

Public Document Pack



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

Monday, 17 June 2024 at 6.30 p.m.
The Board Room - Municipal Building,
Widnes

S. Young

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Eddie Jones (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Angela Teeling (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor John Abbott	Labour
Councillor Neil Connolly	Labour
Councillor Emma Garner	Labour
Councillor Stan Hill	Labour
Councillor Noel Hutchinson	Labour
Councillor Katy McDonough	Labour
Councillor Christopher Rowe	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Mike Ryan	Labour
Councillor Tom Stretch	Labour

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 or e-mail
ann.jones@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 16 September 2024*

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

Part I

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

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

At a meeting of the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 29 January 2024 in the Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), Ball, Garner, Hutchinson, Rowe, Ryan and Stretch

Apologies for Absence: Councillors C. Plumpton Walsh and Wall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, P. Wright and J. Gallagher

Also in attendance: None

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

	<i>Action</i>
<p>ELS26 MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 20 November 2023, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>ELS27 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
<p>ELS28 THE CORPORATE PLAN - THE BIG CONVERSATION ANALYSIS AND THE WAY FORWARD</p> <p>The Board received a report of the Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, which gave an update on 'The Big Conversation', since it was presented at the last meeting in November 2023.</p> <p>The consultation closed on 30 November 2023. The report outlined the engagement results of the consultation, broken down into age groups and presented the methods used and areas the consultation had reached, which included many stakeholders and partners.</p> <p>It was noted that there was a high level of agreement</p>	

on the suggested themes within the consultation. It was evident however that the addition of a 6th theme was required to encompass areas such as: environment, open and green spaces and the protection of these, litter, overgrowth and weeds, regeneration, business, economy, growth support and town centres, housing and supported living. It was proposed that these would come under '*Place and Community*'.

The timeline for the new Corporate Plan was provided and its launch was scheduled for April 2024. All Elected Members of the Council had been emailed to advise of the qualifying statements devised for each priority/theme. These would also be made available to the public, employees and residents, who would now be given the opportunity to provide feedback on these statements, which set out what each priority would aim to achieve over the next 5 years.

The public consultation on the qualifying statements was open from 19 January to 26 January and was being shared via social media and drop-in sessions in the libraries and Direct Links in Runcorn and Widnes.

The following additional information was given in response to Members questions:

- The feedback for the qualifying statements was now received and a 10- page document explaining the detail of each of the priorities would be added;
- This 10-page document will be shared and promoted amongst stakeholders – Elected Members, residents, Halton's workforce and businesses once it was approved;
- A detailed Workforce Plan would then be written for staff to work to, containing business plans and KPI's for example; and
- The Corporate Plan is linked to the reimagine Halton agenda and the Transformation agenda.

Members discussed the timeline for the launch of the new Corporate Plan and raised concerns that the full Plan would not have been scrutinised by Members before it was launched. Specifically, they were concerned that the detail of the full plan would not be known until after the Council meeting in March, where the Plan was being approved. The Board also requested an opportunity to scrutinise the full document at Policy and Performance Board's in the future.

Officers would explore the possibility of sharing the

10-page document with all Members prior to approval of the Plan at the Executive Board meeting in February.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) concern was expressed with regards to the lack of time for scrutiny of the full Corporate Plan. Therefore, the Board declined to endorse the approach to facilitate the implementation of a new Corporate Plan. Members felt that it was essential that Policy and Performance Boards were able to scrutinise the full Corporate Plan before its presentation to full Council.

ELS29 PRESENTATION - COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE DEPARTMENT

The Board received a presentation from the Operational Director of Community and Greenspace, on developments that had taken place within that Department over the past two years and how they were contributing to the Council's strategic aims.

The Community and Greenspace Department comprised 4 areas:

- Environmental Services;
- Leisure Services;
- Community Safety and Protection; and
- Stadium and Catering Services.

The presentation covered several areas of interest within each of the above services, including how the structural changes that had been made had aligned services to the various Member Portfolios and streamlined management arrangements to create a more focused service delivery.

The following highlights were discussed:

- An additional stage had been built for the Stadium, to accommodate smaller events such as tribute and comedy nights; this was also portable so could be used indoors and outdoors;
- The cessation of the schools meals service by 31 March 2025 was discussed;
- A restructure of the Stadium and Catering services to form a new division was currently underway. Although staff would be put at risk, there were

enough job vacancies for those staff who wanted them;

- Widnes Cemetery was now full – an opening ceremony for the one in Peel House Lane would take place in Spring 2024;
- Further work around increasing the amount of recycling in the Borough was being undertaken, as well as looking at reducing contamination;
- The importance of the Borough's libraries to Halton's communities; and
- An Enforcement Team of 4 staff is being put into place who would patrol open spaces and parks and would issue fines for littering and dog mess/control offences.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received and information noted.

Meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.

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

DATE: 19 June 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

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

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

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

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

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

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

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

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

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None identified.

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

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

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

DATE: 17 June 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Employment, Learning & Skills & Community

SUBJECT: Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board Annual Report for 2023/24.

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF REPORT

1.1 To receive the Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2023/24.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the 2023/24 Annual Report be recommended to Full Council.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Article 6 of the Constitution requires each Policy and Performance Board to submit an Annual Report to Council outlining their work, making recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods as appropriate.

3.2 The Annual Report (see attached) has been submitted to the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board for consideration.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 No further implications

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no equality or diversity issues.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications as part of this report.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING & SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD JUNE 2023 – MARCH 2024

Introduction from Councillor Eddie Jones Chair of the Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board

The Board scrutinises the work of the *Economy, Enterprise and Property Department* and the *Community and Environment Department*.

My thanks to the officers for working with the Vice-Chair and I to develop the agenda items and thank you for the quality of the reports and presentations they have produced during the year. We have certainly had a varied and informative agenda and I believe that Members of this Board continue to proactively shape the services we provide to our residents and I would like to thank Members of the Board for their passion and commitment.

I hope that the Board will continue to make a worthwhile contribution to creating an economically prosperous Borough in this challenging environment.

THE BOARD'S MEMBERSHIP

During 2023/24, the Board's membership comprised Councillor Eddie Jones (Chair); Councillor Aimee Teeling (Vice-Chair); Councillor Angela Ball; Councillor Emma Garner; Councillor Stan Hill; Councillor Noel Hutchinson; Councillor Mike Ryan; Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh; Councillor Chris Rowe; Councillor Tom Stretch; and Councillor Andrea Wall

The Board had 4 meetings during the year in June 2023, September 2023, November 2023 and January 2024.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

The Council's constitution sets out the Board's strategic priority is to develop policy and scrutinise performance in relation to the Council's objectives. Specifically in relation to 4 areas:

- Enterprise and employment
- Adult learning and skills
- Culture and leisure services
- Library Service

Key items covered during the 23/24 financial year include:

Enterprise and Employment

Business Growth Programme and the Business Support Service

The Business Growth Programme was a business support initiative that had been running since 2014 and ended on 30 June 2023. It is to be replaced with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and is currently funded until March 2025. The Council's Business Investment and Growth Team will work in partnership to deliver Place Based Business Support, using lessons learned from the ERDF Business Growth Programme. The aim is to deliver business support at the local level through direct commissioned delivery and by linking businesses into the wider UKSPF programmes and other support initiatives in the LCR. The Programme is for new business start-ups as well as established businesses.

Halton and St Helen's Voluntary Action Update

The Chief Executive of Halton and St Helens Voluntary Action, Sally Yeoman, gave an update on the Organisation's strategic priorities, training, development and capacity building, and the support given to local groups. Information included:

- The Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector in the Liverpool City Region (LCR);
- The LCR VCFSE Infrastructure Partnership;
- The LCR VCFSE Manifesto 2021-24 - the three priority areas;
- Equality and diversity in the region for all;
- The generation of economic growth locally and investing in communities;
- Employment and skills opportunities for all;
- Recent investment; and
- Opportunities for collaboration.

Adult Learning and Skills

Halton Adult Learning Service Performance 22/23

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

Following an Ofsted inspection, the Adult Learning Service maintained a 'Good' rating.

Pathways to Teaching Project

The Pathways to Teaching Project is co-ordinated by HBC's Employment, Learning and Skills Division, on behalf of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA). It is an inclusive programme, aimed at supporting residents across the Liverpool City Region in taking their first steps towards a teaching career within the Adult Education Sector, by:

- Removing potential barriers for prospective tutors to undertake training, such as funding and childcare;
- Providing the opportunity to experience the Adult Education sphere from a tutor's perspective through placements in their own Local Authority;
- Supporting learners with the achievement of qualifications.

