

# Public Document Pack



## Executive Board

Thursday, 13 June 2024 2.00 p.m.  
The Boardroom, Municipal Building

S. Young

Chief Executive

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

#### PART 1

Item	Page No
1. MINUTES	1 - 2
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
<p>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.</p>	
3. CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO	
(A) 2023/24 SPENDING AS AT 31 MARCH 2024	3 - 45

*Please contact Gill Ferguson 0151 511 8059 or  
gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.  
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 11 July 2024*

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6. SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985	
<b>PART II</b>	
<p>In this case the Board has a discretion to exclude the press and public and, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, it is <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, having been satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.</p>	
7. ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL AND DEPUTY LEADER'S PORTFOLIO'S	
(A) DELIVERING THE FREEPORT UPDATE - KEY DECISION	186 - 191

***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.***

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Tuesday, 14 May 2024 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building*

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Dennett, Harris, M. Lloyd Jones, T. McInerney, Nelson, P. Nolan, Thompson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor J. Lowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: S. Young, M. Reaney and G. Ferguson

Also in attendance: None

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

	<i>Action</i>
<p>EXB110 MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>EXB111 APPOINTMENT OF THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to appoint Councillor Mike Wharton as the Leader and Councillor Dave Thompson as the Deputy Leader of the Council for the 2024/25 Municipal Year</p>	Chief Executive
<p>EXB112 APPOINTMENT OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR AND APPOINTMENT OF HEALTH PPB CO-OPTEE</p> <p>The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive, regarding appointments to the Council's Boards, Committees and Scrutiny Co-ordinator post, and the re-appointment of a non-voting co-optee to the Health Policy and Performance Board, for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.</p> <p>A list of Committee and Board memberships was tabled at the meeting.</p>	

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to make the following appointments: Chief Executive

- 1) to the Council's Boards, Committees and Scrutiny Co-ordinator post, for the 2024/25 Municipal Year; and
- 2) Mr David Wilson - Healthwatch Halton, be re-appointed as non voting Co-optee to the Health Policy and Performance Board, for the 2024/25 Municipal Year

*Meeting ended at 2.05 p.m.*

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 13 June 2024

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Director of Finance

**PORTFOLIO:** Corporate Services

**SUBJECT:** 2023/24 Spending as at 31 March 2024

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To report the Council's overall revenue and capital net spending position for the 2023/24 financial year.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That;**

- (i) The Council's 2023/24 outturn position as presented in the report be noted;**
- (ii) Directorates take all possible steps to manage spending in line with budget during 2024/25;**
- (iii) Priority is given to the acceleration of the Council's Transformation Programme, to ensure it is sufficiently developed to deliver the savings required to meet the medium-term financial gap and help the Council replenish its reserves.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Revenue Spending**

- 3.1 Appendix 1 presents a summary of spending against the Council's revenue budget for the 2023/24 and Appendix 2 provides detailed figures for each individual Department.
- 3.2 In overall terms, net Council spending as at 31 March 2024 is £5.633m over budget. This is an improvement from the forecast outturn position of £7.144m reported at the end of December 2023, showing that the actions being taken by Directorates are having a positive effect. Whilst an improved position, it still has a significant detrimental impact upon the Council's finances and further reduces the Council's limited reserves.
- 3.3 It is clear that the trend of overspending against the approved budget cannot continue, as this is a position which the Council cannot sustain.

The External Auditors Annual Report (received by Audit & Governance Board 20 March 2024) raised the issue of the Council's financial sustainability as a major weakness. The External Auditor issued a key recommendation that the Council should ensure its Transformation Programme is sufficiently developed to meet the medium-term financial gap and help the Council replenish its reserves.

- 3.4 Funding of the overspend position will be met from reductions made via a review of earmarked reserves. The balance of the General Fund reserve totals £5.149m which is considered to be a minimum level which the Council should hold. Further information regarding reserves is included in paragraph 3.27 below.
- 3.5 The total annual budget has increased over the past quarter from £140.880m to £141.772m, an increase of £0.821m. The reason for this is a recalculation by Government of the business rates baseline and a one-off adjustment to the business rates top-up grant. The gain realised here has been moved to reserves and was used to assist with balancing the Council's 2024/25 budget.
- 3.6 The outturn position is a significant improvement on the forecast overspend of £7.144m reported at the end of quarter 3. Detail on significant departmental variances is included within the report.
- 3.7 The table below summarises changes (by directorate) between the forecast outturn reported at 31 December 2023 and the actual outturn position at 31 March 2024. Included below the table are the main reasons for the changes.

	<b>Forecast Outturn Variance 31 December 2023</b>	<b>Actual Outturn Variance to 31 March 2024</b>	<b>Variance</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Adults Directorate	-2,497	-2,819	-322
Chief Executives Directorate	-534	-960	-426
Children Services Directorate	-10,931	-11,020	-89
Environment & Regeneration Directorate	883	2,039	1,156
Public Health Directorate	66	316	250
Corporate & Democracy	5,869	6,812	943
<b>Total Variance</b>	<b>-7,144</b>	<b>-5,633</b>	<b>1,512</b>

- Environment and Regeneration outturn has improved on the forecast position by £1.156m. The main reason for this being £0.996m relating to a refund received following Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority carrying out a reconciliation of the total contract costs for prior years across the Liverpool City

Region. The percentage of contract costs charged to Halton has reduced in recent years, meaning that it is likely that this refund is a one-off occurrence.

- Corporate & Democracy position has improved due to the Council not drawing down any additional contingency during the final quarter of the year and actual investment income being greater than forecast.
- Chief Executives Directorate position shows an increase in overspend of £0.426m above what was forecast at Q3. Most of the increased costs relate to Legal Services where there is an overspend of £0.480m in Barrister Fees. This increased cost relates primarily to the staffing pressures and the volume of extra work required to meet the increased demands relating to Children's Services.

- 3.8 The outturn position continues shows overspend positions across the majority of departments with the exceptions of Public Health and the Environment and Regeneration Directorate departments.
- 3.9 The largest pressure on the budget continues to be within the Children & Families Department, where net spend for the year is over the approved budget by £10.0m
- 3.10 Included within the departmental figures is the cost of the 2023/24 pay award. This was settled in November 2023 at an increase of £1,925 (excl on-costs) for all staff, with the exception of senior officers where a pay award of 3.5% was previously agreed. The £1,925 equates to a 6% pay increase on average.
- 3.11 The use and cost of agency staff continues to be one of the main contributing factors to the overspend position for the year. This is most evident within the Children & Families Department and the Care Homes Division. Initiatives and support from the Transformation Programme are ongoing to reduce reliance upon agency staff. However, given the level of spend to date, the changes must be introduced as quickly as possible to avoid this becoming an unaffordable issue in the next financial year.
- 3.12 Analysis of agency spend for the year, together with comparative analysis of 2022/23 costs, is included in the table below. This shows an increase in costs over each quarter of the financial year with costs increasing the 2022/23 level of agency spend by 9.15% (4.54% excluding the Transformation Programme).



	2023/24					2022/23
	Q1 £'000	Q2 £'000	Q3 £'000	Q4 £'000	Total £'000	Total £'000
Adult Social Care	1,176	1,339	1,486	1,926	5,927	5,677
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	118	114	122	-354	0	23
Children & Family Services	1,395	1,506	1,731	1,525	6,157	6,315
Community & Greenspace	44	75	98	119	336	130
Economy, Enterprise & Property	92	71	89	91	343	452
Education, Inclusion & Provision	107	102	76	108	393	31
Finance	18	23	0	15	56	31
ICT & Support Services	0	1	6	3	10	0
Legal & Democratic Services	193	182	202	237	814	473
Planning & Transportation	45	48	50	63	206	225
Public Health & Public Protection	0	1	5	15	21	249
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,188</b>	<b>3,462</b>	<b>3,865</b>	<b>3,748</b>	<b>14,263</b>	<b>13,605</b>

3.13 Inflation as at April 2024 is running at 2.3% for CPI and 3.3% for RPI. Whilst rates are above the Government target of 2%, they represent the lowest inflation rates since the summer of 2021.

3.14 Forecast inflation rates for the year are estimated with a range 1.7% to 4.1%, the average expected rate to be 2.4%. It is forecast rates will drop below the 2% Government target rate in early 2025.

3.15 The pay award, high inflation rates, increasing service demands and use of agency staff, continue to have a serious negative impact upon the Council's financial position. As such there continues to be a real urgency for all departments to cease any non-essential spending and to implement any proposed efficiency savings as soon as possible.

### Revenue - Operational Spending

3.16 Within the overall budget position for the year, the key variances are as follows;

(i) **Children and Families Department**

The Department's net expenditure is £10.021m over budget at the end of the financial year with the majority relating to Children's Social Care.

Employee costs are over budget by £3.094m at the end of the financial year. There continues to be a heavy reliance on agency staff to fill vacancies across the structure, including Social Worker and Practice Lead positions. This combined with a number of agency staff recruited in addition to the current staffing structure is the cause of this overspend.

Total agency spend for 2023/24 across the division was £6.157m or 51% of the employee budget.

There are various workstreams currently in place to target the difficulties in recruitment and to reduce the volume of agency staff, including the Social Work Academy, a recruitment work group and

a local offer for employees offering recruitment and retention enhancements for those working in Children’s Social Care.

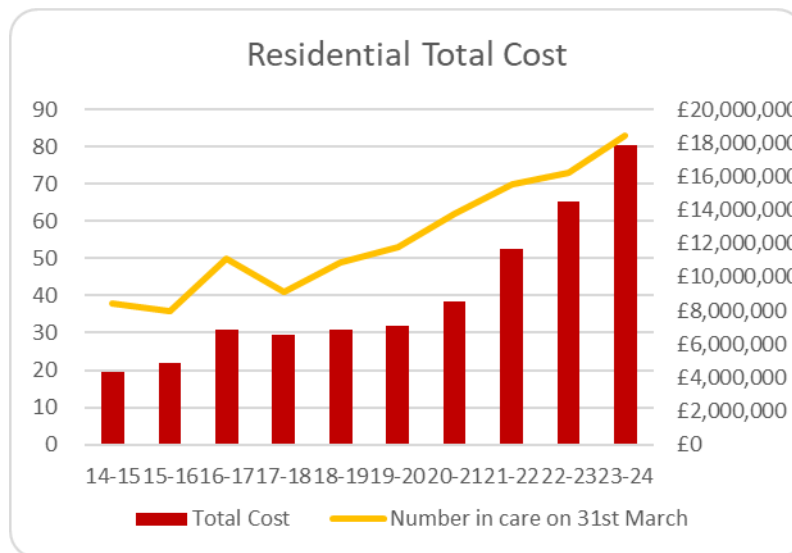
Out of Borough Residential Care continues to be the main budget pressure for the Children and Families Department as the costs of residential care have continued to rise year-on-year. This budget was given additional growth of £4.052m for this financial year to alleviate the pressure, however residential care is still £4.082m overspent.

The table below compares actual revenue spend at 31 March 2024 to annual forecast costs at 31 December 2023.

Provision	Weekly Costs	31 March 2024		31st December 2023	
		No.	Estimated cost	No. Placed	Estimated cost for the year
Residential	£2000 - £3000	7	1,220,918	6	853,613
Residential	£3001 - £4000	8	1,477,688	11	1,959,602
Residential	£4001 - £5000	6	1,401,013	6	1,473,015
Residential	£5001 - £13720	35	10,886,809	30	10,611,463
Secure	£6397 - £8137			0	0
Leaving Care	£443 - £7175	18	2,260,385	17	1,922,334
Parent & Child	£2000 - £5500	8	628,230	6	562,071
<b>Total:</b>		<b>82</b>	<b>17,875,043</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>17,382,099</b>

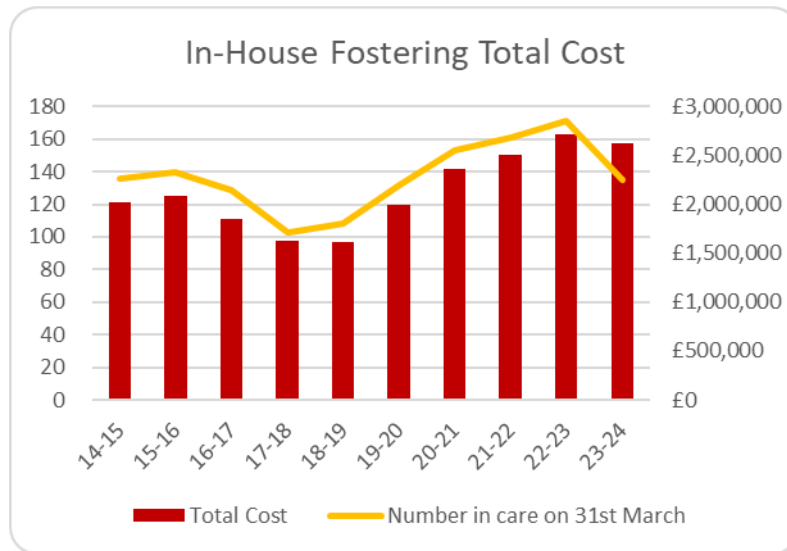
Over the past year out of borough residential care costs have increased from £14.487m (as at 31 March 2023) to £17.875m (23%). Over the same period the number of children with an out of borough residential placement increased from 73 to 82, an increase of 9 (12%).

The graph below illustrates the rising costs of Residential Care, for consistency this does not include the costs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) as these costs were not included in previous years.

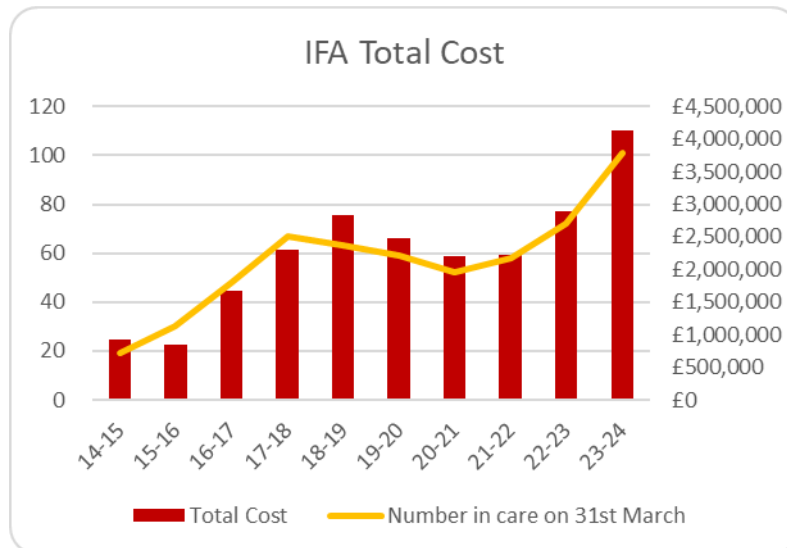


In house fostering placements is £0.119m under budget profile. Growth of £0.268m was added which has reduced pressure in this area. Along with the growth provided to reduce the pressure, the number of children placed within in-house provision has reduced. The underspend relates to a number of children that have moved to either a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) or residential care placement, as the inhouse placement has become unstable.

Work continues to recruit and retain Halton’s In-house foster carers, along with training to develop carers enabling them to accommodate more specialist placements and support and mentor each other. This therefore means that costs could increase. However, the ability to accommodate young people within in-house provision provides a substantial saving in comparison to IFA or residential care.



Increasing numbers of children in care and insufficient in-house fostering provision has meant increased reliance on IFA. Higher numbers of children placed within IFA provision and increased IFA rates has resulted in an outturn overspend of £1.081m.



(ii) **Education, Inclusion and Provision Department**

The net departmental expenditure for EIP is £0.998m over budget at the end of 23/24.

Schools Transport continues to be the main budget pressure for Education, Inclusion and Provision. The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils with transport. The budget can be split into two main areas; between SEN pupils attending an In Borough Schools and those attending Out of Borough Schools. The demand for the School Transport service is increasing in line with the increasing number of pupils with SEN within the Borough.

The table below breaks down the split between the different areas, and how each areas spend compares to budget.

	<b>2023-24</b>				
<b>Area</b>	<b>No. of Users</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>Actual Spend £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>	<b>Average Cost per User £</b>
In Borough	422	1,186	1,470	(284)	£3,483
Out of Borough	125	459	1,181	(722)	£9,448
<b>Total</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>1,645</b>	<b>2,651</b>	<b>(1,006)</b>	

As at 31 March 2024 there were 547 service users, largely unchanged from Q3. The majority of which attend schools within the Borough, 422 compared to 125 out of the Borough. As can be seen both areas are overspending compared to budget. However, the out of borough forecast overspend is far greater than that for in-borough. The demand for the School Transport service is increasing in line with the increasing number of pupils with SEN within the Borough.

In setting the 2024/25 budget, growth has been added to increase the annual budget to £2.100m, despite which this is still significantly short of actual spend incurred during 2023/24. There is a workstream within the Transformation Programme considering this area, which needs to be looked at with pace to ensure the Council starts to see a reduction in costs.

(ii) **Adult Social Care Directorate**Community Care

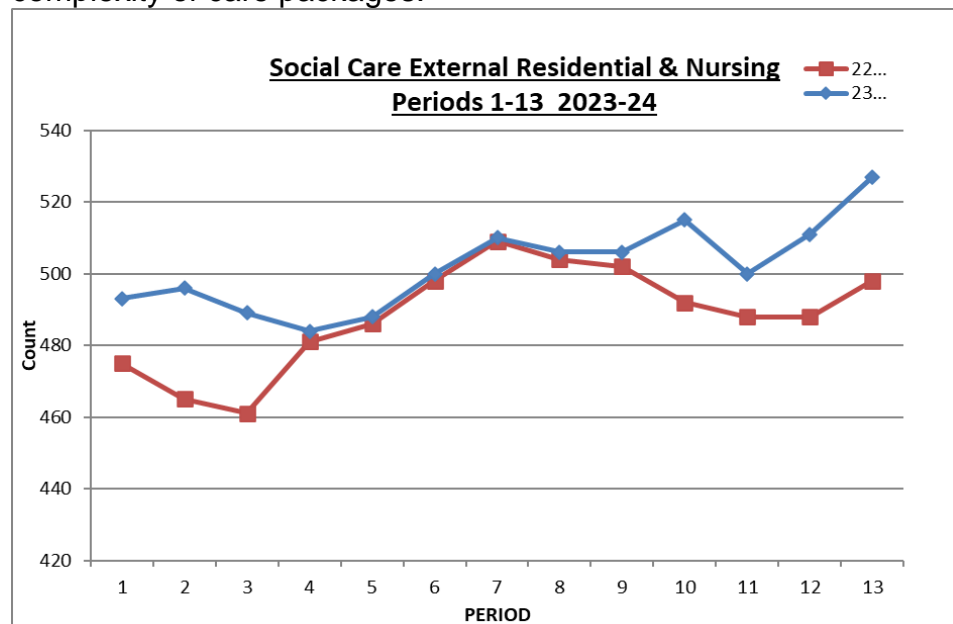
At the end of the financial year, expenditure on Community Care services is over budget profile by £1.326m.

The Domiciliary and Supported Living outturn is significantly more than was forecast at quarter 3. This is due to two high cost service users who were omitted from the previous forecast

Residential & Nursing Care

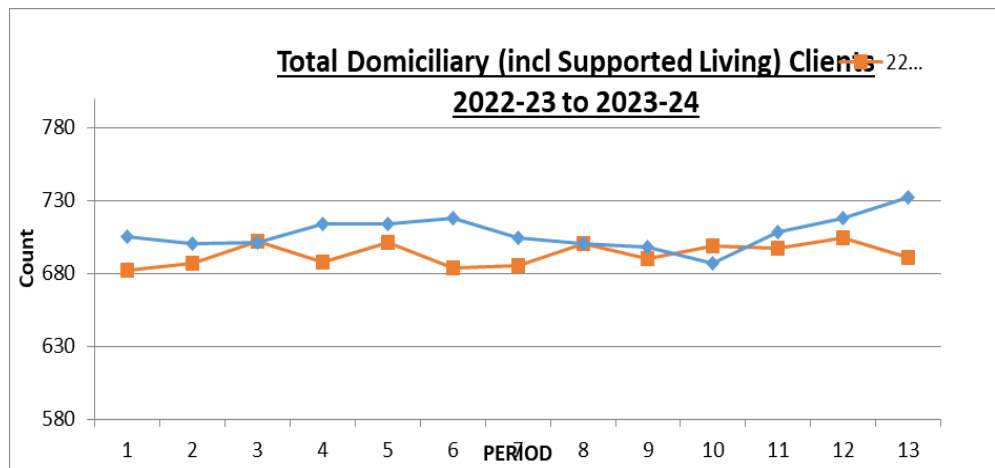
Between April 23 and March 24 the number of people in receipt of Residential or Nursing Care increased from 493 to 527, an increase of 6.8%.

The average cost of a package of care has increased 10.6% from £864 in April to £956 in March suggesting an increase in the complexity of care packages.

Domiciliary Care & Supported Living

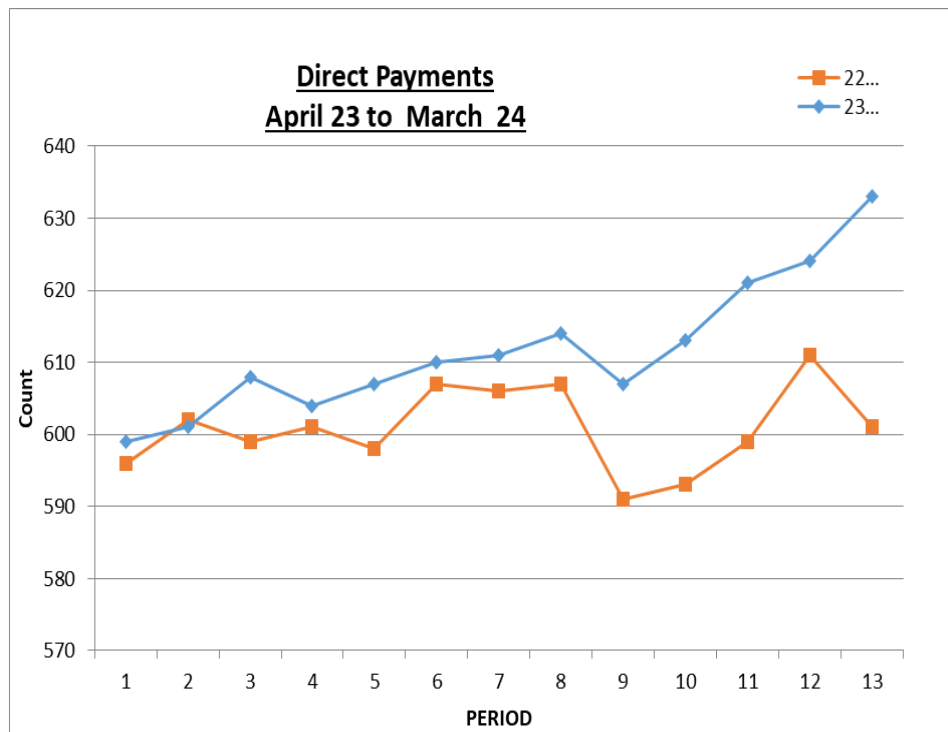
At 31 March 2024 there are 732 service users receiving a package of care at home compared to 705 in April 2023, an increase of 3.8%.

The average cost of a package of care has increased from £417 in April to £475 at the end of the year, an increase of 13.9%. Note, this is inclusive of an in-year uplift of 6% paid to providers from October 2023, funded from the Market Sustainability Grant.



**Direct Payments**

The number of service users in receipt of a Direct Payment increased from 599 to 633 over the course of the year. The average package of care cost increased from £551 to £591, an increase of £7.25%. This service continues to be a pressure as it is often used as a default position due to the current domiciliary provider being unable to pick up additional care packages.



**Care Homes**

Net spend for the Care Homes division to 31 March 2024 was £10.942m, which was £1.036m higher than budget. The main budget pressure related to staffing costs.

Recruitment and retention of staff is a continued pressure across the care homes and the division is heavily reliant upon the use of overtime and agency staff to cover vacancies. At the end of financial year 2023/24 total agency spend across the care homes reached £3.6m, the cost of which has partially been offset by staff vacancies.

Whilst the spend remains high, there has been a reduction of £0.5m from the £4.1m spend in the previous financial year. This is due to a combination of all care homes now using the Matrix booking system, and some vacant posts being filled permanently.

Throughout the year a number of residents within the care homes were identified as needing 1:1 care in addition to the support the care homes provide on a day to day basis.

(iii) **Community and Greenspaces**

The net departmental expenditure is £1.808m under budget at the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

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

Spend on premises costs is £0.592m under budget in 2023/24. The Department was provided with an increase of £1.2m in utility budgets for 2023/24, based on an estimated increase in energy bills, however, the actual increase in costs was not as high as anticipated. Additionally, £0.126m of credits for prior-year gas costs were received by the Department following a reconciliation of energy bills which has increased the level of the underspend significantly. This underspend is unlikely to occur in future years as utility budgets have been reduced for 2024/25.

Both Supplies & Services, and Hired & Contracted Services budgets show a significant overspend in 2023/24. This is a budget pressure throughout the Department and is primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years.

Waste Disposal Contract costs are £1.262m under budget during 2023/24. £0.996m of this underspend relates to a refund received following Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority carrying out a reconciliation of the total contract costs for prior years across the



Liverpool City Region. The percentage of contract costs charged to Halton has reduced in recent years, meaning that it is likely that this refund is a one-off occurrence. The remaining £0.266m of the underspend relates to 2023/24 contract costs, which did not increase as much as expected from the previous year.

Income targets for the department have always been a cause of budget pressure, however, the past year has seen a significant reduction in the shortfall of income against budget. Overall the department has generated income of £14.863m against a budget target of £14.924m, with significant income increases for leisure centres and The Brindley.

#### (iv) **Corporate and Democracy**

Net expenditure for Corporate & Democracy was £6.812m below budget for the year to 31 March 2024. There were two main areas which reflect on the underspend against budget.

Included within the above figures are both general and specific contingency budgets. This includes a contingency for continuing budget pressures within social care services and recognises that efforts to control and reduce spending within these areas is part of a longer term plan. The contingency budget figure for the year was £4.036m.

Interest rate rises by the Bank of England (5.25% at March 2024) have increased the amount of interest which the Council is able to generate from its cash investments. This position also helped by the Council maintaining higher cash reserves than expected at the time the budget was set. Overall external income from investments was £5.685m against a budget target of £3.999m, an overachievement of £1.686m.

Looking ahead to 2024/25, contingency budget has largely been allocated out to departments, to assist them with managing their overspending areas. The budgeted income target for interest receivable has also been significantly increased to match actual activity, to assist with balancing the 2024/25 budget.

