

# Public Document Pack



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

Monday, 16 September 2024 at 6.30 p.m.  
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](mailto:ann.jones@halton.gov.uk) for further information.  
The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 18 November 2024*

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

**Part I**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	<b>1 - 6</b>
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)</b>	
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.	
<b>3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b>	<b>7 - 9</b>
<b>4. DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ISSUES</b>	
<b>(A) HALTON CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE</b>	<b>10 - 11</b>
<b>(B) LIVERPOOL CITY REGION EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS UPDATE</b>	<b>12 - 17</b>
<b>(C) SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME WORK BASED STUDY</b>	<b>18 - 24</b>
<b>5. PERFORMANCE MONITORING</b>	
<b>(A) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS Q1 2024/25</b>	<b>25 - 39</b>

*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, 17 June 2024 in the Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), Abbott, Connolly, Garner, S. Hill, McDonough, Ryan and Stretch

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Hutchinson and Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, D. Cooke and L. Carr

Also in attendance: None

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

		<i>Action</i>
ELS1	MINUTES  The Minutes from the meeting held on 29 January 2024, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
ELS2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME  The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
ELS3	EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY PPB'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2023-24  The Chair presented the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community PPB's Annual Report for 2023/24.  The Board had met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out during the Municipal Year April 2023 to March 2024. He thanked all Members of the Board and Officers for their participation and support over the past year.  RESOLVED: That the Annual Report for 2023-24 be received.	

ELS4 RIVERSIDE COLLEGE - PRESENTATION

The Board welcomed Mary Murphy, the Principal of Riverside College, who presented an update on various areas of interest, including key developments taking place.

She announced that recent skills development and investment had included:

- An £8.5m Health and Wellbeing, Business, Computing and Immersive Room was opened in Cronton in June 2023;
- New sports facilities were opened in Cronton in November 2023;
- A new music hub and teaching block would open in Cronton in 2025;
- A hydrogen pipework rig was opened in March 2024 in Riverside;
- A new Green Skills Centre would be opening in the Kingsway Campus in December 2025; and
- As part of a joint venture with the Council and NHS, funded by the Runcorn Town Deal, a Health and Education Hub would be developed, offering Health and Social Care and Maths and English courses.

Further to Members' questions, the following information was provided:

- Runcorn used to have 2 campuses' many years ago, but these were unviable so they were closed and the College offering was consolidated in Widnes;
- Students from Runcorn aged between 16-18 were offered free bus transportation to and from College;
- Depending on household income, adult learners may qualify for access to a discretionary bus fare fund;
- The College is publicly owned and funded by the DfE, as well as the Liverpool City Region (LCR);
- The ratio of pupils from Runcorn and Widnes would be provided after the meeting as the numbers were not at hand;
- 70% of the students were from Halton;
- The College had donated approximately £90,000 to local charities and they also offered services in the community, such as painting and decorating and performing arts shows.

Members discussed the Apprenticeship Levy and welcomed the fact that the College offered courses for all trades (plumbing, electrical, joinery etc), which were in huge demand locally and nationally. They also agreed that the

installation of a hydrogen pipework rig was impressive and looked forward to seeing this.

It was noted that the work of Riverside College complemented a wide range of areas within the Council's priorities. It was recognised that the College was an important and supportive strategic partner in contributing to the Borough's economic regeneration and growth agenda. It is one of only two outstanding Further Education Colleges in the North West.

Mary invited to Board to visit the College Campuses in the near future, so that they could view the investment projects mentioned above.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received and comments made be noted.

Director -  
Economy, &  
Enterprise  
Property

*Councillor Abbott declared an Other Registerable Interest in the following item as he had previously accessed the services of HPIJ as an employer in the Borough.*

#### ELS5 EMPLOYER INITIATIVES

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which gave an overview of the current services provided by Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ).

It was reported that HPIJ had 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 the above programmes had supported Halton residents with looking for and sustaining employment.

HPIJ had also delivered a range of externally funded programmes that had provided financial incentives/grants to employers to recruit unemployed and economically inactive residents. These included Future Jobs Fund and Kick Start (both DWP funded), and the Intermediate Labour Market wage subsidy programme (ESF/SIF funded) through Ways to Work, since 2016.

It was announced that funding had been secured through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) to continue to deliver the Ways to Work Programme, from October 2023 to March 2024, before the UKSPF funded activities from April 2024 to March 2025.

The report provided details on the Ways to Work Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) wage subsidy for employers, and the Young Persons Guarantee (YPG) grant for employers, which included performance information. Income and expenditure for both programmes and the key successes were noted.

Further to Members discussions and questions, the following additional details were provided:

- Officers had received a good response from employers to the ILM, which now offered a simpler application process than previously;
- After 26 weeks of employment under the ILM, HPIJ would assist with securing employment elsewhere, if they were not kept on by the employer;
- Data had shown that some clients were kept on after the 6 months for up to one year;
- Staff were preparing to market the YPG grant for employers – Members were invited to contact any companies they were aware of who would benefit from this;
- HPIJ offered employers access to jobs fairs – noted that 5+ vacancies were required from an employer to be able to attend;
- Regrettably, the company ‘Carpenter Additives’ was leaving Halton – Officers advised that the Council would offer support to those being made redundant. The Health Improvement Team (HIT) were also contacted when large numbers of people were facing job losses.