It has four key principles:

- Develop the knowledge and understanding of Education and Training from an Adult Learning perspective through the achievement of the Level 3 Award in Education and Training;
- Understand the meaning of the wider curriculum (Safeguarding, British Values, Equality and Diversity), and develop the skills to effectively bed these into an effective Scheme of Work;
- Experience working in an Adult Learning setting, and are supported by a mentor within that setting; and
- Potentially progress into a higher level teaching qualification (Level 5 or 7), and ultimately gain employment as a tutor within the Local Authority where they have completed their placement (these are undertaken within the participants' chosen authority and will be in the learners' chosen subject area where this is reasonably practicable).

Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ) Update

HPIJ's future focus is to engage with more economically inactive residents for Ways to Work and the new Work and Health Pioneer Programme. Economically inactive individuals are those not in work and not actively seeking work (unlike unemployed individuals who are actively seeking work). This changes the focus to much harder to reach residents, often with complex employment needs. Funding is from UKSPF and the programme will start in April 2024 and will initially run for 12 months.

Culture and Leisure Services

The Brindley Theatre

The financial position of The Brindley was scrutinised, since its opening in 2004. The report also requested that Members delegate the full commercial programming of the Brindley Theatre to the Brindley Manager and Leisure Services Divisional Manager, which was agreed. It was recognised that the commercial programming of the venue was critical to maximising income and to maintain the Venue's break even position, in what was a highly competitive and challenging marketplace.

Leisure Centre Operations

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

The Council's new Leisure Centre is on site and has progressed throughout 2023/24, and is on time and on budget, with a current anticipated opening date of Spring 2025.

Community and Greenspace Update

The Community and Greenspace Department comprises 4 areas:

- Environmental Services;
- Leisure Services;
- Community Safety and Protection; and
- Stadium and Catering Services.

Library Service

Library Strategy 2023-28

It was reported that the new Strategy had been produced in-house by the libraries team and all library staff had been given the opportunity to comment and provide input. The Strategy provided useful information for the customer on what the Library Service offered and set objectives for the next 5 years, to improve the service and ensure it moved forward and widened the customer base. Following the Board's consideration of the draft Strategy, it would be taken to Executive Board for adoption.

Miscellaneous Items

The Big Conversation

The Big Conversation was about engaging with the public so that they understood the challenges that the Council was facing. It was an approach between the Council and those who lived or worked in Halton to work together to create an improved Borough in all aspects of everyday life. A stakeholder analysis and a Communications Plan was developed in order to generate and establish as many opportunities as possible to involve all stakeholders in many different ways. The consultation closed on 30 November 2023 with the aim to feed into the Council's new Corporate Plan, which was launched in April 2024:

Total Number of responses: 1076

Response by Area: Runcorn: 55%; Widnes: 45%

The top 3 priorities identified by our stakeholders were:

- Environment / Open spaces / Litter / Overgrowth / Maintain green spaces / Keep street free of litter and weeds
- Regeneration / Business / Economy / Support growth and town centres
- Housing / Affordability / Increase supported living / Improved infrastructure.

Halton's 50th Anniversary

In order to recognise this momentous occasion, plans had been made for HBC, external organisations and groups to hold activities and events throughout 2024. The aim was to involve as many schools, local community groups and individuals as possible, and small grants would be available to assist in the planning and delivery of activities. It was noted that a temporary externally funded Culture Officer post had been created, utilising UK Share Prosperity Funding. They would assist in the preparations for the celebrations and work alongside colleagues in Leisure Services.

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning, Skills & Community Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	17 th June 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Director – Economy, Enterprise and Property
PORTFOLIO:	Employment Learning and Skills
SUBJECT:	Presentation to Update on Riverside College
WARD(S)	Boroughwide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To receive a presentation from the Principal of Riverside College.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

i) That the board notes the presentation and action points.

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Members will receive a general update from the Principal about Riverside College.

3.2 It is anticipated that the Principal will cover several areas of interest, i.e. quality of teaching and learning; enrolments; funding; key developments.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no further policy implications.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications.

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

6.1 The work of Riverside College complements a wide range of the Council's priorities, and the college is an important and supportive strategic partner in contributing to the Borough's economic regeneration and growth agenda.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no risks identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues directly related to the presentation.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

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

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

DATE: 17 June 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director – Environment &
Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Employment, Learning and Skills and
Community

SUBJECT: Halton People into Jobs – Employer
Initiatives

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the current services provided by Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ) and the incentives available to employers when recruiting unemployed and/or economically inactive Halton residents.
- 1.2 To provide opportunities to members to raise any questions with regards to HPIJ providing financial incentives/grants to employers when recruiting unemployed and/or economically inactive Halton residents that are accessing HPIJ's Ways to Work and/or Young Persons Guarantee programmes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) **the report be noted**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background information

- 3.1.1 Halton People into Jobs has delivered a range of DWP Welfare to Work Programmes since 2011 including the Work Programme, Ways to Work, the Work and Health Programme, JETS and more recently the Work and Health Programme Pioneer Support Programme. All of these programmes have supported Halton residents with looking for and sustaining employment.
- 3.1.2 Halton People into Jobs has delivered a range of externally funded programmes that have provided financial incentives/grants to employers to recruit unemployed and economically inactive residents including Future Jobs Fund (DWP funded), Kick Start (DWP funded)

and the Intermediate Labour Market wage subsidy programme (ESF/SIF funded) through Ways to Work since 2016.

- 3.1.3 Halton People into Jobs has secured funding through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to continue to deliver the Ways to Work Programme which is funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) from April 2024 to March 2025. This includes funding available to continue to deliver a wage subsidy programme for employers that are recruiting eligible unemployed/economically inactive Halton residents aged 16+ that are accessing the programme for employment support.

The definition of economically inactive for UKSPF is:

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

Ways to Work Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) wage subsidy for employers

- Employers can access funding to cover the costs of an employee’s wages for 26wks when recruiting eligible unemployed/economically inactive Halton residents that are accessing the Ways to Work programme for employment support
- ILM funding is available to SME’s, the voluntary sector and the local authority (large/national employers aren’t eligible to access the funding)
- The ILM is paid at National Minimum Wage and the employer can also recover NI/pension costs for the employee
- The individual is employed directly by the employer and receives a formal contract of employment
- The employer signs an agreement stating that if there is a vacancy available then the individual accessing the ILM will be given the opportunity to apply during or at the end of the ILM
- The employer will provide an employment reference at the end of the 26wk ILM if required
- The employer and employee can access ongoing in work support from Halton People into Jobs to address any issues that are identified and ensure support is put in place
- The financial claims process requires the employer to provide evidence that the individual is receiving the agreed payment for the duration of the 26wk ILM i.e. payslips/bank statements etc.

- The wages are claimed and reimbursed on a monthly basis by the which helps SME's maintain their cash flow into the business
- Funding has to be spent and defrayed by 31st March 2025

3.1.4 Halton People into Jobs has also secured funding through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to deliver the Mayors Young Persons Guarantee Programme which is funded through the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) from April 2024 to March 2027. This includes funding available for employers to claim a grant when recruiting eligible unemployed/economically inactive Halton residents aged 18 to 24yrs that are accessing the programme for employment support. The Young Persons Guarantee Programme has been integrated into the Halton Ways to Work programme to ensure that young people with complex barriers to work receive a wraparound package of support to enhance their chances of gaining employment and to reduce the risk of them becoming long term unemployed (NEET).

Young Persons Guarantee grant for employers

- Employers can access a £3,000 grant when recruiting eligible unemployed/economically inactive Halton residents aged 18 to 24yrs old that are accessing employment support through the Young Persons Guarantee (YPG) programme
- YPG funding is available to SME's and the voluntary sector (large/national employers and local authorities aren't eligible to access the funding)
- The £3,000 grant is paid in instalments of £500 per month for a maximum period of 6 months
- The individual is employed directly by the employer and receives a formal contract of employment
- The employer and employee can access ongoing in work support from Halton People into Jobs to address any issues that are identified and ensure support is put in place
- The financial claims process requires the employer to provide evidence that the individual is remains in paid employment each month i.e. payslips
- Halton has a small allocation of 6 YPG grants per year so requests for funding will be monitored closely to ensure maximum benefit to both the employer and the young people of Halton

3.1.5 Both of the above contracts are voluntary programmes for individuals that meet the respective criteria. Employers will be required to evidence that they meet the relevant funding criteria through an Expression of Interest process

3.1.6 In addition to the funding available above HPIJ can also provide the following services to employers:

- Free recruitment and job matching support to help fill their vacancies (including arranging interviews/providing feedback to candidates)

- Access to interview rooms (free of charge if they are recruiting through HPIJ services)
- Access to Jobs Fairs to promote their vacancies to local residents (larger scale recruitment opportunities)
- Redundancy support for Halton employees placed at risk of redundancy including:
 - ✓ Information, advice and guidance
 - ✓ Practical support with CV's, applications and interviews
 - ✓ Funding for retraining
 - ✓ Funding to remove barriers i.e. interview clothes, travel to interview costs etc.
- Employers can also access a range of courses for their employees via Halton Adult Learning

3.2 Performance/achievement

3.2.1 Ways to Work (April 2024 – March 2025)

- 138 starts on programme
- 69 job starts (50% into work)
- 15 people to access training

3.2.2 Young Persons Guarantee Programme – year 1 (April 2024 – March 2025)

- 19 young people aged 18-24 supported
- 6 employer grants issued

3.3 Income and expenditure

3.3.1. Ways to Work – income is generated through quarterly claims to cover the associated costs of the service plus a 15% management fee. The programme is funded through UKSPF which has an established claims process in place.