### **Collection Fund**

- 3.17 Council tax collection for the year to 31 March 2024 is 93.8%, down 0.11% on this point last year. Cash collection for the year to date is £74.3m, this includes £2.2m collected in relation to previous year debt.
- 3.18 Business rates collection for the year to 31 March 2024 is 96.7%, down 0.94% on this point last year. The collection percentage has been impacted by a large site coming onto the rating list during March 2024, for which the Council has billed the organisation in full for the rates due but it remained unpaid at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Excluding this site the

collection rate would have been 97.7%, up by 0.08% on this point last year.

### **Review of Reserves**

- 3.19 As at 31 March 2024 the Council's General Reserve is unchanged from the previous year at £5.147m, which represents 3.46% of the Council's 2024/25 net budget. This is considered to be the minimum level required.
- 3.20 Funding of the 2023/24 overspend position has been funded from available earmarked reserves.
- 3.21 A review of earmarked reserves has been undertaken and depending upon their purpose and level of commitment, it has been determined whether they can be released in part or in full to assist with funding the Council's current financial challenges, recognising that this only provides one-year solutions.

### **Mersey Gateway Reserve**

- 3.22 During the year a performance review of the Mersey Gateway project was undertaken by Mersey Gateway Crossing Board (MGCB) and the Department for Transport (DfT). This review covered the period October 2017 to March 2023 and future reviews will be undertaken every 3 years.
- 3.23 As part of the review an exercise was undertaken regarding the excess revenue share procedure. This identified that up to March 2023 the excess income from the project over and above project costs was £52.647m. The Council's share of this amount is £7.897m, with £44.750 being repayable to the DfT.
- 3.24 Included within Schedule 3 of the Mersey Gateway Road User Charging Scheme are restrictions upon how the Council can utilise the excess share. Included as part of these is the following:
- Making payments to the Council's General Fund for the purpose of directly or indirectly facilitating the achievement of policies relating to public transport in its Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- 3.25 Since April 2018 (first full year of Mersey Gateway being operational) the Council has incurred costs of £16.510m in funding LTP initiatives. The Council's share of the excess funding meets these conditions, and therefore forms part of the Council's overall reserves available to fund the 2023/24 overspend and future years' budgets.

3.26 The table below shows the cost of funding the LTP over the 5 years from 2018/19 to 2022/23.

Narrative	Extract from LTP	18/19 spend	19/20 spend	20/21 spend	21/22 spend	22/23 spend	Total Spend 18/19 to 22/23
		£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Highways Maintenance	Maintain roads and footpaths to appropriate standards. Provide adequate winter maintenance to roads and footpaths	2.228	2.362	2.699	2.369	2.739	12.397
Street lighting	Maintain street lights to best possible standards ensuring energy efficient	0.157	0.165	-0.043	0.050	0.035	0.364
School Crossing Patrol	Continue to ensure road safety	0.080	0.077	0.075	0.078	0.074	0.384
Bus shelters	Good quality timetable information	0.022	0.044	0.020	0.005	0.028	0.118
Independent travel trainer and travel training co-ordinator	Continue to provide travel training for vulnerable young people and adults	0.061	0.064	0.064	0.067	0.074	0.331
Bus support	Ensure a good, reliable bus service which is accessible to all. High frequency services	0.554	0.503	0.457	0.666	0.736	2.915
<b>Totals</b>		<b>3.103</b>	<b>3.214</b>	<b>3.271</b>	<b>3.235</b>	<b>3.686</b>	<b>16.510</b>

### Reserves Summary

3.27 A summary breakdown of Council reserves is presented in the table below, this shows the remaining position “after” funding of the 2023/24 overspend.

<b>Summary of General and Earmarked Reserves</b>	
<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Reserve Value £m</b>
<b>Corporate:</b>	
General Fund	5.149
Transformation Fund	6.334
Capital Reserve	0.500
Insurance Reserve	1.000
<b>Specific Projects:</b>	
Adult Social Care	0.911
Fleet Replacement	0.328
Highways Feasibility Costs	0.964
Local Development Framework	0.494
Community & Environment	0.238
Mersey Valley Golf Club	0.483
Various Other	0.383
<b>Grants:</b>	
Building Schools for the Future	7.123
Public Health	1.881

Supporting Families Performance Payments	0.534
Children's & Education	0.820
Domestic Abuse	1.186
Community & Environment	1.094
Various Other	1.083
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>30.505</b>

- 3.28 Held within the Transformation Reserve is £6.334m, set aside to provide funding to assist with balancing future budgets and a range of potential spending commitments in future years associated with delivering the Transformation Programme.
- 3.29 The excess share of the Mersey Gateway reserve, as outlined above, has been included within the Transformation Reserve.
- 3.30 The above table shows the diminishing level of reserves available to assist with funding any future budget overspends and balancing future budgets. Only the £11.483m total of the General Fund and Transformation Reserve could now be used for these purposes, as all remaining reserves are committed for specific purposes. It is therefore essential over the coming year that councilwide spending is brought in line with budget and the Transformation Programme delivers the required budget savings.

### **Capital Spending**

- 3.31 Capital spending at 31st March 2024 totalled £43.939m, which is 71.4% of the planned spending of £61.528m (which assumes a 20% slippage between years). Appendix 2 presents details of spending against all capital schemes.

### **Outstanding Sundry Debts**

- 3.32 A review of aged debt outstanding as at March 2024, shows an increase in overdue sundry debts of £1.200m or 7.0%. The total balance outstanding and currently overdue is £18.525m.
- 3.33 The increase in outstanding debt is most notable within Adult Social Care, the total outstanding debt has increased since March 2023 by £1.696m or 13.9% to £12.228m. Although it should be noted there has been a gradual improvement with this position, as during the final quarter of the financial year ASC outstanding debt has reduced by £0.646m or 5% from December 2023 levels.
- 3.34 The increase in ASC debt has been tracked over the past year and in March 2024, Management Team agreed to the creation of two new permanent Community Care Worker posts to concentrate on collection of old debt and prompt recovery of new debt. It is expected there will be a significant drop in outstanding debt over the next year given the resource available to focus on this area.

3.35 The table below summarises debt at March 24 compared to March 23 and also shows the bad debt provision the Council has had to prudently set aside to account for any future write off of debt. The significant increase over the year for Employment, Enterprise and Property, is due to repayment of a significant grant claim from a private operator. This debt is being collected via an up to date payment plan and is expected to be collected in full.

Department	Outstanding Debt March 2024 £'000	Outstanding Debt March 2023 £'000	Increase (Decrease) in Debt in Debt £'000	Bad Debt Provision March 2024 £'000
Adult Social Care	12,228	10,532	1,696	2,607
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	13	16	(4)	10
Children & Family Services	1,016	936	80	119
Community & Greenspace	1,324	1,390	(66)	317
Economy, Enterprise & Property	1,116	681	435	175
Education, Inclusion & Provision	296	746	(450)	26
Finance Department	676	877	(201)	44
ICT & Support Services	180	176	4	18
Legal & Democratic Services	75	82	(7)	70
Planning & Transportation	441	494	(53)	184
Public Health & Public Protection	85	55	30	11
Other	1,075	1,340	(265)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,525</b>	<b>17,325</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>3,581</b>

3.36 It should be noted that the profile of aged debt is a snapshot taken at a point in time and there is constant work being undertaken to recover outstanding debt.

3.37 Higher debt levels result in missed opportunities for the Council given the high level of return the Council can currently obtain on cash investments. For every £1m of debt, the Council is missing the opportunity to generate around £60,000 per annum in interest income. Therefore, it is essential that additional work is undertaken to analyse the debt in more detail to enable more prompt recovery action to be taken.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Whilst the outturn position for the year is £1.511m lower than forecast at quarter 3, it was only largely due a one-off reimbursement from the Waste contract which has helped achieve this position.

4.2 The £5.6m overspend for the year is a major concern for the Council. It is clear the Council cannot continue on the same course as it has over the last 6 years where net spending has been over the approved budget (with the exception of 2020/21).

- 4.3 The 2024/25 budget has been increased to reflect the increased spending against all the high pressure areas, including, Children's Social Care, Community Care and Schools Transport. It does not provide budget for the excess cost of agency staff (the assumption being that departments provide for this by reducing spend elsewhere) and the budget also includes a Transformation Programme savings target of £4m.
- 4.4 Departmental budget managers should continue to ensure that any expenditure is limited to absolutely essential items only. Departments should ensure that all spending continues to be restricted and tightly controlled throughout the financial year.
- 4.5 The use of agency staff should be a last resort and only used where there is a vacant post within the permanent establishment to mitigate against the additional cost.
- 4.6 There is an urgent requirement to accelerate the Transformation Programme to start delivering against the budget savings targets of £4m in 2024/25 and £16m over the following two years. If these are not delivered on schedule and spend on agency staff is not reduced, the Council will quickly run out of resources required to continue to deliver services.
- 4.7 A report on the 2024/25 budget monitoring position as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024 along with an initial outturn forecast, will be presented at the earliest opportunity to allow for any urgent corrective action to be taken.

## **5.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

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

- 6.1 There are no direct implications, however, the revenue budget and capital programme support the delivery and achievement of all the Council's priorities.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 There are a number of financial risks within the budget. However, the Council has internal controls and processes in place to ensure that spending remains in line with budget as far as possible.

## **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 1072**

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

## Summary of Revenue Spending to 31 March 2024

## APPENDIX 1

Directorate / Department	Annual Budget £'000	Actual To Date £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000
Adult Social Care	21,966	22,423	(457)
Care Homes	9,906	10,942	(1,036)
Community Care	15,697	17,023	(1,326)
Complex Care Pool	10,099	10,099	0
<b>Adults Directorate</b>	<b>57,668</b>	<b>60,487</b>	<b>(2,819)</b>
Finance	4,487	4,696	(209)
Legal & Democratic Services	1,749	2,087	(338)
ICT & Support Services	1,216	1,477	(261)
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	-1,568	-1,415	(153)
<b>Chief Executives Directorate</b>	<b>5,884</b>	<b>6,845</b>	<b>(961)</b>
Children & Families	32,115	42,136	(10,021)
Education, Inclusion & Provision	9,004	10,003	(999)
<b>Childrens Directorate</b>	<b>41,119</b>	<b>52,139</b>	<b>(11,020)</b>
Community & Greenspace	29,216	27,408	1,808
Economy, Enterprise & Property	3,182	2,988	194
Planning & Transportation	17,743	17,706	37
<b>Environment &amp; Regeneration Directorate</b>	<b>50,141</b>	<b>48,102</b>	<b>2,039</b>
<b>Corporate &amp; Democracy</b>	<b>-14,513</b>	<b>-21,325</b>	<b>6,812</b>
<b>Public Health Directorate</b>	<b>1,473</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>316</b>
<b>Total Operational Net Spend</b>	<b>141,772</b>	<b>147,405</b>	<b>(5,633)</b>





## Adult Social Care

## APPENDIX 2

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	15,593	15,919	(326)
Premises	695	679	16
Supplies & Services	1,426	1,396	30
Aids & Adaptations	38	39	(1)
Transport	228	386	(158)
Food Provision	201	202	(1)
Agency	734	726	8
Supported Accommodation and Services	1,205	1,211	(6)
Emergency Duty Team	110	163	(53)
Contacts & SLAs	577	575	2
<u>Housing Solutions Grant Funded Schemes</u>			
Homelessness Prevention	356	355	1
Rough Sleepers Initiative	157	167	(10)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>21,320</b>	<b>21,818</b>	<b>(498)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-804	-760	(44)
Sales & Rents Income	-453	-478	25
Transfer from Reserves	-435	-435	0
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-1,953	-2,131	178
Capital Salaries	-121	-121	0
Housing Schemes Income	-506	-540	34
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-4,272</b>	<b>-4,465</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>17,048</b>	<b>17,353</b>	<b>(305)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	583	583	0
Transport Support	575	727	(152)
Central Support	3,667	3,667	0
Asset Rental Support	205	205	0
Recharge Income	-112	-112	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>4,918</b>	<b>5,070</b>	<b>(152)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>21,966</b>	<b>22,423</b>	<b>(457)</b>

## Care Homes

	Annual Budget	Actual	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
<b><u>Madeline Mckenna</u></b>			
Employees	672	784	(112)
Other Premises	122	127	(5)
Supplies & Services	16	16	0
Food Provison	43	45	(2)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-35	-35	0
<b>Total Madeline Mckenna Expenditure</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>(119)</b>
<b><u>Millbrow</u></b>			
Employees	2,084	2,265	(181)
Other Premises	151	203	(52)
Supplies & Services	43	66	(23)
Food Provison	75	80	(5)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-101	-101	0
<b>Total Millbrow Expenditure</b>	<b>2,252</b>	<b>2,513</b>	<b>(261)</b>
<b><u>St Luke's</u></b>			
Employees	2,740	2,906	(166)
Other Premises	208	237	(29)
Supplies & Services	46	73	(27)
Food Provison	118	121	(3)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-76	-76	0
<b>Total St Luke's Expenditure</b>	<b>3,036</b>	<b>3,261</b>	<b>(225)</b>
<b><u>St Patrick's</u></b>			
Employees	1,824	2,246	(422)
Other Premises	191	192	(1)
Supplies & Services	43	65	(22)
Transport	0	0	(0)
Food Provison	112	130	(18)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-121	-121	0
<b>Total St Patrick's Expenditure</b>	<b>2,049</b>	<b>2,512</b>	<b>(463)</b>
<b><u>Care Homes Divison Management</u></b>			
Employees	285	250	35
Supplies & Services	0	3	(3)
<b>Care Home Divison Management</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>8,440</b>	<b>9,476</b>	<b>(1,036)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	285	285	0
Transport Support	0	0	0
Central Support	890	890	0
Asset Rental Support	291	291	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>9,906</b>	<b>10,942</b>	<b>(1,036)</b>

## Community Care

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Residential & Nursing	13,579	13,928	(349)
Domiciliary Care & Supported living	12,357	12,643	(286)
Direct Payments	12,218	12,969	(751)
Day Care	375	535	(160)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>38,529</b>	<b>40,075</b>	<b>(1,546)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Residential & Nursing Income	-12,059	-11,865	(194)
Community Care Income	-2,381	-2,402	21
Direct Payments Income	-956	-1,003	47
Income from other CCGs	-126	-131	5
Market Sustainability & Improvement Grant	-1,497	-1,497	0
Adult Social Care Support Grant	-4,357	-4,357	0
Market Sustainability Workforce Grant	-718	-718	0
LA UEC Grant	-156	-156	0
War Pension Disregard Grant	-67	-56	(11)
Other Income	-515	-867	352
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-22,832</b>	<b>-23,052</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>15,697</b>	<b>17,023</b>	<b>(1,326)</b>

## Complex Care Pool

	<b>Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Actual Spend £'000</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend) £'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Intermediate Care Services	5,292	5,150	142
Oakmeadow	1,831	1,894	(63)
Community Home Care First	1,530	2,047	(517)
Joint Equipment Store	829	1,014	(185)
HICafs	3,258	3,024	234
Contracts & SLA's	3,321	3,222	99
Carers Breaks	450	345	105
Carers Centre	354	357	(3)
Residential Care	7,393	7,209	184
Domiciliary Care & Supported Living	3,756	3,897	(141)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>28,014</b>	<b>28,159</b>	<b>(145)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
BCF	-12,762	-12,762	0
CCG Contribution to Pool	-2,864	-2,864	0
ASC Discharge Grant	-979	-979	0
ICB Discharge Grant	-942	-942	0
LA UEC Grant	-144	-144	0
Oakmeadow Income	-6	-2	(4)
Other Income	-25	-27	2
Transfer from Reserve	-193	-193	0
Cfwd from 2022/23	0	-147	147
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-17,915</b>	<b>-18,060</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>10,099</b>	<b>10,099</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	0	0	0
Transport	0	0	0
Central Support	0	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>10,099</b>	<b>10,099</b>	<b>0</b>

**Finance Department**

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	6,500	6,415	85
Insurances	1,039	1,048	(9)
Supplies & Services	446	406	40
Rent Allowances	30,945	30,945	0
Concessionary Travel	1,748	1,684	64
Non HRA Rent Rebates	51	51	0
Discretionary Social Fund	73	6	67
Discretionary Housing Payments	273	273	0
Household Support Fund Expenditure	2,528	2,528	0
Energy Bills Support	40	40	0
LCR Levy	2,241	2,241	0
Transfer to Reserves	17	0	17
Bad Debt Provision	110	281	(171)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>46,011</b>	<b>45,918</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Other Fees & Charges	-344	-385	41
Burdens Grant	-60	-104	44
Dedicated schools Grant	-123	-123	0
Council Tax Liability Order	-541	-649	108
Business Rates Admin Grant	-157	-157	0
Schools SLAs	-295	-311	16
LCR Reimbursement	-2,241	-2,241	0
HB Overpayment Debt Recovery	-236	-236	0
Rent Allowances	-30,390	-30,049	(341)
Non HRA Rent Rebate	-70	-70	0
Discretionary Housing Payment Grant	-285	-285	0
Housing Benefits Admin Grant	-493	-524	31
Universal Credits	-204	0	(204)
Council Tax Admin Grant	-2,526	-2,526	0
Household Support Fund Grant	-55	-55	0
Energy Bills Support	-129	-129	0
Alternative Fuel	-300	-300	0
Transfer from Reserves	-82	-85	3
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-38,531</b>	<b>-38,229</b>	<b>(302)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>7,480</b>	<b>7,689</b>	<b>(209)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	268	268	0
Transport	0	0	0
Central Support	2,069	2,069	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-5,330	-5,330	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-2,993</b>	<b>-2,993</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>4,487</b>	<b>4,696</b>	<b>(209)</b>

Legal & Democratic Services Department

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	1,436	1,364	72
Agency Costs (Locums)	0	814	(814)
Supplies & Services	164	175	(11)
Civic Catering & Functions	26	12	14
Legal Expenses	260	614	(354)
Transport Related Expenditure	11	7	4
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,897</b>	<b>2,986</b>	<b>(1,089)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
School SLA's	-92	-78	(14)
Licence Income	-284	-324	40
Reimbursement & Other Grants	-42	-42	0
Fees & Charges Income	-70	-43	(27)
Transfer from Reserves	0	-752	752
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-488</b>	<b>-1,239</b>	<b>751</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>1,409</b>	<b>1,747</b>	<b>(338)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	58	58	0
Transport Recharges	0	0	0
Central Support Recharges	282	282	0
Asset Rental Support Costs	0	0	0
Support Recharge Income	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,749</b>	<b>2,087</b>	<b>(338)</b>



	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employee Expenditure	8,126	8,406	(280)
Supplies & Services Expenditure	1,122	1,276	(154)
Capital Finance	78	32	45
Computer Repairs & Software	1,021	1,021	(0)
Communication Costs	155	155	0
Premises Expenditure	175	135	40
Transport Expenditure	3	2	1
Transfer to Reserves	147	147	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>10,827</b>	<b>11,175</b>	<b>(347)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-996	-1,087	91
Schools SLA Income	-610	-606	(4)
Transfer From Reserves	-150	-150	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-1,756</b>	<b>-1,843</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>9,071</b>	<b>9,332</b>	<b>(260)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	557	557	0
Transport	16	16	0
Central Support	1,797	1,797	0
Asset Rental Support	726	726	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-10,951	-10,951	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-7,855</b>	<b>-7,855</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>(260)</b>

## Chief Executives Delivery Unit

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	2,845	2,907	(62)
Employees Training	117	78	39
Apprenticeship Levy	379	379	0
Supplies & Services	203	337	(134)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,544</b>	<b>3,701</b>	<b>(157)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-241	-245	4
Schools SLA	-532	-532	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-773</b>	<b>-777</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>2,771</b>	<b>2,924</b>	<b>(153)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	117	117	0
Transport	0	0	0
Central Support	1,023	1,023	0
Asset Rental Support	12	12	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-5,491	-5,491	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-4,339</b>	<b>-4,339</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>-1,568</b>	<b>-1,415</b>	<b>(153)</b>

## Children &amp; Families Department

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	12,101	15,195	(3,094)
Other Premises	476	421	55
Supplies & Services	2,078	3,280	(1,202)
Transport	113	376	(263)
Direct Payments	1,048	871	177
Commissioned services to Vol Orgs	224	198	26
Residential Care	14,993	19,075	(4,082)
Out of Borough Adoption	30	0	30
Out of Borough Fostering	3,194	4,274	(1,081)
In House Adoption	461	453	9
Special Guardianship Order	2,221	2,523	(302)
In House Foster Carer Placements	2,740	2,621	119
Lavender House	230	219	11
Home Support & Respite	530	553	(23)
Care Leavers	286	308	(21)
Family Support	53	75	(22)
Contracted services	3	4	(1)
Early Years	275	440	(165)
Emergency Duty	124	184	(59)
Youth Offending Services	255	326	(71)
Capital Financing	0	0	(0)
Transfer to Reserve	106	106	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>41,540</b>	<b>51,501</b>	<b>(9,961)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-34	-23	(11)
Sales Income	-4	-2	(2)
Rents	-84	-84	0
Reimbursement & other Grant Income	-1,134	-1,086	(48)
Transfer from reserve	-193	-193	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	-50	-50	0
Government Grants	-10,488	-10,488	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-11,988</b>	<b>-11,926</b>	<b>(62)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>29,552</b>	<b>39,575</b>	<b>(10,023)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	392	392	(0)
Transport Support	15	13	2
Central Support	3,290	3,290	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-1,134	-1,134	(0)
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>2,563</b>	<b>2,561</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>32,115</b>	<b>42,136</b>	<b>(10,021)</b>

## Education, Inclusion &amp; Provision Department

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	7,206	7,028	178
Premises	13	9	4
Supplies & Services	2,545	2,529	16
Transport	6	1	5
Schools Transport	1,645	2,651	(1,006)
Commissioned Services	1,636	1,626	10
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	35	94	(59)
Independent School Fees	8,131	8,131	0
Inter Authority Special Needs	1,043	1,043	0
Pupil Premium Grant	129	129	0
Nursery Education Payments	7,843	7,843	0
Capital Financing	2,705	2,703	2
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>32,937</b>	<b>33,787</b>	<b>(850)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges Income	-202	-217	15
Government Grant Income	-5,938	-5,938	0
Schools SLA Income	-389	-410	21
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-1,172	-1,162	(10)
Transfer from Reserves	-255	-255	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	-20,430	-20,430	0
Inter Authority Income	-373	-373	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-28,759</b>	<b>-28,785</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>4,178</b>	<b>5,002</b>	<b>(824)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	281	281	0
Transport Support	441	614	(173)
Central Support	1,609	1,611	(2)
Asset Rental Support	2,495	2,495	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>4,826</b>	<b>5,001</b>	<b>(175)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>9,004</b>	<b>10,003</b>	<b>(999)</b>

## Community &amp; Greenspaces Department

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

## Economy, Enterprise &amp; Property Department

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

## Planning & Transportation Department

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	4,957	4,986	(29)
Efficiency Savings	-100	-100	0
Premises	211	145	66
Hired & Contracted Services	356	605	(249)
Supplies & Services	225	327	(102)
Other Expenditure	0	0	0
Street Lighting	2,025	1,685	340
Highways Maintenance - Routine & Reactive	1,699	1,595	104
Highways Maintenance - Programmed Works	565	568	(3)
Fleet Transport	1,410	1,475	(65)
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	52	14	38
Bus Support	458	458	0
Capital Financing	0	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	31	30	1
NRA Levy	73	71	2
LCR Levy	1,059	1,059	0
Contribution to Reserves	1,427	1,427	0
<b>Contribution to Reserves</b>	<b>14,448</b>	<b>14,345</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Sales & Rents Income	-101	-67	(34)
Planning Fees	-738	-470	(268)
Building Control Fees	-242	-183	(59)
Other Fees & Charges	-916	-1,065	149
Grants & Reimbursements	-562	-525	(37)
Government Grant Income	-262	-262	0
Halton Hopper Income	-54	-23	(31)
Recharge to Capital	-280	-113	(167)
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-1,059	-1,059	0
Contribution from Reserves	-531	-531	0
Efficiency Savings	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-4,745</b>	<b>-4,298</b>	<b>(447)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>9,703</b>	<b>10,047</b>	<b>(344)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	509	509	0
Transport	591	668	(77)
Central Support	1,432	1,432	0
Asset Rental Support	10,157	10,157	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-885	-885	0
Transport Recharge Income	-3,764	-4,222	458
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>8,040</b>	<b>7,659</b>	<b>381</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>17,743</b>	<b>17,706</b>	<b>37</b>

## Corporate &amp; Democracy

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	361	347	14
Contracted Services	39	34	5
Supplies & Services	131	-169	300
Premises Expenditure	5	8	(3)
Transport Costs	1	21	(20)
Members Allowances	946	949	(3)
Interest Payable - Treasury Management	1,099	1,238	(139)
Interest Payable - Other	1,744	1,687	57
Bank Charges	144	253	(109)
Audit Fees	342	355	(13)
Contingency	4,036	0	4,036
Capital Financing	4,482	4,174	308
Contribution to Reserves	4,391	4,970	(579)
Debt Management Expenses	20	24	(4)
Precepts & Levies	221	227	(6)
Agency Related Expenditure	0	0	0
Business Support Grants	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>17,962</b>	<b>14,118</b>	<b>3,844</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Interest Receivable - Treasury Management	-3,999	-5,685	1,686
Interest Receivable - Other	0	-13	13
Other Fees & Charges	-153	-336	183
Grants & Reimbursements	-473	-826	353
Government Grant Income	-1,469	-1,994	525
Transfer from Reserves	-8,384	-8,592	208
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-14,478</b>	<b>-17,446</b>	<b>2,968</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>3,484</b>	<b>-3,328</b>	<b>6,812</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	8	8	0
Transport Support	0	0	0
Central Support	870	870	0
Asset Rental Support	-18,875	-18,875	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-17,997</b>	<b>-17,997</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>-14,513</b>	<b>-21,325</b>	<b>6,812</b>



## Public Protection

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	4,913	4,365	548
Premises	6	6	0
Supplies & Services	280	252	28
Contracts & SLA's	7,088	7,071	17
Transport	4	2	2
Other Agency - Port Levies	23	23	0
Transfer to Reserves	51	51	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,365</b>	<b>11,770</b>	<b>595</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-152	-173	21
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-422	-480	58
Transfer from Reserves	-842	-484	(358)
Government Grant Income	-11,509	-11,509	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-12,925</b>	<b>-12,646</b>	<b>(279)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>-560</b>	<b>-876</b>	<b>316</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	156	156	0
Transport	19	19	0
Central Support	2,340	2,340	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-482	-482	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>2,033</b>	<b>2,033</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,473</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>316</b>