It was commented that HPIJ had been operating for 22 years and had earned an excellent reputation in the community. The staff at HPIJ were very knowledgeable and skilled and were praised by the Board for the support they offered to clients. They also offered valuable ‘signposting’ for clients to services they may not be aware of.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

#### ELS6 QUARTER MONITORING REPORTS - Q3 OF 2023-24

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 3 of 2023-24 (1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2023-24 were agreed by Members and included in

Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

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

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

RESOLVED: That the quarter 3 2023-24 performance management reports be received.

#### ELS7 QUARTER MONITORING REPORTS - Q4 OF 2023-24

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 4 of 2023-24 (1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2023-24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

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

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

Officers advised that a new reporting system would be in place in the coming months, which would be simpler to understand. It was agreed that narrative behind the data was important to add context but this should be succinct.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair congratulated The Brindley Theatre for its recent award for Customer Service Excellence, and the success of Halton's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event in Runcorn was noted.

A site visit to the new Leisure Centre on Moor Lane was being arranged on 17 July 2024 at 4pm and all Members of the Board were invited to join.

RESOLVED: That the quarter 4 2023-24 performance management reports be received.

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*Meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.*



<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	16 September 2024
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Public Question Time
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Boroughwide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).

1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That any questions received be dealt with.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

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

- a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
- Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

(vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.

(vii) The Chair will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.

(viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.

(ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

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

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

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

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

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

None identified.

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

None identified.

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

None identified.

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

None identified.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None identified.

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

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills & Community Policy & Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Presentation about Halton Cancer Support Centre
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To receive a presentation from Nicola Donoghue, Operations Manager.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:**

**the Board notes the presentation and action points.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Members will receive a presentation from Nicola Donoghue about the work of Halton Cancer Support Centre

### **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 the Halton Cancer Support Centre complements a wide range of the Council's priorities such as:
- Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.
  - Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
  - Supporting Children, Young People and Families.

- Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need.
- Working Towards a Greener Future.
- Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 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 None under the meaning of the Act.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	16 September 2024
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director Environment & Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Liverpool City Region Employment & Skills Update
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Boroughwide, Liverpool City Region

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on Liverpool City Region (LCR) Employment and Skills matters.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 HBC's Head of Employment, Learning & Skills attends regular meetings with the Combined Authority's (CA) Employment & Skills officers and officers from each of the LCR's respective local authorities. The purpose of the meetings is varied:

- Feeding back from CA meetings with Government departments e.g. DWP and gathering observations from officers on those discussions.
- Consulting with LA officers on proposed policy development and initiatives e.g. The Long-Term Skills Plan.
- Sharing papers for key LCR CA committees e.g. Growth Directors, Employment, Education & Skills Cabinet Board; Employment & Skills Board; and garnering feedback.

- 3.2 After each meeting, the Head of Employment, Learning & Skills provides a written record to relevant council officers and the Portfolio Holder for Employment, Learning and Skills, Leisure, Community and Culture. If any follow up actions are needed from officers/Portfolio Holder, these are highlighted and requests for updates are given.

- 3.3 Clearly, the change of Government might result in some pre-planned LCR CA initiatives may not happen. However, the following

information will provide Members with the latest thinking on a range of topics being worked through by the CA and LA officers.

3.4 Proposition for Employment & Skills

As part of the preparations for the new Government, LCR has been developing a proposition, which sets out what could be delivered by the area, based upon input and consideration from CA and LA officers and Members and which reflects the Metro Mayor's manifesto, the CA's emerging Corporate Plan, opportunities and alignment with the priorities of a new Government.

3.5 Relevant to this PPB will be the proposals around Education, Employment & Skills. Key propositions around this element include:

- a reset of employment support
- creation of a local Jobs, Skills & Careers Hub for young people and adults to reflect the Government's plans to merge JobCentre Plus with the National Careers Service, leaving the 'benefits' element within a different area, and based upon need/opportunity rather than the current eligibility model.
- full devolution of post 16 vocational and technical skills provision
- LCR Pathway – the highest quality Technical Education for 16–19-year-olds in LCR matched to the skills needs of employers and business.
- High quality FE facilities through devolution of skills capital.

3.6 In order for the above to be successfully implemented, increased collaboration and connectivity of national government departments around key public service challenges will be essential.

3.7 Long Term Skills Plan

The 10-year Plan will set out the long term skills 'roadway' for the City Region and will be used as a basis to commission future work around skills/employment. Consultation has taken place throughout with a range of key partners including council officers (Employment & Skills leads, Growth Directors, Chief Executives etc), LCR FE colleges/institutions, training providers, Directors of Children's Services and HR leads. A Halton-specific workshop for key stakeholders also took place.