Young Persons Guarantee – income is generated through quarterly claims to cover the associated costs of the service. The programme is funded through SIF which also has an established claims process in place.

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

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

3.4 Key Successes

3.4.1 Ways to Work – successful close down of the SIF funded programme by 31st March 2024 and transition to new UKSPF funded programme from 1st April 2024. A large number of employers have accessed ILM funding since 2016. HPIJ will continue to build on the success of the ILM programme and will endeavour to promote good news stories to show the wider benefits of employers providing paid employment opportunities to Halton residents.

3.5 Key issues

3.5.1 Promotion of these incentives and the support available to employers needs to be ongoing to maximise the funding available within the allocated budgets (UKSPF and SIF).

3.6 Concluding comments

3.6.1 Performance across programmes for the unemployed and economically inactive has been strong. HPIJ have successfully delivered employment programmes that have provided financial incentives to employers to recruit unemployed Halton residents since 2016. We will continue to build on this success to further increase the number of local residents accessing paid employment with local employers and also within Halton Borough Council.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None identified at this stage.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

LCRCA contracts are closely monitored to ensure sufficient income is being generated to cover the full delivery costs of provision and employer incentives.

HBC internal audit conduct monthly audits on the LCRCA/UKSPF externally funded contracts.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

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

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The fantastic achievements that have come out of the various Work Programmes delivered by Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning and Skills Division getting so many people into work are a

very positive outcome for the local economy. Many of the individuals that have accessed the programme have also gained vital maths, English, IT and employability skills along the way, in addition to sector specific qualifications such as FLT, Digital Skills, Food Hygiene, CSCS etc. Signposting to partner organisations to support individuals furthest away from the labour market has been a key part of the programme. Delivery of the Ways to Work and WHP Pioneer Programme will continue to build on the success we have had previously.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

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

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

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

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 To maintain existing work patterns.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

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

DATE: 17 June 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Performance Management Reports for
Quarter 3 of 2023/24

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and raise, any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the third quarter period to 31st December 2023.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023 - 24 were agreed by Members for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
 - Enterprise, Employment and Skills
 - Community and Environment

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

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Departmental service objectives and performance measures, both local and national are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The identification of business critical objectives/ milestones and performance indicators will further support organisational improvement.

6.2 Although some objectives link specifically to one priority area, the nature of the cross - cutting activities being reported, means that to a greater or lesser extent a contribution is made to one or more of the Council priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 At the time at which annual business plans are developed, Directorate Risk Registers are also refreshed and updated.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Not applicable

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

10.1 Not applicable

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

Reporting Period: 1st October to 31st December 2023

1.0 Introduction

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

2.0 Key Developments

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

2.2 Employment, Learning and Skills

HPIJ submitted its Delivery Plan to the LCR CA for use of UKSPF to continue delivery of the Ways to Work programme from April 2024, although the funding will require a revised focus on working with economically inactive residents. CA SIF funding secured to deliver Ways to Work from January 2024 – March 2024.

HPIJ negotiated with the CA on a proposal for delivery, at local level, of the Metro Mayor's Young Person's Guarantee, which will support those aged 18-24, and anyone who is unemployed and inactive and seeking support. Following discussions with G4S/DWP, plans have been put in place to return the underspend on the Restart programme. A number of factors have contributed to this, including JCP referrals being much less than anticipated at the start of the programme.

Following successful delivery of the Adult Education Budget (AEB), Halton Adult Learning have been successful in securing 'growth' funding for the next academic year.

The LCR CA consulted with a range of stakeholders in developing its forthcoming 'Long Term Skills Plan'. Consultation included a HBC officers session, with a range of services represented (Employment, Learning & Skills, Business Support, HR and adult social care). The Plan is scheduled to be finalised by spring/summer 2024 and will inform what the CA commissions around skills.

Halton Adult Learning co-ordinates the LCR CA Pathways to Teaching project. A city region wide celebration, to award those trainee tutors that had completed the first cohort, took place in Q3 at Calderstone's Park Reading Room, with 34 learners being recognised for their achievements. A number of these learners have gone on to gain employment in their respective LA Adult Learning service or are continuing with their trainee teacher studies.

Community & Environment

2.3 Culture - Brindley Theatre

This year's sponsored fireworks display was the best ever, set against the backdrop of the iconic Silver Jubilee Bridge. With an estimate of over 40,000 people viewing the fireworks across the borough. The Silver Jubilee Bridge was closed for the day and used at the launch site for the display.

The Events Team could not have put on this year's event without the sponsorship and support of the below local companies:

- Beesley & Fildes Ltd
- Halton Housing
- Langtree
- Marshall CDP
- Tarmac

The Events Team in partnership with the Mayoral Office supported the local British Legions Remembrance Day Services at both Victoria Park and Runcorn Cenotaph. Both services were very well attended with the numbers gathering to pay their respects is increasing each year.

An update on Halton 50th Year (2024) Activities was provided to Executive Board on 16.11.23 and to Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board on 23.11.23.

Peter Kay performed two Surprise Christmas shows at the Brindley on 7 December.

Works completed on the Bridgewater Canal Towpath to provide temporary public access during the extension works in 2024. The works included safety railings, towpath widening, lighting and a safety handrail.

A large recruitment drive was completed to increase both Casual Theatre Stewards and Casual Production Technicians.

The new extension is out to tender, with a closing date of 19 January.

2.4 Community Centres

Mike Amesbury MP moved into The Old Police Station in December 2023. A new lease agreement is in place. This brings the building to maximum occupancy. We are in the process of securing a new tenant for the vacant space at Murdishaw Community Centre.

2.5 Library Service

The monthly Bereavement Café in Halton Lea was launched in October with over 30 adults attending. An article was published in Inside Halton.

Also, the recently launched Dungeons and Dragons role-play club, in Halton Lea, is continuing to be popular with over 240 adults and children taking part in weekly sessions.

Warm Welcome free coffee mornings began in November and have seen over 245 people attend the sessions for a hot drink in both Halton Lea and Runcorn

Ditton Library pc replacement is near to completion. Once Ditton is completed the project will roll out to other libraries in Halton.

2.6 Leisure

Construction of Halton Leisure Centre is progressing to time. The external fabric, including the glass façade is nearing completion and the internal structure is taking shape.

Positioning of power and data points and all internal fixtures and fittings have been selected and confirmed. The Active Halton website has a dedicated page for the development, the picture gallery is regularly updated and social value reports continue to be posted every month.

Active Halton APP will launch on 2nd January 2024. The APP will give customers quick access to booking fitness classes and swimming sessions, accessing exclusive member perks, and tracking their progress. It is a great tool for staying motivated, organised, and connected to all the amazing activities the sites offer. To celebrate the launch of the APP, those downloading the APP can claim 50% of the first month on a full membership or have the admin fee waived on any of other memberships. This is time limited but hoped to significantly boost sales.

Sports Development

Volunteer Walk Leaders won Volunteering Team of the Year award at Halton & St Helens Voluntary and Community Action annual awards ceremony, and to celebrate they were invited to afternoon tea with Halton's Mayor and Consort. Around 100 people a week attend a health walk across Widnes and Runcorn.

Liverpool FA Active Through Football Recognition Award for delivery of activity in Halton during 2023.

3.0 Emerging Issues

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

Employment, Learning & Skills

3.2 Employment, Learning & Skills

Additional AEB funding will be used to grow the ESOL provision within the Adult Learning service from Q1 24/25, to support increasing numbers of ESOL residents. Provision will include conversation clubs and art sessions.

Adult Learning's annual Self-Assessment Report will be completed in Q4, shared with relevant senior officers and Portfolio Holder and uploaded to the Ofsted portal.

In Q4, discussions will take place with the Combined Authority on year 6 AEB allocations for Halton Adult Learning. It will be important that proposals and allocations reflect the requirements of the CA's Long Term Skills Plan.

