12% 26/27 – 10%		Q1 – 14% - significant decrease from Q1 of readvertisements. Q2 – 6%
To increase the number of post filled 1st time 23/24 – 78% -current 24/25 – 80% 25/26 – 83% 26/27 – 88%		Q1 – 90% - increase from Q1, however both over target Q2 – 94%

ICT

Key Objectives / milestones


Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
ICT 01	LD1 Average availability of the Council’s M365 Systems 24/7 - 365.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
2023 saw the delivery of the initial Microsoft M365 E5 platform – 2024		The delivery of M365 has been a colossal undertaking, delivering a step change in the way the


<p>continues to deliver updates with key technical partners.</p>		<p>authority delivers technology to the end user. This undertaking has also crossed over the Customer Journey Transformation project delivering positive change to the end user experience linked to this change over to the Microsoft cloud. This programmes Phase 1 objective is the full transformation from legacy telephony and contact centre systems to modern, integrated communication and data infrastructure.</p> <p>It includes decommissioning outdated hardware, implementing new cloud-based contact centre solutions, building a secure on-premise and hybrid data Lakehouse, and delivering a business intelligence platform that supports the Halton operational and strategic goals.</p> <p>Successful completion of these works will enhance both internal and external communications, improve data-driven decision-making, and provide a scalable foundation for future growth and a clear foundation for further transformational project deliveries as the technologies become embedded and the environment continues to improve as the technology set and the team’s skills grow. With the programme of works underway with the Business Analysis programme started Q2 and the Contact Centre solution procurement and delivery, with the Data Lakehouse project deployment starting also in Q3 the programme is well underway.</p>
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<p>Corporate Priority</p>	
<p>ICT 02</p>	<p>LD2 Security Incidents across each reporting quarter</p>

<p>Milestone</p>	<p>Progress Q2</p>	<p>Supporting Commentary</p>
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<p>The software packages and monitoring solutions will be in place by the 3rd quarter 2024. Work is underway with Emergency planning in terms of communicating the implication of loss and the need for business based resilience plans.</p>		<p>The procurement and delivery of the MDR security management systems are now in place with the security team refining and deploying systems and services in line with the suppliers recommendations. This will be an ongoing set of requirements as the cyber security space evolves and changes to deal with the ever changing threat landscape.</p> <p>The IT security team have linked up with Emergency planning and an event is planned in November to cover the cyber essentials in the case of an all out attack rendering the technology we expect to be available – all off. DR and BCM will be the focus of the event with attendees from all directorates.</p> <p>Corporate Cyber Security Video training is also planned with a package and a system currently being procured and designed.</p>
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Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
ICT 03	LD3 Number of resolved customer contacts – Contact Centre

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>On a quarterly basis, the delivered process and the number of contacts will be reported with an objective of delivering contact through all digital means, reducing wait times and improving resolution at 1st contact for those services that will allow.</p>		<p>28'603 individual call contacts across Quarter 2, For over 15 years the council has relied upon an on-premise Skype for Business Telephony System supported by a solution that is now struggling linking into the new technology platforms in the cloud both have more than served a purpose. The IT and Customer Service teams have operated and delivered high volume services through these technologies within the bounds of the austerity restrictions.</p>

		<p>Now, due to prolonged underinvestment and technical obsolescence, these systems are now failing and causing significant operational disruption.</p> <p>With a new phase of investment through the transformation programme and the increased IT capital programme, the Customer Journey and IT teams have embarked on a program to replace these outdated systems with the recently chosen contact centre telephony solution, that will be integrated with the Microsoft 365 Teams solution, also the IVR, to be linked to an interactive Ai driven bot to enhance customer service and one that will potentially deployed for internal services.</p> <p>This transition is part of a broader program of technology development linked to the use of business analysis skills aimed at aligning technological solutions with business goals.</p>
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Corporate Priority	Priority 4 - Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
ICT 04	LD4 Number of resolved contacts – One Stop Shop’s