3.8 Draft versions of the Plan have also been shared with the CA's Employment & Skills Board and the Employment, Education & Skills Cabinet Board.

3.9 Currently being worked up is an Implementation Framework with identified 'leads' for relevant areas. The Combined Authority will review the Plan at its meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> September.

- 3.10 The four strategic objectives that the Plan will focus on are:
- SO1 Improving Technical Education outcomes for young people:
  - SO2 Enabling Second chance Learning and help people to get into work:
  - SO3 Developing the Skills that employers need: and
  - SO4 Providing People with the Skills that they need to progress:
- 3.11 The Long-Term Skills Plan will be shared widely once published.
- 3.12 Early Years Sector workforce and provision  
From Summer 2023, the CA, through working in partnership, has convened discussions and activity relating to the Early Years Workforce and provision, designed to support the Early Years sector to sustain, develop, and scale up.
- 3.13 Recruitment and retention have been challenges for Early Years and Childcare settings in LCR and nationally, with some parents finding it difficult to secure accessible, affordable and high quality childcare and some unable to extend working hours as there was not sufficient care available. This was the context *before* the previous Government announced an extension to funded childcare provision in the Budget 2023.
- 3.14 Following this, the CA has been working with Council Early Years leads to facilitate a broader whole system approach to addressing the challenges and capturing the opportunities to support the Sector to develop, sustain and scale up.
- 3.15 Construction Sector priorities  
The delivery of 80,000 new homes across LCR was announced by Steve Rotheram in his Mayoral Manifesto recently, together with the improvement of current housing stock, and the CA is looking at the implications associated with this (e.g. availability of land, construction labour supply etc).
- 3.16 In LCR, we do not have sufficient supply of local labour to deliver on this scheme. And, whilst the provision of construction sector skills is readily available in LCR, quite a number of young people that start on a construction course do not go on to complete it, let alone move into this sector to work. Partners in the City Region, therefore, need to ensure more people who take up construction training, actually complete and go on to work in the sector. Added to this, there is also a huge gender and race imbalance in the sector in LCR.



- 3.17 Construction can be a tough industry to work in as contracts may be short term – and then the workers might be expected to travel to a different location for the next contract. Additionally, early starts and working outdoors can be off-putting.
- 3.18 The CA is leading on a piece of work on construction sector priorities and are engaging with individual LAs, to better understand their priorities. Included in the report will be several good practice case studies, showcasing local authority employment and skills services working in partnership with planning and procurement teams in gaining maximum benefits from local construction projects.
- 3.19 Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) updates  
The National Careers Service is to merge with DWP to create a new national jobs and careers service. This will be available for young people and adults and will not just be a service available for those residents who are on state benefits. A forthcoming White Paper containing full details will be published.
- 3.20 A new ‘youth guarantee’ will also be launched. And a final key priority for DWP will be around skills and health support for its customers.
- 3.21 Further details on the above will be made clearer over the next few months.
- 3.22 Economies for Healthier Lives  
The Liverpool City Region’s Economies for Healthier Lives programme is one of only four programmes across the UK to be approved for funding from the [Health Foundation](#). The purpose of each programme is to explore at a local level how health and wellbeing can be effectively incorporated into local economic strategies and demonstrate how inclusive economies can build healthier communities.  
<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/economies-for-healthier-lives>
- 3.23 Each programme will also explore ways that employers, and in particular anchor institutions, can create business opportunities and high-quality local jobs in the community and how those jobs can be made more accessible to people with a health condition.
- 3.24 The initiative will continue until December 2024 and a new CA Health Portfolio will be created to aid with future joint working.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None identified at this stage.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Long Term Skills Plan will be used as a basis to commission future work around skills/employment.

5.2 A number of the initiatives detailed within the main body of the report do not involve new funding allocations; rather, it is an attempt for the CA/LAs to work more collaboratively and smartly in maximising the best skills and employment outcomes for its residents.

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

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

The work of the Economies for Healthier Lives and the forthcoming new skills and health support offer from DWP will support improved health, wellbeing and independence of our residents.

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

The strategic objectives set out in the Long Term Skills Plan for the City Region will support positive steps to build a stronger, sustainable local economy through upskilling and creation of good quality jobs in key and growth sectors.

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

The Long Term Skills Plan and other associated skills and employment initiatives detailed in the main report include providing young people with the right kind of information, advice and guidance needed to make informed choices about their next steps and the support that is available to them.

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

Proposals being put forward by DWP and the CA would see a shift from a targeted model to a more inclusive one, whereby local residents, whether in employment or not, with an identified health condition or not, etc, can access support they need to help improve their access to provision and progress their career.

### **6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future**

None

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

Halton Borough Council is a constituent council of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority; all updates detailed in the main report apply to Halton's community.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 All proposals detailed in the main body of the report will be led by the Combined Authority, who will undertake relevant risk analyses.