Tarmac have been awarded the Highways & Maintenance contract for Halton & Warrington councils. Discussions in Q4 will commence with Tarmac, Employment, Learning & Skills and Procurement regarding social value outcomes and ELS KPIs to benefit Halton residents. A plan will be developed and monitoring of outcomes will be undertaken, with Tarmac attending Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) meetings to report on progress.

During Q4, the CA will be inviting partners to contribute to a number of 'deep dive' discussions on key topics, with a view to formulating some plans for action. Initial deep dives will cover: Economic Inactivity; Support for those with experience of care; and transport issues.

A number of Investment Zones are being developed across the LCR. Partners, including LAs, are invited to attend an Investment Zones – Access to Opportunity Plan event in Q4, to better understand what benefits/positive outcomes Investment Zones will bring to local areas.

LCR Chambers of Commerce led on the submission of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), which aims to represent the views of local employers regarding their skills requirements. In Q4, an LSIP conference will take place at Aintree Racecourse with a range of stakeholders, including LAs, colleges, employers, Chambers etc to set out progress to date and next steps. Local Skills Improvement Funds have been successfully secured by LCR colleges to deliver on some of the employer skills 'asks'.

A new public address system will be completed in Q4 in Kingsway Learning Centre to comply with the requirements of the Protect Duty (Martyn's Law). The PA system will be tested and then key staff in the centre will be trained in its operation. Following this, the KLC Bomb & Fire Evacuation Plan will need to be updated accordingly.

Community & Environment

3.3 Culture Services

Brindley Theatre

We are currently noticing a change away from advanced ticket purchases to much nearer to the performance date. We suspect this is due to the current financial climate.

The changing summer climate will now be a consideration when identifying event locations managed by the Events Team.

3.4 Community Centres

Since Halton Day Services have vacated Murdishaw Community Centre, Officers are in negotiation with The Bridge School to take on the space early in 2024.

3.5 Library Service

Funding has been secured to provide 540 packed lunches for children during the next half term at all 4 libraries secured from Public Health.

Changing Places facility, installation complete in Halton lea and awaiting final plaque instalment before launch and official opening.

3.6 Leisure

Good footfall continues through both centres. However, the reduction in free and proposed increases in prices for all activities from 1st April is likely to widen the affordability gap. A review of Halton Leisure Card is taking place, it is expected that new criteria will be proposed to help those most in need.

Sports Development

Savings target for 2024/25 has been achieved. There is a reduction in Officer hours and sports coaching budget, thus the support service to community groups will reduce. Charges for activities will continue.

Inactivity levels are still higher than before the pandemic, women's activity levels have recovered slower than men's. Active Lives survey results identify that the gap between most and least affluent continues to grow. Changes to Adult Active Lives survey, Sport England recently reviewed the survey allocation approach. As a result, every local authority identified by the Place Need Classification as falling within the top 20% (top 2 deciles) for both a sporting and physical activity need and social need will receive a minimum sample of 900 (previously 500). Halton is within this classification thus 900 surveys should impact on the precision of estimates and granularity of future reporting. Recent Active Lives survey results for Children and Young People reports participation levels nationally remain unchanged compared to 12 months ago, although they're up compared to five years ago, activity levels are the lowest for those in school Years 3-4 (ages 7-9, 40%).

4.0 High Priority Equality Actions

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

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

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






5.0 Performance Overview

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

Employment, Learning & Skills

Key Objectives / milestones

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

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
To deliver year 3 of the Supported Internship programme by September 2023		Year 3 delivery commenced September 2023
To achieve the required outputs and customer service standards on the DWP/G4S Restart Programme contract to cease the Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP by June 2023		Referrals have remained low which has impacted on job start and sustained job outcome performance this quarter. The Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP was extended (progress is reviewed monthly with G4S).
To review HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy and implement improvements by June 2023 .		Review of the HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy is ongoing. Due to staffing issues actions are likely to be implemented next quarter.
Implementation of new contracts within required deadlines (UKSPF/Home Office Refugee Programme if contracts secured) by July 2023 .		Gap funding to bridge the transition from ESF to UKSPF has been secured (SIF funding). Grant Funding Agreements for continued funding from UKSPF will be in place for April 2024 delivery of Ways to Work. The Home Office bid was not secured by the Prime Contractor so Halton will not be a sub contracted provider for this programme.
To deliver a Pathways to Teaching programme, which will create adult learning tutor employment opportunities by September 2023		Year 2 of the project has officially launched, with enrolments in Halton, Sefton, Liverpool, Wirral, and Knowsley. Celebration event for the first cohort took place on 8/11/2023.

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



Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
To deliver an Adult Learning Marketing Strategy by April 2023		Marketing colleagues continue to work towards the overarching targets set out in the Marketing strategy. Progress on Marketing KPIs now included in half termly Quality and Income reporting.
To review the Quality Assurances processes within the Adult Learning Service by July 2023		Adult Learning QA processes and documentation reviewed and launched in September 2023.
To review the adult learning tutor contracts by July 2024		The new full time/fractional Tutor Contract was implemented from 1 st August 2023. Liaison with HR is underway on revising the sessional tutor contract, to be signed off by July 2024 at the latest.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Community Services

Community Services

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

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.		Update was provided.
Programming report to Executive Board July 2023.		Update was provided.

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

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Update was provided.
Programming report to Executive Board September 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Update was provided.













Ref	Objective
CE 03	To improve the access to affordable fitness and health facilities through the provision of leisure centres and sports development services.





Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
New Halton Leisure Centre to Open Spring 2025	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The external fabric is approaching completion. Internal brick work commenced.
New Leisure Management System to be operational by November 2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tender documents drafted.

CE 04	Increase the occupancy levels at the Old Police Station
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Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Improve the accessibility of the building June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Works complete.
Negotiate with new tenants to secure a tenancy agreements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MP move in December 2023. Building is now fully occupied.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/ 23	Actual 2022/ 23	Quarter 3 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Direction of Travel
CE LI 01	% occupancy of tenants at Old Police Station	93%	100%	100%			MP took vacant space. Now at 100% occupancy.
CE LI 02	Brindley - Total number of tickets sold	74,962	100%	60,439			Tickets are purchased in advance for shows so fluctuate depending on when a show goes on sale.
CE LI 03	Brindley - Total number of days Hired days	182	100%	157			Figures in line with expectation.
CE LI 04	Brindley - Total number of Council Promotions	120	100%	97			Figures in line with expectation.
CE LI 05	Footfall for all libraries: Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library	Total 320,600	Total 320,600	Total 212,854 4,907 21,483 19,737 35,587			Footfall figures for Q3 total 81,714. This is an improve on Q2.
CE LI 06	Library Digital issues	1,350,119	1,500,000	2,856,132			955,235 digital issues for Q3 exceeding expectations.
CE LI 07	Library Issues in branch: Ditton Widnes Runcorn Halton Lea	Total 203,595	Total 203,595	Total 161,182 3,552 20,144 5,924 18,416			Issue figures for Q3 total 48,036. On track to meet target but down on Q2.

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/ 23	Actual 2022/ 23	Quarter 3 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Direction of Travel
CE LI 08	Footfall for Leisure Centres: Brookvale Kingsway	188,937 205,344	100% 100%	140,089 196,342			OBA continue to book out sports hall for school exams, this results in reduced participation, but income is generated.
CE LI 09	Sports Development - community bookings at Frank Myler	n/a	1,500	1,047			On track to meet target, but a number of groups have cancelled. MUGA continues to be well used in winter months.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY****Revenue Operational Budget at 31 December 2023**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,491	4,195	4,118	77	103
Repairs & Maintenance	1,980	1,453	1,464	(11)	(14)
Premises	123	110	116	(6)	(6)
Energy & Water Costs	1,782	1,057	860	197	262
NNDR	763	702	639	63	84
Rents	175	167	165	2	2
Economic Regeneration Activities	27	3	3	0	0
Security	501	331	372	(41)	(55)
Supplies & Services	430	300	267	33	44
Supplies & Services - Grant	772	356	356	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	264	120	120	0	0
Capital Finance	44	44	44	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	40	40	40	0	0
Total Expenditure	12,392	8,878	8,564	314	420
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-860	-488	-562	74	98
Rent - Commercial Properties	-908	-566	-528	(38)	(50)
Rent - Investment Properties	-44	-34	-30	(4)	(5)
Rent - Markets	-852	-644	-609	(35)	(47)
Government Grant	-1,387	-614	-614	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-585	-633	-643	10	13
Schools SLA Income	-299	-294	-258	(36)	(36)
Recharges to Capital	-282	-114	-119	5	7
Transfer from Reserves	-1,270	-1,229	-1,229	0	0
Total Income	-6,487	-4,616	-4,592	-24	-20
Net Operational Expenditure	5,905	4,262	3,972	290	400
Recharges					
Premises Support	2,006	1,505	1,505	0	0
Transport Support	23	16	19	(3)	(3)
Central Support	1,710	1,283	1,283	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-7,728	-5,796	-5,796	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,985	-2,992	-2,989	-3	-3
Net Departmental Expenditure	1,920	1,270	983	287	397

Comments on the above figures

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

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

Comparison to Previous Quarter

Economy, Enterprise & Property outturn has improved from a forecasted net spend outturn of £0.204m over budget to £0.397m under budget at the end of the financial year.