## Capital Programme as at 31 March 2024

## Appendix 3

Directorate/Department	2023/24 Capital Allocation	Actual Spend to 31 March 2024	Total Allocation Remaining
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>CHILDRENS DIRECTORATE</b>			
Asset Management Data	15	0	15
Capital Repairs	1,040	904	136
Asbestos Management	22	1	21
Schools Access Initiative	44	22	22
Small Capital Works	142	102	40
Basic Need Projects	601	0	601
Cavendish School	605	451	154
Astmoor Primary	300	243	57
Ashley School	500	37	463
Kingsway Academy	30	26	4
Oakfield Primary	370	353	17
St Basils Primary	250	0	250
St Peter & Paul High School	356	0	356
The Brow Primary	115	103	12
Victoria Road Primary	250	142	108
Westfield Primary	220	216	4
Woodside Primary	340	307	33
SEMH Free School	239	239	0
Brookfields School	300	0	300
SCA unallocated	19	0	19
Family Hubs & Start for Life	82	29	53
Grange BSF	49	49	0
<b>TOTAL CHILDRENS DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>5,889</b>	<b>3,224</b>	<b>2,665</b>
<b>ADULT DIRECTORATE</b>			
Disabled Facilities Grant	650	771	-121
Stair lifts (Adaptations Initiative)	300	259	41
RSL Adaptations (Joint Funding)	200	171	29
Telehealthcare Digital Switchover	300	165	135
Millbrow Refurbishment	200	51	149
Madeline Mckenna Refurb.	1,000	17	983
St Luke's Care Home	100	97	3
St Patrick's Care Home	100	44	56
<b>TOTAL ADULTS DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>2,850</b>	<b>1,575</b>	<b>1,275</b>

## Capital Programme as at 31 March 2024

Directorate/Department	2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000	Actual Spend to 31 March 2024 £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
<b>ENVIRONMENT and REGENERATION DIRECTORATE</b>			
Total Bridge & Highway Maintenance	3,133	1,404	1,729
Integrated Transport	539	0	539
CRSTS	7,140	2,983	4,157
SJB – Decoupling	0	0	0
Runcorn Busway	239	556	-317
East Runcorn Connectivity (ERC)	1,577	2,238	-661
A56 Reconstruction	947	3	944
Dukesfield ATL (Waterloo Bridge)	0	1,518	-1,518
LCWIP Phase 2 Daresbury	5,783	1,921	3,862
ATF3 Murdishaw to Whitehouse	3,000	611	2,389
ATF4 Widnes Town Centre Accessibility	122	1	121
SUD Green Cycle	0	2	-2
Street Lighting	50	100	-50
Lighting Upgrades	300	423	-123
Silver Jubilee Bridge - Lighting	0	0	0
Risk Management	100	58	42
Fleet Vehicles	2,500	1,430	1,070
Mersey Gateway - Land Acquisition	839	309	530
Mersey Gateway - Crossings Board	33	30	3
Mersey Gateway - Handback Land	23	102	-79
Widnes Loops	0	91	-91
Measures to Assist Buses	0	12	-12
Stadium Minor Works	34	31	3
Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment	28	13	15
Halton Leisure Centre	15,057	17,260	-2,203
Open Spaces Schemes	850	314	536
Children's Playground Equipment	105	107	-2
Upton Improvements	13	0	13
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12	1	11
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	0	340
Runcorn Town Park	284	125	159
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,023	54	969
Pickerings Pasture Café	520	17	503
Litter Bins	20	20	0
3MG	24	16	8

## Capital Programme as at 31 March 2024

Directorate/Department	2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000	Actual Spend to 31 March 2024 £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Murdishaw	30	8	22
Equality Act Improvement Works	289	289	0
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2,471	1,311	1,160
Police Station Demolition	406	406	0
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	32	32	0
Roof Top Garden	0	0	0
Property Improvements	268	269	-1
Woodend - Former Unit 10 Catalyst Trade Park	204	204	0
Runcorn Station Building Development	80	30	50
Waterloo Building	109	109	0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	82	30	52
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	291	22	269
Changing Places	213	188	25
Town Deal	2,303	1,829	474
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT and REGENERATION DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>51,413</b>	<b>36,477</b>	<b>14,936</b>
<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE</b>			
ICT Rolling Capital Project	700	281	419
Halton Smart Microgrid	11,000	0	11,000
Transformation Programme	5,000	2,323	2,677
Decarbonisation Scheme	59	59	0
<b>TOTAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>16,759</b>	<b>2,663</b>	<b>14,096</b>
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>76,911</b>	<b>43,939</b>	<b>32,972</b>
Slippage (20%) Carried Forward	-15,382		
Slippage Brought Forward			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61,528</b>	<b>43,939</b>	<b>17,590</b>







**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Corporate Director –  
Chief Executive’s Delivery Unit

**PORTFOLIO:** Corporate Services

**WARDS:** All

**SUBJECT:** Directorate Performance Overview Reports for  
Quarter 4 2023 - 24

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report the Council’s performance for the final quarter period to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.  
The reports detail progress against key objectives / milestones and performance targets, and describes factors affecting each of the Directorates.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDED:**

- 1) Executive Board note the information contained in the reports**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 It is essential that the Council maintains a planning and performance framework that allows the identification and on-going monitoring of key activities and performance measures that meet organisational needs. Performance management will also continue to be important in our demonstration of value for money and outward accountability.
- 3.2 The Directorate Performance Overview Reports provide a strategic summary of the key issues arising from performance in the relevant quarter for each Directorate and being aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. Such information is central to the Council’s performance management arrangements and the Executive Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.
- 3.3 Information for each of the Council’s Directorates, including the implementation of high-risk mitigation measures, is contained within the following appendices:

Appendix 1 – People Directorate (Adult Social Care)  
Appendix 2 – Enterprise, Community and Resources Directorate  
Appendix 3 – Children and Young People Directorate

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Council's Performance Management Framework will continue to form a key part of the Council's policy framework.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 These reports would also be available to support future scrutiny arrangements of services by Members and Inspection regimes for Ofsted and Adult Social Care.

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

6.1 Existing and future performance frameworks at both local and national level are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities.

6.2 The provision of Directorate Overview Reports to Executive Board, that include progress in relation to objectives/ milestones and performance indicators will support organisational improvement and accountability.

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The Council performance management framework allows the authority to both align its activities to the delivery of organisational and partnership priorities and provide appropriate information to all relevant stakeholders in accordance with the "transparency agenda".

#### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no specific equality and diversity issues relating to this report.

#### **9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Not applicable

#### **10 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTIONS 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

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

## Directorate Performance Overview Report Quarter 4

**Directorate:** ADULTS

**Departments:** Adult Social Care

**Period:** Quarter 4 Period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

### 1.0 Introduction

This quarterly monitoring report covers Adult Social Care Services fourth quarter period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

The way in which symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix 4.

### 2.0 Key Developments

#### **Halton Floating Support Service**

Halton Floating Support Service was re-tendered during Q3/Q4. The contract was awarded to Plus Dane, the incumbent provider of the service. The mobilisation period will take place from 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 with the new contract commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024. A contract extension is in place to ensure continuity of service during the three-month mobilisation period.

#### **Integrated Sensory Support Service**

The service has run for six years as a collaboration between Vision Support and the Deafness Resource Centre. The current contract runs to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024. In March a report was taken to Executive Board to look at continuation of the service for a further five years. This was agreed and work will now take place to amend the service specification to reflect objectives over the period.

#### **Halton Home Based Respite Service**

Care at Home Group Limited (CHAG) has been delivering the Home-Based Respite Service since April 2023, following Crossroads Care North-West exiting the market in March 2023. A report was taken to Executive Board in March to seek approval to award CHAG an 18-month contract to continue to deliver the service in Halton from April 2024; this was agreed. During this period, we aim to commence a new procurement process for the supply of the Service.

## Directorate Performance Overview Report Quarter 4

### **Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy**

The Commissioning Strategy for Care and Support outlines our commissioning intentions over the next three years and went through its final stages of formal approval during Q4, being approved at Executive Board on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**Dementia Delivery Group** meetings to determine priorities going forward. Delivery Plan to be presented to April 2024 One Halton Board for approval and agreement on practical implementation.

### **Immigration Impact upon Homelessness**

The Home Officer have confirmed that there will be approximately 3000 asylum seekers that have experienced the delay in the move on process and will be served 7-day notice. Not all of these clients will be in Halton as they will be dispersed across the country, and numbers have not yet been released.

As part of the Asylum process many of the clients placed within the Initial Assessment centres are families, which will have a vast impact upon homelessness and temporary accommodation provision. Presently, we are seeing an increase in families presenting as homeless and reviewing the temporary accommodation available, however, the concerns remain on the high increase in numbers and the impact this will have upon the homelessness team and the financial costs incurred.

## 3.0 Emerging Issues

### **Domiciliary Care Tender**

Work commenced in Q4 to re-tender the Domiciliary Care Service. At the time of writing, the tender opportunity is currently a live tender via The Chest procurement portal. The new contract is expected to commence in the Autumn. The tender is expected to increase the diversity of provision within the borough.

### **Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) Cases**

Discussions are scheduled to take place between Commissioners and advocacy representatives across Halton and Warrington to discuss responsibility for IMCA advocacy for Halton residents temporarily resident in Warrington, e.g. due to hospital admission. Historically, Halton Advocacy hub has provided the advocacy in such cases even though Warrington are effectively the host authority for cases within their locality. Due to current resource constraints and demands on the service, Halton Advocacy hub has stated is unable to continue to provide the advocacy for all Halton residents placed in Warrington.

### **Halton Carer's Strategy**

The One Halton all-age carers strategy has now been signed off by the Halton's Carers Strategy Group and is due to be taken for ratification to the One Halton Place Based Partnership Board in April.

## Directorate Performance Overview Report Quarter 4

### Co-Production

The Coproduction Charter and associated report is due to be taken for ratification to the One Halton Place Based Partnership Board in April, prior to implementation.

### 4.0 Service Objectives/Milestones

#### 4.1 Progress Against Objectives/Milestones

Total



Appendix 1

### 5.0 Performance Indicators

#### 5.1 Progress Against Performance Indicators

Total



Appendix 2

### 6.0 Risk Control Measures

Risk control forms an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and performance monitoring arrangements. During the development of the 2018/19 Business Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all key service objectives with high risks included in the Directorate Risk Register.

### 7.0 Progress Against High Priority Equality Actions

The Council must have evidence that it reviews its services and policies to show that they comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force in April 2011. The PSED also requires us to publish this information, as it is available.

As a result of undertaking a departmental Equality Impact Assessment no high

## Directorate Performance Overview Report Quarter 4

priority actions were identified for the service for the period 2023-24.

### 8.0 Data Quality Statement



The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.

### 9.0 Appendices

- Appendix 1 Progress Against Objectives/Milestones
- Appendix 2 Progress Against Performance Indicators
- Appendix 3 Financial Statement
- Appendix 4 Explanation of Use of Symbols

**Appendix 1: Progress against objectives/milestones**

<b>Service Objective 1</b>	<b>Working in partnership with statutory and non-statutory organisations, evaluate, plan, commission and redesign services to ensure that they meet the needs and improve outcomes for people with Complex Care needs.</b>
<b>Linked Indicators: ASC 09, 10, 11</b>	

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Monitor the Local Dementia Strategy Action Plan, to ensure effective services are in place.		The Dementia Delivery Plan approval and implementation (or whether further work is required) is dependent on the outcome of the April 2024 One Halton Board meeting at which it is being presented.
The Homelessness strategy be kept under annual review to determine if any changes or updates are required.		Homelessness Forum took place March 24 and consultation will form part of homelessness Strategy, which is presently under review. Draft strategy to be presented to Management Team July/August 2024

**Appendix 1: Progress against objectives/milestones**

<b>Service Objective 2</b>	<b>Working in partnership with statutory and non-statutory organisations, evaluate, plan, commission and redesign services to ensure that they meet the needs and improve outcomes for vulnerable people</b>
<b>Linked Indicators: ASC 01, 02, 03, 04, 12, 13</b>	

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Monitor the effectiveness of the Better Care Fund pooled budget ensuring that budget comes out on target.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Budget projected to come in on target
Integration of Health and social care in line with one Halton priorities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Integration work continues through the One Halton work streams
Monitor the Care Management Strategy to reflect the provision of integrated frontline services for adults.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Halton Borough Council applied for additional funding from DHSC for the Streamlining of assessments, support with post covid waiting times for reviews, Occupational Therapy and DOLS assessments . Firstly we have funded additional dedicated support for front door referrals and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) This has enabled us to clear the backlog 'at the front door' and allocate the correct support for those being referred within 24 hours. The additional resource includes increasing the number of first assessors (x 3) to reduce initial triage waiting lists and reallocate resources to more complex cases. Therefore, they have granted an additional 135 authorisations since receiving the funding, bringing the waiting time for subsequent allocation




**Appendix 1: Progress against objectives/milestones**

	<p>of support down to less than 12 months. Overall, the implementation a First Assessor model has led to a waiting list fall from 1,000 to 250 days to have a review between Q4 22/23 and Q4 23/24. Secondly, Halton has established a Prevention and Wellbeing Service with the support of a redesign of adult social Care, placing outreach support with a Wellbeing approach at the front door. This team is focusing on people accessing community support before requiring support from adult social care where appropriate, and initial findings have identified a reduced demand and associated pressures upon ASC staff: Although the implementation of a First Assessor model and a prevention-focussed front door service were already planned in Halton, this approach has enabled us to progress these redesigns more quickly and allocate more resources to the team of first assessors, which has improved both the speed and impact of this work: We are presently allocating all new referrals within 24/48 hours.</p>
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**Appendix 1: Progress against objectives/milestones**

<b>Service Objective 3</b>	<b>Continue to effectively monitor the quality of services that are commissioned and provided in the borough for adult social care service users and their carers.</b>
<b>Linked Indicators: ASC 05, 06, 07, 08, 14, 19, 20, 21 ASC 15,16,17,18</b>	

Milestones	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Continue to establish effective arrangements across the whole of adult social care to deliver personalised quality services through self-directed support and personal budgets.		<p>250 staff across Adult Social Care have now completed, The Helen Sanderson Person Centred Planning Training, jointly with people of lived experience and providers/Voluntary Sector. This was completed in conjunction with Co-Production events led by TLAP. Presently Training is underway to ‘Train the Trainer’ and Management support to ensure a longer-term legacy.</p> <p>The changes to ways of working have led to a more productive workforce who can focus on meaningful tasks...staff have more time to speak to clients, reviews are more informed.</p> <p>Assessment work is more outcomes-focussed.</p> <p>The Social Care IT systems will be changing in June 24 from Care First 6 to Eclipse, with newly developed Person Centred Documentation.</p>



## Appendix 2: Progress against performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
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### Older People:

ASC 01	Permanent Admissions to residential and nursing care homes per 100,000 population 65+ <i>Better Care Fund performance metric</i>	TBC	600	NA	NA	NA	Figures are being collated for year-end and will not be available until the next meeting.
ASC 02	Total non-elective admissions into hospital (general & acute), all age, per 100,000 population. <i>Better Care Fund performance metric</i>	Q2 22/23 actual = 4,286	No plan set	0 Day LOS = 1869. >0 LOS = 2414 Total = 4283			Q4 data not yet available, this will not be published until at least the middle of May. The latest position available shows the number of admissions in the three-month period Dec 23 to Jan 24. Whilst non-zero LOS admissions have remained unchanged the number of 0-day LOS admissions has fallen slightly, however this does not tell the full picture, the number of 0 day LOS has fallen from 670 to 214 at WHHFT (-456) due to the implementation of the new A&E type 5 process. This means that increasing numbers of patients are now categorised as being treated as a category 5 A&E attendance as opposed to a short stay (0 day) admission. The process is not yet





## Appendix 2: Progress against performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
							happening at MWL. In contrast the number of 0 da NEL admissions at MWL has increased from 1203 to 1558 (+355) nearly offsetting the whole of the decrease seen at WHHFT.
ASC 03	Proportion of Older People (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services (ASCOF 2B) <i>Better Care Fund performance metric</i>	TBC	85%	NA	NA	NA	Annual collection only, to be reported in Q1.
<b>Adults with Learning and/or Physical Disabilities:</b>							
ASC 04	Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within 7 working days (VI/DRC/HMS)	97%	97%	96%			Q4 figures are slightly below target however previous quarters have been above target for 2023/24.
ASC 05	Proportion of people in receipt of Self Directed Support (ASCOF 1C – people in receipt of long term support (Part 1) SDS	74.9	80%	NA	NA	NA	Figures are being collated for year-end and will not be available until the next meeting.
ASC 06	Proportion of people in receipt	22.7	45%	NA	NA	NA	Figures are being collated for

## Appendix 2: Progress against performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
	of SDS (ASCOF 1C – people in receipt of long term support) (Part 2) DP						year-end and will not be available until the next meeting.
ASC 07	Proportion of adults with learning disabilities who live in their own home or with their family (ASCOF 1G)	93.6	89%	90%			The figure for Q4 has exceeded the target, although slightly lower in comparison to Q4 last year.
ASC 08	Proportion of adults with learning disabilities who are in Employment (ASCOF 1E)	5.8	5.5%	6.1%			We have currently exceeded this target and figures are higher than they were in the same quarter 2022/23.
ASC 09	Homeless presentations made to the Local Authority for assistance In accordance with Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Relief Prevention Homeless Advice	NA	2000	756  290 163 121 201		NA	There continues to be an increase in homelessness presentations, due to relationship breakdown, affordability and changes in immigration process.  We anticipate an increase in presentations from families during the next quarter and working with Home Office to process applications.  The team are working tirelessly to source accommodation and save

## Appendix 2: Progress against performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
							tenancies, using the prevention incentives available to reduce and relieve homelessness.
ASC 10	LA Accepted a statutory duty to homeless households in accordance with homelessness Act 2002	NA	500	121		NA	Due to the work the team are undertaking to prevent homelessness prior to decision making stage, this has contributed to the low statutory acceptance decisions
ASC 11	Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation Hostel Bed & Breakfast	NA	NA	148 38 30 Singles 8 Families	NA	NA	There continues to be an increase in the demand for temporary accommodation, resulting in the use of hotels. There are concerns that there will be an increase in families presenting as homeless forcing the LA to increase hotel usage.
<b>Safeguarding:</b>							
ASC 12	Percentage of individuals involved in Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiries	TBC	30%	34%		NA	This is a relatively new indicator, there is no comparison to the previous year.
ASC 13	Percentage of existing HBC Adult Social Care staff that	62%	85%	76%			Although the 23/24 target has not been met; the performance each

## Appendix 2: Progress against performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
	have received Adult Safeguarding Training, including e-learning, in the last 3-years (Previously PA6 [13/14] change denominator to front line staff only.						quarter has been increasing and Q4 has exceeded the actuals from last year.
ASC 14	The Proportion of People who use services who say that those services have made them feel safe and secure – Adult Social Care Survey (ASCOF 4B)	78.8	89%	TBC	TBC	TBC	Annual collection only to be reported in Q1.
<b>Carers:</b>							
ASC 15	Proportion of Carers in receipt of Self Directed Support.	98%	99%	NA	NA	NA	Figures are being collated for year-end and will not be available until the next meeting
ASC 16	<i>Carer reported Quality of Life (ASCOF 1D, (this figure is based on combined responses of several questions to give an average value. A higher value shows good performance)</i>	7.5% (2021-22)	NA	NA	NA	NA	Survey measures are reported annually for service users and bi-annually for carers. The results of these will be provided in Quarter 1, however are not published until later in the year.
ASC 17	<i>Overall satisfaction of carers with social services (ASCOF 3B)</i>	39.3% (2021-22)	NA	NA	NA	NA	The Adult Social Care Survey

## Appendix 2: Progress against performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
ASC 18	The proportion of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for (ASCOF 3C)	69.5% (2021-22)	NA	NA	NA	NA	was administered during January 2024. The results to be reported in the 2024/25 period.
ASC 19	Social Care-related Quality of life (ASCOF 1A). (This figure is based on combined responses of several questions to give an average value. A higher value shows good performance)	18.9%	20%	NA	NA	NA	The Survey of Adult Carers was administered during Q3. The results to be reported in the 2024/25 period.  Further details on both surveys can be found <a href="#">here</a>
ASC 20	The Proportion of people who use services who have control over their daily life (ASCOF 1B)	78.4%	80%	NA	NA	NA	
ASC 21	Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support (ASCOF 3A)	70.4%	71%	NA	NA	NA	



<b>Appendix 3 Financial Statements</b>
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**ADULT SOCIAL CARE****Revenue Operational Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	15,593	15,919	(326)
Premises	695	679	16
Supplies & Services	1,426	1,396	30
Aids & Adaptations	38	39	(1)
Transport	228	386	(158)
Food Provision	201	202	(1)
Agency	734	726	8
Supported Accommodation and Services	1,205	1,211	(6)
Emergency Duty Team	110	163	(53)
Contacts & SLAs	577	575	2
<u>Housing Solutions Grant Funded Schemes</u>			
Homelessness Prevention	356	355	1
Rough Sleepers Initiative	157	167	(10)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>21,320</b>	<b>21,818</b>	<b>(498)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-804	-760	(44)
Sales & Rents Income	-453	-478	25
Transfer from Reserves	-435	-435	0
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-1,953	-2,131	178
Capital Salaries	-121	-121	0
Housing Schemes Income	-506	-540	34
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-4,272</b>	<b>-4,465</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>17,048</b>	<b>17,353</b>	<b>(305)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	583	583	0
Transport Support	575	727	(152)
Central Support	3,667	3,667	0
Asset Rental Support	205	205	0
Recharge Income	-112	-112	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>4,918</b>	<b>5,070</b>	<b>(152)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>21,966</b>	<b>22,423</b>	<b>(457)</b>

**Appendix 3 Financial Statements****Comments on the above figures**

Net Department Expenditure, excluding the Community Care and Care Homes divisions, is £0.457m above budget at the end of the of the 2023/24 financial year.

Employee costs were £0.326m above budget profile. This reflects the unbudgeted additional cost of the 2023/24 pay award (£1,925 plus on-costs per FTE, less the budgeted 4% overall). Total unbudgeted pay award costs are £0.451m for the year, and the staff turnover saving target above target was £0.125m for the year.

The overspends on transport and transport recharges are currently under review, expenditure is significantly above budget on both headings, costs have increased steadily over recent years.

Housing Strategy initiatives included in the report above include the Rough Sleeping Initiative and Homelessness Prevention Scheme. The Homelessness Prevention scheme is an amalgamation of the previous Flexible Homelessness Support and Homelessness Reduction schemes.

Overall income is above target for the year, although there is an under-achievement of £62,000 in respect of transport income charged to service users. This is reflected in the overall under-achievement of £44,000 in respect of Fees & Charges income.

**Approved 2023/24 Savings****Adult Social Care**

Details of progress towards achieving budget efficiency savings agreed by Council in February 2023.

## Appendix 3 Financial Statements

### Progress Against Agreed Savings

	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
ASC1	Housing Solutions	474	Remodel the current service based on good practice evidence from other areas.	0	0	125	<span style="color: green;">✓</span>	Expected to be achieved in 2025/26 budget year
ASC2	Telehealthcare	680	Explore alternative funding streams such as Health funding or Disabled Facilities Grants.	0	170	0	<span style="color: green;">✓</span>	Expected to be achieved in 2024/25 budget year
			Increase charges / review income.	0	170	0		
			Cease the key safe installation service.	0	15	0		
ASC11	Dorset Gardens Care Services	471	Cease onsite support and transfer to the domiciliary care contract.	275	0	0	<span style="background-color: yellow;">u</span>	To be achieved in current year, but only effective from September 2023 onwards
ASC17/18	Quality Assurance Team	395	Review the activities of the Quality Assurance Team, given there are fewer providers for domiciliary care and the transfer of four care homes into the Council.	35	0	0	<span style="color: green;">✓</span>	Current year savings achieved, and 2024/25 savings on target
			Merge the service with the Safeguarding Unit.	0	50	0		

## Appendix 3 Financial Statements

ASC12	Meals on Wheels	33	Increase charges to ensure full cost recovery. A procurement exercise will also be completed for the provision of food.	33	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Charge increase implemented
ASC16	Shared Lives (Adult Placement Service)	115	Engage with an external agency currently operating Shared Lives to take over the running of this service. It is anticipated that this would provide an improved service.	0	58	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Expected to be achieved in 2024/25 budget year
ASC19	Voluntary Sector Support	N/A	Review the support provided by Adult Social Care and all other Council Departments, to voluntary sector organisations. This would include assisting them to secure alternative funding in order to reduce their dependence upon Council funding. A target saving phased over two years has been estimated.	0	200	100	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Expected to be achieved in the relevant budget years
ASC4	Positive Behaviour Support Service	349	Increase income generated in order to ensure full cost recovery, through increased service contract charges to other councils.	0	100	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Expected to be achieved in 2024/25 budget year

## Appendix 3 Financial Statements

			Review the Integrated Care Board contribution for Adults, to ensure the full recovery of related costs.	0	150	0		
ASC6	Bridge Builders	250	Restructure and incorporate within the Care Management front door service, introducing the services currently offered by Bridge Builders to all new referrals.	120	0	0	<span style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">u</span>	To be achieved in current year, although full-year savings not realised
ASC5	Mental Health Outreach Team	376	Streamline the service and focus on higher needs requiring joint funding from the Integrated Care Board.	140	0	0	<span style="background-color: red; color: white; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">x</span>	Currently under review, it does not seem probable that the savings will be achieved this year
ASC21	Mental Health Team Carers Officer	38	Commission the Carers Centre to complete all Carers assessments or undertake the function through the Initial Assessment Team.	38	0	0	<span style="background-color: red; color: white; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">x</span>	Currently under review, it does not seem probable that the savings will be achieved this year
ASC15	Learning Disability Nursing Team	424	Cease provision of this service. The service is a Health related function rather than Adult Social Care, but this is a historical arrangement. The Integrated Care Board would need to consider how they want to	0	424	0	<span style="background-color: green; color: white; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">✓</span>	Expected to be achieved in 2024/25 budget year

## Appendix 3 Financial Statements

			provide this function.					
ASC14	Care Management Community Care Budget	18,982	Attract £500k investment from the pooled budget (BCF) from 2024/25. Undertake work in years 1 and 2 to reduce reliance upon contracted services from 2025/26. Services are currently in the process of being redesigned on a “Strengths Based Approach” ie. focused upon prevention.	0	500	1,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Expected to be achieved in the relevant budget years
<b>Total Adult Social Care Department</b>				<b>641</b>	<b>1,837</b>	<b>1,225</b>		

<b>Appendix 3 Financial Statements</b>
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**Care Homes Division****Revenue Budget 23-24 Outturn**

	Annual Budget	Actual	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
<b><u>Madeline Mckenna</u></b>			
Employees	672	784	(112)
Other Premises	122	127	(5)
Supplies & Services	16	16	0
Food Provison	43	45	(2)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-35	-35	0
<b>Total Madeline Mckenna Expenditure</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>(119)</b>
<b><u>Millbrow</u></b>			
Employees	2,084	2,265	(181)
Other Premises	151	203	(52)
Supplies & Services	43	66	(23)
Food Provison	75	80	(5)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-101	-101	0
<b>Total Millbrow Expenditure</b>	<b>2,252</b>	<b>2,513</b>	<b>(261)</b>
<b><u>St Luke's</u></b>			
Employees	2,740	2,906	(166)
Other Premises	208	237	(29)
Supplies & Services	46	73	(27)
Food Provison	118	121	(3)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-76	-76	0
<b>Total St Luke's Expenditure</b>	<b>3,036</b>	<b>3,261</b>	<b>(225)</b>
<b><u>St Patrick's</u></b>			
Employees	1,824	2,246	(422)
Other Premises	191	192	(1)
Supplies & Services	43	65	(22)
Transport	0	0	(0)
Food Provison	112	130	(18)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-121	-121	0
<b>Total St Patrick's Expenditure</b>	<b>2,049</b>	<b>2,512</b>	<b>(463)</b>
<b><u>Care Homes Divison Management</u></b>			
Employees	285	250	35
Supplies & Services	0	3	(3)
<b>Care Home Divison Management</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>8,440</b>	<b>9,476</b>	<b>(1,036)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	285	285	0
Transport Support	0	0	0
Central Support	890	890	0
Asset Rental Support	291	291	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>9,906</b>	<b>10,942</b>	<b>(1,036)</b>

<b>Appendix 3 Financial Statements</b>
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**Comments on the above figures****Financial Position**

The care home division is made up of the following cost centres, Divisional Management Care Homes, Madeline Mckenna, Millbrow, St Luke's and St Patrick's.