Any commissioning would require respective partners to comply, and to undertake internal risk assessments accordingly.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The Combined Authority (and Halton Borough Council) have DWP Disability Confident Leader status and are signed up to the LCR Fair Employment Charter.

**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 None under the meaning of the Act.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Supported Internship Programme (work-based study programme)
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on the Supported Internship (SI) Programme delivered by HBC's Employment, Learning and Skills division (jointly delivered by Halton People into Jobs and Halton Adult Learning), including outcomes of a recent review and outputs achieved for year 3 (2023 – 2024 delivery).
- 1.2 To provide opportunities to members to raise any questions with regards to the Supported Internship Programme.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Background to the Supported Internship Programme**

In April 2021 Halton Borough Council were commissioned to deliver the Supported Internship Programme which is a structured, work-based study programme for young people aged 16-24 with special educational needs (SEND) who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

- 3.2 The programme is contracted to deliver 11 Supported Internships each academic year (Aug-Jul).

- 3.3 The programme is a voluntary programme which is aimed at supporting young people with an EHCP to gain paid employment by:

- Supporting them to develop the skills valued by employers.
- Enabling them to demonstrate their value in the workplace.
- Developing their confidence in their own abilities to perform successfully at work.

- 3.4 The four key principles of the programme are that:

- Supported Interns will spend the majority of their time at the employers premises completing a work placement
  - Supported Interns will follow a personalised study curriculum alongside their time at the employer
  - Job Coaches are central to the study programme and provide support to the young person and the employer
  - The primary goal for the young person is paid employment
- 3.5 The work placements that are undertaken are designed to support the young persons goal of finding paid employment. For the young person, the job must fit with their vocational profile, contributing to their long-term career goal and be flexible enough to address barriers where necessary. For the employer, placements should meet a real business need. The employer should be committed to supporting the young person towards paid employment.
- 3.6 Supported Internships are funded as a study programme, and as such the main source of funding is from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Supported Interns can also apply directly to Access to Work for funding to cover the practical costs of the support in the workplace.
- 3.7 The Supported Internship Programme must be identified as a suitable progression route for the young person in collaboration with the young person, their family member, their current education provider, and the Supported Internship Programme Team Leader. Those referred to the Supported Internship programme must have an education, health, and care plan (EHCP). A copy of this should be shared with the programme team for them to be able to best support the Intern.
- 3.8 The Supported Internship Programme lasts for up to 52wks. Interns start the programme in September and work placements should be identified for them to start by the following February at the latest to enable them to complete a minimum of 6 months in a placement with an employer before they complete the programme the following July.
- 3.9 The programme of study delivered by Halton Adult Learning includes English, maths, IT and employability skills with the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification **where appropriate** for the individual learner. Additionally, the group setting supports with the development of communication and team work skills, whilst supporting the individuals in understanding how to keep themselves safe in learning, online and in the workplace. Additional enrichment opportunities are provided to help develop the young people with SEND i.e. cooking, art and craft etc.
- 3.10 Job Coaches are responsible for working with the Interns to identify suitable placements for them to complete. They continue to support them during the placement until the Intern and the employer are satisfied that they can undertake the role safely independently.
- 3.11 Job Coaches also provide travel training to help the Intern get to their education setting and the employers premises when they start on placement.

This involves travelling with the Intern via public transport until the Intern, their parent/family member and the Job Coach are satisfied that they can undertake their travel safely independently.

3.12 Some Interns have multiple/complex barriers in addition to their special educational needs which has included both mental health and physical health conditions. This requires collaborative working with other internal colleagues including Safeguarding, Social Workers, and the Transition Team. Signposting to specialist organisations to address specific barriers also forms part of the support process and wrap around service provided throughout their time on programme.

**3.13 Performance/achievement**

Contract delivery commenced in September 2021.

Performance is comprehensively managed and monitored through a range of internal and external measures.

Performance to date

	Number started on programme	Number withdrew	Number started a placement	Number secured employment on completion	Number into further education on completion
Year 1 21/22	11	1	10	4	4
Year 2 22/23	9	0	4	2	2
Year 3 23/24	8	3	2	1 1 also started self-employment	1

3.14 Bespoke training has also been sourced for some Interns on the programme to enhance their employability prospects i.e. food hygiene, first aid, make up and beauty workshops/qualification.

3.15 On completion of the programme in July 2024 the following outputs were achieved:

- ✓ 1 young person started self-employment and they also secured a place on a level 2 photography course.
- ✓ 1 young person offered a paid contract of employment.
- ✓ 3 young people referred to other council services to access ongoing support with their next steps i.e. volunteering, social development and access to community services.

**3.16 Review of the Supported Internship Programme (year 3 – 2024)**

Delivery of the Supported Internship Programme during year 3 presented some key challenges that had the potential to impact on other services that are successfully delivered by the Employment, Learning and Skills Division (in particular at Kingsway Learning Centre) such as:

- Difficulties recruiting to key roles within the Supported Internship delivery team (Team Leader)
- Suitability of referrals and understanding that the Supported Internship Programme is a step towards paid employment.
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties that the Interns presented with
- Fewer Supported Interns being able to start a placement with an employer.

