

Public Document Pack



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

Monday, 18 November 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 for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 27 January 2025*

**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, 16 September 2024 in The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor S. Hill

Absence declared on Council business: None

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

Also in attendance: None

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

	<i>Action</i>
<p>ELS8 MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 17 June 2024, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>ELS9 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
<p>ELS10 HALTON CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE</p> <p>The Board welcomed Nicola Donoghue, Operations Manager for Halton Cancer Support Centre, who gave an overview about the Centre and the services offered in the Borough.</p> <p>The Centre provided therapeutic support for people who were affected by cancer. They offered a professional, quality service with warmth and compassion, responding to the needs of local people.</p> <p>A total of 851 clients were currently registered at the Centre; 400 of those had a cancer diagnosis and the rest</p>	

were a mix of carers and the bereaved. The Centre offered a range of services to these clients such as: counselling, peer support (eg. men's group); online support; therapies, respite breaks; a children and young people's service; and workshops (eg. sleep, wellness).

It was noted that last year the Centre was core funded by the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership and Halton Borough Council. The remainder of the Centre's costs were covered by one off grants and from fundraising events, such as the Park Run.

It was announced that the Charity has supported the local community for 29 years and next May 2025 would be its 30th Anniversary.

Additional information was given following Members questions:

- The Centre did not have any joint projects with Halton Haven at the moment but they did refer clients to each other's services at times;
- The Centre's running costs amounted to £133k last year;
- Bereavement counselling helped reduce a persons need for other services, which takes pressure off them;
- The Centre employed an outreach worker who visits hospitals and GP practices to raise awareness of the Centre;
- Runcorn clients amounted to about 20% as they had the Delamere Centre at the Hospital;
- Core funding for local charities was being cut and it was felt that they should be supported more than they were, for the benefit of local people;
- The Centre was restricted to the size it currently is due to the accommodation; if they wanted to expand they would need another building;
- The Centre owned a caravan in North Wales and this was available for hire by clients for respite care; and
- The young people's service was used by schools who referred children who had parents with a cancer diagnosis (with parents' consent).

Referring to the accommodation issue, it was suggested by one Member that the Council's voided properties could be looked at, to see if any were suitable for the use of the Cancer Support Centre in the future. This would be looked into.

Executive Director

RESOLVED: That the presentation and comments made be noted.

Environment &
Regeneration

ELS11 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) Employment and Skills matters.

The report outlined a range of topics being worked through by the LCR and Officers as follows:

- Proposition for Employment and Skills – as part of the preparations for the new Government a proposition was being developed setting out what could be delivered by the area and which reflected the Metro Mayor’s manifesto;
- A Long Term Skills Plan – the 10 year plan would set out the long term skills for the LCR and would be used as a basis to commission future work around skills and employment;
- Early Years Sector Workforce and Provision – to support the Early Years and Childcare sectors to sustain, develop and scale up;
- Construction Sector Priorities – to support the delivery of 80,000 new homes through a local workforce in the sector;
- Department for Work and Pensions Updates – a new national jobs and careers service would be created; and
- Economies for Healthy Lives – one of only four programmes in the UK to be approved for funding from the Health Foundation.

The following was discussed after the presentation:

- Young people training to work in the construction industry and the fact that the numbers moving to work in the sector were declining. Some who started a construction training programme often did not finish or chose not to go into employment in this sector afterwards;
- Some schemes had been successful in terms of creating apprenticeship opportunities in the construction sector and this included The Mersey Gateway construction project;
- The ‘social value’ of projects and large contracts, in relation to jobs for local people and businesses and

was this element incorporated in the Council's procurement stage as a condition of bidding;

- The Employment, Learning and Skills team did work with contractors during construction of the Mersey Gateway. Sometimes however, they were not aware of other large contracts going to tender, so it was felt that the team needed to be included in the notice of these;
- From a planning perspective, were conditions being implemented to ensure that S106 agreements included social value elements in an application;
- It was felt that it was important that developers understood they must contribute to the communities of Halton if they want to build houses here for example; and
- Server farms – one Member gave an example of these being installed by a Council in the South of England; could this be looked into by Halton.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ELS12 SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME WORK BASED STUDY

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, that provided an update on the Supported Internship (SI) Programme.