The net departmental expenditure across the division is over budget for 2023-24 financial year by £1.036m.

Recruitment and retention of staff at all levels continue to place pressures across the care homes. This has resulted in the use of expensive agency staff and overtime to cover vacancies. A proactive rolling recruitment process is taking places across the care homes.

**Employee Related expenditure**

Employee related expenditure is over budget at the end of 2023-24 financial year by £0.846m.

Recruitment and retainment of staff is a continued pressure across the care homes and is therefore reliant on the use of overtime and agency staff to cover vacancies. At the end of financial year 2023/24 total agency spend across the care homes reached £3.6m, the cost of this has partially been offset by staff vacancies.

Whilst the spend remains high, there has been a reduction of £0.5m from the £4.1m spend in the previous financial year. This is due to a combination of all care homes now using the Matrix booking system, and some of the vacancies being filled.

Throughout the year a number of residents within the care homes were identified as needing 1:1 care in addition to the support the care homes provide on a day to day basis. The staffing budget has been revised to take this into consideration., The revised budget helped support agency spend:

<b>In Year Revised Agency Budget</b>	
MMK	£5,399
Millbrow	£115,031
St Lukes	£18,190
St Patricks	£75,031
<b>Total</b>	<b>£213,651</b>

In addition to the above, a Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund grant contribution was received and made available to the care homes to be spent in financial year 23-24, this further supported the cost of agency staff:

<b>Workforce Grant</b>	
MMK	£30,375
Millbrow	£72,001
St Lukes	£72,001
St Patricks	£80,077
<b>Total</b>	<b>£254,454</b>

A proactive rolling recruitment exercise is ongoing within the care homes and is supported by HR and the Transformation team.



**Appendix 3 Financial Statements****Premises Related Expenditure**

At the end of financial year 2023-24 premises costs were over budget by £0.087m.

Premises related expenditure covers both repairs, maintenance and utilities. The budget was increased significantly for utilities in 2023/24 due to increases in costs in previous years. Due to this, there is a large under spend for utilities which has masked overspend for repairs and maintenance significantly.

Repairs and maintenance continue to be a budget pressure across all the care homes. The recruitment of a facilities manager would help to support the reduction in these costs. Budget for a facilities manager has been made available and this position has been advertised.

**Supplies and Services Expenditure**

Supplies and Services expenditure is over budget at the end of 23-24 financial year by £0.072m.

**Food Provision Expenditure**

Food Provision expenditure is over budget at the end of 23-24 financial year by £0.028m.

**Approved 2023/24 Savings**

There are no approved savings for the care home division in financial year 2023/24

**Risks/Opportunities**

Recruitment and retention of care and nursing staff within care homes remains the significant risk to the budget. Work through the transformation programme, HR and the managers and staff have significantly reduced these pressures in year and continues.

<b>Appendix 3 Financial Statements</b>
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**COMMUNITY CARE****Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Residential & Nursing	13,579	13,928	(349)
Domiciliary Care & Supported living	12,357	12,643	(286)
Direct Payments	12,218	12,969	(751)
Day Care	375	535	(160)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>38,529</b>	<b>40,075</b>	<b>(1,546)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Residential & Nursing Income	-12,059	-11,865	(194)
Community Care Income	-2,381	-2,402	21
Direct Payments Income	-956	-1,003	47
Income from other CCGs	-126	-131	5
Market Sustainability & Improvement Grant	-1,497	-1,497	0
Adult Social Care Support Grant	-4,357	-4,357	0
Market Sustainability Workforce Grant	-718	-718	0
LA UEC Grant	-156	-156	0
War Pension Disregard Grant	-67	-56	(11)
Other Income	-515	-867	352
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-22,832</b>	<b>-23,052</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>15,697</b>	<b>17,023</b>	<b>(1,326)</b>

**Comments on the above figures:**

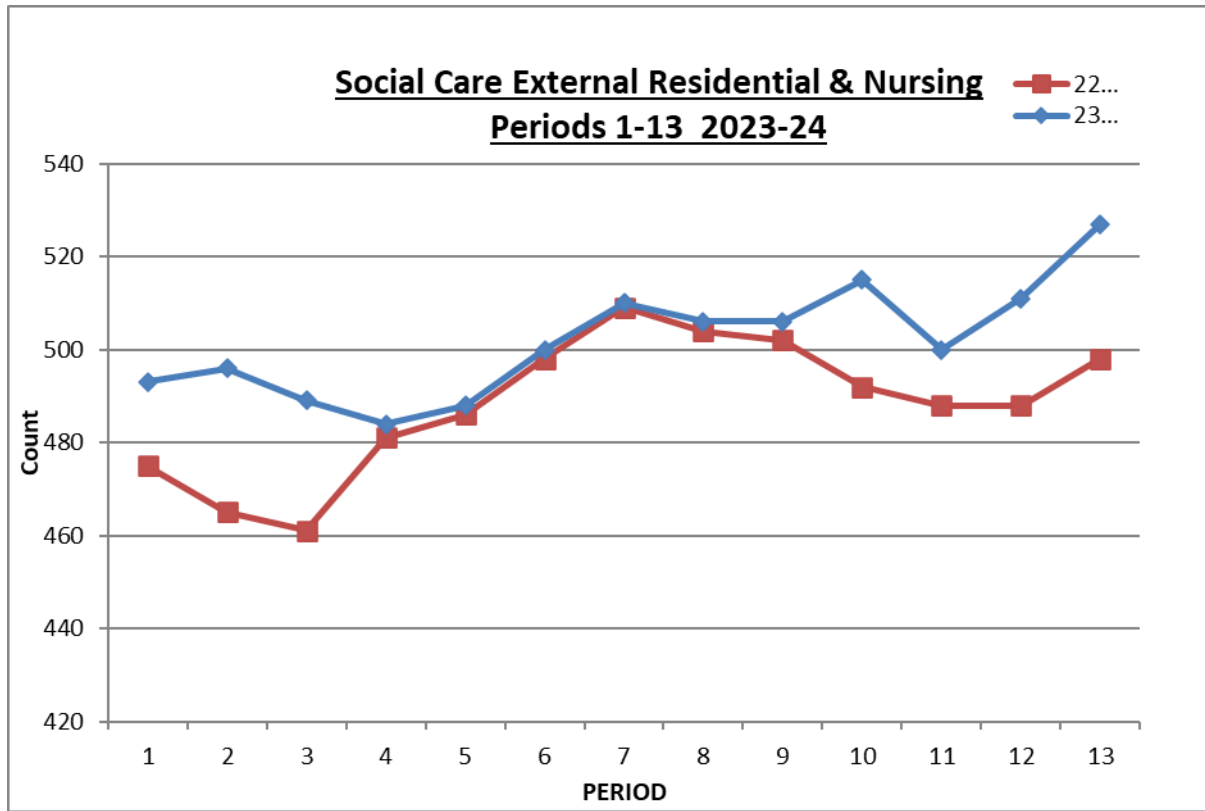
At the end of the financial year 2023/24, expenditure on Community Care services is over budget profile by £1.326m.

The Domiciliary and Supported Living outturn is significantly more than was forecast at quarter 3. This is due to a couple of high cost service users, not previously known to finance. Therefore they were not included in the original forecast.

Individual Services budgets are analysed in more detail below.

Appendix 3 Financial Statements

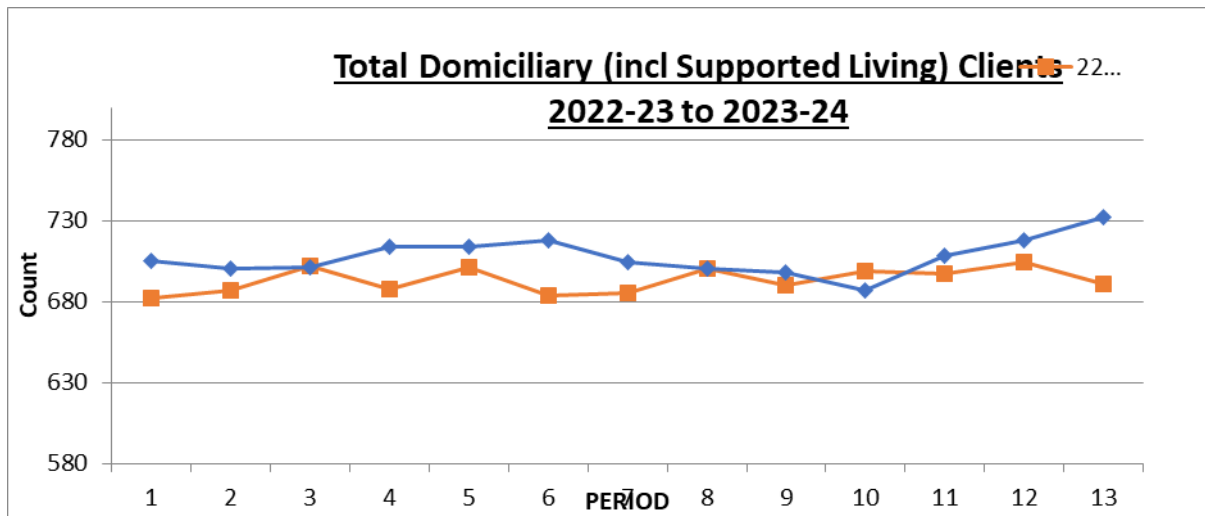
**Residential & Nursing Care**



Between April 23 and March 24 the number of people in receipt of Residential or Nursing Care increased from 493 to 527, an increase of 6.8%.

The average cost of a package of care has increased 10.6% from £864 in April to £956 in March suggesting an increase in the complexity of care packages.

**Domiciliary Care & Supported Living**

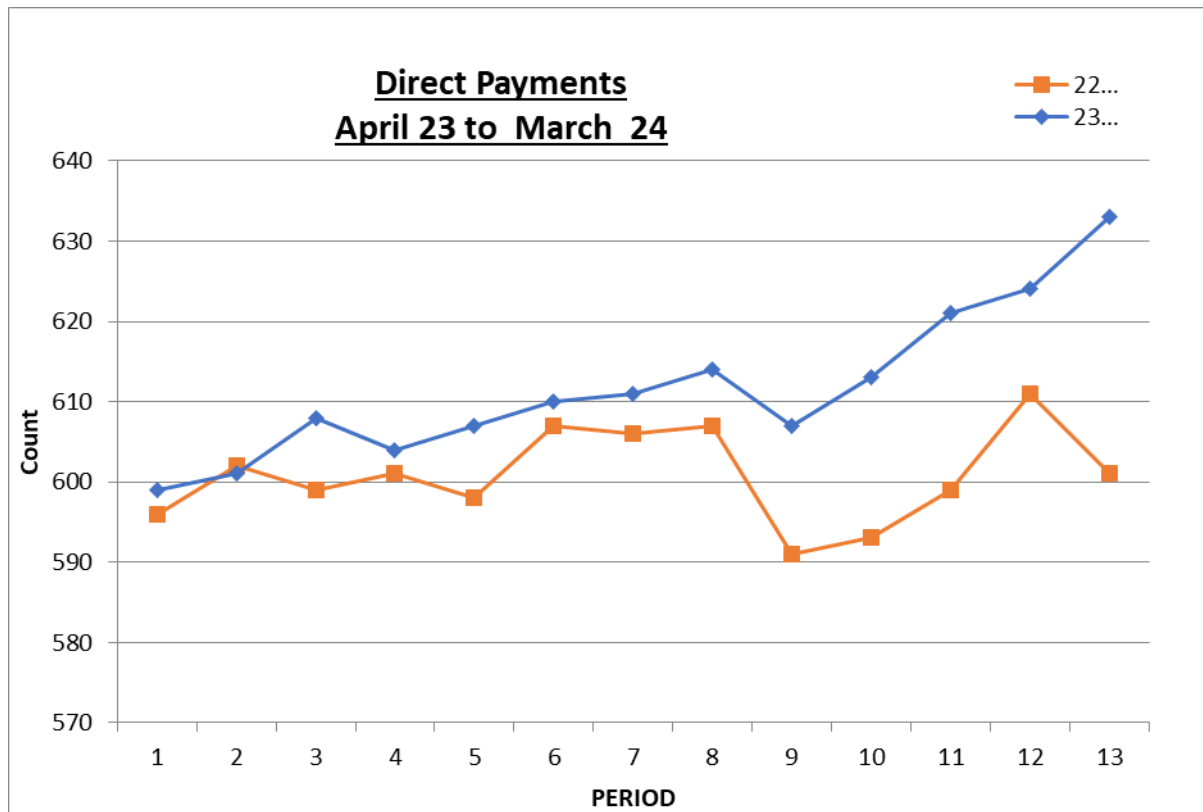


There are currently 732 service users receiving a package of care at home compared to 705 in April, an increase of 3.8%.

## Appendix 3 Financial Statements

The average cost of a package of care has increased from £417 in April to £475 at the end of the year, an increase of 13.9%. Note, this is inclusive of an in-year uplift of 6% paid to providers from October 2023, funded from the Market Sustainability Grant.

### Direct Payments



The number of service users in receipt of a Direct Payment increased from 599 to 633 over the course of the year. The average package of care cost increased from £551 to £591, an increase of £7.25%. This service continues to be a pressure as it is often used as a default position due to the current domiciliary provider being unable to pick up additional care packages.

The Community Care budget is very unpredictable by nature as it is demand driven, with many influential factors such as the ageing population, deprivation within the borough and its links to the health care sector. It will continue to be closely monitored and scrutinised to quantify pressures and, in conjunction with the budget recovery group, we will continue to identify savings in order to achieve a balanced budget at the end of the financial year.

## Appendix 3 Financial Statements

**COMPLEX CARE POOL BUDGET****Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual Spend</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend)</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Intermediate Care Services	5,292	5,150	142
Oakmeadow	1,831	1,894	(63)
Community Home Care First	1,530	2,047	(517)
Joint Equipment Store	829	1,014	(185)
HICafs	3,258	3,024	234
Contracts & SLA's	3,321	3,222	99
Carers Breaks	450	345	105
Carers Centre	354	357	(3)
Residential Care	7,393	7,209	184
Domiciliary Care & Supported Living	3,756	3,897	(141)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>28,014</b>	<b>28,159</b>	<b>(145)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
BCF	-12,762	-12,762	0
CCG Contribution to Pool	-2,864	-2,864	0
ASC Discharge Grant	-979	-979	0
ICB Discharge Grant	-942	-942	0
LA UEC Grant	-144	-144	0
Oakmeadow Income	-6	-2	(4)
Other Income	-25	-27	2
Transfer from Reserve	-193	-193	0
Cfwd from 2022/23	0	-147	147
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-17,915</b>	<b>-18,060</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>10,099</b>	<b>10,099</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	0	0	0
Transport	0	0	0
Central Support	0	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>10,099</b>	<b>10,099</b>	<b>0</b>

**Comments on the above figures:**

The pool has achieved a balanced budget at the end of the financial year 2023/24.

<b>Appendix 3 Financial Statements</b>
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The Better Care development £0.428m and other underspends were split equally between the Council and Health to cover pressures in the Health & Social Care Budget. The councils share, £0.275m went to Domiciliary and Supported Living.

The underspend on Intermediate Care Services and HICafs is due to staff vacancies.

Oakmeadow overspend was due to agency, utility and food costs.

The Community Home Care First overspend of £0.517m is due to an agreement to pay the main homecare provider for all of their agency costs.

The Joint Equipment Service overspend has arisen as the closing stock figure has reduced by £0.185m.

Contracts & SLA's include Inglenook which has had a void for most of the year, hence the underspend.

Expenditure on Carer's Breaks is £0.105m less than anticipated, as demand for services is still lower than pre-pandemic levels.

The pool budget has balanced at the end of the year and as previously mentioned, funds have been diverted to cover Health and Community Care pressures. These pressures continue to rise but it cannot be guaranteed that we can rely on Pool underspends in the future.

#### **Pooled Budget Capital Projects as at 31 March 2024**

	2023-24 Capital Allocation £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Disabled Facilities Grant	800	771	29
Stair lifts (Adaptations Initiative)	260	259	1
RSL Adaptations (Joint Funding)	170	171	(1)
Telehealthcare Digital Switchover	300	165	135
Millbrow Refurbishment	100	51	49
Madeline Mckenna Refurb.	100	17	83
St Luke's Care Home	100	97	3
St Patrick's Care Home	100	44	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.930</b>	<b>1,575</b>	<b>355</b>

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

Allocations for Disabled Facilities Grants/Stair Lifts and RSL adaptations are consistent with 2022/23 spend and budget, and expenditure across the 3 headings are broadly within budget overall.

<b>Appendix 3 Financial Statements</b>
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The £0.4m Telehealthcare Digital Switchover scheme was approved by Executive Board on 15 July 2021. Significant capital investment is required to ensure a functional Telehealthcare IT system is in place prior to the switchoff of existing copper cable based systems in 2025. Procurement commenced in 2022/23 with an initial purchase to the value of £100,000. It is anticipated that the scheme will be completed early in the 2024/25 financial year, fully funded from the residual capital allocation of £0.3m.

On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 Executive Board approved a £4.2M refurbishment programme in respect of the four Council owned care homes, to be completed withing a three year timescale. Halton purchased the homes, with the exception of Madeline McKenna, when it was evident that the buildings had been neglected. £0.419m was spent on refurbishment across the 4 homes in the previous financial year, and £0.209m in 2023/24. Unspent funding at year-end will be carried forward to the 2024/25 financial year to enable the scheme's completion.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH & PUBLIC PROTECTION DEPARTMENT**

#### **Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual Spend</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend)</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	4,913	4,365	548
Premises	6	6	0
Supplies & Services	280	252	28
Contracts & SLA's	7,088	7,071	17
Transport	4	2	2
Other Agency - Port Levies	23	23	0
Transfer to Reserves	51	51	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,365</b>	<b>11,770</b>	<b>595</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-152	-173	21
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-422	-480	58
Transfer from Reserves	-842	-484	(358)
Government Grant Income	-11,509	-11,509	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-12,925</b>	<b>-12,646</b>	<b>(279)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>-560</b>	<b>-876</b>	<b>316</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	156	156	0
Transport	19	19	0
Central Support	2,340	2,340	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-482	-482	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>2,033</b>	<b>2,033</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,473</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>316</b>

**Appendix 3 Financial Statements****Comments on the above figures**

The net Department spend for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 is £0.315m under the approved budget.

£0.484m was transferred from reserves to balance the public health budget, however this was £0.358m lower than the contribution of £0.842m that was expected for the year.




Employee's cost for the year was £0.548m lower than the approved budget, this is due to vacancies and temporary reduction in hours across the department. All saving targets approved for 2023/24 were achieved

Expenditure on supplies and services was kept to essential items only throughout the year and has achieved a small underspend of £0.027m.






Appendix 4 Explanation of Symbols
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Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress		<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 whether the annual target is on course to be achieved</u>.</i>
Red		Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain</u> that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the target <u>will not be achieved unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken</u>.</i>

#### Direction of Travel Indicator

Where possible performance measures will also identify a direction of travel using the following convention

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

## Directorate Overview Report – Chief Executive’s Directorate Quarter 4

Reporting Period: 01<sup>st</sup> January – 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 final quarter of 2023/24 for service areas within the remit of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 It covers key priorities for development or improvement in the various functional areas reporting to the Board in relation to the Council’s priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency i.e.:
  - Financial Services
  - Operational HR Division, Chief Executives Delivery Unit
  - ICT Infrastructure
  - Legal and Democracy
  - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
  - Property Services
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 8 of this report.

### 2.0 Key Developments

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

#### **Financial Services**

#### **2.2 Benefits Division**

##### Processing Times

At 31 March 2024 processing times for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction were as follows: new claims 22.65 days and changes in circumstances 9.23 days.

##### Universal Credit – Managed Migration 2024/25

In March 2024 the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) issued further guidance to local authorities, which stated that from April 2024 the DWP will begin to notify working age benefit claimant households regarding when they will migrate to Universal Credit. The DWP will arrange an advertising campaign to raise awareness of the move to Universal Credit, and explain the actions claimants need to take when they receive a migration notice.

The Migration Notice tells the claimant that their legacy benefits will be ending, and they need to make a Universal Credit claim by a specific date.

This will be a minimum of three months from the date the Migration Notice is issued. If a claimant does not make a claim by their specified date, their legacy benefits which may include Housing Benefit will be terminated. When the Council receives a “stop notice” from the DWP to cancel a claimants Housing Benefit, the claimant will then be entitled to two further weeks of Transition to Universal Credit Housing Payments at the existing Housing Benefit rate. The impact of this additional work for the Council’s Housing Benefits Team is currently unknown.

The DWP statistics indicate at 8 February 2024 there were 16,545 people within Halton claiming Universal Credit. The table below shows the Universal Credit caseload in Halton on a quarterly basis over the past 23 months.

<b>Universal Credit caseload</b>	
Date	Caseload
1 April 2022	15,262
30 June 2022	15,283
30 September 2022	15,533
31 December 2022	15,581
31 March 2023	15,817
8 June 2023	16,057
9 November 2023	16,332
8 February 2024	16,545

### **2.3 Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance Division**

#### Supplier Invoice Processing Performance

90.39% of all supplier invoices paid in 2023/24 were settled within 30 days. The 9.61% of supplier invoices that were settled after 30 days includes any invoices that were in dispute.

#### Early Payment Scheme

Since August 2022, the Council has operated its early payment scheme for supplier invoices without any external support. This has ensured that any rebate generated by the accelerated payment of invoices is retained in full by the Council. The amount of rebate achieved and retained by the Council during 2023/24 was £114k.

#### Insurance tender

The Council has retendered a range of insurance policies that were expiring on 31 March 2024. The Council’s Procurement team and insurance broker supported the competitive tender process, which was undertaken using a Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation framework agreement. Five separate lots were awarded. Details of those lots and the successful bidders are shown as follows:

<b>Lot</b>	<b>Successful bidder</b>
Property	Maven
Computer	Maven
Combined Liability	Zurich Municipal
Motor	Zurich Municipal
Engineering and Inspection	Risk Management Partners

The outcome of the tender process was beneficial for the Council. An overall saving on premiums was achieved despite the difficult insurance market. Additionally, the Council was able to secure a reduction on the amount of self-insurance (excess) on its public liability and employers liability policies from £600,000 per claim to £500,000 per claim.

## Customer payments

Following the withdrawal of the payment kiosks from HDL in April 2023, the Council has experienced a significant reduction in the number of customers wishing to make payments in cash. Cash payments can however still be made to the Council via the many PayPoint outlets located across the Borough.

The Council also continues to see a reduction in the number of customers choosing to pay by cheque. During 2023/24, the Council received an average of just 12 cheque payments per week.

In contrast, during 2023/24 there was an increase in the number of telephone payment transactions, touch tone transactions, and internet payments received by the Council. These are more cost effective income collection methods for the Council.

## **2.4 Revenues and Financial Management Division**

### 2023/24 Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring

For the financial year to 31 December 2023, overall Council net spending was £96.2m against a budget of £90.7m, resulting in an overspend position to date against budget of £5.5m. The forecast position for the year to 31 March 2024 was an estimated overspend of £7.1m.

Capital spending at 31 December 2023 totalled £31.5m, which is 94% of the planned spending of £33.6m at this stage. This represents 51% of the total Capital Programme of £61.5m (which assumes a 20% slippage between years).

The financial outturn position for the year to 31 March 2024 will be reported to Executive Board on 13 June 2024

### 2022/23 Statement of Accounts

The external audit of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts has now concluded. The accounts together with the Audit Findings Report and the Auditor's Annual Report were reported to Audit & Governance Board on 20 March 2024. Documents relating to the conclusion of the audit have been published on the Council web-site. The Council's External Auditor has given an unqualified Audit Opinion regarding the 2022/23 accounts, with their Audit Findings Report providing a relatively clean bill of health with no significant recommendations. The Auditor's Annual Report provides a value for money assessment and makes number of key recommendations which management will be responding to.

### Council Tax and Business Rate Collection

Council tax collection for the year to 31 March 2024 is 93.8%, down 0.11% on this point last year. Cash collection for the year to date is £74.3m, this includes £2.2m collected in relation to previous year debt.

Business rates collection for the year to 31 March 2024 is 96.7%, down 0.94% on this point last year. The collection percentage has been impacted by a larger site coming on to the rating list during March 2024, the Council has billed the organisation in full for the rates due but remains unpaid at financial year-end. Excluding this site the collection rate would have been 97.7%, up by 0.08% on this point last year.

Business rate cash collected for the year is £60.9m, this includes £1.1m collected in relation to previous year debt.

## **2.5 Operational HR Division, Chief Executives Delivery Unit**

The HR Business Partnering Model is embedding within the organisation with HR presence in Senior Management Meetings supporting both strategic and operational priorities and objectives.