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
The partnerships within the shop’s continue to increase at a pace and a programme of work linked to the Transformation programme owned by the department. This is currently under development to increase the levels of		21’304 individual face to face interactions across Quarter 2 The Customer Journey transformation strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to enhancing the full customer journey using a variety of technologies:

<p>services available and looking to partner with key external agencies.</p>		<p>Personalised web portals, chatbots, mobile technologies, social media integration, and the latest AI and chat technologies.</p> <p>The goal is to seamlessly link the authority's contact centre and shop's with these technologies, improving both face-to-face and digital customer experiences while ensuring accessibility for all, including those with limited access to technology. This strategy will also integrate with existing CRM and Office 365 technologies to improve internal and external client interactions from contact to resolution. Digital poverty remains an issue within Halton as it does in many areas across the North West new ways of interacting with this client base will be part of the customer journey programme but the shops remain and essential aspect of the front door into the council for many.</p> <p>This programme of work will also be linked to a newly agreed partnership with NHS led Halton Health Hubs – discussions have taken place to evaluate the options for a presence within the new Runcorn Old Town hub and also to offer an NHS presence within the HBC locations. The management within this area are discussing options to increase the number of council services within the locations bringing services into the community on a face to face basis. Digital poverty and low digital skills make sure not all interactions can be digital.</p>
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Legal & Democracy

Key Objectives / milestones

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
LD 01	To ensure that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information and are kept informed of changing legislation and responsibilities


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Revised Constitution to be approved by Annual Council each May		The revised Constitution was approved by Council in May

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
LD 02	To provide efficient and effective Democratic Support Services that provides Elected Members, as key decision makers, with the necessary information, support and training opportunities to fulfil their individual potential and management and governance role effectively


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Inductions to be completed by June following election and offer of MAPs to be monitored on a quarterly basis		<p>All inductions were completed by the end of May and MAP meetings have been offered to all members.</p> <p>No MAPs have taken place in the quarter 1st July – 30th September 2024.</p> <p>Due to the elections in May and July, and subsequent holidays in July and August the Member</p>

		<p>Development Group were unable to meet until Thursday 26th September 2024.</p> <p>At the meeting on the 26th September, the group discussed the MAP Form and agreed that it needed to be updated. The Chair, Cllr Angela Teeling has asked the group to come together for a one item Agenda meeting on Thursday 10th October 2024, to discuss the form and how it can be updated.</p>
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Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
LD 03	Ensure that prosecutions are carried out expeditiously by monitoring average time taken to issue from receipt of full instructions. The target is within 10 working days.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target		Target has been met

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
LD 04	Ensure that care cases are carried out expeditiously by monitoring average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department. The target is within 3 working days


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target:</p> <p>Adults – 1 issued</p> <p>Children’s – 13 cases issued</p>		<p>For adult work, it’s not care proceedings, it is a welfare application in the court of protection. Once all finalised papers are received the target is to file applications within 5 working days. The target time is longer because</p>



		<p>there are not admin' resources and one full time solicitor in the team.</p> <p>For care cases, once all finalised/approved paperwork is received by the legal team, care cases are issued within 3 working days, shorter if urgent.</p>
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Catering Stadium & Registration Services

Key Objectives / milestones




Corporate Priority	<p>Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.</p> <p>Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families.</p> <p>Priority Six - Valuing and Appreciating Halton and our Community</p> <p>The DCBL Stadium</p>
ERD 39	Provide affordable space for business, community, cultural and recreational activities to take place.