Supporting Information

The Department consists of 154fte of which 66fte are core funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.134m. There has continued to be delays in recruiting across the department, and so the projection is currently that employee expenditure across the department will be under budget by £0.103m at financial year-end.

By carefully monitoring the accounts, the department has used grant/external funding where possible to try and relieve the pressure on the core Council budget. This is reflected in employee expenses this quarter where various projects have been identified and staff time has been charged accordingly. This process will continue throughout the year. This Q3 report includes the 23/24 pay award. Projections for the final quarter of the year have been updated.

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

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

As a result of Tarmac taking up occupancy at Unit 10 Catalyst Park, the Council has received a NNDR refund of £30k. Projections have been updated with regards to NNDR costs at the Markets.

Due to the energy costs budget increasing significantly in 2023/24, the department is forecasting that it will be £0.262m under budget in year as costs have not risen as much as expected, but costs are still predicted to be £0.461m higher than 2022/23, which is an increase of over 43%. The forecast may change during the following quarter depending on the change in energy usage over this time.

A stop on non-essential supplies and services budgets has contributed to the under spend for the Department. It is anticipated that the budget will be under budget by £44k at year end.

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

As in previous years, and the long recovery from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the financial challenges of commercial property rent continue to present a significant financial challenge, though the third quarter of the year has seen an increase in the amount of commercial property income. This is due to Agency Staff within Asset Management being able to focus on the rent reviews and licence fees. There is also a focus within the team to fill the vacant properties within the portfolio. The current projection is that the income target will not be achieved by £0.050m.

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

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

Approved 2023/24 Savings

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

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Capital Projects as of 31 December 23

	Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Expenditure				
3MG	24	14	14	10
Murdishaw	30	8	8	22
Equality Act Improvement Works	282	230	230	52
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	36	0	0	36
Halton Lea TCF Roof Top Garden	35	0	0	35
Property Improvements	254	210	210	44
Waterloo Building Runcorn	93	1	1	92
Woodend - Former Unit 10 Catalyst Trade Park	200	234	234	-34
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2,634	1,308	1,308	1,326
Police Station Demolition	406	406	406	0
Runcorn Station Building Development	80	30	30	50
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	82	20	20	62
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	291	18	18	273
Changing Places	212	180	180	32
Town Deal	2,240	825	825	1,415
Total Capital	6,899	3,484	3,484	3,415

Murdishaw – HBC supported the capital works to the former Youth Centre/Boxing Club which has been brought back in to use as the Tea Tree Café, a community project supported by Onward Homes. The funding was provided to match fund Onward Homes contribution. A programme of improvements to the external facilities at Murdishaw Community Centre is currently being priced with works anticipated in the Quarter 4.

Equality Act Budget - It is anticipated that most of the budget will be spent by year end, as the department has some access improvement works which are adjacent to the Brindley yet to be invoiced.

Kingsway Learning Centre – A PA system was recently installed in the building. The department is awaiting the final invoice.

Property Improvements- It is anticipated that this budget will be fully spent by year end. The department has already completed a number of projects from this fund, inclusive of the heating/ventilated replacement works at Phoenix Park, the installation of the new safety barrier system, and the new audio equipment at the Brindley and we have allocated the Halton Lea lift replacement project to this code, so all will be spent by year end.

Waterloo Centre - The demolition works are likely to commence in February, the Council a date for the disconnection of the services which is late January. The anticipated cost of the work is circa £115k plus fees.

Woodend Former Unit 10 - All works are complete other than the provision of the new gas supply.

Foundry Lane – Foundry Lane is moving to a crucial stage with reserved matters to enable the beginning of construction on the site. Planning permission should be determined in January to allow the construction company to start on site by the end of this financial year.

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

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

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






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

Changing Places - All 3 changing places facilities are complete, bar a few minor snags at the Victoria Park facility. The department is still in the process of getting them all registered on the Changing places website, all will be complete by year end.

The Town Deal programme –The seven projects which make up the Runcorn Town Deal programme are progressing and are currently on track to be completed by 31st March 2026 when the funding ends.

3MG - The substantive programme for 3MG in terms of land disposals is now 90%+ complete with up to 900,000 square foot of development in the pipeline some of which will require professional support over the coming years which will continue this as an ongoing project.

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT
APPENDIX A

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

EEP6	Facilities Management	165	Restructure the team in light of an expression of interest for retirement.	44	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP8	Technical Support & Market Team	392	Restructuring of the team	98	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
Total Economy, Enterprise & Property Department				307	152	0		

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE DEPARTMENT****Revenue Budget as at 31 December 2023**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	17,085	12,606	11,991	615	820
Premises	3,817	2,200	2,048	152	274
Supplies & Services	1,609	1,307	1,372	(65)	(86)
Hired & Contracted Services	607	413	637	(224)	(299)
Book Fund	140	108	113	(5)	(7)
Food Provisions	371	158	268	(110)	(147)
School Meals Food	1,965	1,474	1,540	(66)	(88)
Miscellaneous Transport Costs	117	77	96	(19)	(25)
Other Agency Costs	601	490	429	61	81
Other Expenditure	0	0	9	(9)	(9)
Waste Disposal Contracts	6,885	1,146	1,077	69	91
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	67	48	16	32	43
Grant to Norton Priory	172	172	174	(2)	(1)
Capital Financing	201	180	118	62	83
Total Expenditure	33,637	20,379	19,888	491	730
Income					
Sales Income	-3,962	-3,098	-2,292	(806)	(1,075)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,752	-4,691	-5,113	422	564
Rental Income	-221	-149	-182	33	43
Government Grant Income	-827	-3,244	-3,434	190	252
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-676	-445	-496	51	67
SLA Income	-2,391	-2,321	-2,139	(182)	(242)
Internal Fees Income	-592	-158	-275	117	156
Capital Salaries	-173	-106	-73	(33)	(43)
Transfers From Reserves	-20	51	51	0	2
Total Income	-14,614	-14,161	-13,953	(208)	(276)
Net Operational Expenditure	19,023	6,218	5,935	283	454
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,825	1,369	1,369	0	0
Transport	2,046	1,504	1,592	(88)	(117)
Central Support	3,856	2,893	2,897	(4)	(5)
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-540	-409	-409	0	0
Net Total Recharges	7,386	5,357	5,449	(92)	(122)
Net Departmental Expenditure	26,409	11,575	11,384	191	332

Comments on the above figures**Financial Position**

The net department spend is £0.191m under budget at the end of Quarter 3 and the estimated outturn underspend against budget for 2023/24 is £0.332m.

This represents a significant improvement on the forecast outturn overspend of £0.564m estimated at the end of Qtr2. The variance between the two quarters is largely attributed to employee and premises costs over the year to date being lower than expected.

Net employee spend is estimated to be under the approved budget at the end of the financial year by £0.820m. This is due to the number of vacancies within leisure services and reduced casual usage in line with 2022/23 actual data. The costs included within the report now take account of all 2023.24 pay awards being agreed and paid to employees.

Utilities budgets for 2023/24 were inflated due to the expected rise in energy costs, however, the actual charges to date have not been as high as forecasted. There has also been a considerable saving on Crematorium gas charges as the new cremator is more efficient. Gas usage at the Stadium has been reduced due to using heat source pumps. Energy costs for the year are under review and a prudent approach has been taken in estimates.

Hired and Contracted Services has increased since Q2 due to additional costs of Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme, funding for these costs will be met by additional Government Grant recorded against income.

Food Provisions is overspent due to the continuing increase of food costs from suppliers driven by high inflation over the past year.

Due to delays in receiving waste disposal contract invoices spend for the year has been estimated based on the average costs from 2022/23. Any changes to these estimates could have a large impact on the Department's outturn position.

Sales income for the year is expected to underachieve compared to the budgeted income target. Shortfalls in income at the Stadium, school meal sales plus a reduction in room hire at Community Centres and Libraries are forecast to contribute towards lower income levels. This shortfall against the income target is mitigated by reduced employee costs and casual usage at these establishments.

Other Income categories are estimated to overachieve against budget due to additional income levels for Trade and Green Waste Collection fees plus letting fees and promotions at The Brindley.