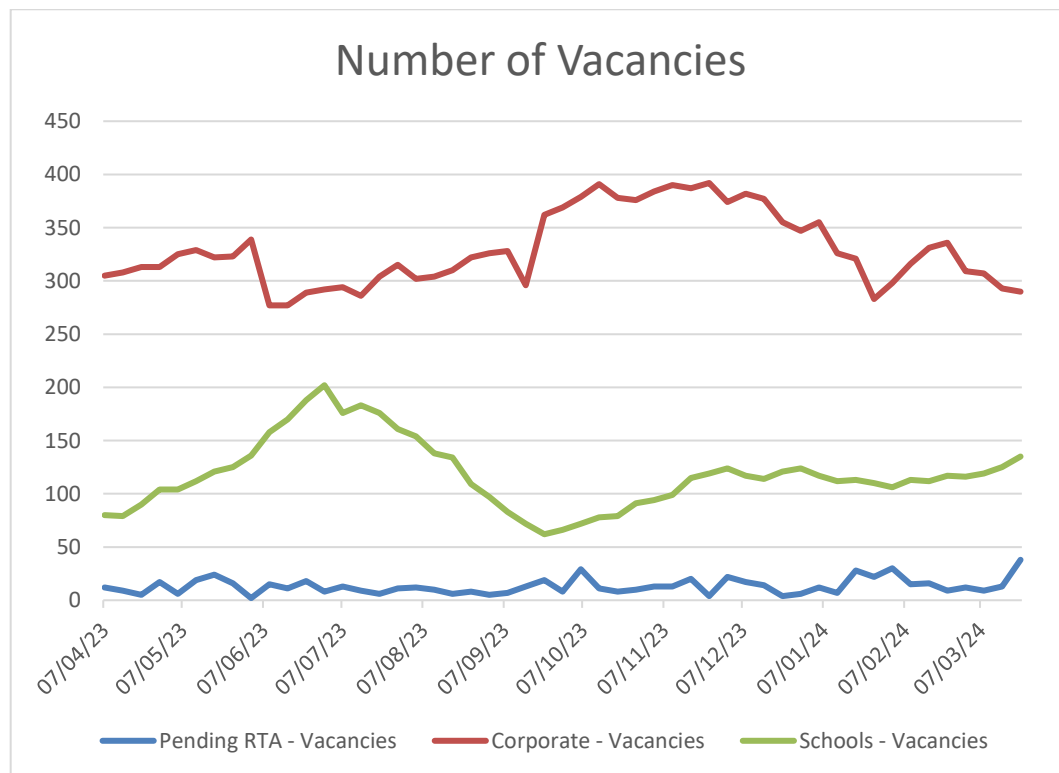
The services within the HR Operations Division (Resourcing & Recruitment, Payroll & Pensions, Health & Safety and Business Partnering) remain under significant pressure in the current year. Additional demand persists across all areas.

The services are working collaboratively to deliver what the wider Council now requires informed by the new corporate priorities, values and the Transformation Programme together with business as usual.

The Division has successfully recruited to the Principal Health & Safety Advisor role and process has commenced to recruit to the Health & Safety vacant post.

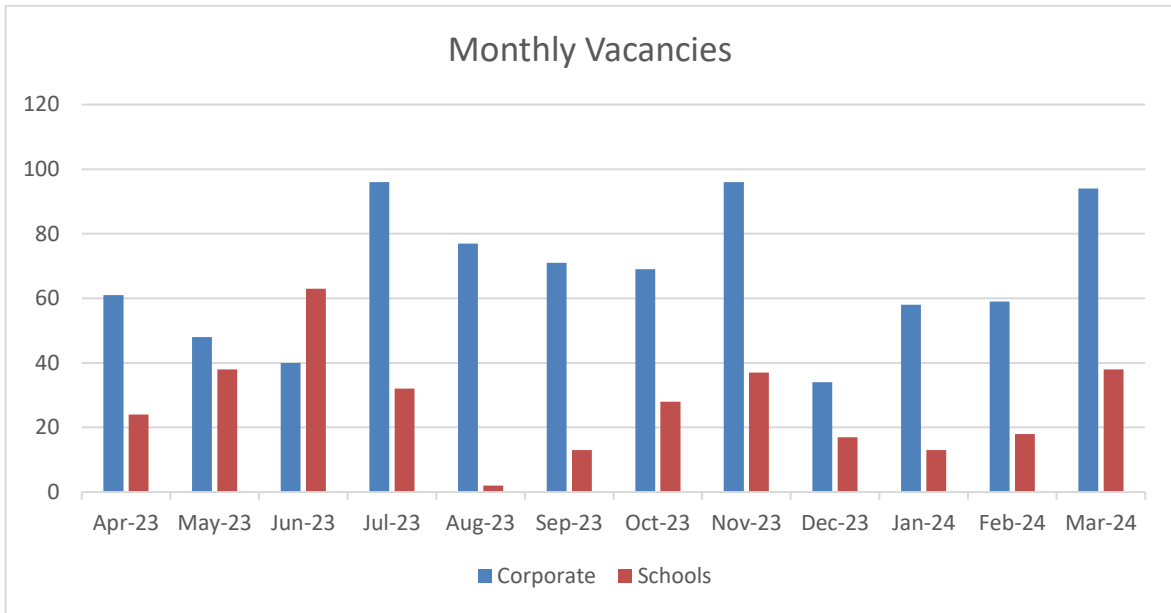
Agency usage remains high, work has been carried out to on-board all care homes to reduce off contract agency spend with clear processes for requesting an agency worker. This process is now part of the HR Operations as business as usual to challenge operational service areas to seek solutions to bring usage and associated spend down.

Recruitment demand continues to be high, with the service seeing an upswing in demand for the processing of corporate vacancies, as can be seen in the graph below. Although vacancy demand has remained consistently high, the 'pending RTA – Vacancies' throughout the year has remained consistently low compared to historic data where this has increased as a result of school recruitment resulting in little to no impact on corporate recruitment.



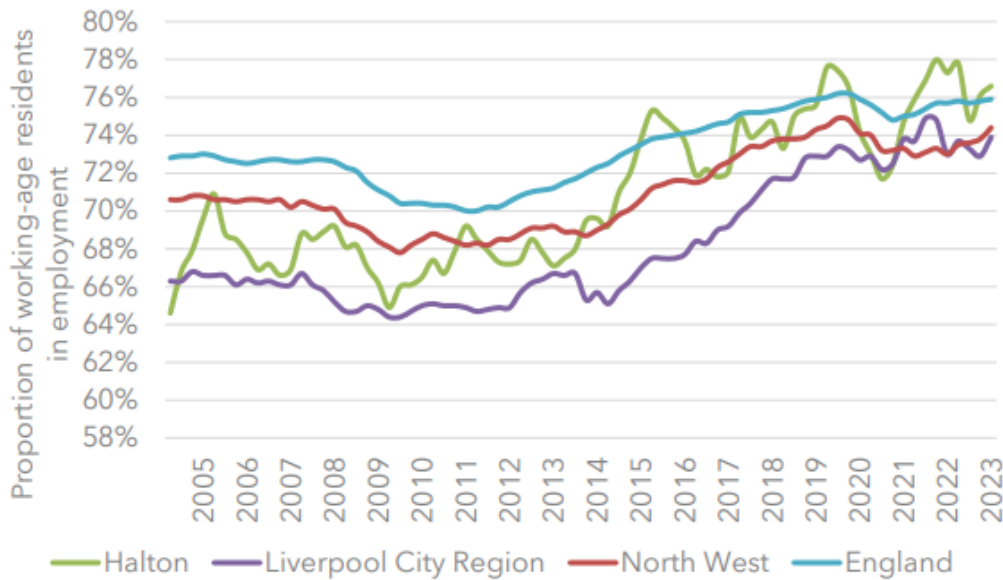
At the time of writing, there are 306 Council vacancies in the recruitment workflow inclusive of usual recruitment, 'Adults Always On' campaign, 'Indeed' campaign, and 138 school vacancies in progress. The graph below shows vacancies for corporate and schools month on month for 2023/24.

To support ongoing communications campaigns across the Council, following a successful recruitment process, appointments have been made to the vacant Communications Officer and Marketing Communications Assistant posts



Difficult labour market conditions remain to bring barriers in the recruiting and resourcing of many service areas across the organisation. This is consistent with the overall employment rate in the local economy increasing in recent times to 77%, above both regional (74%) and national levels (76%) as demonstrated below. Resourcing workflows remain continuously under review to address the consistent issue to streamline processes and shorten recruitment timescales.

### Employment rate



### 2.6 ICT and Administration

Given the large number of vacancies across the wider service and in particular within IT the service continues to struggle to recruit into these posts due to the lack of suitable candidates and low volumes of applicants, link this to a widening issue with sickness the services are depleted at this point in time.

But it must be loudly noted that those currently in place are more than stepping up with many people working way outside of their normal functions and delivering new and innovative services out to the authority across all teams within IT.

All pulling together to deliver M365 and its component parts through to delivering detailed training whilst delivering the new Dell devices and the new ways of working associated with this role-out.

The feedback so far from the 700+ users now on the devices has been fantastic with all users noting without exception the speed and ease of use as a considerable benefit to productivity and their general working day.

Given the team only has 2 people part time delivering the training the programme this delivery has moved at pace, the objective is to recruit into a further 2 posts to push the project forward with an objective of late summer to complete the roll-out of the new devices subject to resource.

The delivery of M365, One Drive and full Teams access linked to SharePoint Online is again moving at pace given the complexity of the business requirements linked to SharePoint and call-groups.

We fully appreciate there are issues at the moment with the integration of Skype and Teams at this stage in the project. This was highlighted at the start of the process as 15-year-Old technology is currently trying to integrate with constantly updating new technology. We ask the teams working with us to respond in a timely manner to upgrade requests and work with us to change and upgrade ways of working/process and document library designs; required to work within the new environments. Again we appreciate change isn't always easy to implement within busy working environments but as a business we wanted this new way of working and the IT teams are more than willing to help you through this process, but it must be understood we are a limited resource dealing with thousands of users with a plethora of individual requirements – the objective behind online services and cloud computing is to standardise as much as possible to reduce costs and improve efficiencies.

## **2.7 Legal and Democracy**

Recruitment difficulties have continued in Legal Services, leading to the consideration of alternative strategies.

Maternity cover is in place for a Group Solicitor who will commence her leave in Quarter 4. Arrangements have been made to deal with the departure of the Principal Members Service Officer at the end of Quarter 3.

## **2.8 Catering - School Meals**

TUPE transfers are in the process for several schools, we have a further 5 schools leaving at the end of March / early April 2024. This will still leave 37 schools that Halton provide the catering for. We estimate 50% of these schools will leave in September 2024 with the remaining schools leaving between September 2024 and March 2025.

## **2.9 Stadium**

The Stadium Management Team continue to engage with the Transformation Team in reimagining the Stadium, its commercial viability and sustainability.

Key performances indicators continue to be monitored and developed to ensure appropriate data is gathered. These are focused on Stadium usage/occupancy and customer satisfaction. Data received to date (including Q4) on the customer satisfaction surveys reads as follows.

- 89% of returns rated the stadium in terms of 'Quality of Venue' between 4 and 5 stars.
- 93% of returns rated the stadium in terms of 'Quality of Catering' between 4 and 5 stars.

- 89% of returns said they would likely or very likely use the stadium again.
- 84% of customers would likely or very likely recommend the stadium to others.

*(1 star being very poor and 5 stars being excellent)*

Overall, 79% of customers rated the stadium very good or excellent.

Throughout Q4 the social media campaign continued in partnership to celebrate Halton's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The aim is still to increase the Stadiums social media following and interaction rates across all platforms, this included various competitions resulting in free ticket giveaways. The Take That Experience performed to a packed-out audience in the Stadium Event Hall.

HBC, Widnes Vikings and GiggleShack (local promoter), hosted another sold out comedy night which was a great success. 2 high profile acts have been confirmed for June and September 2024.

The Stadium was approached and subsequently staged several fixtures for the City of Liverpool FC due to ground sharing issues. Management built a positive relationship with the board and has resulted in the City of Liverpool FC signing a 2 seasons agreement with Halton Borough Council (The DCBL Stadium), starting 2024/25.

The Widnes Vikings kicked off the season 2024 in February 2024. Management and the Vikings are working on ways to increase the spectator atmosphere whilst minimising costs for both parties.

Management have agreed with HBC Finance to open up the executive box level for meeting rooms to all HBC staff at no extra charge, in a bid to increase occupancies levels and secondary spend of refreshments.

### **Stadium & Catering (New Division)**

The consultation process for the Stadium and Catering Division closed on the 25/01/2024. Categorisation letters were issued to at Risk and Assimilated positions on the 06/02/2024 and the 'At-Risk' period started for those employees on 07/02/2024. Recruitment for all the new positions started on 29/02/2024 with the appointment the new Divisional Manager on 01/03/2024. Recruitment and implementation of the new structure will be completed by 30/04/2024.

### **2.10 Registration Services**

The Registration Service has successfully opened a brand new suite within the Civic Building at Runcorn Town Hall. The Preece Suite (located on the first floor) is a modern suite suitable for all types of ceremonies.

The Registration Service has updated its websites: [www.halton.gov.uk/registration](http://www.halton.gov.uk/registration) and [www.weddingsinhalton.co.uk](http://www.weddingsinhalton.co.uk);

The Registration Service has completed the recruitment and selection process for a replacement for three Casual Registration Officers

The Registration Service has successfully completed a full stocktake on all certificates and secure stationary issued by GRO. All records were accurate and up-to-date as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.



## **2.11 Property Services (Operations)**

maintenance programme was approved by the Asset Management Working Group. The budget has been fully spent with us being slightly over budget at year end. The majority of projects on the list have been completed with a couple having to be deferred until next year due to the availability of funding.

### Education SEMH Resource base projects

There are 6 schools where we are upgrading the facilities to create Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) resource bases for both KS1 & KS2 groups. 5 of the projects are now complete, at Oakfield, Victoria Road, Astmoor and Westfield and Woodside Primaries, we are still awaiting instruction in respect of Ditton Primary.

### Demolition of the Waterloo Building, Runcorn

This project is now complete, and the site has been left ready for redevelopment. Planning permission has been granted for a supported living residential scheme which will be delivered via a private sector developer.

### Runcorn Waterfront Scheme

The demolition of both Belvedere & Churchill Hall has been tendered and a contractor appointed. It is hoped that works will commence on site within the next few weeks. This is the first stage of the above scheme which is being delivered in conjunction with HHT.

## **3.0 Emerging Issues**

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

### **3.2 Finance - Benefits Division**

#### Household Support Fund 5

The Council received formal notification on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024 from the Department for Works and pensions (DWP) of the extension of the Household Support Fund for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Halton's grant allocation is £1.3m for this 6 month period, and a spending plan is currently being developed with Council departments and voluntary sector partners that have previously been involved in the delivery of the Household Support Fund. The DWP has arranged a meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 for all local authorities to attend to enable further guidance to be given, and councils will have the opportunity to ask questions concerning delivery of the latest Household Support Fund scheme. The DWP also require that a Household Support Fund delivery plan be submitted by 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

### **3.3 Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance Division**

#### Procurement Act

The Procurement Act 2023 received Royal Assent in October 2023 and secondary legislation was laid in March 2024. However, the changes to the public sector procurement regime have not yet taken effect.

In March 2024, the Procurement Regulations 2024 were laid in Parliament to bring some elements of the Bill and the wider regime into effect. It is currently anticipated that the new regulations will then take effect in full in October 2024. The Cabinet Office will issue notice of the 'go-live' date for the new regulations at least six months in advance.

Once the Procurement Regulations 2024 are live, they will govern all above threshold procurement activity from that time. The Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015, which currently govern procurement activity in the UK, will continue to apply for any above threshold procurement commenced before the go live date. Details of the current thresholds are provided below:

Contract Type	Threshold from 1 January 2024
Public Works Contracts	£5,372,609
Supplies and Services	£214,904
'Light Touch Regime' Services	£663,540

The Act will allow greater flexibility to contracting authorities in terms of procurement procedures. For example, contracting authorities will be able to decide whether to use an 'open procedure' or another kind of competitive procedure of their choice, known as a 'competitive flexible procedure':

- Open procedure - A single stage tendering procedure, without restriction on who can submit tenders
- Competitive flexible procedure - This will allow contracting authorities the opportunity to design their own procedures, provided that they are appropriate to the procurement in question

The Procurement Team are preparing for the forthcoming changes by accessing briefings from the Cabinet Office. Procurement documentation and Procurement Standing Orders will also be updated in due course.

However, in the short term, it is unlikely that there will be any significant changes to the way in which the Council conducts its procurement activities.

It should be noted that procurement activity below threshold will continue to be governed by the Council's Procurement Standing Orders.

### 3.4 Revenues and Financial Management Division

#### 2023/24 Statement of Accounts

Financial Management are currently in the process of drafting the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts for the Council. The deadline for publishing the draft accounts continues to be a challenging target date of 31 May 2024. The deadline date for the accounts to be signed off by the Councils External Auditor (Grant Thornton) is 30 September 2024.

#### Financial Distress in local authorities - Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee Report

The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee published their report on 'Financial distress in local authorities' on 1 February 2024. The report can be found [here](#). The inquiry reviewed the current funding arrangements across local government, analysed the main exceptional expenditure pressures currently facing local authorities and identified priorities for the next government.

Amongst the conclusions made by the Committee included:

- Local authorities have seen significant reductions in their spending power coincide with increasing demand for their services and inflationary pressures exceeding those in the wider economy. Recent funding settlements have not kept pace with these pressures.

- The prospect of further real terms funding cuts is likely to exacerbate existing concerns about systemic underfunding, with the current funding gap nationally already estimated at £4bn.
- Reform of the Children's social care system is urgent and necessary. Despite the additional funding that the Government announced in Autumn 2022, its plans do not provide sufficient short-term financial support to local authorities to enable them to maintain the quality of services that vulnerable people need and deserve.

There were a number of recommendations made including:

- The Government must include additional funding in the local government finance settlement for 2024/25 to ensure local authorities bridge their estimated £4bn funding gap, setting out which local authorities are being prioritised and why for this financial settlement. The Government must also set out what longer term support will be provided to local authorities if the £4bn funding gap is not fully met in the forthcoming financial settlement.
- The Government must work urgently with local authorities to better understand their short-term budgetary pressures on social care work to develop a package of support and funding to enable continued service delivery while wider system reforms are implemented.
- The Government should support local authorities by reviewing possible ways of facilitating greater collaboration across local authorities so that they can collectively deliver more children's care services directly rather than through private suppliers.

### **3.5 Operational HR Division, Chief Executives Delivery Unit**

As the 2024/25 pay claim remains under national negotiation this will result in a delayed agreement. As a result the delayed national agreement will place significant increased pressures on the Pay & Pensions team to process at an unknown later date. It also places pressure on the Council budget planning process. The later these agreements are made, the more retrospective work there is to be processed by this service area, and resources do not exist to cover this so a pragmatic approach will be taken, usually incurring cost to the Council in respect of overtime and additional hours worked.

Use of agency workers remains consistently high in the Council, particularly in Adults and Children's Services where labour market conditions continue to be extremely tight and competitive in care sectors.

Refer to CXDU LI 05/06 in Appendix 1 for volumes and expenditure. This is not restricted to Halton, but the national service and profession skill shortages for care and social care sector. This also correlates to a consistently high number of vacancies (see recruitment update in Key Developments above).

### **3.6 ICT**

In terms of the full removal of the existing Skype telephony systems the Contact Centre has been one of the larger stumbling blocks in terms of the old systems in place and the complexity of switching from the current on-premise system that is integrated into the authorities CRM system which in turn is integrated into over 1200 processes and hundreds of systems dealing with over 25'000 calls into the authority per day be that direct or into the contact centre. This is a considerable undertaking.

As noted within reports to the Corporate Management Team and Exec Board work is underway as part of the current Transformation programme through a work stream titled Customer Journey. This programme of work will now encompass the IT and Workstream delivery objectives with the Contact Centre being one of the main projects moving into the 24/25 work programme.

Over the last few months, the project team has evaluated and reviewed a large number of options and systems for the delivery of a contact centre solution that will integrate with Teams and one that will move the authority forward with greater integration into the Web, social media, and self-help services with potential links to Ai driven technologies and Knowledge based services such as Bot's.

At this stage the project is almost at the point of being able to decide upon the direction of travel and the procurement of linked cloud-based services that will have the ability to also link into the Halton CRM solution that as discussed manages a huge number of systems and services. This is a system we would not want to replace as the functionality developed in-house by the IT development team over the last 15 years can-not be replaced cost effectively or functionally as there isn't anything in the marketplace as good – this is an asset to the organisation, the development teams will upgrade and reconfigure the CRM over the next couple of years to utilise the latest technologies and enable integration with cloud services and product sets.

The project will detail and define the wider ICT and workstream programme as the funding becomes available.

The project will report back through QMR and Management Team and Exec Reports quarterly but now funding has been agreed and awaiting final council approval to project is starting to move forward at pace.

### **3.7 Legal and Democracy**

The annual review of the Constitution is nearing completion, and the revisions will be considered by Executive Board in Quarter 4, and the Annual Council in Quarter 1 of 2024/25. Preparations continue to move quickly for the local, Police and Crime Commissioner and Combined Authority Mayoral elections, taking place in Quarter 1. Arrangements have been made for the induction of new Councillors in May.

Recruitment strategies will be further developed for hard to fill posts in Legal Services and Members will be kept up to date.

### **3.8 Catering - School Meals**

The School Meals Management are still concerned some schools had made little or no progress in sourcing a new catering provider.

Management contacted all remaining schools for an update and expected transfer date. Please see below.

School have contacted the DfE after a webinar was arranged by the school meals management and Wade Deacon. A free procurement service to HBC schools has been offered to help ease the pressure and ensure they make the right informed decisions.

Recruitment and retention have still been causing issues. We have not had to close any kitchens or reduce the service in HBC School Kitchens in 2023/24.

## 3.9 Stadium

### Contractual Negotiations

- Widnes FC for season 2024/25 (Completed)
- City of Liverpool season 2024/25 (Completed)
- Halton Table Tennis

Management finalised the agreement with Widnes FC to play at the DCBL Stadium. This ensures the financial viability of playing at the stadium for the next 2 seasons.

Management have negotiated a deal with the City of Liverpool FC to play their home fixtures at the DCBL Stadium for the next 2 seasons. This is new income stream for stadium which increases for football by at least 100%.

Halton Table Tennis agreement will be reviewed in quarter 1 of 2024/25.

## 3.10 Registration Services

The Registration Service continues to work with HBC ITC Service's, HBC Income and Stopford (an external Registration Management System provider) - to technically develop and allow online appointments for Births, Deaths, Marriage and Civil Partnerships. This use of automation in improving the customers journey is aligned with the "Reimagining Halton" transformation agenda.

The Registration Service is currently in the process of recruiting a new Principal Registrar. Interviews to take place on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024

The Registration Service will be holding an Open Day on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April, this will allow prospective couples to view all the ceremony room available at Runcorn Town Hall, meet the staff make reservations and ask any questions.

## 3.11 Property Services (Operations)

### Protect Duty

The 'Protect Duty', more commonly known as Martyn's Law is due to come in to force later in the year. The legislation will place a requirement on those responsible for certain publicly accessible buildings, locations and venues to consider the threat from terrorism and to implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures. It will mainly focus on the requirement to undertake risk assessments of the various locations following which plans must be put in place in respect of implementing appropriate mitigation measures. The impact of this is that it may likely mean the introduction of measures such as public address voice alarm (PAVA) systems in certain venues where not already installed together with the enhancement of other factors such as street furniture, e.g. bollards, to prevent vehicular access to certain areas.

### Accommodation review

With the new agile approach to working since the COVID pandemic, i.e. with office-based staff only needing to be in the office for a minimum of 40% of the time, subject to service requirements, our main office accommodation is now significantly underutilised which gives us an opportunity to rationalise our office bases. Following on from a report produced in January 2023 looking at our accommodation, a Member working group was set up to look at the various options available to us in respect of rationalising our accommodation. The general feedback from this group was that it was accepted that the Municipal Building was probably the most appropriate building to vacate (due to significant refurbishment requirements and cost) however it was made clear that a 'head office' type facility was to be maintained in Widnes. It was agreed that further work will be carried out in respect of options for that, and that a report would be brought to Exec Board in due course to seek approval to the proposals.

## Carbon emission targets

Halton's Climate Change Action Plan has set a target for the Council's own carbon emissions to reach net zero by 2040 which is the same as Liverpool City region. Two bids were submitted in November to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), the first covering St Luke's and St Pat's care homes the second covering, Runcorn Town Hall, Kingsway Learning Centre and Picow Farm depot. It was anticipated that the outcome of the bids would be announced in April and presented in Quarter 1 return 2024/2025, however by way of an update both lots of bids for nursing homes and the 3 buildings were unsuccessful.

## **4.0 High Priority Equality Actions**

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

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



## **5.0 Performance Overview**

- 5.1** 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.
- 5.2** It should be noted that given the significant and unrelenting downward financial pressures faced by the Council there is a requirement for Departments to make continuous in-year adjustments to the allocation of resources in order to ensure that the Council maintains a balanced budget.
- 5.3** Whilst every effort continues to be made to minimise any negative impact of such arrangements upon service delivery they may inevitably result in a delay in the delivery of some of the objectives and targets contained within this report




<b><u>Financial Management</u></b>
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## Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective
FS 01	<b>Set the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Recommend Council Tax.</b>


Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Report 2024-27 Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board - <b>November 2023.</b>		Medium Term Financial Strategy reported to Executive Board in November 2023.
Report 2024/25 revenue budget, capital programme and council tax to Council - <b>March 2024.</b>		Reported to Council 06 March 2024.

Ref	Objective
FS 02	<b>To effect financial prudence by assisting managers to control their budgets by monitoring spending and providing timely and accurate financial reports.</b>



Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Provide <b>monthly</b> financial reports to budget holders <b>within 8 days of month end.</b>		Reports all issued on schedule to date.
Provide <b>quarterly</b> financial monitoring reports to Operational Directors for inclusion in Performance Monitoring Reports.		Outturn reports are in the process of being finalised and will be shared with Operational Directors for inclusion in Performance Monitoring Reports.
Provide <b>quarterly</b> monitoring and forecasting reports on the overall budget to Executive Board.		Outturn report on the overall budget will go to Executive Board on 13 June 2024

Ref	Objective
FS 03	<b>Provide for public accountability by reporting the Council's stewardship of public funds and its financial performance in the use of resources by preparing</b>


	<b>the statutory Statement of Accounts in accordance with the latest accounting standards.</b>
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Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Publish the Statement of Accounts following external audit and the Annual Governance Statement <b>by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.</b>		The draft accounts were published and shared with the External Auditor on 04 July 2023. The audit of accounts commenced at the start of October 2023 and was completed in March 2024. Documents now published on Council web-site.