	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Meeting space occupancy levels %		<p>Following the introduction of a central recharge from April 2024, which allows all council departments to book meeting space in the Executive Boxes at the Stadium for no additional cost, the Stadium has seen an increase in occupancy levels in comparison to the same period the previous year.</p> <p>2024 Q2 has seen meeting space occupancy at 42.3% which shows an increase of 22.3% from the same period in the previous operating year which was 20%.</p> <p>There was an expected drop in usage during Q2 in conference and function bookings in the Stadium's</p>

		<p>suites, which is attributed to the summer break, however, even with the anticipated reduction 2024 Q2 occupancy is at 50.4% compared to 40% occupancy in Q2 2023 representing a 10.4% increase.</p>
Sports hall occupancy levels %		<p>Sports hall occupancy has increased in the Q2 period to 57.69% in comparison to 19.23% in Q2 2023.</p> <p>This increase can be attributed to the Stadium accommodating local dance schools for competitions and showcases, the ambition is to continue to grow this usage and the positive direction.</p> <p>Stadium Management have reviewed fees and charges to ensure they are in line with other Council service areas and are currently in discussion with user groups, in addition Stadium Management are progressing with the development of additional usage packages for this area i.e. children's party packages.</p>
4g pitch occupancy levels %	N / A	<p>Winter occupancy only starts in QTR3.</p>
Customer satisfaction % of 4/5 star reviews.		<p>96% of returns rated the stadium in terms of 'Quality of Venue' between 4 and 5 stars.</p> <p>95% of returns rated the stadium in terms of 'Quality of Catering' between 4 and 5 stars.</p> <p>98% of returns said they would likely or very likely use the stadium again.</p> <p>96% of customers would likely or very likely recommend the stadium to others. (1 star being very poor and 5 stars being excellent)</p>

		Overall, 93% of customers rated the stadium very good or excellent.
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Corporate Priority	Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. Registrars
ERD 40	Provide accessible and efficient Registration Service to Halton residents.





Milestone: Quarterly updates on progress and annual performance data statistics to be reported to the relevant PPB	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Births (or declarations) within 5 working days of request		100% achievement. Appointment availability monitored to ensure births registered with required timeframe. Above National Benchmark set by GRO 95%
Deaths (or declarations) within 2 working days of request		99.04% achievement. Appointment availability monitored and adjusted to meet required deadline. Some delays in process due to new Death Certification Reform in Sept 2024.
Waiting times - % of customers seen early, on time or within 10 minutes of their appointment time.		97.38% achieved. Above National Benchmark 90% set by GRO

[Property Services](#)



Key Objectives / milestones


Corporate Priority	Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. Property Services
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ERD 11	Rationalise the Council's main office accommodation to deliver revenue savings.
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Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Exec Board approval to vacate the Municipal Building and progress with associated works – June 24.		Informal discussions held with Exec Board with regards the rationalisation of our office accommodation in September. Lead Member for Major Projects to present recommendations to Labour Group in November with a view to report going to Exec Board for approval thereafter.
Agreement to revised officer to desk ratio – September 24		Revised officer to desk ratio yet to be approved, this will be included in the Accommodation report to Exec Board in due course.
Complete options appraisal for Widnes office to present to members by March 25		RIBA stage 1 feasibility studies completed for 3 options. Report to be presented to Exec Board in due course with regards the recommendations.
Agreed approach to provision of HBC staff accommodation by March 25		RIBA stage 1 feasibility studies completed for 3 options. Report to be presented to Exec Board in due course with regards the recommendations.

Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. Property Services
ERD 12	Reduce Carbon Emissions from the Council's Property Portfolio

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Deliver the leisure centre by Feb 3 rd , 2025.		Works are progressing well and on programme to be delivered by 3 rd Feb 2025
Commence works on site at St Pat's & St Luke's by December 2024.		Adult Services to report to Exec Board in respect of the future direction of Care homes in due course.

		All refurbishment works inclusive of decarbonisation work on hold until a decision is made by Exec Board. No works will commence on site prior to December 2024
Ensure year on year reduction in carbon emissions from the Council's property portfolio. Baseline at 31 st March 2023 - 6096 tonnes. target 3% after year 1, 5% reduction after year 3.		Carbon emissions from the Council property portfolio for 2023/2024 are 5593 tonnes, a reduction of 8.25% from the previous year.