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

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

Approved 2023/24 Savings

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

Capital Projects as at 31 December 2023

Project Title	2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	34	20	18	16
Halton Leisure Centre	15,056	12,600	12,550	2,506
Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment	28	14	13	15
Open Spaces Schemes	851	200	150	701
Children's Playground Equipment	105	20	20	85
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12	1	1	11
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	0	0	340
Runcorn Town Park	284	120	117	167
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,023	35	32	991
Pickerings Pasture Café	520	0	0	520
Litter Bins	20	0	0	20
Totals	18,286	13,010	12,901	5,385

Comments on the above figures**Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment**

This project is now completed - waiting on invoice for outstanding works so project can be closed down.

Halton (Moor Lane) Leisure Centre

Construction is on track and in line with expected spend.

Open Spaces

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

Children's Playground Equipment

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

Upton Improvements

Open space improvement works undertaken.

Crow Wood Park

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

Landfill Tax Credits Schemes

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

Runcorn Town Park

Project to renew park infrastructure. Project is ongoing with 2 contracts on site. Carry forward to complete work in season and for contingency payments.

Wigg/Spike Island Recovery Works



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



Pickerings Pasture Café

Site surveys are on-going, planning application and tender documentation currently being prepared; the anticipated start on site is Spring 2024 with a completion Autumn 2024.

COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX A




Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
COMM1	The Brindley Theatre	64	Reduce Box Office opening hours from 10am-5pm Monday-Friday to 10am-2pm. Currently 80% of tickets are purchased online or by telephone and this is increasing each year.	10	0	0		Box Office core opening hours were reduced to 5 hours (Mon – Fri) 10am – 3pm. They will be realigned to 4 hours daily 11am – 3.00pm (Mon – Fri) from 1 September onwards. No LED lighting has yet been installed but is planned for later in the financial year.
			Replace all non-LED lighting in the building. This is estimated to reduce on-stage energy costs by 75%.	10	0	0		
COMM3	Sport & Recreation	471	Restructuring the roles and responsibilities of the Sports Development Team	0	36	0		On track to meet savings identified for 2024/25.
COMM4	Stadium & Catering Services	751	Franchise the concourse only catering services to an external operator.	50	0	0		
			An organisational restructure is currently being implemented for Stadium & Catering Services to reflect recent service changes.	40	0	0		

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
COMM6	Area Forums	170	Reduce the base budget provision to £50k temporarily for one year, with all unspent monies in 2022/23 (currently £120k) being carried forward to be spent by the relevant Area Forums in 2023/24. The base budget position will then be reviewed for 2024/25.	120	-120	0		Implemented in 2023/24 budget setting.
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	0	12		Work underway in school meals being delivered through alternative means
Total Community & Environment Department				230	-84	12		





7.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
Green 	Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the annual target <u>is on course to be achieved</u>.</i>
Amber 	Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the annual target is on course to be achieved</i>
Red 	Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain</u> that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the target <u>will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</i>

Direction of Travel Indicator

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

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

DATE: 17th June 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Performance Management Reports for
Quarter 4 of 2023/24

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and raise, any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the final quarter period to 31st March 2024.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023 - 24 were agreed by Members for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
- Enterprise, Employment and Skills
 - Community and Environment

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

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Departmental service objectives and performance measures, both local and national are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The identification of business critical objectives/ milestones and performance indicators will further support organisational improvement.

6.2 Although some objectives link specifically to one priority area, the nature of the cross - cutting activities being reported, means that to a greater or lesser extent a contribution is made to one or more of the Council priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 At the time at which annual business plans are developed, Directorate Risk Registers are also refreshed and updated.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Not applicable

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

10.1 Not applicable

Employment, Learning, Skills and Community PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report Q4

Reporting Period: 1st January to 31st March 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 final quarter of 2023 / 24 for service areas within the remit of the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023 - 24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy & Performance Board i.e.
 - Employment, Learning and Skills
 - Library and Culture and Leisure Services
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 7 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

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

2.2 Employment, Learning and Skills

- Ways to Work gap SIF funding ceased on the 31st March 2024, to be replaced by ULSPF funding
- Local Skills Improvement Plan – official launch took place in Q4. St Helens Chamber were leading on this on behalf of the other Liverpool City Region local authorities; however, they went into administration in March 24.
- 1st social value meeting held between Tarmac and Halton Borough Council (Employment, Learning & Skills & Procurement) to agree KPIs and targets to be achieved in relation to the 10-year Highways & Maintenance contract that has been awarded.
- 1st meeting took place of the Environment & Economy Directorate Communications Group, chaired by the DM Employment, Learning & Skills – remit of the group is to put a plan in place to support improved communications across the Directorate, with representation from a cross section of teams.
- The ELS Division successfully retained its Matrix Accreditation status.

Community & Environment

2.3 Culture - Brindley Theatre

The Brindley Team won the 2024 'Customer Service Excellence Award' at the Celebrating Success Awards in March.

2.4 Community Centres

The Old Police Station room rentals remain 100% after one group vacated a room in March another tenant was ready to take over the space. Ditton Community Centre have had interest in a permanent booking which can potentially generate £8400 per year. All Community Centres continue to provide free tea and coffee on Wednesday afternoons which help those in need, we plan on introducing a game of Bingo on these afternoons at Grangeway and Upton Community Centres to bring people together to support the lonely and isolated.

2.5 Library Service

Changing Places facility completed at Halton Lea Library.

Ditton Library pc replacement is now at the snagging stage and the roll out to Widnes Library has begun.

The success of Halton Bereavement Café pilot project has led to the continuation for the next twelve months in the first instance. The project is a joint collaboration between Halton Libraries, Halton and St Helens Voluntary Action and Halton Cancer Support.

The continued popularity of Dungeons and Dragons at Halton Lea has led to the introduction of this weekly club at Widnes Library.

Warm Welcome Coffee morning initiative over the winter period is now continuing as weekly free sessions at each library site due to popularity and customer demand.

February half term saw 540 free packed lunches distributed to children through all four library sites.

Following external funding we implemented Aspen an enhanced library catalogue aiding user discovery to libraries wide range of online resources and other materials.

2.6 Leisure

Construction of Halton Leisure Centre is progressing well and in line with the programme.

Changes made to the access control measures at Kingsway has resulted in capturing more visitors, 32% increase on previous year. Total visits recorded through Brookvale and Kingsway sites 475,283.

App launched. Lots of interactions and communications. It is now the main way to sign up for a membership 79% of memberships sold in March came from the App.

Following a review of fees and charges the admission and membership for Halton Leisure Card holders has been reduced. It is hoped that this widens the access to Leisure Centre, making it affordable for those in receipt of certain benefits.

3.0 Emerging Issues

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

Employment, Learning & Skills

3.2 Employment, Learning & Skills

- From 24/25 Ways to Work will be funded through UK Shared Prosperity Funding. Previous local residents who were eligible for support under European Funding will no longer be eligible as the focus for the funding is on those residents who are economically inactive, rather than unemployed.
- Changes in funding for some employment programmes from 24/25 will happen - this will require a review of the Halton People into Jobs service to account for changes in funding.

Community & Environment

3.3 Culture Services

Brindley Theatre

The start of the new extension works have been delayed until the end of May/early June.

3.4 Community Centres

No emerging issues have been identified.

3.5 Library Service

The temporary funded position of Activities Co-ordinator is at implementation stage of offering additional services targeting chronic loneliness.

3.6 Leisure

Halton Leisure Centre has some smaller room areas than Kingsway. The service has drafted a programme of use and is working with its current users to accommodate them or find alternative provision.

Latest research, highlights, adults from the most deprived socio-economic groups are less likely to be active, as are children from less affluent families. People aged 16-34 have seen activity levels drop over the past few years and this has been exacerbated by the pandemic. More recently, those enjoying taking part has also fallen. People need more support, in their locality, to help them move more.

4.0 High Priority Equality Actions

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

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

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






5.0 Performance Overview

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

Employment, Learning & Skills

Key Objectives / milestones

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

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
To deliver year 3 of the Supported Internship programme by September 2023		Year three of the programme is underway, with 6 interns currently on programme.
To achieve the required outputs and customer service standards on the DWP/G4S Restart Programme contract to cease the Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP by June 2023		There has been an increase in performance against customer service standards on the DWP/G4S Restart Programme contract. However, due to a lack of referrals to the programme the required outputs have not been achieved this quarter therefore HPIJ will remain on Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP.
To review HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy and implement improvements by June 2023 .		Staffing issues has meant the HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy review has not yet taken place
Implementation of new contracts within required deadlines (UKSPF/Home Office Refugee Programme if contracts secured) by July 2023 .		The WHP Pioneer contract went live in Sep 2023.
To deliver a Pathways to Teaching programme, which will create adult learning tutor employment opportunities by September 2023		Year two of the programme underway, with 45 trainee tutors on programme across the Liverpool City Region (last year 34 completed). Funding provisionally secured for next year to continue the project.