In April 2021 Halton Borough Council was commissioned to deliver the SI Programme which was a structured, work-based study programme for young people aged 16-24 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who had an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

The SI Programme is delivered by HBC's Employment, Learning and Skills division and is jointly delivered by Halton People into Jobs and Halton Adult Learning. The Programme was contracted to deliver 11 supported internships each academic year.

The report outlined the four key principles of the voluntary Programme and how this supported young people with an EHCP to gain paid employment. Performance data was provided, as well as information on key successes and challenges faced. The Board was presented with case studies of three young people who had successfully completed the Programme and were now working in part time paid employment.

The Board welcomed the news contained within the report and confirmed their continued support to the Programme.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

ELS13 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS Q1 2024/25

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 1 of 2024-25 (1 April 2024 to 30 June 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 2024-25 were agreed by Members and 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. Members were invited to highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be provided to a future meeting of the Board.

The following matters were raised:

- The new Leisure Centre would be opened in January 2025 but it was believed there was uncertainty over contracts for casual workers;
- The variety of acts at The Brindley and that there seemed to be more tribute type acts than those of a cultural nature;
- There was no signage in The Brindley car park to show the way to the Theatre, which was difficult for people visiting for the first time;
- What was the difference between milestones EEP 9 and EEP 10 as they looked the same with the same commentary;
- It was thought that a public consultation that took place recently in the Old Police Station regarding Runcorn's Town Centre regeneration should be shared with all Members;
- More details were requested on the overspend on agency costs for the next performance management report;
- NI contributions / IR35 for agency workers, were

these included in the fees.

Feedback would be sought to those questions and the Chair requested an update on The Brindley for the next meeting's agenda.

RESOLVED: That the performance management reports for quarter one be received.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

Meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community PPB
DATE:	18 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Public Question Time
WARD(S)	Boroughwide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

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

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

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

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

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

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

None identified.

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

None identified.

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

None identified.

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

None identified.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None identified.

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

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	18 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment & Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Proposed Topic Group item on Voluntary and Community Group Funding
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To propose a Topic Working Group for members of the Employment Learning and Skills and Community PPB.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

Members determine if they would like a Scrutiny Topic Group to discuss the funding of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Halton, and to agree the membership of that group and a time and date for the meeting.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In February 2023 Executive Board agreed to reduce the funding for voluntary and community groups.
- 3.2 In March 2024 Full Council approved the budget for 24/25 which included a reduction in funding for these groups.
- 3.3 Members are requested to advise on whether they would wish to establish a Scrutiny Topic Group to consider funding of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Halton.
- 3.4 Membership of the Topic Group is to be determined by the PPB and agreed on the night of the PPB meeting.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None identified at this stage.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

None

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 None identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Transformation Programme and Budget Proposals 23/24 to 25/26.	Executive Board 1 st February 2023	Ed Dawson
Budget 2024	Full Council 6 th March 2024	Ed Dawson

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	18 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment & Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Halton People into Jobs – update on engaging with Economically Inactive residents and Halton People into Jobs current funding position.
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the current services provided by Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ) and our continued focus to engage with Economically Inactive residents and individuals ‘at risk’ of redundancy for Ways to Work and the Work and Health Pioneer Programme (Economically Inactive for Pioneer).
- 1.2 To provide members with an update on current funding streams and the requirement for Halton People into Jobs to secure future funding to sustain the service it provides to Halton residents.
- 1.3 To provide opportunities to members to raise any questions with regards to us supporting Economically Inactive/Unemployed residents.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background information

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

- 3.2 **Ways to Work** – has been delivered by HPIJ since January 2016. It was originally funded by ESF / DWP, then the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) up to March 2024 and then the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) since 1st April 2024. The focus for both SIF and

UKSPF was to engage with Economically inactive. Since 1st April 2024, the Ways to Work team have been engaging with Economically inactive residents and individuals that have been placed 'at risk' of redundancy across the borough.