4.0 Financial Statements

Finance DepartmentRevenue Budget as at 30 September 2024

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	6,945	3,373	3,343	30	60
Insurances	986	565	322	243	260
Supplies & Services	417	279	366	(87)	(167)
Rent Allowances	35,500	15,651	15,651	0	0
Concessionary Travel	1,748	533	530	3	6
LCR Levy	1,748	0	0	0	0
Bad Debt Provision	77	0	0	0	(145)
Non HRA Rent Rebates	70	27	25	2	3
Discretionary Social Fund	106	53	0	53	106
Discretionary Housing Payments	300	150	101	49	97
Household Support Fund Expenditure	2,625	1,235	1,235	0	0
Total Expenditure	50,522	21,866	21,573	293	220
Income					
Fees & Charges	-335	-155	-159	4	9
Burdens Grant	-60	-66	-78	12	24
Dedicated schools Grant	-144	-10	0	(10)	(19)
Council Tax Liability Order	-581	-439	-493	54	108
Business Rates Admin Grant	-157	0	0	0	0
Schools SLAs	-312	-312	-307	(5)	(5)
LCR Reimbursement	-1,748	0	0	0	0
HB Overpayment Debt Recovery	-400	-200	-184	(16)	(36)
Rent Allowances	-34,700	-13,041	-12,926	(115)	(232)
Non HRA Rent Rebate	-70	-35	-37	2	(3)
Discretionary Housing Payment Grant	-300	-300	-93	(207)	(21)
Housing Benefits Admin Grant	-498	-249	-244	(5)	(9)
Housing Benefits Award Accuracy	0	0	-12	12	12
Universal Credits	-5	-3	0	(3)	(5)
Household Support Fund Grant	-2,625	0	-243	243	0
VEP Grant	0	0	-5	5	5
CCG McMillan Reimbursement	-87	-43	-25	(18)	5
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-151	-76	-329	253	316
Transfer from Reserves	-7	-7	-7	0	0
Total Income	-42,180	-14,936	-15,142	206	149
Net Operational Expenditure	8,342	6,930	6,431	499	369
Recharges					
Premises Support	377	188	188	0	0
Transport Support	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	2,365	1,183	1,183	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-6,053	-3,027	-3,027	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,311	-1,656	-1,656	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	5,031	5,274	4,775	499	369

Comments on the above figures

Based on the first 6 months of figures it is forecast net spend for the year will be £0.369m less than the approved budget profile for the Finance Department.

Concessionary Travel had previously expected an overspend of £0.127m but due to reduced passenger numbers and an adjusted tariff being applied the forecasted outturn is a £0.006m underspend. Resulting in a favourable shift of £0.133m.




There has been a reduction of Insurance premiums through negotiating better terms/changing providers resulting in a saving of £0.070m with combined liability insurances alone. Public liability claimant damages have significantly reduced from previous years resulting in a total underspend on insurances of £0.260m.

Despite an increase in budget in 2024/25, net rent allowance costs continue to be an area of concern, due to the increased costs of supported accommodation the expenditure budget is higher than the income budget. This should ideally net to zero, however, Housing benefits will only support up to a nominal figure after which, 60% will come from housing benefits and the remaining 40% is up to the Council to support. The overrun figure has reduced from prior years due to the increased support, however it is still forecasted to have a significant impact on the department's overall outturn.

Within supplies and services, there is a £0.167m overspend, £0.56m is due to the business rates team engaging with Inform CPI Ltd (Analyse Local) who specialise in identifying new business rate premises that have not been included within the rating list. Whilst there is no budget for this expenditure, the exercise has generated £0.240m in additional business rates income which should sit against the Collection Fund next year.

Reimbursement & Grant Income has significantly increased due to receiving unbudgeted income of £0.200m from NatWest purchase card rebates and an anticipated increased in procurement card income.