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

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
To deliver an Adult Learning Marketing Strategy by April 2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Complete – strategy has been developed and implemented. Performance against targets reported at half termly Quality, Income and Marketing meetings.
To review the Quality Assurances processes within the Adult Learning Service by July 2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Complete – new QA processes in place from September 2023 for the start of the academic year.
To review the adult learning tutor contracts by July 2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full time / Fractional Contracts reviewed and approved by Steering Group. Sessional tutor contracts being finalised by HR. On track for completion before July 2024.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Community Services

Community Services

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

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed
Programming report to Executive Board July 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed

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

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed
Programming report to Executive Board September 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed

Ref	Objective
CE 03	To improve the access to affordable fitness and health facilities through the provision of leisure centres and sports development services.





Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
New Halton Leisure Centre to Open Spring 2025	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Works have progressed well this quarter. The envelope/roof works marginally behind programme due to the extremely wet weather. However, good progress on the internal works, second fix MEP activities have commenced. Boarding works are significantly progressed, and screeding works are complete. Works to the substation continue with Scottish Power. Monthly updates and social value reports are available on the Active Halton website
New Leisure Management System to be operational by November 2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tender due to be published in April 2024

CE 04	Increase the occupancy levels at the Old Police Station
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Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Improve the accessibility of the building June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Works completed
Negotiate with new tenants to secure a tenancy agreements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed 100% occupancy

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/ 23	Actual 2022/ 23	Quarter 4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Direction of Travel
CE LI 01	% occupancy of tenants at Old Police Station	93%	100%	100%			MP took vacant space. Now at 100% occupancy.
CE LI 02	Brindley - Total number of tickets sold	74,962	100%	82,360			Ticket sales increase linked to large increase in Hire books and the return to pre covid ticket sale levels.
CE LI 03	Brindley - Total number of days Hired days	182	100%	213			Large increase in Hirer books.
CE LI 04	Brindley - Total number of Council Promotions	120	100%	120			Figures in line with expectation.
CE LI 05	Footfall for all libraries: Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library	Total 320,600	Total 320,600	Total 326,406			83,599 across all libraries in quarter 4 – an improvement on quarter 3. Exceeded year-end total
CE LI 06	Library Digital issues	1,350,119	1,500,000	3,908,339			1,022,771 for quarter 4. Exceeded year-end total
CE LI 07	Library Issues in branch: Ditton Widnes Runcorn Halton Lea	Total 203,595	Total 203,595	Total 210,501			49,310 in quarter 3. Exceeded year-end total

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/ 23	Actual 2022/ 23	Quarter 4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Direction of Travel
CE LI 08	Footfall for Leisure Centres: Brookvale Kingsway	188,937 205,344	100% 100%	202,521 272,762			Access controls have been improved. Also increases in membership numbers across the year and swimming service has been stabilised with new instructors qualified and working within the centres
CE LI 09	Sports Development - community bookings at Frank Myler	n/a	1,500	1,590			Some classes have folded. Community classes continue to be impacted by cost of living and other issues.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT****Revenue Operational Budget at 31 March 2024**

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employee Related Expenditure	5,611	5,453	158
Repairs & Maintenance	2,034	2,149	(115)
Premises	161	158	3
Energy & Water Costs	1,781	1,560	221
NNDR	738	635	103
Rents	195	297	(102)
Economic Regeneration Activities	19	15	4
Security	551	625	(74)
Supplies & Services	445	429	16
Supplies & Services - Grant	597	597	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	168	168	0
Capital Finance	60	60	0
Transfer to Reserves	592	592	0
Total Expenditure	12,952	12,738	214
Income			
Fees & Charges Income	-1,146	-1,210	64
Rent - Commercial Properties	-878	-847	(31)
Rent - Investment Properties	-44	-39	(5)
Rent - Markets	-831	-802	(29)
Government Grant	-1,260	-1,260	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-718	-718	0
Schools SLA Income	-299	-264	(35)
Recharges to Capital	-305	-324	19
Transfer from Reserves	-1,566	-1,566	0
Total Income	-7,047	-7,030	(17)
Net Operational Expenditure	5,905	5,708	197
Recharges			
Premises Support	2,006	2,006	0
Transport Support	23	25	(2)
Central Support	1,710	1,711	(1)
Asset Rental Support	1,266	1,266	0
Recharge Income	-7,728	-7,728	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,723	-2,720	(3)
Net Departmental Expenditure	3,182	2,988	194

Comments on the above figures

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

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

Comparison to Previous Quarter

Economy, Enterprise & Property's outturn has reduced from a projected £0.397m under budget at Quarter 3 to £0.194m under budget at financial year end. There are two reasons for this.

A rent review was carried out for Rutland House. As the rent review was later than the time frame specified in the lease agreement, the review was backdated to 2017 which incurred a cost £102k which was not projected in quarter 3.

The final quarter of the year witnessed an increase in the repairs and maintenance programme.

Supporting Information

The Department consists of 154fte of which 66fte are core funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.134m, by carefully monitoring the accounts the department has used grant/external funding where possible to try and relieve the pressure on the core Council budget. Various projects have been identified and staff time has been charged accordingly. The Department has also delayed the recruitment of vacancies to help achieve a balanced budget. As a result, the employee expenses this year is £0.158m under budget at financial year-end.

As inflation is running much higher than originally predicted at the time of budget setting, the department will be expected to absorb any price increases that may arise from within the budget allocations made. This is proving difficult for repairs and maintenance due to the continued increase in the price of materials. The Repairs and Maintenance programme is constantly under review to keep within budget. However, the final quarter of the year has seen an increase in urgent repairs and maintenance, as a result the budget is £0.115m over budget. There is a risk that this budget will remain volatile in financial year 24/25 and will need to be reviewed on a regular basis.

The energy costs budget increased significantly in 2023/24, as costs have not risen as much as expected the department is £0.221m under budget. It is worth mentioning that costs are still £0.501m higher than 2022/23, which is an increase of nearly 50%.

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

As in previous years, and the long recovery from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the financial challenges of commercial property rent continue to present a significant financial challenge, though the third and fourth quarter of the year has seen an increase in the amount of commercial property income. This is due to agency staff within Asset Management being able to focus on rent reviews and licence fees. There is also a focus within the team to fill the vacant properties within the portfolio. The budget reveals that the income target for commercial properties. was not achieved by £0.031m. Although this is offset by the reduction in vacant properties reducing the level of business rates payable by the Council.

Due to adverse trading conditions in the retail sector which have been made worse due to inflation and increased utilities costs, the department is projecting to under achieve on market rental income targets this budget year. The occupancy rate is approximately 89%. We have seen a uplift of rental income in the final quarter of year. This could be due to the promotion of the service.

The School Cleaning Service Level Agreement (SLA) is not covering its costs this year due to the need to employ agency staff to cover sickness and leave and the pay award. The demand for the service is also decreasing as schools move to Academies. A review of the service provided is currently being conducted.

Approved 2023/24 Savings

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

Project Title	2023/24 (Outturn)		
	2023/24 Capital Allocation	Actual	Total Allocation Remaining
	£'000	£'000	£'000
3MG	24	16	8
Murdishaw	30	8	22
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	32	32	0
Equality Act Improvement Works	289	289	0
Property Improvements	269	269	0
Waterloo Building Runcorn	109	109	0
Woodend Unit 10 Catalyst Industrial Estate	204	204	0
Police Station Demolition	406	406	0
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2,471	1,310	1,161
Runcorn Station Building Development	80	30	50
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	82	30	52
Runcorn Waterfront Residential	291	22	269
Changing Places	212	188	24
Runcorn Town Deal	2,303	1,829	474
Totals	6,802	4,742	2,060

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Capital Projects as of 31 March 24

3MG - The substantive programme for 3MG in terms of land disposals is now 90%+ complete with up to 900,000 square foot of development in the pipeline some of which will require professional support over the coming years which will continue this as an ongoing project.

Murdishaw – HBC supported the capital works to the former Youth Centre/Boxing Club which has been brought back in to use as the Tea Tree Café, a community project supported by Onward Homes. The funding was provided to match fund Onward Homes contribution. A programme of improvements to the external facilities at Murdishaw Community Centre is currently being priced.

Kingsway Learning Centre - The works to upgrade the public address system are now complete.

Equality Act Improvement Works - All works included in the programme for 2023/24 have been completed.

Property Improvements - All works included in the programme for 2023/24 have been completed.

Waterloo Building, Runcorn -The demolition works are complete, there will be some retention monies due for payment next year circa £3k.