**3.17** Following the review in year 3 the following actions were agreed and implemented in preparation for year 4 delivery:

- Team Leader recruited following approval to extend the end date of the job (meeting funding requirements)
- Creation and recruitment of a Supported Internship Pastoral Coach to support Interns with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Creation of a dedicated SEND Tutor role to teach the Interns (recruitment to this is ongoing and interim delivery arrangements will be put in place for September delivery)
- Change to the eligibility criteria from 16-24 to 18-24 to ensure young people with SEND are more suitably referred to the programme.
- Changes to marketing and presentations to key partners to emphasise the importance of suitable referrals to the Supported Internship Programme and Interns/parents/carers understand that a placement is a step towards paid employment.
- Commitment to support 100% of Year 4 Supported Interns into a placement (year 4 delivery starts in September)

**3.18 Supporting the wider SEND agenda in Halton for both young people and adults**

During 2023 – 2024 we have been able to support the wider SEND agenda in Halton around access to employment, learning and skills.

- Presentations delivered at the Halton SEND employment forum and ALD board to a wide range of key partners.
- Closer working with services that support young people with the transition to adulthood including employment and skills.
- Collaborative working between 14-19 team, Family Hubs, Schools, Riverside College, and the Supported Internship team to create a SEND hub at Brookvale Children Centre/Family Hub
- Addressing key themes/barriers that can impact on young people progressing towards paid employment:
  - Parent/carer fear
  - Employers real/perceived perceptions
  - Social and communication

**3.19 Key Successes**

This is the third year the Halton Employment, Learning Skills division has

delivered a Supported Internship Programme. The knowledge and skills of the delivery team has enhanced the experience that the Supported Interns received.

3.20 Feedback from the Interns and their families/parents has been really positive stating that the support they received on the programme has been life changing.

**3.21 Key issues**

Recruitment of sufficiently qualified and experienced front-line staff to deliver the programme has been a challenge. Advertising currently for a dedicated SEND Tutor to deliver the academic side of the programme including maths, English, IT, and employability skills.

**3.22 Concluding comments**

The team that delivers the Supported Internship Programme have worked hard, showed passion and commitment to improve the lives of young people with SEND. The team are currently working with 7 young people to prepare them for start the programme in September where we are committed to ensuring 100% of the Interns start a placement with an employer that could lead to paid employment in the future, this includes placements within HBC. We are keen for senior managers to help raise the profile of Supported Internships and increase opportunities for young people with SEND within HBC so we can lead by example (HBC has level 3 leader status under the Disability Confidence scheme).

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Key policy implications have related to Safeguarding Children & Young People. Policies have been reviewed and continue to be updated in line with guidance to keep young people safe.

**5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Supported Internships are funded as a study programme, and as such the main source of funding is from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Supported Interns can also apply directly to the DWP's Access to Work programme for funding to cover the practical costs of the support in the workplace.

5.2 High Needs funding is also used to support the delivery of the Supported Internship Programme

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

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



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

Supported Interns 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. Health and wellbeing modules are also covered as part of their learning programme. Promoting and supporting greater independence is a key aim of the Supported Internship Programme.

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

The fantastic achievements that have come out of the various programmes delivered by Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning and Skills Division increasing qualification levels and 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 food hygiene, hair and beauty etc. Signposting to partner organisations to support has been a key part of the programme. Delivery of the Supported Internship Programme will continue to build on the success we have had previously.

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

The Supported Internship Programme supports both young people aged 18-24 with SEND and their families (parents/carers). Key elements of the programme help young people develop a wide range of skills that help in the workplace and at home i.e. communication, social, team building, goal setting and practical skills such as cooking.

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

The Supported Internship Programme supports vulnerable young people with SEND that need support to access paid employment. The Supported Internship team liaises with Halton Employers to tackle inequality and source placements for the Interns that they deserve equal access to.

**6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future**

None

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

The Supported Internship Programme supports young people aged 18-24 with SEND and their families (parents/carers) to access opportunities and help in the community. Placements can take place in community venues such as Adult Learning and Library Services to help Interns value the services available within the community.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The management of the Supported Internship Programme has been meticulous and close monitoring both internally and externally to 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 identified.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills & Community Policy and Performance Board .
<b>DATE:</b>	16th September 2024
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Performance Management Reports for Quarter 1 of 2024/25
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Boroughwide

## 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider, and to raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the first quarter period to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2024-25 were agreed by Members for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
- Finance
  - Operational HR Division, Chief Executives Delivery Unit
  - ICT and Administrative Support
  - Legal and Democracy
  - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
  - Property Services

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

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

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

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

**5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

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

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

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

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

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

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

**Employment, Learning, Skills and Community PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report Q1**

Reporting Period: 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> 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 first quarter of 2024 / 25 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 2024 - 25 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 5 of this report.