Ref	Objective
FS 04	<b>Make best use of cash resources available to the Council and meet its statutory responsibility by setting, implementing and monitoring the Treasury Management Policy.</b>

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Establish Treasury Management Policy and report to Council - <b>March 2023.</b>		Treasury Management Policy reported to Council on 08 March 2023
Provide monitoring reports to Executive Board <b>on a bi-annual basis.</b>		Treasury Management update to 30 September 2023 reported to Executive Board 16 November 2023.







Ref	Objective
FS 05	<b>Ensure that the Capital Programme is affordable, prudent, and sustainable by setting and monitoring prudential borrowing indicators.</b>









Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Establish and report prudential indicators to Council - <b>March 2023.</b>		Prudential indicators reported to Council on 08 March 2023.



Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board <b>on a bi-annual basis.</b>		Position to 30 September 2023 reported to Executive Board 16 November 2023.
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### Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
FS LI 01	Receive an unqualified external audit opinion on the accounts	Yes	Awaited	Yes			Unqualified audit opinion received March 2024
FS LI 02	Receive an unqualified VFM opinion from the Council's External Auditor	Yes	Awaited	Yes			Report received March 2024. Report included 3 key recommendations relating to financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
FS LI 03	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected	94.14%	94.25%	93.81%			Council tax collection for the year to 31 March 2024 is 93.81%, down on this point last year

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
FS LI 04	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received	96.18%	97.50%	96.69%			Business rates collection for the year to 31 March 2024 is 96.7%, down 0.94% on this point last year. The collection percentage has been impacted by a large site coming on to the rating list during March 2024, the Council has billed the organisation in full for the rates due but remains unpaid at financial year-end. Excluding this site the collection rate would have been 97.7%, up by 0.08% on this point last year.
FS LI 05	Average time for processing new claims (Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction)	23.71	18	22.65			Target of 18 days not achieved, but an improvement of over 1 day compared to the same time last year.
FS LI 06	Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances	9.55	8	9.23			Target of 8 days not achieved, but a slight improvement compared to the same time last year.
FSLI 07	Proportion of all supplier invoices paid within 30 days	91.13%	92.0%	90.39%			Invoice payment performance is slightly down on 2022/23.



**Operational HR Division, Chief Executives Delivery Unit**

**Key Objectives / milestones**

Ref	Objective
<b>CXDU 01</b>	<b>To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of corporate training opportunities through the design and implementation of appropriate learning interventions, to include the development of bespoke Learning &amp; Development offerings to individual service areas.</b>


Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Organisational D Development Strategy <b>September 2023</b>		The strategy has been reviewed, tailored accordingly, and is now aligned with the Transformation Programme requirements
Regular engagement with Management Team to identify areas of challenge and develop appropriate strategic responses <b>June, September, December 2023, and March 2024.</b>		This is scheduled periodically
Embed knowledge and skills gained from Senior Leadership and Management Development Programmes (MBA / MSc) <b>December 2023.</b>		This will be particularly targeted to supporting Transformation projects.
Reconfigure Leadership and Management development in the organisation to align with Transformation Programme principles <b>December 2023.</b>		Leadership & Management cohort established at Level 5 in collaboration with The Solace Group, and at level 7 through Northwest Employers, utilising the apprenticeship Levy to fund both qualifications.  Commissioned Northwest Employers to deliver Children's Service Management Development, consisting of 5 cohorts each receiving 6 modules linked to the outcomes of Transformation.
Monitor the embedding of knowledge and skills gained through previously delivered in-house modular Leadership and Management development activity. <b>Ongoing and report in December 2023.</b>		Evaluation and reviews have taken place and this will inform the content and delivery of future programmes

Ref	Objective
CXDU 02	Implement the Apprenticeship Policy to support the establishment of apprenticeships across the Council, and optimise return on the Apprenticeship Levy.


Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
<p>Establish 20 new apprentice placements within Council services, utilising existing vacancies, compliant with the requirements of apprenticeship legislation <b>March 2024</b>.</p> <p>The Council remains committed to establishing apprenticeship placements should additional monies be made available.</p>		<p>Target has been missed, although the work required on this agenda is advanced. A specification for resources to support this agenda has been created and a funding model is being developed to enable that to be put in place. This will provide dedicated support to managers who wish to bring apprentices into existing vacancies and provide for a systematic approach to career development. Implementation will be linked to the transformation project around workforce</p> <p>The Council has created 5 new apprentice placements during the year.</p>
<p>Establish 20 new existing employee apprenticeships to enable up-skilling in a range of business areas, compliant with the requirements of apprenticeship legislation <b>March 2024</b>.</p>		<p>16 conversions this quarter, taking total up to 26 in this current financial year.</p>

Ref	Objective
CXDU 03	Optimise the use of the Agency Worker contract across Council services, to secure ongoing reductions in the incidence and cost of agency usage, and to ensure that correct and appropriate resourcing solutions are being deployed across Council services.


Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
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Review and consider most appropriate resourcing mix in collaboration with service management in areas of highest agency usage (Transformation Programme) <b>December 2023.</b>		This is a key strand of Transformation Programme activity in terms of addressing future requirements. In the prevailing situation, dedicated resource is now active in the HR Operations area to further engagement with services. A proactive approach is being taken.
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Ref	Objective
<b>CXDU 04</b>	<b>Work with high demand service areas to develop and implement effective recruitment programmes, optimising labour market engagement to attract high quality candidates.</b>





Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Identify service areas with highest consistent recruitment demand, turnover, and low attraction rates. Develop tailored solutions. (Transformation Programme) <b>December 2023.</b>		Now a key strand of Transformation Programme activity. Detailed and specific campaigns are running to meet requirements. Refer to Key Developments and Emerging Issues above for more information. Broader work is ongoing around Employer Value Proposition (EVP), employer branding, career pathways, succession planning, and retention.



Ref	Objective
<b>CXDU 05</b>	<b>Develop and implement an organisation wide change programme – The Future Work Programme - to evaluate and introduce revised working practices following to meet the requirements of the changing labour market and employee expectation in the post-pandemic environment (to include use of accommodation, HR policy and practice, wellbeing support, application of technology)</b>











Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Use findings of Corporate Accommodation Review (2023) to determine available workspace capacity and develop optimum balance of 'staff to space'. <b>December 2023.</b>		Corporate Accommodation Review is ongoing. The prevailing budget challenge, linked to uncertain cost influences such as energy costs, long term maintenance costs, and property values, means that a

		prudent approach to determining the optimum way to configure the Council's estate is required. This is being overseen by the Asset Management Working Group with representation from the Chief Executives Delivery Unit present on that group.
Develop contractual model to meet business requirements of 'staff to space' balance. <b>March 2024</b>		This is contingent on milestone immediately above.







### Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
CXD U LI 01	Average FTE days lost to sickness	12.98 (Days)	9.5 (Days)	11.46 (Days)			Improvement from outturn at Q4 of 2022/23 with a total 11.46 days for TFY for 2023/24. Refer to narrative in key developments above around the implementation of HR Business Partnering to increase value in this topic area.
CXD U LI 02	Percentage of Employees without sickness	66.45	70.00	82.5			Higher than same period as last year and better than outturn for whole of 22/23. Also, refer to comments against LI 01 above.

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
CXD U LI 03	Total Full Time Equivalent Staffing Establishment (Indicator for information only)	3,204		3127			
CXD U LI 04	Total Staff (head count) (Indicator for information only)	4,127	For information Only	4168	For information Only	For information Only	Reported for information purposes only.
CXD U LI 05	Total Agency Worker Usage (number of placements – year to date)	766	650	656			Improvement from Q4 2022/23 however outturn continues to be driven by high usage in Children's and Adults services, resulting from labour market conditions and is just above yearly target. Usage across all areas, although reduced in comparison to last years is still high – refer to emerging issues above for more information. <i>(Please note, data includes 28</i>






Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
CXD U LI 06	Total Agency Worker Cost (cumulative gross cost – year to date)	£8.34m	£5.0m	£13.2m			See commentary in LI 05 immediately above and emerging issues. <i>(Please note, the 22/23 actual has been updated during the year to include 'off-contract' spend and has therefore increased from £8.5m reported at end of 22/23 FY)</i>
CXD U L109	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are:	61.45%	55%	58.82%			Fluctuation in (a), (b) and (c), due to turnover.
	a) Women	2.7%	2.0%	3.16%			It should be noted that recruitment in to the top 5% of earners is not generally a high volume, and as such scope for significant change over time is low.
	b) From BME communities	2.7%	2.0%	3.16%			
	c) With a disability	0%	8.0%	20%			
							As above Outturn reflects significant changes to previous data and is based upon additional data from




Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
CXD U LI 10	No of staff declaring that they meet the definition of disability within the Equality Act 2010 as a % of the total workforce.	1.25%	10.00%	14.98%			Indicates significant increase from Q4 22/23 at 1.29%, reflecting significant changes to previous data and is based upon additional data from Staff Workforce profile data which was loaded to iTrent in Q4.
CXD U LI 11	Minority Ethnic community staff as % of total workforce.	0.99%	1.00%	2.02%			Demonstrates improvements, however fluctuation exists due to turnover and outturn tends to remain around target level.
CXD U LI 12	Average time to recruit (Applicant Tracking System reported figure)	19 Days	12.2 Days	10.2%			Outturn demonstrates the number of days taken from vacancy closing date to completion of recruitment. Significant improvement from Q4 22/23 at 35.3 days. Improvement in this outturn is reflective of the process changes to streamline pre-checks



## Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective
ICT 01	Constantly evaluate and improve the usability, resilience, control and flexibility of the Council's Client interaction, Data Communications and Management, Hardware and Software provision.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Continued Enhancement and delivery of the E5, M365, Azure platforms to enhance and deliver new technologies into the authority - <b>March 2024.</b>		Significant progress continues to be made in the delivery stages of Office 365 and Azure Cloud services. Many user data sets have been migrated and will continue through Q2 24 when this aspect of the initial delivery is envisaged will be completed.
Delivery of the Front Door transformation programme delivering changes in process, customer contact and customer journey - <b>March 2024.</b>		As detailed within the body of the QMR significant progress has started to be made with funding bids now approved and awaiting council approval through to moves forward in the design and delivery of key project phases – linked to a Halton Digital Strategy delivery plan.
The continued development of the Records Management Unit enhancing all opportunities and creating a central fulfilment centre within - <b>March 2024.</b>		Ongoing development has included enhancing support for Information Management and prevention of data loss, which includes enhancements that have been implemented in respect of hybrid mail – with the implementation of new software and changes to process creating greater financial efficiencies.
Development of Interactive Services, through integration with the Contact Centre and One Stop Shop's - <b>March 2024.</b>		Again, as noted within the body of the QMR considerable progress has been made in the design and delivery plans for the new systems and the integration into the services. The shops continue to develop new services within the areas with a number of new partner agencies and charities linking to the shop's with surgeries now in place for Health and Homelessness
Management and development of commercial ICT opportunity within		The continued development and delivery of the Finance solution into



desktop, hosting and DR provision - <b>March 2024.</b>		partners within the city region continues with additional services and deliveries continually sought.
Continued compliance with Central Government and NCSC Security guidelines and compliance requirements – <b>March 2024.</b>		Audits are complete – with additional funding awarded by DHLUC for the enhanced provision of security across the authority. Also, separate funding awarded to the council to develop a standardised security compliance regime across all UK government agencies. HBC is one of 30 bodies awarded this funding – offering considerable recognition to the work carried out so far by the HBC security team.


Ref	Objective
ICT 02	<b>The implementation of a range of new corporate wide facilities including Web services, records &amp; document management, business process workflow, corporate desktop portal, Information governance and Security Compliance process.</b>

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Delivery, deployment and Management of the E5, M365, Azure managed cloud platforms, enhancing user experience. - <b>March 2024.</b>		Ongoing preparatory work in the form of workshops with support staff provided by contracted support organisation. Most initial configuration of the Councils Microsoft Azure Tenant has been completed, currently working on the development of the end user experience, which is expected to be completed by the end of Q2 24. As within the body of text
Continued development and internal, commercial use of the Print Unit, Records management Unit - <b>March 2024.</b>		Ongoing development has included enhancing support for Information Management and prevention of data loss, which includes enhancements that have been implemented in respect of hybrid mail. The transfer of land search functions now complete and transfer of post, income and budget in process and delivery through the RMU is now underway.



Continued development of Contact Centre and One Stop Shop Services/Facilities/Integration with Authority wide process - <b>March 2024</b> .development and internal, commercial use of the Print Unit, Records management Unit - <b>March 2024</b> .		With the advent of the Front door/Customer Journey transformation programme, the department will evolve at pace and begin to report against developments over the coming months as the objectives are set.
The development of improved information governance and Security compliance in line with government guidelines - <b>March 2024</b> .		This has been built into the configuration of the Councils Microsoft Tenancy and will continue to be enhanced and reported via the SIRO reports to Management Team. These changes will continue to evolve as the deployment of the new transformed ICT platform matures. This is part of a gradual change programme supported by the Councils ICT Security Programme to minimise disruption to users, while enhancing capabilities and improving the Councils security and compliance position.





Ref	Objective
ICT 03	<b>The implementation of a range of new corporate wide facilities including cloud and web service solutions, records &amp; document management enhancement, business process development, customer service provision.</b>





Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
The delivery of the Front Door transformation programmes across Admin and Support Services - <b>March 2023</b> .		The disaggregation of the Administrative Support Division is now complete as part of the transformation programme New initiatives are now within the body of this report.
The delivery of new and enhanced IT Security Management and Compliance systems/facilities across the authority's user base - <b>March 2024</b> .		Most preparatory work has been completed. The onboarding of a Security Operations Centre will be the priority for Q2 24, with work currently underway analysing the SEIM and SOC services available to the authority – this will be subject to Management Team and Exec Board reporting Q1 2024. For the 5 year procurement of a security contract.



<p>The delivery of new and enhanced technology provision across the authority's user base - <b>March 2024.</b></p>		<p>As noted within the body of this report this is an ongoing objective with the implementation of M365 linked to the Dell device roll-out, the delivery of MS Teams to all users with the added implication of the contact centre delivery, linked to the user base adopting change and new process – finally linked to a limited resource base for delivery again noted.</p>
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### **Key Performance Indicators**

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
ICT LI 01	Average availability of the Council's M365 Systems (%).	N/A	99.9%	99.98%			<p>This new KPI relates to the new M365 platform that remains currently under development –</p> <p>The department has moved into the test phase of the development with over 700 users across all departments testing and evaluating the build and the software deployment and device deployment technologies – to date this has been highly successful with very positive feedback.</p>

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
ICT LI 02	Security Incidents across quarter	N/A	TBA	TBA			In line with the delivery of the new M365 platform this statistic will be monitored by new systems currently under development – Again to evolve with the programme of work. Limited issues experienced and within the monthly target. As noted a contract is under review with the objective to let that contract Q1 2024.
ICT LI 03	Service Desk Call Resolution	86.56%	90%	89.99%			The Service Desk continues to be challenging – Currently the service has no FTE's within post on the service desk this is causing issue as calls are spread across the teams – we have recruited into one post to be filled May 24 we are still struggle to fill the other – new Job adverts have been posted externally – currently the department within this area holds a number of vacancies. recruitment issues across the authority.

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
ICT LI 04	Average working days from delivery to completion of a new Laptop.	1 (Days)	1 (Days)	2 Hours for the delivery			Again, a new KPI that will evolve with the considerable programme of work underway. With the advent of the new Dell Laptop contract completed and the roll-out underway, the team only has 2 people to carry this out due to vacancies and sickness – again these people are needed for day-to-day tasks which is limiting the training sessions. But on the positive side over 700 devices have been issued with extremely positive feedback associated.
ICT LI 05	Number of resolved customer contacts – Contact Centre	27500	27000	30017			The level of calls into the contact centre are at an expected level with seasonal changes to call patterns with Adult Social Care and Waste Management being the main focus – Q4 will show considerable changes again as the weather has been a considerable factor over the last few weeks.

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
ICT LI	Number of resolved contacts – One Stop Shop's	15500	15500	17066			<p>The level of foot fall into the Shops continues to rise, with seasonal and service dependant changes are considered with Social Care and Homelessness accounting for a high level of the contacts over this winter period. The levels of abusive members of the public are rising at an alarming rate to the extent the Police are constantly attending the locations resulting in a number of arrests for abusive and often potentially violent behaviour. Many of them single males with issues relating to homelessness. The level of calls into the contact centre are at an expected level with seasonal changes to call patterns with Adult Social Care and Waste Management being the main focus – Q4 will show considerable changes again as the weather has been a considerable factor over the last few weeks.</p>



<u>Legal &amp; Democracy</u>
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## Key Objectives / milestones











Ref	Objective
LD 01	To ensure that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information and are kept informed of changing legislation and responsibilities.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Review constitution - <b>May 2023</b> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The revised Constitution was approved at Annual Council.

Ref	Objective
LD 02	To provide efficient and effective Democratic Support Services that provides Elected Members, as key decision makers, with the necessary information, support and training opportunities to fulfil their individual potential and management and governance role effectively.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting where desired.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All Members have been offered a MAP meeting.
To induct all new members <b>by October 2023</b> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All new Members have been inducted.



**Key Performance Indicators**

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
LD LI 01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (54 Total).	54	54	54			All Members have been offered a MAP. Take up is a matter of personal choice.
LD LI 02	Percentage of Members attending at least one organised Training Event.	52 98%	54 100%	36 65%			All Members have been offered numerous training opportunities. Take up is a matter of personal
LD LI 03	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days).	10 (Days)	10 (Days)	10 (Days)			The target has been met.
LD LI 04	Average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department (working days).	3 (Days)	3 (Days)	3 (Days)			The target has been met.
LD LI 05	% of Executive Board minutes published within 5 working days after the meeting.	100%	100%	100%			The target has been met.


**Community & Environment**


**Key Objectives / milestones**

<b>CE 05</b>	<b>To routinely use customer feedback to drive forward service improvement in the Registration Service</b>
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Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Ensure our services are available to those who wish to or who need to use them by providing accessible information in a range of ways (e.g. written information, online services).		<p>Registration Service information is provided in written format e.g. leaflets and price lists. We also provide information via our own websites:</p> <p><a href="http://www.halton.gov.uk/registration">www.halton.gov.uk/registration</a> and <a href="http://www.weddingsinhalton.co.uk">www.weddingsinhalton.co.uk</a></p> <p>In accordance with General Register Office (GRO) protocols, we provide the latest statutory Registration information and guidance, via web links: <a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a></p> <p>In addition, to assist those with physical and sensory access needs; and to help plan and prepare for their visit to the Register Office, we also provide a web link to:</p> <p><a href="https://www.accessable.co.uk/halton-borough-council/access-guides/halton-register-office">https://www.accessable.co.uk/halton-borough-council/access-guides/halton-register-office</a></p>
Seek the views of the local community and make adjustments to our service delivery when appropriate, based on customer feedback, to improve the service going forward. Where feedback cannot be acted upon, an explanation will be given.		<p>As part of our annual reporting to GRO, we have a Customer Engagement Strategy (2022/20233).</p> <p>In addition, we have a published set of Service Standards at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.halton.gov.uk/registration">www.halton.gov.uk/registration</a> and <a href="http://www.weddingsinhalton.co.uk">www.weddingsinhalton.co.uk</a></p>

Ref	Objective
CE 06	Develop a Stadium Business Plan and Marketing Strategy to make the Stadium more commercially viable.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Business Plan & Marketing Strategy		No recommendation received from transformation. New Stadium & Catering Division proposed for live implementation 01/05/24. This will be a priority for the new Divisional Manager of the service.











Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Manage greenspace areas as per the agreed specification - <b>March 2024</b> .		The Environment Services Division was able to deliver all works within the Council's agreed specification for green space management.

Ref	Objective
CE 07	Implementation of actions to ensure that the Council achieves its waste related targets and objectives.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Continue to deliver communications and awareness raising initiatives to ensure that participation with the Council's recycling services is maximised and that residents comply with the requirements of the Council's Household Waste Collection Policy - <b>March 2024</b> .		Activities to meet this objective have remained on-going. This includes the production and delivery of a booklet to Halton households providing information and advice on how to 'recycle right' by setting out the details of the materials that residents can recycle at home in their blue bin or box.

**Key Performance Indicators**


Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
CE L1 09	Residual household waste per household.	625kg	625kg	591kg			This is an estimated figure but it does show that household waste levels are lower than those in Q4 in the previous year.
CE L1 10	Household waste recycled and composted.	39.3%	40%	37%			This is an estimated figure but it does show that recycling levels are slightly higher than in Q4 in the previous year, but the annual target will not be met.
CE LI 10	Registration Service - Births - 98% registered within 42 days	100%	100%	100%			Birth registered within 42 days 98% (National benchmark – 95%)
CE LI 11	Registration Service - Deaths with MCCDs (no coronial involvement) - 90% registered within 5 days	87%*	100%	100%			Deaths registered within 2 working days of request – 98% (National benchmark 95%)
CE LI 12	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Primary Schools.		75%	72.02%			Data is based on period 3 as year end data has not been finalised.







Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Q4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
CE LI 13	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Secondary Schools.		60%	64.27%			Data is based on period 3 as year end data has not been finalised.
CE LI 14	Take up of school lunches (%) – primary schools.		60%	56.87%			Data is based on period 3 as year end data has not been finalised.
CE LI 15	Take up of school lunches (%) – secondary schools.		50%	61.58%			Data is based on period 3 as year end data has not been finalised.
CE LI 16	Room Occupancy – Meetings (Box Level)	12.34%	40%	29.74%			Data is based on period 3 as year end data has not been finalised.
CE LI 17	Room Occupancy – Conferences (Bridge & Karalius)	50.19%	60%	43.46%			Data is based on period 3 as year end data has not been finalised.

### Property Services

#### Key Objectives / milestones


Ref	Objective
EEP 07	Corporate Resources: To provide an effective corporate property service

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Ensure the leisure centre is on track on <b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2024</b> both in terms of time and cost by project managing it throughout the year.		Works are currently progressing well on site. The project is both on budget and on programme for completion by 03/02/25



<p>Ensure the contractor commences on site with the major upgrade works at both St Patrick's and <b>St Luke's by 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2023.</b></p>		<p>The projects have been delayed, initially as a result of the need to incorporate the decarbonisation works, the latest estimated costs for both projects are over budget however so further discussions are required in respect of progressing same, further update to be provided in Quarter 1.</p>
<p>Ensure all the projects are progressed in line with the school maintenance programme and are delivered by <b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.</b></p>		<p>All works included in this years' schools maintenance programme have now been delivered.</p>
<p>Ensure all the projects are progressed in line with the corporate maintenance programme and are delivered by <b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.</b></p>		<p>The corporate maintenance programme has been delivered and the budget for 2023/24 has been fully spent on the programmed works.</p>
<p>Submit a decarbonisation funding bid in conjunction with the Combined Authority by October 2023 and be successful in having the funding approved by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.</p>		<p>Two bids were submitted to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. These were not in conjunction with the Combined Authority however but standalone bids for Halton. We still await the outcome of both bids, which is due in early April</p>
<p>Ensure there is a wide and varied mix of commodities and services on offer in the Market and ensure occupancy levels are maintained or increased by <b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.</b></p>		<p>There is a wide and varied mix of commodities and services on offer in the Market. Occupancy levels are slightly down from the start of the year however, the reasons being the difficult trading conditions resulting in reduced footfall to the market</p>
<p>Ensure all necessary servicing, and repairs and maintenance is carried out within our properties <b>by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024</b> and ensure building managers are satisfied with the service provided.</p>		<p>All necessary servicing and repairs and maintenance has been undertaken and the feedback from Managers is very positive.</p>

Ref	Objective
EEP 08	<b>Corporate Priority: To design, manage and improve processes to generate increasing value for customers and other stakeholders.</b>



	To undertake Employee Reviews for all staff
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Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
All EDRs to be completed by <b>September 23</b>		Completed

Ref	Objective
<b>EEP 09</b>	<b>Corporate Priority: To design, manage and deliver a place-based business support programme for Halton</b> Commission support sessions to provide advice and guidance based on initial diagnostic.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Scheme in Place <b>September 2023</b>		Internal procurement delays slowed down the commissioning of the service but with one exception the service is fully up-and-running now.
Scheme finalised <b>March 2025</b>		Scheme is now starting to deliver priorities and will meet targets by the end of 2024 - 2025.

Ref	Objective
<b>EEP 10</b>	<b>Corporate Priority: Secure funding, support procurement and ground-breaking to take place for Ultraviolet at Sci Tech Daresbury</b> Commissioning of Ultraviolet

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Funding Secured <b>Q3 2023 / 2024</b>		Discussions with the CA are ongoing in relation to Investment Zone funding however the earliest anticipated approval has now been pushed back to Q1 2024-25
Procurement <b>Q4 2023 / 2024</b>		A procurement exercise has been completed by the Joint Venture using the Procure Partnerships Framework.



Groundbreaking Q1 2024 2025		The start on site is likely to be delayed by the funding situation.
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### Key Performance Indicators

STRATEGIC ISSUES	BASELINE POSITION	OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 1 2024	OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 3 2027	INTERVENTIONS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<b>High Unemployment</b>	2.7% of economically active people are unemployed (2021 Census)	In March 2024, Halton had 17,041 people claiming Universal Credit.  Halton has the highest proportion of claimants across City Region.	Ends 2027	<b>HBC's contribution:</b> HPIJ delivery of Welfare to Work & Health programmes (Ways to Work, Restart, Work & Health, Pioneer Programme and Supported Internships Programme)	Percentage unemployed (aged 16-64 years). Percentage of economically inactive of working age
<b>Low wage residents</b>	Data not available from Census 21?  Data from Adzuna – median salary in Halton is £26,000 which is 14.3% less than the national average of £30,000 (although there has been a YOY increase of 8% in Halton)	Data from Adzuna – median salary in Halton is £29,139, which is an increase of £3139 from the previous year (10.6%). It is 11.8% less than the overall national salary of £33,033 (an improvement of 2.5% on previous year)	Ends 2027	Employers signing up to the LCR Fair Employment Charter	Percentage of employees' earnings below real living wage.
<b>Low-income households</b>	<b>Data??</b>			<b>HBC's contributions:</b> HPIJ delivery of Welfare to Work & Health programmes (Ways to Work, Restart, Work & Health, Pioneer Programme and Supported	Percentage employees who are local (FTE) employed on contract for one year or the whole duration of the contract, whichever is shorter.