- 3.3 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+.'
- 3.4 Since April 2024 Halton People into Jobs has supported 3 large scale employers across the borough who have been in an unfortunate position of having to put staff 'at risk' of redundancy.
- Employer A – up to 50 staff affected (July 2024)
 - Employer B – up to 210 staff affected (August/September 2024)
 - Employer C – up to 30 staff affected (October 2024)
- 3.5 Individuals 'at risk' have accessed 1:1 support, advice, and funding to help upskill and prepare for work in new roles with new employers (some staff having been employed with their previous employer for as long as 25 years have required a lot of practical and emotional support).
- 3.6 **Pioneer Programme** – in October 2023 Halton Borough Council entered a subcontracting arrangement with the existing Work and Health Prime (WHP) Contractor (Ingeus) who had been tasked with delivering the Department for Work & Pensions WHP Pioneer Support Programme until September 2024. Referrals to the programme stopped in September and customers that are currently on programme will continue to receive up to 15mths support.
- 3.7 **The definition of Economically Inactive for DWP/WHP Pioneer is:**
Inactive customers will be defined as customers who are not in UC intensive work search regime or income based JSA at point of referral. The following will therefore qualify:
- Universal Credit - Work Preparation
 - Universal Credit – Work Focused Interview Only
 - Universal Credit – No Work-Related Requirements
 - Universal Credit – Light Touch Out of Work

- Universal Credit – Conditionality Unknown
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Employment and Support Allowance Contributory (ESAC)
- Incapacity Benefit (IB)
- Income Support (IS)
- Passport Incapacity Benefit (PIB)
- Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)
- Training Allowance (TA)
- Not in receipt of any “out of work” benefit.

- 3.8 Both of the above contracts are voluntary programmes for individuals that meet the respective Economically Inactive criteria and are looking to start work in the immediate future.
- 3.9 Ways to Work is grant funded and quarterly claims will be submitted to the LCRCA for costs associated with delivering the contract. The WHP Pioneer programme offers ‘Payment by Results’, which are received on achievement of sustained job outcomes. Performance is measured against sustained outcomes being met (meeting the earnings threshold of approx. £4000).
- 3.10 Participants can access the WHP Pioneer programme for up to 15mths. They are supported by their Advisor/Employment Specialist throughout the duration of the programme. Ways to Work is funded through UKSPF (Apr 24 – Mar 25). Discussions are being held with the LCRCA regarding the future of the Ways to Work service beyond March 2025.
- 3.11 **Performance / Achievements**
Ways to Work UKSPF (Apr 24 – Oct 24)
212 starts on programme.
50 job starts.
34% into work (23% into work)
Redundancy support – 3 employers (64 individuals ‘at risk’ of redundancy support to date).
- 3.12 **WHP Pioneer Programme (Sep 23 – Oct 24)**
61 starts on programme.
22 job starts (36%)
- 3.13 **Income and Expenditure**
WHP Pioneer Programme – income is generated from job outcome payments (paid when the participant earns £1,000. Notification is received from HMRC when they achieve this) and sustained job outcome payments, whilst customers remain in sustainable employment.
- 3.14 Ways to Work – income is generated through quarterly claims to cover the associated costs of the service plus a 15% management fee.

- 3.15 Income and expenditure are closely monitored through a combination of internal and external mechanisms, to ensure that contracts are delivered efficiently.
- 3.16 Where possible, access to other available services and/or funding streams are maximised to support the delivery of the Ways to Work and WHP Pioneer Programme contract and their challenging targets.
- 3.17 **Key Successes**
WHP Pioneer Programme – currently exceeding monthly job start and outcome targets set by Ingeus/DWP
- 3.18 Ways to Work – successful transition to new UKSPF funded programme from 1st April 2024. Over 2500 Halton residents have been supported through the Ways to Work programme between since 2016. Supported 3 local employers with large scale redundancies.
- 3.19 **Key Issues**
Two similar programmes running parallel to each other potentially trying to engage with the same customer group. However, HPIJ was well placed to utilise funding streams effectively so that customers and employers get the best out of each programme.
- 3.20 The number of inactive referrals from Jobcentre Plus needed to be maintained. HPIJ marketed both contracts through community engagement and events. A review of this activity completed – most effective methods of engagement is via partnership working.
- 3.21 Future funding to continue the HPIJ service in its current format is uncertain. ELS managers are committed to securing future funding streams and are currently working with the other 5 LA's to identify and bid for new programmes available through DWP/LCRCA, however this is in the early stages at the moment. The Restart, Pioneer and Work and Health Programme have all stopped taking referrals now as per contracted arrangements. Referrals to the Ways to Work programme stop in March 2025. A gap in provision has been identified already i.e. day 1 unemployed (minimal support available locally).
- 3.22 **Concluding Comments**
Performance across programmes for the unemployed and economically inactive has been strong. We acknowledged the transition from supporting unemployed residents to economically inactive would be a real challenge, but the team worked hard to achieve the targets set out.
- 3.23 Future funding for HPIJ beyond March 2025 is uncertain. HPIJ has