1.4 Corporate Priorities



**2.0 High Priority Equality Actions**

- 2.1 Equality issues continue to form a routine element of the Council’s business planning and operational decision making processes. Additionally the Council must have evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011.
- 2.2 The Councils latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives is published on the Council website and is available via:

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

**3.0 Performance Overview**







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

**Employment, Learning & Skills**






**Key Objectives / milestones**

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need. <b>Employment, Learning &amp; Skills</b>
<b>EEP 9</b>	<b>To promote access to learning to those who need it most and create employment opportunities for Halton residents</b>

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Deliver six accredited ESOL and two Pre-ESOL courses across Widnes and Runcorn to help our BAME residents improve their English skills between 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2024 and 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2025	<span style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">U</span>	Tutor now in place for 3 accredited ESOL courses and one Pre-ESOL programme to run between Augst 2004 and 31 July 2025,. Recruitment currently ongoing to support the additional provision. Currently developing Test and Learn proposal for ESOL in Schools project.  Actual figure can be reported on in Q2

Utilise a budget of £11,300 LCR Devolved ESFA Hardship Funding for adult learners between 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2024 and 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2025		Delivery to commence in September 2024 (Q2) – Kingsway Warm Hub will continue (approx. £500 per month). Childcare places still to be offered for any course longer than one term in duration. Travel costs reimbursed for all learners in Hardship.  Actual figure can be reported on in Q2.
Commence learning programme for those aged 19+ by 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2024		Recruitment for the programmes started in Q1 – enrolments dates at the end of August (Q2) Prospectus disseminated to all staff. 146 residents booked in for enrolment dates at the end of August.  Actual figure can be reported on in Q2
Commence year 3 of the Supported Internship Programme by August 2024		6 learners have so far registered to start on programme in Q2.  Actual figure will be reported in Q2
Learners passing courses = 92% by July 2025		Delivery to commence in September 2024 (Q2). Increased Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) support offered for tutors to increase achievement in accredited programmes (monthly IQA meetings and tutor support).  Actual figure will be reported in Q2
Number of learners successfully placed into Employment = 330 by July 2025		76 customers were supported into employment in Q1 against overall annual target of 330.
Percentage of people engaged in Learning from most deprived areas increased from 29% to 48% by July 2025		Delivery to commence in September 2024 (Q2). Targeted marketing ongoing in identified wards.  Actual % figure can be reported on in Q2

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need. <b>Employment, Learning &amp; Skills</b>
<b>EEP 10</b>	<b>To promote access to learning to those who need it most and create employment opportunities for Halton residents</b>

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q1</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Deliver six accredited ESOL and two Pre-ESOL courses across Widnes and Runcorn to help our BAME residents improve their English skills between 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2024 and 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2025		Tutor in place for 3 accredited ESOL courses and one Pre-ESOL programme to run between August 2004 and 31 July 2025. Recruitment currently ongoing to support the additional provision. Currently developing Test and Learn proposal for ESOL in Schools project.  Actual figure will be reported in Q2
Utilise a budget of £11,300 LCR Devolved ESFA Hardship Funding for adult learners between 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2024 and 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2025		Delivery to commence in September 2024 (Q2) – Kingsway Warm Hub will continue (approx. £500 per month). Childcare places still to be offered for any course longer than one term in duration. Travel costs reimbursed for all learners in Hardship.  Actual figure will be reported in Q2.
Commence learning programme for those aged 19+ by 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2024		Recruitment for the programmes started in Q1 – enrolments dates at the end of August (Q2) Prospectus disseminated to all staff. 146 residents booked in for enrolment dates at the end of August.  Actual figure will be reported in Q2
Commence year 3 of the Supported Internship Programme by August 2024		6 learners have so far registered to start on programme in Q2.  Actual figure will be reported in Q2
The % of residents accessing Halton Adult Learning courses and achieve will increase from		Delivery to commence in September 2024 (Q2). Increased Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) support offered for tutors to increase



88% to 92% between 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2024 and July 2025.		achievement in accredited programmes (monthly IQA meetings and tutor support).  Actual figure will be reported in Q2
The % of learners (average across all target wards) who are of unemployed working age residing in the LSOAs, and who access Halton Adult Learning will increase from 29% to 48% between 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2024 and end July 2025.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Delivery to commence in September 2024 (Q2). Targeted marketing ongoing in identified wards.  Actual % figure will be reported in Q2
330 residents who access HPIJ employment programmes to obtain employment between April 2024 – March 2025.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	76 customers were supported into employment in Q1 against overall annual target of 330.