Approved 2024/25 Savings**FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
F9	Internal Audit	300	Restructure in light of potential retirements over the next two years within the Internal Audit Team.	0	50		No official changes made yet
F13	Discretionary Support Scheme	221	Review the roles, procedures and structure of the team.	25	0		On track
F17	Council Tax	84	Increase the charges applied when a court summons is issued by 30% (£23), to achieve full cost recovery over the three year period.	40	40		On track
Total Finance Department				65	90		

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols**Symbol****Objective****Green**

Indicates that the saving is on course to be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.

Amber

Indicates that it is uncertain or too early to say at this stage whether the saving will be achieved but work is ongoing.

Red

Indicates that it is highly likely or certain that the saving will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.

Chief Executive's Delivery Unit**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	3,304	1,605	1,623	(18)	(35)
Employees Training	99	50	52	(2)	(9)
Apprenticeship Levy	300	136	147	(11)	(21)
Supplies & Services	391	154	124	30	62
Total Expenditure	4,094	1,945	1,946	-1	-3
Income					
Fees & Charges	-223	-122	-118	(4)	(9)
Schools SLA Income	-565	-539	-509	(30)	(56)
Transfer from Reserves	0	0	-5	5	5
Total Income	-788	-661	-632	(29)	(60)
Net Operational Expenditure	3,306	1,284	1,314	(30)	(63)
Recharges					
Premises Support	174	87	87	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	1,209	605	605	0	0
Asset Rental Support	53	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-3,573	-1,787	-1,787	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,137	-1,095	-1,095	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	1,169	189	219	(30)	(63)

Comments on the above figures

Currently the Chief Executive Delivery Unit Department (CXDU) is projecting an outturn position under the approved budget profile by £0.065m.

The employee overspend is in relation to transitional costs for HR Business Partner posts.

The School SLA Income has reduced as some schools have become academies and are not buying back departmental services.

Capital Programme 2024/25

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
Chief Executives Directorate								
IT Rolling Programme	1,026.9	1,026.9					0.0	1,026.9
Halton Smart Microgrid	11,000.0	11,000.0					0.0	11,000.0
Transformation Programme	3,740.0	3,740.0	435	624			1,059.0	2,681.0
Total Chief Execs	15,766.9	15,766.9	434.7	624.3	0.0	0.0	1,059.0	14,707.9

ICT and Administration Department**Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024**

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,596	2,746	2,631	115	230
Supplies & Services	921	409	565	(156)	(310)
Capital Finance	100	50	11	39	81
Computer Repairs & Software	1,724	1,547	1,734	(187)	(374)
Communication Costs	13	0	59	(59)	(122)
Premises	159	81	73	8	17
Transport	3	1	0	1	2
Total Expenditure	8,516	4,834	5,073	(239)	(476)
Income					
Fees & Charges	-1,056	-533	-556	23	36
Schools SLA Income	-646	-554	-490	(64)	(130)
Reimbursements & Grant Income	0	9	18	(9)	(18)
Transfer from Reserves	-148	-148	-148	0	0
Total Income	-1,850	-1,226	-1,176	(50)	(112)
Net Operational Expenditure	6,666	3,608	3,897	(289)	(588)
Recharges					
Premises Support	550	275	275	0	0
Transport Support	19	10	10	0	0
Central Support	2,380	1,190	1,190	0	0
Asset Rental Support	1,494	0	0	0	0
Support Costs Income	-8,831	-4,417	-4,417	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-4,388	-2,942	-2,942	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,278	666	955	(289)	(588)

Comments on the above figures

At the end of the 2024/25 financial year it is forecasted that the ICT and Administration Department net spend will be over the approved budget profile by £0.588m

In previous years, a significant budget pressure for the department has been the administrative staff. Now that the service has been disaggregated the burden is no longer pooled within the department but across the Council.

The main pressures faced by the ICT and Administration Department is now in relation to the IT infrastructure, with the move to Microsoft 365, staff have been able to utilise much more efficient hardware. However, the software utilised by the new hardware is at a premium and will be a continuous pressure the Council will need to react to as prices fluctuate.