delivered programmes to the unemployed and economically inactive residents of Halton for over 20 years. We will continue to bid for any programmes that will benefit the borough over the coming weeks and months.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None identified at this stage.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

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

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

HPIJ customers will continue to 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.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

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 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

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.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

HPIJ look to support those individuals that require support.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

HPIJ look to support residents and community with opportunities.

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 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.

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	18 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Director Community & Greenspace
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	The Brindley Enhancement Project
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 A presentation will be provided on the Brindley Enhancement project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

The presentation is welcomed by the Board.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Brindley Enhancement project forms part of the Town Deal Fund - Reconnecting Runcorn programme. This transformational project will not only act as a catalyst for the Reconnecting Runcorn programme, it will also transform the Brindley into a cultural hub for the borough, providing a new space for Runcorn Library, a larger café / bistro offer and a high quality outdoor green space.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The grant provided from the Town Deal Fund must be drawn down by 31 March 2026.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The venue is a social gathering place and can help reduce loneliness. It also has free to use spaces; the gallery and café area, with free Wi-Fi and as it becomes home to the Runcorn Old Town

Library and a larger café/ restaurant area the opportunities for local people will increase and include free PC access.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The Brindley supports from an employment learning and skills perspective as it is a key employer in the town with over one hundred staff, largely made up of casual staff with flexible hours. Increased staff will be required for the Cultural Hub.

The theatre is an important selling point when attracting inward investors and businesses to the borough. The Brindley is the key flagship project within the Reconnecting Runcorn programme.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The Brindley programme will continue to provide ample opportunities for children and young people to come and watch performances. In addition there are numerous opportunities to be involved in performances, which can improve confidence and raise self-esteem. There are over 100 dance schools who regularly use the Brindley for rehearsals and shows. In addition, the Halton Primary Arts Network schools regularly use the performance space. The library service provides excellent opportunities and engagement activities for children and young people for rhyme time to science clubs. The green outdoor space will also open up opportunities for outdoor activities.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The venue is also a social gathering place and can help reduce loneliness. It also has free to use spaces; the gallery and café area, with free wi-fi and as it becomes home to the Runcorn Old Town library and a larger café/ restaurant area the opportunities for local people will increase and include free PC access.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The Brindley extension project is including significant climate supporting measures. These were reported to Executive Board on 20 April 2023 (EXB111).

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Advice has been taken from Cheshire Police Counter Terrorism Unit for the existing Brindley and the extension, to promote a safe venue for customers and staff and measures have been implemented in advance of the Protect Duty.

The Brindley provides a high quality key asset for the Boroughs residents. Impacts range from accessing the building and its services to stimulating and growing interests in theatre, culture, arts and creativity.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The enhancement project is being closely monitored by cost consultants and the Council's Client and Project Manager. The greatest risk is failure to draw down the Town Deal Fund grant in deal, however, we are confident this can be achieved.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Brindley Theatre is open and fully accessible. As part of the new extensions a Changing Places facility will be installed which will not only serve the Brindley, the wider town centre.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications as part of this report. However, the Brindley extension project is including significant climate supporting measures. These were reported to Executive Board on 20 April 2023 (EXB111).