### Library & Culture Services

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need. <b>Leisure Services</b>
<b>EEP 24</b>	<b>To provide a new leisure centre for Widnes</b>




Milestone: One new leisure centre open	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Opening February 2025	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The contractor is ahead of schedule, as such we are confident that the centre will be open in February 2025, if not before.  To operate the new Halton Leisure Centre, Sports Services, supported by IT and Procurement have tendered for a new Leisure Management Operating System, a contract is expected to be awarded in July 2024. In addition, the new Leisure Centre will operate differently to Kingsway Leisure

		<p>Centre and as such, requires a Service Redesign.</p> <p>Work on a business case has begun, which subject to consultation could see new Job Descriptions, operating hours and new ways of optimising the use of technology and responding to customer demands. The new centre will also have a soft play and a cafe, which the current centre does not have.</p>
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<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<p>Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.</p> <p>Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy.</p> <p>Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families.</p> <p>Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need.</p> <p><b>Leisure Services</b></p>
<b>EEP 25</b>	<b>Increase footfall at the Brindley</b>

<b>Milestone: Increase footfall at the Brindley</b>	<b>Progress Q1</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Brindley - Total number of tickets sold		20,244 Figures in line with expectation
Brindley - Total number of days Hired days		56 Increase in Hirer books, for theatre and studio's total
Brindley - Total number of Council Promotions		29 Figures in line with expectation, for theatre and studio's total

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<p>Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.</p> <p>Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy.</p> <p>Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families.</p> <p>Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need.</p> <p><b>Leisure Services</b></p>
<b>EEP 25</b>	<b>Increase footfall at the Libraries</b>

<b>Milestone: Increase footfall at the Libraries</b>	<b>Progress Q1</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
<p>Footfall for all libraries:</p> <p>Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library</p>		Total 103,945 On track to meet target.
<p>Library Digital issues</p>		Total 847,810 On track to meet target.
<p>Library Issues in branch:</p> <p>Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library</p>		Total 49,099 On track to meet target.

## 4.0 Financial Statements

### **ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**

#### **Revenue Operational Budget at 31 July 2024**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	4,342	1,812	1,709	103	308
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	102	(102)	(305)
Agency - in addition to establishment	0	0	0	0	0
Repairs & Maintenance	1,689	700	741	(41)	(117)
Premises	146	119	119	0	0
Energy & Water Costs	1,221	281	267	14	62
NNDR	659	633	623	10	10
Rents	163	0	0	0	0
Economic Regeneration Activities	21	0	0	0	0
Security	544	173	172	1	4
Supplies & Services	482	119	106	13	40
Supplies & Services - Grant	1,074	169	169	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	67	44	44	0	0
Capital Finance	0		0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	165	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>10,573</b>	<b>4,050</b>	<b>4,052</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges Income	-721	-346	-361	15	46
Rent - Commercial Properties	-871	-196	-196	0	0
Rent - Investment Properties	-38	-14	-14	0	0
Government Grant	-1,531	-753	-753	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-306	-172	-170	(2)	(6)
Schools SLA Income	-234	-209	-192	(17)	(17)
Recharges to Capital	-348	-163	-163	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-393	-384	-384	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-4,442</b>	<b>-2,237</b>	<b>-2,233</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>6,131</b>	<b>1,813</b>	<b>1,819</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	2,074	691	691	0	0
Transport	30	10	10	0	0
Central Support	1,947	649	649	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-7,927	-2,642	-2,642	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-3,872</b>	<b>-1,292</b>	<b>-1,292</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>2,259</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>25</b>

### **Comments on the above figures**

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

### **Supporting Information**

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

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

To fulfil statutory and contractual obligations and support the borough's regeneration, maintaining a complete staff establishment is essential. However, the challenge of filling surveyor and project manager roles, even with a market supplement, has resulted in a lack of suitable candidates. Consequently, the engagement of agency personnel has been necessary, anticipated to cost £300,000 this financial year. Without these personnel, the borough's regeneration efforts would be hindered, potentially leading to a loss of business rates and council tax.

The recruitment of the agency staff has led to an increase in commercial rental income, as it has enabled the completion of pending rent reviews.

Managers have asked to identify and implement measures to reduce unnecessary spending, whilst also ensuring the needs of the service are met leading to the department's projecting a positive variance amounting to £0.040m within supplies and services.

A recent exercise was conducted to determine the costs associated with empty properties within the Borough. Consequently a new cost centre was established to monitor these expenses. In addition to the loss of rental income whilst the properties remain vacant, the Council incur additional costs for utilities, repairs, and maintenance. As of the end of July, the total costs related to these properties amount to £0.143m. To reduce the expenses actions need to be taken to accelerate the leasing or explore temporary uses for properties, such as short-term rentals or community projects, which will generate some income and reduce costs.

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

Although the Council have seen a significant increase in energy costs over the last few years, it is anticipated that costs this financial year will be £0.163m lower than in 2023/24, representing a decrease of over 13%. The department is forecasting that it will be £0.062m under budget by year-end. Since contract prices are fixed until March 2025, projections are based on the 2023/24 usage using the unit price quoted by the supplier. However, if usage increases as more staff return to the office, these prices might rise.



The Repairs and Maintenance program is continually being reviewed to ensure it remains in budget. This financial year presents a challenge as no inflation adjustment was factored into the 2024/25 approved budget, and it was further reduced by 10%. It is projected that the expenditure will exceed the budget by £0.117m at the end of the year. This projection is based on the 2023/24 expenses and does not take into account the 6% inflation in general building materials over the past year, as reported by BCIS.