With a number of agency staff across the Council, ICT and Administrative Services are recharging licence costs for non HBC staff to their respective departments as the costs are not held within the initial contracts with suppliers such as Microsoft, this should help budget holders more readily see the impact their agency staff are having on the Council's finances as there is not just the direct fees to be considered, there is strain on a number of other services and existing contracts which do come at additional costs.

There has been a substantial increase in postage costs £0.215m as well as communication costs £0.121m

Capital Expenditure

Q2 ICT Rolling Capital programme incurred expenditure of £0.638m in relation to Dell MDR Solution HC managed detection and response

Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation	2024/25 Revised Allocation	Q1 Spend	Q2 Spend	Q3 Spend	Q4 Spend	Total Spend	Allocation remaining
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executives Directorate								
IT Rolling Programme	1,026.9	1,026.9	28	668			695.7	331.2
Halton Smart Microgrid	11,000.0	11,000.0					0.0	11,000.0
Transformation Programme	3,740.0	3,740.0					0.0	3,740.0
Total Chief Execs	15,766.9	15,766.9	27.7	668.0	0.0	0.0	695.7	15,071.2

Legal and Democratic Services 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	1,511	873	864	9	17
Agency Related Expenditure	0	219	527	(308)	(616)
Supplies & Services	385	260	277	(17)	(33)
Civic Catering & Functions	23	9	3	6	12
Legal Expenses	218	19	126	(107)	(259)
Transport Related Expenditure	11	10	6	4	7
Other Expenditure	0	3	3	0	0
Capital Financing	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	2,148	1,393	1,806	(413)	(872)
Income					
School SLA's	-98	-78	-77	(1)	(20)
Licence Income	-301	-139	-129	(10)	(49)
Government Grant	-42	-42	-42	0	0
Reimbursement & Other Grants	-161	-161	-161	0	0
Fees & Charges Income	-74	-40	-21	(19)	(35)
Transfer from Reserves	-27	-27	-27	0	0
Total Income	-703	-487	-457	(30)	(104)
Net Operational Expenditure	1,445	906	1,349	(443)	(976)
Recharges					
Premises Support	53	26	26	0	0
Transport Support	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	275	139	139	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Support Costs Income	-2,391	-1,195	-1,195	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,063	-1,030	-1,030	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	-618	-124	319	(443)	(976)

Comments on the above figures

As at the end of September 2024 the department is reporting a net overspend against budget. It is currently forecast that net spend for the department will be over the approved budget by approximately £0.976m at the end of the financial year.

Employee costs for the year are expected to marginally be below the approved budget (including staff payments for recent elections). This is a result of the number of vacancies that exist within the department but due to the demand on the service, agency staff are required to maintain the service. The main area of concern for the department is the volume of agency costs resulting from hard to fill vacant posts. It is expected these costs will be in the region of £0.616m at the end of the financial year.

Within the forecast £0.259m overspend against budget of legal expenses, there is an estimated £0.490m costs relating to the contracting of barristers, most of which again, are due to the limited number of staff available to clear an increasing caseload. The impact of the transformation and recovery work in Children Services, as well as alternatives to agency staff such as attractive market supplements in recruitment for current locums to apply for the Solicitor posts, should help drive down the overspend in the department

Approved 2024/25 Savings

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

LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
L4	Marketing, Design and Communications	45	Review the frequency of production of Inside Halton, as part of the wider consideration of the Council's communications strategy required for the Transformation Programme	15		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Budget adjusted inline with the savings in the ICT department
Total Legal Services Department				15	0		

Environment & Regeneration

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. Ensuring at all times 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		

Catering Stadium & Registration Services**COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE****Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024**

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'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 is 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 regards 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</u> unless there is an <u>intervention or remedial action</u> taken.</i>

Direction of Travel Indicator

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