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

Woodend Unit 10 - The works are complete, and the tenants have moved in however the new gas connection is still outstanding and is due to be completed soon. This is not affecting the office space as the gas heating is just to the main warehouse area.

Police Station demolition - The demolition works were completed some time ago. The overage payment has now been made.

Foundry Lane – Foundry Lane is moving to a crucial stage with reserved matters to enable the beginning of construction on the site. Planning permission has been approved to allow the construction company to start on site in the near future.

Changing Places - The works are complete, the final facility at Victoria Park has yet to be registered, this will be due very soon.

Runcorn Town Deal - Work continues to develop and deliver all Runcorn Town Deal projects by March 2026.

Runcorn Station Development





A Cost Estimate Summary Report was produced by Network Rail providing two options as a way forward, Option 1 a full scope of works (costing £1.5m for GRIP 3 validation and surveys and GRIP 4 outline design, approvals and close down), option 2 a phased approach (costing £480k, which is the total amount of development funding that we have available)

It was decided to progress with the full scope of works so not to delay the programme further and potential for increased costs between stages

A meeting with the LCR CA Capital Development Team took place to review Gateway 3 criteria to allow the project to access capital funding earlier in order to commit to full scope of works for outline design stage. Gateway criteria evidence has been submitted to LCR CA for review.

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EEP1	Capital Works Team	N/A	Increase the level of fee income by increasing the percentage charged or charging by time, including those works not currently charged for.	10	0	0		On target.
EEP4	Cleaning Services – Council Buildings	580	Review cleaning arrangements, with a focus on only emptying bins and cleaning toilets daily.	0	100	0		Until the accommodation review is complete, only limited savings will be made in 2024/25
EEP2	Caretaking & Security Services	641	A review and restructuring of caretaking arrangements.	0	52	0		Restructure will take place in 24/25. It is anticipated the full saving will not be met in year.
			Reduce security cover at Halton Lea to provide opening/closing and then static guarding 7.00am to 7.30pm Monday to Friday, and 9.30am to 3.00pm on Saturdays to cover the opening hours of Halton Direct Link.	35	0	0		

EEP5	Corporate Buildings	927	Generate additional rental income by providing additional office space for external organisations at Rutland House, by letting out the remaining three floors.	120	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP6	Facilities Management	165	Restructure the team in light of an expression of interest for retirement.	44	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP8	Technical Support & Market Team	392	Restructuring of the team	98	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
Total Economy, Enterprise & Property Department				307	152	0		

COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE**Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employees	16,785	16,064	721
Premises	3,913	3,321	592
Supplies & Services	1,446	1,740	(294)
Hired & Contracted Services	963	1,121	(158)
Book Fund	140	140	0
Food Provisions	371	353	18
School Meals Food	1,965	2,221	(256)
Transport	117	123	(6)
Waste Disposal Contracts	6,885	5,623	1,262
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	170	142	28
Grant to Norton Priory	174	174	0
Other Agency Costs	498	477	21
Other Expenditure	61	79	(18)
Transfers to Reserves	459	459	0
Total Expenditure	33,947	32,037	1,910
Income			
Sales Income	-1,305	-1,244	(61)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,099	-5,248	149
Rental Income	-213	-236	23
Government Grant Income	-1,132	-1,135	3
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-876	-912	36
School SLA Income	-2,061	-2,081	20
School Meals Income	-3,576	-3,427	(149)
Internal Fees Income	-418	-406	(12)
Capital Salaries	-166	-96	(70)
Transfers from Reserves	-78	-78	0
Total Income	-14,924	-14,863	(61)
Net Operational Expenditure	19,023	17,174	1,849
Recharges			
Premises Support	1,825	1,825	0
Transport	2,046	2,087	(41)
Central Support	3,856	3,856	0
Asset Rental Support	3,006	3,006	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-540	-540	0
Net Total Recharges	10,193	10,234	(41)
Net Departmental Expenditure	29,216	27,408	1,808

Comments on the above figures

The net departmental expenditure is £1.808m under budget at the end of the 2023/24 financial year. Spend on employees is £0.721m under the annual budget. Management-level restructures have taken place across the Department during the year, with further a further restructure taking place within the Community Safety Division, and another underway within the Stadium and Catering Division. In order to facilitate these restructures, posts have been held vacant on a temporary basis, leading to a reduction in costs. There have also been difficulties recruiting to certain roles due to a lack of qualified applicants, which has led to some posts being vacant for longer than planned.

Spend on premises costs is £592k under budget in 2023/24. The Department was provided with an increase of £1.2m in utility budgets for 2023/24, based on an estimated increase in energy bills, however, the actual increase in costs was not as high as anticipated. Additionally, £0.126m of credits for prior-year gas costs were received by the Department following a reconciliation of energy bills which has increased the level of the underspend significantly. This underspend is unlikely to occur in future years as utility budgets have been reduced for 2024/25.

Both Supplies & Services, and Hired & Contracted Services budgets show a significant overspend in 2023/24. This is a budget pressure throughout the Department and is primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years. Software and other essential licence costs now far exceed the budget available, with an overspend of £0.062m occurring in 2023/24. Difficulties in recruiting to some technical roles within the Brindley Theatre have necessitated a large increase in consultancy costs, with spend exceeding £0.074m, although this needs to be considered alongside an underspend on contracted staff.

School Meals food costs have been severely impacted by the high rate of inflation on food ideas during the last 12 months. Expenditure increased by 10% from 2022/23 despite a decrease in the number of schools which contract with the service.

Waste Disposal Contract costs are £1.262m under budget during 2023/24. £0.996m of this underspend relates to a refund received following Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority carrying out a reconciliation of the total contract costs for prior years across the Liverpool City Region. The percentage of contract costs charged to Halton has reduced in recent years, meaning that it is likely that this refund is a one-off occurrence. The remaining £0.266m of the underspend relates to 2023/24. Although costs did increase slightly from 2022/23, this increase was smaller than anticipated given current high levels of inflation.

Sales Income is £0.061m below the income target in 2023/24, primarily due to a shortfall in catering and bar sales at the Stadium. School Meals Income is also significantly under the budget target. 2024/25 is the final year of operation for the School Meals service, so this will cease to be a budget pressure in the medium- and long-term.

Fees and Charges income is £0.149m above the target budget in 2023/24. There were significant increases in the income generated by the Leisure Centres as the service continued to recover from the impacts of Covid-19. In addition to this, management have introduced new recruitment initiatives over the last 12 months which has led to an increase in the number of swimming instructors, allowing more income to be generated. Income at the Brindley also increased during the last financial year, with the theatre once again managing to cover its operating costs.

There was a shortfall of Capital Salary income in year, primarily due to difficulties recruiting to Landscape Architect roles. It is anticipated that income will increase in 2024/25 after a successful round of recruitment towards the end of 2023/24.

Inflationary increases in fuel and repair costs have resulted in an overspend of £0.041m on Transport Recharge budgets.

Capital Projects as at 31 March 2024

Project Title	2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000	Actual £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	34	31	3
Open Spaces Schemes	850	314	536
Children's Playground Equipment	107	107	0
Upton Improvements	13	0	0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12	1	11
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	0	340
Town Park	284	125	159
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,023	54	969
Pickerings Pasture Café	520	17	503
Litter Bins	20	20	0
Halton Leisure Centre	15,057	17,260	(2,203)
Brookvale Recreation Centre Pitch	28	13	15
TOTAL	18,288	17,942	346

Comments on the above figures**Stadium Minor Works**

A stage, lighting equipment, and crowd barriers have been purchased in year, allowing additional events to be held at the Stadium.

Open Spaces Schemes

This covers a variety of smaller schemes which are all fully-funded from external sources. In 2023/24, projects included work on the Sankey Canal, improvements at Birchfield Gardens, and work on the dog exercise area at Hale Park.

Children's Playground Equipment

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

Town Park

The scheme includes the renewal of footpaths and landscape improvements within Town Park. The next phase of work is due to continue during 2024/25.

Spike Island / Wigg Island

Consultants have now been appointed and the scheme is underway.

Pickerings Pasture Café

Site investigation works are currently ongoing to inform the foundation design.

Halton Leisure Centre

Work on the new leisure centre has progressed well. The contractor is slightly ahead of schedule, which has caused the payments made in 2023/24 to exceed the original allocation, and it is anticipated that the building will be handed over to the Council in the final quarter of 2024/25. The additional expenditure in 2023/24 will be funded by a reduction in the anticipated expenditure during the next financial year.




Brookvale Recreation Centre Pitch

Work on the pitch is complete and the retention payment was made in 2023/24.





7.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
Green 	Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the annual target <u>is on course to be achieved</u>.</i>
Amber 	Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the annual target is on course to be achieved</i>
Red 	Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain</u> that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the target <u>will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</i>

Direction of Travel Indicator

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