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, and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	18 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment & Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Q2 Performance Management Report of 2024/25
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1. The board receives the second quarter performance management report.**
- 2. Progress and performance information is considered and any questions or points for clarification raised.**
- 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

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 Q2

Reporting Period: 1st July to 30th September

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the second quarter of 2024 / 25 for service areas within the remit of the 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

Corporate Priority	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. Employment, Learning & Skills
ERD 9	To promote access to learning to those who need it most and create employment opportunities for Halton residents

Milestone	Progress Q2	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 st August 2024 and 31 st July 2025		Three ESOL accredited courses and one pre-ESOL course launched in September 2024. Recruitment of an additional ESOL tutor is ongoing – previous attempts to recruit have been unsuccessful.
Utilise a budget of £11,300 LCR Devolved ESFA Hardship Funding for adult learners between 1 st August 2024 and 31 st July 2025		£1050 across August and September was used to support learners with provision of Warm Hub, Travel, Study Supplies (Stationery,

		Reuseable Water bottles) and Childcare. The remaining budget of £10249 continues for the remainder of the 24/25 academic year.
Commence learning programme for those aged 19+ by 1 st August 2024		Adult Learning academic year 2024/25 delivery commenced on 4 th September 2024. Over 250 enrolments recorded by the end of September, with further courses commencing in October and November.
Commence year 3 of the Supported Internship Programme by August 2024		Programme delivery began on 17 th September, with a range of pre-programme onboarding activities having taken place over the summer. There are 7 learners on programme.
Learners passing courses = 92% by July 2025		Adult Learning delivery commenced in September 2024. First set of achievement data to be captured after October half term and reported fully in Q3. Data this year is split into Adult Skills Fund (accredited) and Tailored Learning (non-accredited) - an average will be taken to report on KPI.
Number of learners successfully placed into Employment = 330 by July 2025		93 residents were supported into work through HPIJ employment programmes in Q2. There were more job starts, however we are awaiting evidence from employers for audit.
Percentage of people engaged in Learning from most deprived areas increased from 29% to 48% by July 2025		44.2% of Adult Learners enrolled onto Adult Learning programmes by end of Q2 are from Halton's target wards: Central and West Bank, Halton Lea, Appleton, Halton View and Grange. These wards were identified using LSOA data. Individual Ward Data (% of residents from each ward area) will be captured at the end of Autumn Term (Q3)

Corporate Priority	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. Employment, Learning & Skills
ERD 10	To promote access to learning to those who need it most and create employment opportunities for Halton residents

Milestone	Progress Q2	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 st August 2024 and 31 st July 2025		Three ESOL accredited courses and one pre-ESOL course launched in September 2024. Recruitment of an additional ESOL tutor is ongoing – previous attempts to recruit have been unsuccessful.
Utilise a budget of £11,300 LCR Devolved ESFA Hardship Funding for adult learners between 1 st August 2024 and 31 st July 2025		£1050 across August and September was used to support learners with provision of Warm Hub, Travel, Study Supplies (Stationery, Reuseable Water bottles) and Childcare. The remaining budget of £10249 continues for the remainder of the 24/25 academic year.
Commence learning programme for those aged 19+ by 1 st August 2024		Adult Learning academic year 2024/25 delivery commenced on 4 th September 2024. Over 250 enrolments recorded by the end of September, with further courses commencing in October and November.
Commence year 3 of the Supported Internship Programme by August 2024		Programme delivery began on 17 th September, with a range of pre-programme onboarding activities having taken place over the summer. There are 8 learners on programme.
The % of residents accessing Halton Adult Learning courses and achieve will increase from 88% to 92% between 1 st August 2024 and July 2025.		Adult Learning delivery commenced in September 2024. First set of achievement data will be captured after October half term and reported fully in Q3.

		Data this year is split into Adult Skills Fund (accredited) and Tailored Learning (non-accredited) - an average will be taken to report on KPI.
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 st August 2024 and end July 2025.		44.2% of Adult Learners enrolled on Adult Learning programmes at the end of Q2 are from Halton’s target wards: Central and West Bank, Halton Lea, Appleton, Halton View and Grange. These wards were identified using LSOA data. Individual Ward Data (% of residents from each ward area) captured at the end of Autumn Term
330 residents who access HPIJ employment programmes to obtain employment between April 2024 – March 2025.		93 residents were supported into work through HPIJ employment programmes in Q2. There were more job starts, however we are awaiting evidence from employers for audit.