Additionally, the department has conducted an exercise to determine which expenditures are capital in nature, and these have now been reclassified within the capital program.

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

#### Approved 2024/25 Savings

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

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

## COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	17,358	3,700	3,457	243	1,146
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	66	(66)	(262)
Agency - in addition to establishment	0	0	50	(50)	(101)
Premises	3,521	1,070	1,089	(19)	(71)
Supplies & Services	1,585	380	401	(21)	(80)
Hired & Contracted Services	510	83	83	0	0
Book Fund	128	53	53	0	0
Food Provision	388	115	108	7	36
School Meals Food	2,083	320	332	(12)	(42)
Transport	117	10	11	(1)	(9)
Agency Costs	441	100	148	(48)	(94)
Other Expenditure	0	0	41	(41)	(50)
Waste Disposal Contracts	7,002	0	0	0	255
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	64	16	12	4	35
Grant to Norton Priory	172	29	87	(58)	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>33,369</b>	<b>5,876</b>	<b>5,938</b>	<b>(62)</b>	<b>763</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Sales Income	-1,373	-422	-422	0	(118)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,470	-1,952	-1,942	(10)	(50)
Rental Income	-235	-39	-71	32	26
Markets Income	-910	-152	-208	56	(79)
Government Grant Income	-643	-482	-482	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-703	-467	-467	0	0
School SLA Income	-1,313	-219	-250	31	(10)
School Meals Income	-3,598	-600	-562	(38)	(213)
Internal Fees Income	-286	-48	-15	(33)	61
Capital Salaries	-173	-29	-14	(15)	(5)
Transfers from Reserves	-14	-14	-14	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-14,718</b>	<b>-4,424</b>	<b>-4,447</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>(388)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>18,651</b>	<b>1,452</b>	<b>1,491</b>	<b>(39)</b>	<b>375</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	1,675	279	279	0	0
Transport	2,257	376	214	162	(51)
Central Support	3,592	599	599	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	33	33	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-843	-141	-141	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>6,880</b>	<b>1,146</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>(51)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>25,531</b>	<b>2,598</b>	<b>2,475</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>324</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

The net Departmental Expenditure is forecast to be £0.324m under budget at the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

Spend on employees is forecasted to be £1.146m under the annual budget. A restructure is taking place within the Community Safety, Leisure and 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. The figure is offset from an expected agency spend of £0.363m.

Spend on premises costs is forecast to be £0.071m over the approved budget in 2024/25, the new leisure centre is now expected to hand over within this financial year and will begin to incur costs within 24/25. The original plans were for the leisure centre to utilise the solar farm however the extension required to provide energy to the leisure centre has only recently been submitted for planning, so there is a potential budget pressure next year as the energy will have to be provided elsewhere until the solar farm extension is functioning.

Supplies and Services is showing a forecast overspend of £0.080m which is a budget pressure throughout the Department and is primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years

Waste Disposal Contract costs are forecasted to achieve £0.255m under the approved budget during 2024/25. Costs are likely to increase slightly from 2023/24, however invoices are not received until later in the financial year so it is difficult to fully indicate what the outturn position will be at this stage.

Sales, Fees & Charges, and Markets Income are expected to be below the income target within 2024/25, these are offset against reductions in forecasted expenditure for the year in particular the staffing costs, as the staff are not in place to generate the income, however the full impact of changes of this nature will be realised following the cessation of the School Meals service as this budget pressure absorbs any underspend generated.

**Capital Programme 2024/25**




Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation £000	2024/25 Revised Allocation £000	Q1 Spend £000	Q2 Spend £000	Q3 Spend £000	Q4 Spend £000	Total Spend £000	Allocation remaining £000
<b>Environment &amp; Regeneration Directorate</b>								
<b>Community &amp; Greenspace</b>								
Stadium Minor Works	30.0	30.0	7.9				7.9	22.1
Halton Leisure Centre	8,997.0	8,997.0	2,030.0				2,030.0	6,967.0
Children's Playground Equipment	67.8	67.8	1.0				1.0	66.8
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340.0	340.0	0.0				0.0	340.0
Upton Improvements	13.0	13.0	0.0				0.0	13.0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12.0	12.0	0.0				0.0	12.0
Open Spaces Schemes	600.0	600.0	130.0				130.0	470.0
Runcorn Town Park	468.6	468.6	0.0				0.0	468.6
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,933.5	1,933.5	2.4				2.4	1,931.1
Pickerings Pasture Cafe	503.0	503.0	0.0				0.0	503.0
Replacement Cremator Widnes	308.0	308.0	0.0				0.0	308.0
Litter Bins	20.0	20.0	0.0				0.0	20.0
<b>Total Community &amp; Greenspace</b>	<b>13,292.9</b>	<b>13,292.9</b>	<b>2,171.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2,171.3</b>	<b>11,121.6</b>







## 5.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

### Progress Symbols

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

### Direction of Travel Indicator

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