				Internships Programme). Better off calculations for HPIJ jobseekers. In work support to help low-income households increase their hours or change their job.	
<b>Good employment</b>	Data not available from Census 21? Current Data from Adzuna – 26.93% in Permanent Employment, 9.68% in Contract Employment and 63.39% unspecified	HPIJ unable to implement new employer engagement strategy due to staffing related issues highlighted above		Employers signing up to the LCR Fair Employment Charter <b>HBC's contribution:</b> Employer Engagement Strategy to be updated to recognise and celebrate 'good' employers in the borough.	Proportion of employed in permanent and non-permanent employment. Adzuna data??
<b>(appropriate) External Funding Maximised</b>	Some bids are logged, some are not.  No strategic view on whether bids should be made.  Officers writing bids which can take them away from core work; not always using skills of Programmes Office.	All potential bids registered on a Business Justification form.  All relevant officers in Department trained in bid-writing.  All project leads logging funding bids on central system.	Increase in appropriate funding secured.  No resource issues in delivering.  No clawback issues.	6 bid-writing courses p.a. scheduled.  3 monitoring and evaluation courses p.a. scheduled.  Central log of all bids maintained.	to establish a Business Justification Case for all bids over £50,000 to ensure the relevance and deliverability of externally funded schemes – to be signed off monthly by OD. All bids to be logged with the Programmes Office and all officers within the Dept to attend the Bid-Writing course before drafting any bids.

<b>Climate change agenda and carbon emissions</b>	CO2 emissions for 2022/23 amounted to 8740 tonnes.	Reduce emissions by 1%	Reduce emissions by 5%	<p>Submit a funding bid and obtain funding to carry out decarbonisation works to various buildings.</p> <p>Continue to deliver the LED lighting replacement programme.</p> <p>Carry out further rationalisation of our property portfolio to reduce emissions.</p> <p>Help carry out education programme for officers and Members alike</p>	Percentage reduction in CO2 emissions from Council activities. The emissions for 2022/23 were 6.29% lower than for the previous year.
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OPERATIONAL ISSUES	BASELINE POSITION	OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 1	OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 3	INTERVENTIONS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Low skills levels in LSOAs are not being addressed in line with need.	No. of unemployed of working age population compared to number of actual HBC Adult Learning enrolments (Top 5 LSOAs)	Central and West Bank - 43% Appleton and Halton View - 40% Grange –25% Halton Lea – 38% <b>Q4 Update</b>	Central and West Bank – 48% Appleton and Halton View - 45% Grange – 35% Halton Lea – 43%	<b>HBC's contribution:</b> Targeted marketing of LSOAs – working with Customer Intelligence Team and use of Adzuna dashboard. Outreach and engagement schedule.	To increase the number of Adult Learning enrolments from residents aged 19+ living in Halton's LSOA areas

	<p>for unemployment)</p> <p>Central and West Bank – 145 claimants, only 56 enrolled (38%)</p> <p>Appleton and Halton View – 100 claimants, only 35 enrolled (35%)</p> <p>Grange – 95 claimants, only 17 enrolled (18%)</p> <p>Halton Lea – 90 claimants, only 30 enrolled (38%)</p>	<p>Central and West Bank 41.5%</p> <p>Appleton 38.6%</p> <p>Halton View 40.7%</p> <p>Grange 45%</p> <p>Halton Lea 46.1%</p>			
<p>The number of HBC adult learning withdrawals has shown a year-on-year increase. Withdrawals adversely affect income levels.</p>	<p>14% overall withdrawals in the year 21/22</p>	<p>12%</p> <p><b>Q4 Update</b> 5% currently (academic year so far)</p>	<p>10%</p>	<p><b>HBC's contribution:</b> Early intervention for learner issues. Implementation of 'Extensions in Learning' process. Reviewed onboarding process – distance learning.</p>	<p>To reduce the number of withdrawals in the Adult Learning Service</p>
<p>Halton adult Learner Voice does not consistently get used to promote the service</p>	<p>19 limited detail success stories provided in 21/22. Format does not showcase effectively the impact of the service</p>	<p>12 Meaningful case studies</p> <p><b>Q4 Update</b> 9 total – 6 social media celebrations and 3 Learner of the month celebrations with half of the academic year to go.</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>Annual marketing strategy. Promotional videos of learning.</p>	<p>To increase the number of Adult Learning Case Studies produced each year</p>

A reduction of HBC AEB funding due to performance levels only achieving 98%	-£14,197.92 (2% of overall budget)	0% <b>Q4 Update</b> Currently at 55.5% of total allocation with half of the academic year to go	0%	To increase enrolment numbers. To reduce withdrawals. To deliver more accredited provision.	To reduce our Adult Education Budget threshold level, year on year
Marketing and promotion of the Adult Learning Service is inconsistent	10 Marketing events attended in 21/22	38 <b>Q4 Update</b> 15 attended (10 in target wards) with half of the academic year to go	38	Attendance at partner events Increased social media presence and followers. Increase to at least one marketing activity per week during term time.	To deliver an annual programme of outreach and engagement adult learning activities
Targeted employer engagement activity to increase the number of opportunities made available to HPIJ customers accessing employment programmes	51 employer visits made by appointment 272 sales calls made to employers 35 speculative visits made to employers	200 2000 <b>Q4 update</b> Unable to provide accurate data for end of year 1 due to staffing related issue highlighted above	300 3000	Targeted employer visits Targeted sales calls made to employers	To review HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy, implement improvements and increase the number of opportunities sourced by local employers for local residents
Increase the number of Economically Inactive customers that we engage with on programmes not just for unemployed people (focused on Economically Inactive)	12% of Ways to Work participants on programme were Economically Inactive	25% <b>Q4 update</b> Achieved 23% at end of years (of Ways to Work participants on programme were Economically Inactive)	75%	Attendance at Jobcentres on a weekly basis (engaging with Work Coaches that support Economically Inactive customers) Attendance at partner/community events Attendance at Jobs Fairs Increased social media presence and followers Community Engagement Plan and Outreach Based Approach	'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.
Marketing and promotion of HPIJ services for programmes that allow self-referrals is inconsistent	Ad-hoc partnership working across the Borough Leaflets posters and and stands displayed across community venues for some programmes but not all	48 <b>Q4 update</b> Minimum of 50 activities took place across the HPIJ team	48	Attendance at Jobcentres on a weekly basis Attendance at partner/community events Attendance at Jobs Fairs Increased social media presence and followers Increase to at least four marketing activities per month	To deliver an annual programme of outreach and engagement activities to market and promote HPIJ programmes that local residents can self-refer to
Place Based Business Support Programme Delivered  Targeted flexible place-based business support for	Lead Officer nominated.  Specialist advice commissioned in order to support businesses	9	58	Diagnostic sessions performed by trained staff and appropriate support sources for the business. Specific support can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy</li> <li>• Corporate Marketing</li> <li>• Procurement</li> </ul>	Diagnostic approved by CA April 2024. Business Start Website agreed March 2024.

existing businesses with growth ambitions and employment potential which provide equitable access across the city region. To include all businesses including social enterprises				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Access to funding</li> <li>• Business Start</li> <li>• Digital Marketing</li> </ul>	
To provide support to Start-ups, with a focus on enterprise ready entrepreneurs (within 3 months of establishing a business) and a focus on founders who are looking to employ people within 24 months, export and/or generate high turnover growth. To include all businesses including social enterprises.	This service is currently not delivered by Halton BC	5	11	Business Starts being delivered in all sectors (non-specialised)	TBA by CA
<b>Programmes Office fully resourced</b>	Programmes Office established Oct 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2022.  Two positions remain unfilled.	Team fully recruited and operational.  Programmes Office systems fully embedded in EEP Dept.	Programmes Office systems fully established across the Council.	Full team recruited.  Roles and Responsibilities fully understood by Dept.  New systems established – see strategic issue above.	to establish the Programmes Office Team, ensuring the full team is in place and competent, with clear roles and responsibilities.
<b>Externally Funded schemes</b>	Programmes Office established as monitors of the	Two claims successfully submitted and	Six claims successfully submitted and annual	Regular Town Deal catch ups with relevant staff.	To ensure effective systems are in place and

<b>effectively monitored</b>	Town Deal programme.	annual draw down received.  GFAs issued to relevant projects.  Roles and Responsibilities clearly allocated and understood.	drawdowns received.  No clawback/issues.  Audit issues successfully dealt with.	Roles allocated and understood within Programmes Office.  Systems established to successfully record and complete claims.	understood for the monitoring of the Town Deal programme to minimise the risk of clawback/non-compliance.
<b>Reduction in Market occupancy levels</b>	Market Hall 92% occupied at 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2022	Maintain occupancy at 92%	Increase occupancy to 95%	Continue to promote the Market as a positive location to trade from.  Maintain competitive rental rates compared to other town centre rental costs	The Market Hall occupancy is at 87.6% as of 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024. The slight reduction is down to the continued difficult trading conditions. There have been a number of recent enquiries, so we are anticipating this figure increasing in due course.
<b>Reducing Ex-Trader Market Debt.</b>	£29,833.69 as at 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	Reduce debt by 5%	Reduce debt by 15%	Continue to work with the finance recovery team to put payment plans in place.  Continue to actively manage existing traders' debt so they are not in debt if they decide to leave the Market.	Percentage of Ex-Trader debt outstanding. The figure at year end has increased slightly to £30,971, this is as a result of a couple of traders leaving within the year with some outstanding debt.
<b>Level of satisfaction with repair &amp; maintenance service delivered via the FM team</b>	75% of surveys returned were rated as either good or excellent	80% Of surveys returned rated as either good or excellent	85% Of surveys returned rated as either good or excellent	Issue questionnaires to building managers in order to rate the level of service provided.  Continue to deliver a repairs and maintenance service in a timely manner,	Percentage of surveys returned in 2023/24 where the service was rated as either good or excellent was in excess of the



				with quality contractors.  Continue with the procurement of contractors, when necessary, based on best value principles.	85% target figure.
<b>Continued Successful Delivery of Capital schemes if workload increases due to accelerated regeneration</b>	3 Projects Managers currently in post managing external consultants to help deliver various schemes	90% of schemes delivered within the contractual completion date and within the contract sum.	95% of schemes delivered within the contractual completion date and within the contract sum.	Additional Lead Officer post created with Lead Officer now appointed. Currently 2 vacant project manager posts however, with 1 agency surveyor covering in the interim.  Increased use of consultants to help deliver various schemes	Monitoring successful delivery of individual projects within work programme. Over 90% of projects completed were delivered on time and within the contract sum.

## 70. Financial Statements

### Finance Department

### Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024

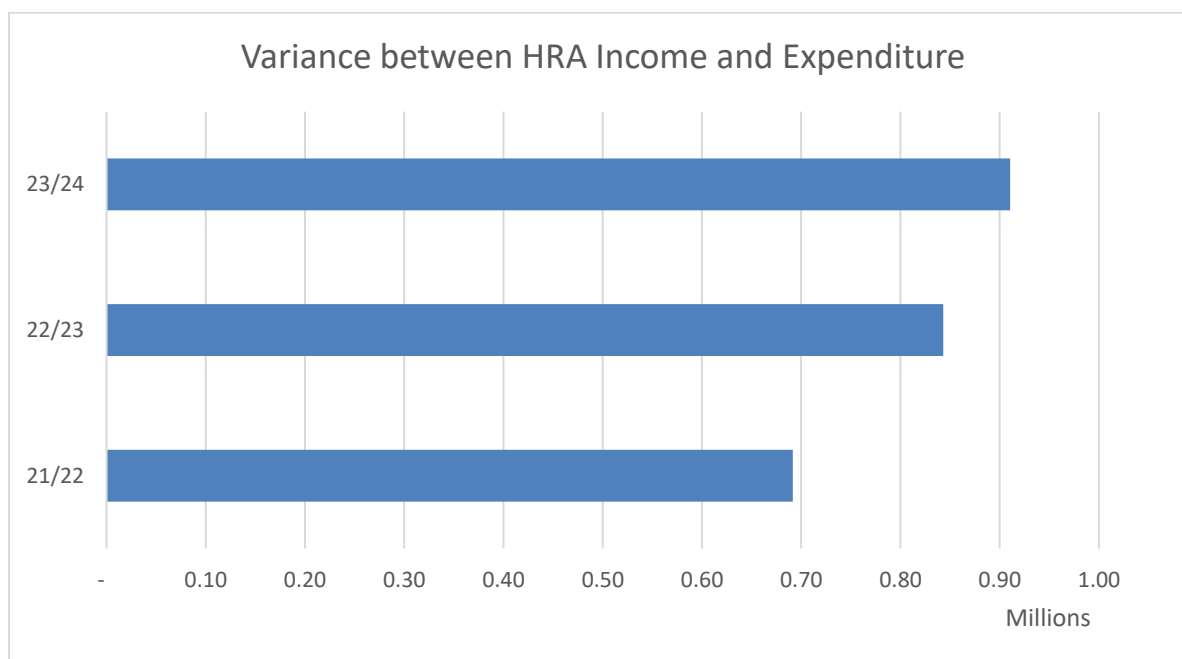
	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	6,500	6,415	85
Insurances	1,039	1,048	(9)
Supplies & Services	446	406	40
Rent Allowances	30,945	30,945	0
Concessionary Travel	1,748	1,684	64
Non HRA Rent Rebates	51	51	0
Discretionary Social Fund	73	6	67
Discretionary Housing Payments	273	273	0
Household Support Fund Expenditure	2,528	2,528	0
Energy Bills Support	40	40	0
LCR Levy	2,241	2,241	0
Transfer to Reserves	17	0	17
Bad Debt Provision	110	281	(171)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>46,011</b>	<b>45,918</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Other Fees & Charges	-344	-385	41
Burdens Grant	-60	-104	44
Dedicated schools Grant	-123	-123	0
Council Tax Liability Order	-541	-649	108
Business Rates Admin Grant	-157	-157	0
Schools SLAs	-295	-311	16
LCR Reimbursement	-2,241	-2,241	0
HB Overpayment Debt Recovery	-236	-236	0
Rent Allowances	-30,390	-30,049	(341)
Non HRA Rent Rebate	-70	-70	0
Discretionary Housing Payment Grant	-285	-285	0
Housing Benefits Admin Grant	-493	-524	31
Universal Credits	-204	0	(204)
Council Tax Admin Grant	-2,526	-2,526	0
Household Support Fund Grant	-55	-55	0
Energy Bills Support	-129	-129	0
Alternative Fuel	-300	-300	0
Transfer from Reserves	-82	-85	3
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-38,531</b>	<b>-38,229</b>	<b>(302)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>7,480</b>	<b>7,689</b>	<b>(209)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	268	268	0
Transport	0	0	0
Central Support	2,069	2,069	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-5,330	-5,330	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-2,993</b>	<b>-2,993</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>4,487</b>	<b>4,696</b>	<b>(209)</b>

#### Comments on the above figures

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March the Finance Department is reporting an overspend against budget of £0.209m. Finance as a department is underspent at year end on the majority of account classifications, however increasing pressures on Housing Benefits, and the need to increase the bad debt provision

for Council Tax Liability Orders is so significant that any areas of underspend must be utilised to help mitigate the pressures faced by those 2 areas.

Rent Allowances alone report a spend above the budget profile of £0.341m. Demand for supported accommodation continues to grow as the population of Halton face the increasing pressures on cost of living. Central Government contribution to supported accommodation is capped at a nominal figure after which, 40% of the costs will be suffered by the Council. An increase in support has been included within the initial 2024/25 budget of £0.100m to help reduce the budgetary pressure within Finance, but seeking to reduce the spend where possible in other areas will be crucial to continue supporting significant pressure Rent Allowances faces.



The insurance budget is also under significant pressure increased costs across all policy premiums, this resulted in expenditure exceeding £0.110m of the budget, although these costs have been met from insurance reserve in year, and in increase in budget in the 2024/25 financial year will seek to reduce the pressures faced by these increases.

Council Tax Liability Orders have over achieved in income, contributing £0.108m of underspend to the department outturn, however there is a high likelihood that these debts are not cleared within the typical timeframe if at all. This is reflected in the increase to the bad debt provision of the department, £0.172m more than the budget profile, as the balance of debt held grows in relation with the pressures to households within Halton.

Concessionary Travel continues to represent an area of underspend within the department, at the end of the financial year, costs were £0.064m lower than budget. Concessionary travel has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic as overall usage levels are still lower than pre covid levels. Bus operators indicate that current levels have become the new standard, and it is unlikely the Council will see passenger numbers grow much further. Reimbursement levels will need to be renegotiated and updated to reflect the new standards of operation, following the update, it is likely that the full budget profile will be utilised for Concessionary Travel in the 2024/25 financial year.

Discretionary Social Fund has also helped mitigate the increased budget pressures through the use of the Household Support Fund, a majority of the expenditure within this area is eligible spend under the grant, therefore generating an underspend of £0.067m for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

The Council Tax Admin Grant has been rolled up into the RSG within this financial year so was not received separately, reflected by the £0.204m target not being achieved. This budget position has been corrected in 2024/25 financial year.

## **Approved 2023/24 Savings**




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




## FINANCE DEPARTMENT

## APPENDIX A

## Progress Against Agreed Savings

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
F1	Client Finance	109	Increase by £3 per week the charge to clients for the Appointeeships Service to ensure full cost recovery.	45	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Implemented in April 2023 and income budget increased accordingly
F6	Income Control	118	Removal of payment kiosks which are now significantly under-utilised and in need of replacement. The ceasing of annual rental and licence costs will provide a saving. Residents can instead make payments for council tax etc. via the numerous Paypoint outlets across the Borough.	20	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Implemented April 2023 and expenditure budgets reduced accordingly
F8	Insurance	1,043	Reduction in the insurance budgets, following a review of claims history over recent years with advice from the Council's insurance broker. The	135	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Implemented April 2023 and expenditure budgets reduced accordingly

			majority of claims are provided for via self-insurance, with external policies providing cover for exceptional or potentially high cost claims.					
F9	Internal Audit	300	Restructure in light of potential retirements over the next two years within the Internal Audit Team.	0	0	50		Planned restructure to take place during 2024/25 and to be implemented 1 April 2025
F11	Purchase to Pay	27	Increase in the target income budgets for the Early Payment Scheme (£15k) and the Corporate Card Programme rebate (£15k)	30	0	0		Implemented 2023/24 income budgets increased accordingly
F12	Benefits Processing & Administration	216	Deletion of a 1.0fte vacant Housing Benefit Officer Post and a 0.5fte vacant Visiting Officer Post.	55	0	0		These two vacant posts accepted for a saving in 2023/24 and can be deleted from the structure.
F13	Discretionary Support Scheme	221	Review the roles, procedures and structure of the team.	0	25	0		A review of the DSS structure will be undertaken in 2024/25.
F15	Business Rates	-26	Increase the charge to Halton Chamber of Commerce for providing	2	0	0		2023/24 operating agreement between the Council and Halton

			billing and collection of Business Improvement District (BID) income.					Chamber of Commerce has been charged at the increased amount
F16	Concessionary Travel	1,892	Due to a decrease in passenger numbers following Covid, it is considered that the budget for concessionary travel costs can be reduced. The budget was underspent by £421k (20%) in 2021/22. A reduction in this budget will not prevent any eligible concessionary passenger from still being able to travel.	150	0	0		On Target
F17	Council Tax	84	Increase the charges applied when a court summons is issued by 30% (£23), to achieve full cost recovery over the three year period.	40	40	40		On target, summons cost increased for 2023/24
F17 Cont.	Council Tax	N/A	Establish a new post dedicated to reviewing council tax exemptions. It is considered at least a 3% reduction in Single Person	116	0	0		Post appointed to and review of exemptions to commence over the next quarter.

			Discount awards could be achieved, generating approximately £150k of additional council tax income, less the cost of the new post.					
F18	Financial Management - Treasury Management	1,152	Closer management of medium- to long-term cash balances will give greater opportunity to invest in higher interest bearing accounts due to increasing interest rates.	300	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Interest payable on target to achieve increased target.
<b>Total Finance Department</b>				<b>893</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>90</b>		



**Chief Executive's Delivery Unit****Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	2,845	2,907	(62)
Employees Training	117	78	39
Apprenticeship Levy	379	379	0
Supplies & Services	203	337	(134)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,544</b>	<b>3,701</b>	<b>(157)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-241	-245	4
Schools SLA	-532	-532	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-773</b>	<b>-777</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>2,771</b>	<b>2,924</b>	<b>(153)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	117	117	0
Transport	0	0	0
Central Support	1,023	1,023	0
Asset Rental Support	12	12	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-5,491	-5,491	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-4,339</b>	<b>-4,339</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>-1,568</b>	<b>-1,415</b>	<b>(153)</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

The Chief Executive's Delivery Unit is reporting an overspend against approved of £0.154m at the end of the financial year. This is a decrease in position from the outturn forecast of £0.042m under the approved budget reported at Qtr3.

The change in outturn performance is largely due reclassification of costs of the payroll software initially being recorded as non-revenue expenditure, however, upon review of the contract and its nature, only an element of the costs can be capitalised. This resulted in £0.120m more expenditure funded from revenue than anticipated, however in the 2024/25 financial year, an increased provision for software costs has been made to reflect the updated quarterly charges.

Another impact on performance has been changes to structure within the HR Service Centre which has resulted in increased costs. 2024/25 budgets have been updated to reflect the new structure.

The budget within the HR Service Centre has also faced pressures from higher costs relating to recruitment of senior positions within the Council, £0.041m of expenditure has been generated in relation to assessment centre costs which are not built into the budget and are funded from department performance.

**Approved 2023/24 Savings**

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

**Capital Projects as at 31 March 2024**

	<b>Annual Capital Allocation</b>	<b>Actual Spend</b>	<b>Total Allocation Remaining</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Transformation Programme	5,000	2,260	2,740
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>2,260</b>	<b>2,740</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

The Transformation Programme has begun within the Council, a number of staff are now in post and consultancy work has begun in the following areas which should positively impact the Council in both financial and non-financial objectives:

- Employer of choice (Workforce)
- Adults Social Care
- Childrens Social Care
- Customer Journey (Front door)

The remaining 2023/24 allocation will be carried forward to the next financial year.

## CHIEF EXECUTIVES DELIVERY UNIT

## APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
PPPE1	Apprenticeships	198	Reduce the budget which provides for apprenticeship salaries by 50%. More apprenticeships will therefore be attached to vacant posts which are already budgeted for. This may particularly help to fill vacancies in areas where recruitment is difficult.	99	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected within the 2022/23 budget.  Should the government change the apprenticeship financing regime at any point in the future to enable funding of apprenticeships salaries, the Council will review its position.
PPPE4	Organisational Development & Performance	383	Explore whether Organisational Development / Learning and Development activities could be rationalised and restructured to reduce cost, given there is currently a vacant post within the team.	65	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected within the budget for the year, vacancies have been held to achieve target.
<b>Total PPPE Department</b>				<b>164</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		

**ICT and Administration Department****Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual Spend</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend)</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employee Expenditure	8,126	8,406	(280)
Supplies & Services Expenditure	1,122	1,276	(154)
Capital Finance	78	32	45
Computer Repairs & Software	1,021	1,021	(0)
Communication Costs	155	155	0
Premises Expenditure	175	135	40
Transport Expenditure	3	2	1
Transfer to Reserves	147	147	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>10,827</b>	<b>11,175</b>	<b>(347)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-996	-1,087	91
Schools SLA Income	-610	-606	(4)
Transfer From Reserves	-150	-150	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-1,756</b>	<b>-1,843</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>9,071</b>	<b>9,332</b>	<b>(260)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	557	557	0
Transport	16	16	0
Central Support	1,797	1,797	0
Asset Rental Support	726	726	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-10,951	-10,951	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-7,855</b>	<b>-7,855</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>(260)</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

At the end of the 2023/24 financial year the ICT and Administration department has exceeded the annual approved budget by £0.260m. A slight improvement to the original position from that reported in Q3 (£0.290m).

The largest contributing factor to the overspend is staff turnover savings targets, these have not been met within the year, resulting in a £0.280m overspend. In the 2024/25 financial year the Administration Staff will be disaggregated, and their respective budgets will move to the service areas. The staff turnover savings targets will therefore be lost in the process, therefore impacting the Council as a whole rather than solely in one department.

The over achievement of income against Fees and Charges relates to external client income for traded services. This is for Agresso implementation and support at partner sites, a drop from the forecasted position in Q3 however, reductions in expenditure have offset this change. With a number of agency staff across the Council, the department is continuing to recharge licence costs for non HBC staff to their respective departments, this should help budget holders more readily see the impact agency staff are having on Council's finances

as there is not just the direct fees to be considered, there is strain on a number of other services and existing contracts which do come at additional costs.

A number of leases have expired within the year in relation to MFDs, a new contract is currently out for tender, but the gap in contracts has generated an underspend in capital finance of £0.040m.

With the shift to Windows 11 and the more efficient laptops, the Council will see an increase in the costs as both legacy and new systems are in operation. In addition the new hardware is unable to be capitalised due to the nature of the contract, resulting in increased pressures on the revenue funding streams. This new model will continue to cost more due to the enhanced technology and reliance on cloud software, however, the new system should have a significant impact on the efficiency of the Council's staff.

### **Approved 2023/24 Savings**

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

### **Capital Projects as at 31 March 2024**

	<b>Annual Capital Allocation</b>	<b>Allocation to Date</b>	<b>Actual Spend</b>	<b>Total Allocation Remaining</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
ICT Rolling Capital Project	700	700	281	419
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>419</b>

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

The ICT and Admin Department has a rolling budget of £0.700m for capital needs each year. The capital allocation will be reduced by £0.218m to fund the new laptop contract with Dell. The new hardware functions without the use of VDI, meaning all Council staff utilising laptops should see an increase in performance allowing them to carry out their work more efficiently. In recent years there has been a shift into user-based subscription costs for Microsoft Office and other software licences, meaning that the IT department in future years will be less reliant on the capital allocation and there will be a significant strain on the revenue funds.