Library & Culture Services

Corporate Priority	<p>Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.</p> <p>Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy.</p> <p>Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families.</p> <p>Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need.</p> <p>Leisure Services</p>
ERD 23	To provide a new leisure centre for Widnes

Milestone: One new leisure centre open	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
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Opening February 2025		<p>The construction programme remains on track. The service redesign has commenced. January 6th is the anticipated handover date. Onsite staff training will be required and the creation of documentation, such as, Safe Systems of Work, Risk Assessments require completion. Programme of use has been drafted. Social value report, updates and progress pictures</p> <p>https://activehalton.co.uk/new-leisure-centre/</p>
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Corporate Priority	<p>Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.</p> <p>Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy.</p> <p>Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families.</p> <p>Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need.</p> <p>Leisure Services</p>
ERD 24	Increase footfall at the Brindley

Milestone: Increase footfall at the Brindley	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Brindley - Total number of tickets sold.		53 (Both Theatre and Studio hires per day)
Brindley - Total number of days Hired days.		53 (Both Theatre and Studio hires per day)
Brindley - Total number of Council Promotions		11 (Both Theatre and Studio promotions per day)

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

Milestone: Increase footfall at the Libraries	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>Footfall for all libraries:</p> <p>Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library</p>		<p>Total footfall was 125,772. Footfall is on track to meet target, with significant increase in footfall from Q1 data, notably at Halton Lea with an increase of 14,677, resulting in a total libraries' footfall increase of over 25,000 from Q1.</p> <p>Ditton - 10,510</p> <p>Widnes - 38,991</p> <p>Runcorn - 25,102</p> <p>Halton Lea - 51,169</p>
Library Digital issues		<p>Total Digital Issues: 1,010,252 Compiled from: BorrowBox ebooks & eaudio issues, Ancestry, Picture Halton, Access to Research and Pressreader articles read. Increase on Q1 data (figure was 1,0009,991) as expected with trends of summer issues</p>
<p>Library Issues in branch:</p> <p>Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library</p>		<p>Total 54,236 Stats are up on previous quarter by over 5,000- on track to meet the target.</p> <p>Ditton - 4,775 Widnes - 22,145 Runcorn - 7,247 Halton Lea - 20,069</p>

Corporate Priority	<p>Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.</p> <p>Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy.</p> <p>Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families.</p> <p>Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need.</p> <p>Community Centres</p>
ERD 26	Increase footfall at the Community Centres

Milestone: Monitor footfall, hires and events at Community Centres	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Community Centres - Total number of users in attendance (including drop-ins, events and hires)		<p>Total for Q2 is 49,321: -</p> <p>Castlefields 9,813 Ditton 10,184 Grangeway 10,893 Murdishaw 9,813 Upton 8,618</p> <p>Based on the previous quarter, Murdishaw has increased its footfall in Q2, this is due to a new booking from the Growth Company for 2 full days per week and are hoping to increase this to a 5-day week booking. All other Centres remain consistent in their quarterly footfall.</p>
Community Centres - Total number of hires		<p>Total for Q2 is 1,918: -</p> <p>Castlefields 363 Ditton 387 Grangeway 358 Murdishaw 351 Upton 459</p> <p>All Centres are performing well with the bookings as expected. However, Q3 figures are expected to increase at Upton due to the outdoor activities moving indoors for the winter period to the Sports Hall.</p> <p>There is some capacity available in the afternoons across community centres the service is promoting via social media and word of mouth.</p>
Community Centres - Total number of Centre organised events		Each Centre held a Fun Day for Halton's 50 th Anniversary, Grangeway and Upton

	<p>are running their own bingo sessions for the community. Grangeway bingo session is well attended, the attendance is likely to improve at Upton bingo, as we have completed a leaflet drop in the area to assist with increasing the footfall. Overall, the Community Centres service directly delivered 39 events in the quarter.</p>
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4.0 Financial Statements

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**Revenue Operational Budget at 30 September 24**

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

Comments on the above figures

Finance communicates with the department on a regular basis to manage and analyse spending, identifying potential savings that could support current and future priorities.

In an era of constrained budgets, achieving these goals is essential. The above report indicates that the department net spend will be under budget by £0.030m at year-end, compared to the month 4 projection of £0.025m under budget.

Supporting Information

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

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

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

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

A reconciliation of service charges at Rutland House and the relocation of Connect to Halton to the Municipal Building have increased the fees and charges income. As a result, the department is forecasting an overachievement against the income target of £0.063m by year-end.

Managers have asked to identify and implement measures to reduce unnecessary spending, whilst also ensuring the needs of the service are met leading to the department's projecting a positive variance amounting to £0.017m within supplies and services.

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

The Department highlighted the necessity of expert advice to advance regeneration projects. Additionally, the change in Government highlighted the need for an up-to-date Housing Strategy for the Borough. Following a meeting with the Director of Economy, Enterprise, and Property, it was decided to use the Department's reserves to cover these one-off costs.

Seeking external advice will assist with future grant funding requests from the LCR and Government and enable the department to fulfil its obligations regarding the borough's regeneration strategy.

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

Due to a delay in securing a new security contract, the current provider has been granted a one-year extension. Based on spending over the last six months, spend is projected to exceed budget by £0.055m by the end of the year.

The Repairs and Maintenance program is under continuous review to ensure it stays within budget. This financial year is particularly challenging because the 2024/25 budget did not include an inflation

adjustment and was further reduced by 10%. An exercise was conducted with the service to distinguish between capital and revenue expenditures, and the budgets have been adjusted accordingly. Despite these adjustments, revenue expenditure is projected to exceed the budget by £0.098m by the end of the year.

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

Approved 2024/25 Savings

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

APPENDIX A

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

Capital Budget at 30 September 24

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

Comments on above figures

3MG

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

Foundry Lane

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

Murdishaw

The allocation has been brought forward to continue work to improve the amenity at Murdishaw Community Centre as part of the wider community project. Work has been completed to provide allotment space and further work is due to be undertaken to provide secure and accessible spaces, enhancing the allotment offer. It is intended to allocate and spend the remaining balance within the financial year.

The improvements are part of the wider Murdishaw community regeneration scheme which has supported the delivery of the Tea Tree community café, improvements to bungalows on the estate and environmental improvements.

Sci-Tech Daresbury Project Violet

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

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

Equality Improvement Works All budget will be spent by year end, £0.200m allocated to The Brindley.

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

Changing Places

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

Runcorn Station Quarter

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

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

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

Town Deal

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

Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development

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

Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition

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

Port of Weston

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

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

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

COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024

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

Comments on the above figures

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Budget Savings**COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT**

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
COMM3	Sport & Recreation	471	Restructuring the roles and responsibilities of the Sports Development Team	36	0		 Restructure is currently underway
COMM5	Stadium & Catering Services – School Meals	12	Cease to deliver the school meals service, which has made significant losses of over £200,000 for a number of years and is forecast to make a similar loss by year-end. Work would be undertaken with schools over the next two years to support them to secure an alternative means of delivery, whether in-house or via an external provider.	0	12		 The cessation of the service is underway with the majority of schools ending their contracts by the end of the calendar year.
Total Community & Environment Department				36	12		

Symbols are used in the following manner:

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

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

Amber

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

Red

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

Capital

Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation £000	2024/25 Revised Allocation £000	Q1 Spend £000	Q2 Spend £000	Q3 Spend £000	Q4 Spend £000	Total Spend £000	Allocation remaining £000
Environment & Regeneration Directorate								
Community & Greenspace								
Stadium Minor Works	30.0	30.0	7.9	7.7			15.6	14.4
Halton Leisure Centre	8,997.0	8,997.0	2,030.0	3,045.4			5,075.4	3,921.6
Children's Playground Equipment	67.8	67.8	1.0	1.0			2.0	65.8
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340.0	340.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	340.0
Upton Improvements	13.0	13.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	13.0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	12.0
Open Spaces Schemes	600.0	600.0	130.0	154.4			284.4	315.6
Runcorn Town Park	468.6	468.6	0.0	6.8			6.8	461.8
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,933.5	1,933.5	2.4	4.4			6.8	1,926.7
Pickerings Pasture Cafe	503.0	503.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	503.0
Replacement Cremator Widnes	308.0	308.0	0.0	77.3			77.3	230.7
Litter Bins	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	20.0
Total Community & Greenspace	13,292.9	13,292.9	2,171.3	3,297.0	0.0	0.0	5,468.3	7,824.6

The Halton Leisure centre capital scheme is currently ahead of schedule with the site aiming to open and be functional by the end of the financial year. Work has also begun under the Replacement Cremator project, this work will reduce the risk of Halton being unable to carry out cremations, which poses risks to income generation and reputational damage.

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 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.