**ICT AND SUPPORT SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
APPENDIX A**

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
ICT3	External Clients	N/A	Recharge the Youth Offending Services for the full cost of ICT services which are hosted by Halton, but have not thus far been recharged. This approach has been agreed by the Cheshire and Warrington partner councils.	232	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The costs have been recharged for the 23/24 financial year
<b>Total ICT and Admin Department</b>				<b>232</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		

**Legal and Democratic Services Department****Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual Spend</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend)</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	1,436	1,364	72
Agency Costs (Locums)	0	814	(814)
Supplies & Services	164	175	(11)
Civic Catering & Functions	26	12	14
Legal Expenses	260	614	(354)
Transport Related Expenditure	11	7	4
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,897</b>	<b>2,986</b>	<b>(1,089)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
School SLA's	-92	-78	(14)
Licence Income	-284	-324	40
Reimbursement & Other Grants	-42	-42	0
Fees & Charges Income	-70	-43	(27)
Transfer from Reserves	0	-752	752
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-488</b>	<b>-1,239</b>	<b>751</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>1,409</b>	<b>1,747</b>	<b>(338)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	58	58	0
Transport Recharges	0	0	0
Central Support Recharges	282	282	0
Asset Rental Support Costs	0	0	0
Support Recharge Income	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,749</b>	<b>2,087</b>	<b>(338)</b>

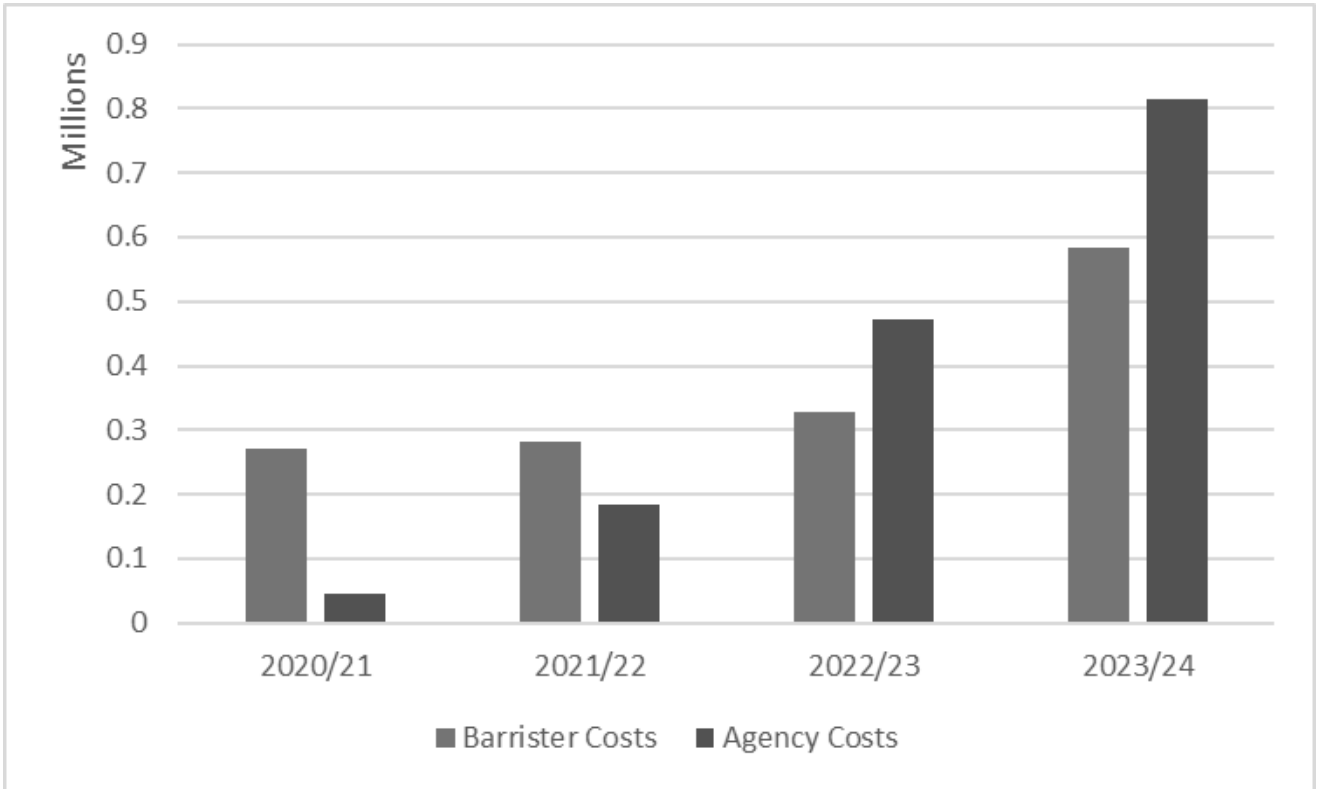
**Comments on the above figures**

As at the end of the financial year 2023/24 the Legal and Democratic Services Department is reporting a net overspend against budget of £0.338m.

Employee costs for the year are marginally lower than the budget profile, this is the result of a number of vacancies that exist within the department. However, The Council has experienced significant difficulty with recruitment into these vacant roles. Local Authorities are unable to provide the same level of compensation as the private sector so in order to meet the rising demand on the service (Children's Care Orders in particular) there has been reliance on agency staff which resulted in a significant cost of £0.814m for the financial year. This expenditure alone is equivalent to 42% of the initial expenditure budget for the department. The impact of the transformation and recovery work in Children Services, along with a review of the structure within Legal Services, aims to reduce the pressures within subsequent years.

Despite the overspend in agency costs being funded from reserves the department is still in excess of its budget profile by £0.338m, this is due to an overspend of £0.480m on Barrister Fees alone.

Again this increased cost is in relation to the staffing pressures and the volume of work required to meet the demand on the service. The rate at which barrister and agency spend is increasing can be seen below:





The budget pressures on agency and barrister fees are so significant within the department that if they were removed, Legal and Democratic Services would be under the approved budget profile by £0.143m. The work to reduce spend where possible is helping to minimise the impact on the Council’s reserves, however, it is unable to fully eliminate the overspend, so the work to reduce these pressures going forward is crucial to bringing expenditure back within the budget profile.



**Approved 2023/24 Savings**

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

**LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT****APPENDIX A**

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
L4	Marketing, Design and Communications	45	Review the frequency of production of Inside Halton, as part of the wider consideration of the Council's communications strategy required for the Transformation Programme	0	15	0		A review of the frequency will take place in 2024/25
L5	Mayoral Services	102	Review the various budgets comprising the Mayoral function, with a target to achieve a 20% savings across these.	20	0	0		Budget has been brought in line with actual expenditure.
<b>Total Legal Services Department</b>				<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>		

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

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

**Comments on the above figures**

The net departmental expenditure is £1.808m under budget at the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Capital Projects as at 31 March 2024**

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

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

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

**Open Spaces Schemes**

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

**Children's Playground Equipment**

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

**Town Park**

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

**Spike Island / Wigg Island**

Consultants have now been appointed and the scheme is underway.

**Pickerings Pasture Café**

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

**Halton Leisure Centre**

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

**Brookvale Recreation Centre Pitch**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Comparison to Previous Quarter**

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

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

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

### **Supporting Information**

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

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

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

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

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

Although this is offset by the reduction in vacant properties reducing the level of business rates payable by the Council.

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

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

### **Approved 2023/24 Savings**

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

## ECONOMY ENTERPRISE &amp; PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

**Capital Projects as of 31 March 24**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

### **Runcorn Station Development**

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




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

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




## 8.0 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	N / A
	Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year.

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 13 June 2024

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Director of Finance

**SUBJECT:** Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief

**PORTFOLIO:** Corporate Services

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider five applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That;**

- (i) the application for 15% discretionary top-up relief from Change, Grow, Live for premises at 75 High Street, Runcorn, be rejected on the basis that they are a charity who operate nationally;**
- (ii) the application for 15% discretionary top-up relief from Care UK Charity for premises at 3-5 Runcorn Shopping Centre, Runcorn, be rejected on the basis that they are a charity who operate nationally;**
- (iii) the application for 15% discretionary top-up relief from Staffordshire Winter Sports Club Ltd for premises at Silver Blades Ice Rink, Earle Road, Widnes, be rejected on the basis that they are a charity who operate nationally;**
- (iv) the application for discretionary relief from Gateway Community Ltd for premises at Hallmark House, Constance Industrial Estate, Waterloo Road, Widnes, be approved at 90% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023;**
- (v) the application for discretionary rate relief from English Table Tennis Association Ltd for premises at Units 17-18, Greenoaks Way, Widnes, Cheshire, be rejected on the basis that they are an organisation who operate nationally.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Under the amended provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council is able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer. This relief had previously only been available to organisations that were a registered charity, a community amateur sports club, or a not-for-profit organisation.
- 3.2 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the Council became responsible for meeting the full cost of all mandatory and discretionary relief granted, as part of the Liverpool City Region 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme.
- 3.3 Five applications for discretionary rate relief have been received as outlined below.
- 3.4 Currently, where discretionary rate relief has been granted to registered charities and non-profit organisations, it has been provided until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 in order to provide the organisations with some degree of certainty.
- 3.5 The Council's policy is that if discretionary top up relief is granted for registered charities, it is only provided at 15% with the organisation themselves meeting the remaining 5%.

#### **Change, Grow, Live**

#### **Ground Floor, 75 High Street, Runcorn, WA7 1AH**

- 3.6 As a registered charity, Change, Grow, Live currently receives 80% mandatory rate relief and have requested further top-up discretionary rate relief.
- 3.7 Change, Grow, Live have their headquarters in Brighton and according to the Charity Commission website they operate throughout England, Wales and Scotland. Historically the Board has chosen to only provide top-up relief for those organisations who operate solely or mainly within the Borough.
- 3.8 The main objective of the organisation is the prevention of substance misuse. They provide a range of services to support individuals, families and communities whose lives are adversely affected by crime, substance misuse, homelessness, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, social deprivation and lack of opportunity. The organisation works with challenging service users with complex needs, including those with entrenched drug habits and offending behaviour.
- 3.9 Their premises at 75 High Street, Runcorn are used for clinical interventions, counselling, education and training, advice, meetings and admin support
- 3.10 If 15% discretionary top-up relief were awarded in respect of Ground Floor, 75 High Street, Runcorn with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, the costs to the Council would be as shown in the appendix.

**Care UK Charity**

**3-5 Runcorn Shopping Centre, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2BS**

- 3.11 As a registered charity, Care UK Charity currently receives 80% mandatory rate relief and has requested further top-up discretionary rate relief.
- 3.12 Care UK Charity has their registered office in Warrington and according to the Charity Commission website operates throughout England and Wales. Historically the Board has chosen to only provide top-up relief for those organisations who operate solely or mainly within the Borough.
- 3.13 The objectives of the organisation are to prevent and relieve poverty and hardship and to protect the vulnerable, in such parts of the world as the Trustees shall determine. This will be by providing grants, items and services to individuals in need and/or charities, or other organisations, working to prevent or relieve poverty.
- 3.14 They aim to collect items that are no longer wanted, such as clothes, furniture, household items etc and pass these on to people in need. Where items cannot be used in this way, they are sold in their shops in order to raise funds to purchase aid.
- 3.15 They are currently working to assist asylum seekers and refugees in the UK and have been working to support asylum seekers housed in the Daresbury Park Hotel since 2019. Their Homes Team supports individuals and families in need who are referred to them by Social Services or other organisations. Their Homes Team has been mainly working in the Warrington area, but are hoping to be able to expand their work to the Halton area once finances allow for this expansion.
- 3.16 The premises at 3-5 Runcorn Shopping Centre are used by Care UK Charity as a charity shop to raise funds to support their work and as a sorting centre to support donations of practical aid.
- 3.17 If 15% discretionary top-up relief were awarded in respect of their premises at 3-5 Runcorn Shopping Centre with effect from 17 November 2023, the costs to the Council would be as shown in the appendix.

**Staffordshire Winter Sports Club**

**Silver Blades Ice Rink, Earle Road, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 0TA**

- 3.18 As a registered charity, Staffordshire Winter Sports Club receives 80% mandatory rate relief and has requested further top-up discretionary rate relief.
- 3.19 Staffordshire Winter Sports Club has their registered office in Lichfield and according to the Charity Commission website operates in Halton, Lancashire, Leeds, Staffordshire and Trafford. Historically the Board has chosen to only provide top-up relief for those organisations who operate solely or mainly within the Borough.

- 3.20 The main objective of the organisation is the preservation and protection of good health and the promotion of community participation in healthy recreation through sport and physical fitness. Activities includes programmes in the following areas; schools, disability, amateur sport, health, social inclusion, women and girls and volunteer programmes. Programmes, consist of three core activities - education, suitable physical activity and social inclusion.
- 3.21 The premises at Silver Blades Ice Rink, Earle Road, Widnes are used by Staffordshire Winter Sports Club Ltd for the provision of health and leisure activities, including education to the local community.
- 3.22 If 15% discretionary top-up relief were awarded in respect of the Silver Blades Ice Rink, Earle Road with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, the costs to the Council would be as shown in the appendix.

**Gateway Community Ltd**  
**Ground Floor Hallmark House, Constance Industrial Estate, Waterloo Road, Widnes, WA8 0QR**

- 3.23 Gateway Community Ltd is a not-for-profit private company limited by guarantee without share capital.
- 3.24 The organisation has been established within the local community, working with adults with learning difficulties and their parents/ carers. As a not-for-profit organisation they are applying for discretionary rate relief. Historically, when the Board has awarded discretionary rate relief to such organisations, it has been awarded at a rate of 90%.
- 3.25 The main objective of the organisation is to provide, training, education and life skills for adults with learning disabilities and difficulties, mental health issues and physical difficulties and also to provide an activity hub for children in the community aged 11-17.
- 3.26 Gateway Community Ltd is based in Widnes at their premises at Ground Floor, Hallmark House, which is used for the training of adults with learning disabilities and difficulties, and they only operate within the Borough.
- 3.27 If 90% discretionary relief were awarded in respect of the premises at Ground Floor, Hallmark House, Widnes with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, the costs to the Council would be as shown in the appendix.

**English Table Tennis Association Ltd, Ping Pong Parlour at Unit 17-18, Greenoaks Way, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 6UB**

- 3.28 The English Table Tennis Association Ltd is a private company limited by guarantee without share capital. The organisation is also known as Table Tennis England which is the National Governing Body for the sport in England. Whilst Table Tennis England (English Table Tennis Association Ltd as registered with Companies House) is a private company limited by guarantee, the organisation has advised that it delivers a large amount of

activity which has a not-for-profit objectives and what they deem as charitable objectives.

- 3.29 The organisation has a paid staff, but this is to run the organisation. Ping Pong Parlour is a national project provided by the English Table Tennis Association Ltd, which transforms vacant commercial property into free-to-use public ping pong playing venues. The activity delivered on the ground is reliant upon clubs and leagues who do it voluntarily. Part of the role of the organisation is to grow and develop the sport in deprived communities, grow participation to support inactivity rates, and it has a key EDI agenda. This is delivered through programmes and interventions that are either free to access or delivered on a break even or reinvestment model.
- 3.30 The premises at Unit 17-18 Greenoaks Way, Widnes was used as a Ping Pong Parlour for the period 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023 to 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 providing free-to-access activity to the public. The organisation is applying for discretionary rate relief during this nine month period. Historically, when the Board has awarded discretionary rate relief to such organisations, it has been awarded at a rate of 90%. The Board has also chosen to only support organisations who operate solely or mainly within the Borough, whilst the English Table Tennis Association Ltd operates nationally.
- 3.31 If 90% discretionary relief were awarded in respect of Units 17-18, Greenoaks Way, Widnes, the costs to the Council would be as shown in the appendix.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Board is required by the regulations to consider each application on its own merit. Any recommendations provided are given for guidance only, are consistent with Council policy and, wherever possible, previous decisions.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Appendix presents the potential costs to the Council of granting discretionary business rate relief in each of the instances.

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

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Gateway Community offers an activity hub for children aged 11-17  
Staffordshire Winter Sports Club offers activities for schools

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Gateway Community provides training, education and life skills for adults with learning difficulties

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Change, Grow, Live's main objective is substance misuse prevention.  
English Table Tennis Association offered free to access table tennis

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

None.

**6.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal**

None.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no key risks associated with the proposed action.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The applicants offer their services to all sections of the community, without any prejudice.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None.

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

10.1	Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
	Application forms and supporting documents	DCBL Stadium, Lower House Lane, Widnes	Adel Tomkins Senior Rating Officer – Business Rates



**APPENDIX**

<b>Ratepayer</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Annual Rates Liability 2023/24</b>	<b>Annual Rates Liability 2024/25</b>	<b>Mandatory Rate Relief Awarded</b>	<b>Annual Cost of Mandatory Rate Relief to HBC 2023/24</b>	<b>Annual Cost of Mandatory Relief to HBC 2024/25</b>	<b>Discretionary Rate Relief Awarded</b>	<b>Annual Cost of Disc. Rate Relief to HBC 2023/24</b>	<b>Annual Cost of Disc. Rate Relief to HBC 2024/25</b>	<b>Actual Cost of Mandatory &amp; Disc. Relief for 2023/24 and 2024/25</b>
		£	£		£	£		£	£	£
Change, Grow, Live	Ground & Part 1st Floor, 75 High Street, Runcorn	11,615.83	13,987.59	80%	9,292.66	11,190.07	15%	1,742.37	2,098.14	24,323.24
Care UK Charity	3-5 Runcorn Shopping Centre, Runcorn	3,947.72	10,354.25	80%	3,158.18	8,283.40	15%	592.16	1,553.14	13,586.88
Staffordshire Winter Sports Club	Silver Blades Ice Rink, Earle Road, Widnes	28,305.30	31,941.00	80%	22,644.24	25,552.80	15%	4,245.80	4,791.15	57,233.99
Gateway Community Ltd	Ground Floor Hallmark House, Constance Industrial Estate, Waterloo Road, Widnes	3,362.57	3,698.83	n/a	n/a	n/a	90%	3,026.31	3,328.95	6.355.26
English Table Tennis Association Ltd	Unit 17-18, Greenoaks Way, Widnes,	25,809.84	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	90%	23,228.86	n/a	23,228.86



<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	13 June 2024
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director Environment & Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Corporate Services
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Corporate Security Contract
<b>WARDS:</b>	Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to notify members of the intention to go out to tender with regards to procuring a new corporate security contract in line with the Council's procurement strategy.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

**Members note the intention to go out to tender via the Chest in respect of procuring a new corporate security contract.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The existing corporate security contract commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021; it was for a 3-year period with the option for a 12-month extension which was granted as such the current contract now expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
- 3.2 The new contract will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 and will be for a 3-year period with the option to extend it for a further 12 months subject to satisfactory performance.
- 3.3 The contract will be as the existing, split in to 3 separate areas, the reason being the differing nature of the services required, the 3 areas are as follows: -
- Corporate Sites,
  - DCBL Stadium & The Brindley
  - Open Spaces (Parks, Cemeteries & Events)
- 3.4 The contract value exceeds the Public Contract threshold for services as such the procurement process will be carried out in full compliance with the Public Contract Regulation 2015 (PCR 2015)

- 3.5 The procurement process used shall be a single stage open tendering procedure in accordance with procurement standing order 1.5.2 and shall be tendered via the chest and will be evaluated on the basis of a 70% / 30% quality/cost split to ensure the most economically advantageous submission is accepted.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The proposals are in line with the principles of the procurement strategy 2020-2023, inclusive of obtaining best value and to maximise community benefit in the form of employment opportunities for local residents.
- 4.2 The provision of security services also links in with the Economy, Enterprise & Properties departmental objective of providing an effective corporate Property Service across our property portfolio as such is a key link in that provision.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The anticipated annual contract spend over the next few years is likely to be circa £500k based on current requirements and allowing for an inflationary increase as such the contract value over the full 4-year period is likely to be in the region of £2m.
- 5.2 The annual security budget, cost code 2050 2127 HBC1, is adequate to cover the cost of providing the necessary security services. The budget is held centrally, and all spend must be approved by the budget holder who is the Head of Operations, Property Services.

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

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

None

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

None

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

None

##### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

None

##### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

There are no key risks associated with the above proposals.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

None

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATION**

None

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Procurement Strategy	Municipal Building	Ashley McDonald

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**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 13 June 2024

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director Children's

**PORTFOLIO:** Children and Young People Portfolio

**SUBJECT:** Fostering and SGO Carers Uplift from 22/23 & 23/24 (outstanding backpay)

**WARD(S)** All

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 An urgent decision is required to progress the delay in foster carer and SGO uplifts. The end of year accounts will need to reflect the decision. All uplifts have been agreed by previous AD.
- 1.2 The report proposes previous uplift (outstanding payments dating back to 2022) is made to our Foster Carers and SGO Carers.
- 1.3 The increase to these allowances will enhance the current offer and we envisage improve Halton's recruitment and retention of Foster Carers.
- 1.4 The request is for all SGO Carers to be paid their uplift from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 at rate of 1%.
- 1.5 The further request is for all Foster Carers and SGO Carers to be provided with an uplift at a rate of 2% to be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- 1.6 The **estimated** accruals that finance have entered into a gresso for the uplift (outstanding backpay) is:

SGO 22/23	£22,086
SGO 23/24	£49,036
Fostering 23/24	£40,890
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£112,012</b>

## 2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

1. the report be noted; and

**2. the Board approves the Strategy.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**3.1 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED:**

To take no action, may result in a high proportion of Halton's Foster Carers choosing to resign and become Foster Carers with private agencies who pay higher allowances than Local Authorities, this would result in increased expenditure for the Local Authority and restricted choice of suitable placements for our most vulnerable children and young people.

**3.2 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS USED OR REFERRED TO:**

**Useful Date:**

There are currently:

- 65 approved mainstream Foster Carers.
- 26 approved Friends and Family Carers.
- 10 temporary approved Friends and Family.
- 146 Special Guardianship Carers .

**Summary:**

It was agreed SGO Carers & Foster carers in Halton receive a 1% uplift in their allowances for the year 2022- 2023, Foster Carers received this uplift but SGO carers did not receive there uplift, it is believed this oversight occurred due to frequent changes of senior personnel.

Subsequently further uplift for 2023/2024 was agreed at rate of 2% for the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 however this has also not been implemented due to frequent changes of senior personnel.

Unfortunately due to frequent changes in senior personnel it has been challenging to locate relevant background documents.

Consultations and discussions have been taking place with previous senior management team between January 2023 and October 2023. The foster carers were also consulted by the previous Divisional Manager who advised them of the uplift.

Head of Service & Director of Children Services attended Foster Carer 'Have Your Say' event which took place on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024, remuneration was significant feature of the agenda.

It is recommended uplifted allowances previously agreed and shared with Foster Carers and SGO Carers and all associated

outstanding backpay is paid prior to newly appointed Senior Leadership team commence with review of allowances for 2024/2025.

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Not applicable

**5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The monies confirmed through the uplift have been ringfenced from last years budget and are available.

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

**6.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

Children should be provided with good quality care in Halton when they can no longer live within their family. The uplift had previously been agreed but was not paid and will need to progress to ensure carers remain committed to providing Halton children with care.

SGO carers are also entitled to financial support from the council and whilst the uplift was agreed it was not paid. Carers should be provided with financial support to ensure the child's needs can be met. Failure to provide adequate funding will result in placement instability.

**6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Failure to pay carers will result in instability in the service. There is a national shortage of carers and further delays may result in resignation of carers which will result in children moving placements into higher cost placements due to sufficiency issues

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 N/A

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.



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

None.

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 13 June 2024

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director of Children's Services

**PORTFOLIO:** Children and Young People

**SUBJECT:** Services for Missing from Home and Care for young people across Cheshire for Halton, Cheshire West & Chester and Warrington: Request for Waiver of Standing Orders

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

### 1.1 Request for Waiver of Standing Orders:

A request for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders is sought to allow the continuation of a contract with We are With You to deliver, on behalf of the Council, the Tri- Party Missing from Home and Care Service, for a period of one year from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That: Executive Board

1. Note the contents of this report; and
2. Consider giving approval to the recommendation that the contract with We are With You should be extended for a further twelve months without going through the Procurement process, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders.

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 We are With You has been commissioned to deliver the Pan Cheshire Missing from home and Care service since July 2018. The Service works across all of the four local authority areas with clear links with Cheshire Constabulary's missing from home co-ordinators to support young people who have been notified as missing from home or care. There is a co-ordinated and organised response including return interviews will facilitate direct intervention work with children, young people and their families.

3.2 The existing contract ends on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The request for authorisation of a waiver rather than implementing a tender process is due to the following:

- i It is proposed to include a young person's interview and evaluation panel in the tender process, as this indicates the competence and approach of a potential provider in working with young people and families. It would not be possible to include this at present, which would reduce the effectiveness of the process for this specific service.
- ii The current service is well known and well regarded across the local authority areas. It has good networks in place with foster carers and residential providers. In the current situation it would be difficult for a new provider to become established as it a specialist provision. All local authorities continue to have a statutory duty to provide services to looked after children.
- iii To continue with a collaborative approach across Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington to deliver a high quality service that is effective in improving outcomes delivered by skilled practitioners which safeguards children and young people that are identified at risk.

3.4 The value of a contract extension for one year to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 is £351,600. The three local authorities have agreed to continue with a joint commissioning approach with Halton acting as the lead.

3.5 In respect of the delivery of the Service, each local authority has an agreed funding commitment which is set out in a Deed of Agreement. The annual fees are:

- o Halton Borough Council £ 117,200
- o Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council £ 117,200
- o Warrington Council £117,200

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The method of procurement complies with both Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Procurement Standing Orders.

4.2 The local authorities continued to have a statutory duty to provide services to looked after children within each local authority area.

4.3 The service supports the Pan Cheshire Missing from Home and Care Protocol with Cheshire Constabulary

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The value of the contract extension for one year to 30th June 2025 is £351,600. The Halton contribution is available within current budgets.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

This service directly relates to improving the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by reducing the incidents of missing and risky behaviour.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The provider will ensure that children and young people that go missing from home or care or that are vulnerable to exploitation are supported in their learning and future employment and skills development.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The service support people to minimise reduce the risks of harm, and access relevant services to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

The service provides support to vulnerable children, young people and families to assist them to access appropriate service provision within their local communities. This links to satisfaction with services and overall perception of the area in which people live.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The current contract for these services will end on 30th June 2024; should the above not be agreed, the services will cease delivery of the provision and there will be a detrimental effect on children and young people across Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington.

If contracts for Missing from Home and Care are not in place, this may lead to the Council being unable to fulfil its statutory duty regarding looked after children. Failure to have this service in place will additionally lead to vulnerable children, young people and families being placed under increased pressure.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The current proposal would not impact upon any equality and diversity issues as all relevant protected characteristics would be unaffected by the proposal.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None are applicable.

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

None within the meaning of the Act.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	13 June 2024
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Major Projects, Community Safety, Environment and Urban Renewal, Employment, Learning and Skills and Leisure, Community and Culture.
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Long term Plan for Towns, Funding for Runcorn.
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Runcorn Wards

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report sets out detail to date about the Long-Term Plan for Towns funding which was allocated to Runcorn in the Spring Budget 2024.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1. The Board accepts external grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) of £19.5m in relation to the Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPT).**
- 2. Agree that the Council will act as Accountable Body for the LTPT Programme.**
- 3. The Executive Director, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, be authorised to amend the Towns Fund Board terms of reference and membership to reflect the criteria of the Long-Term Funding for Towns criteria.**
- 4. In consultation with the Town Deal Board, Deputy Leader and Member of Parliament for Runcorn and Helsby, authority be delegated to the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, to spend the £200,000 capacity funding to develop a ten-year Vision and three-year Investment Plan to submit to Government by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024; and**
- 5. Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration and the Section 151**

**Officer, to agree and complete Funding Agreements with partners that will deliver the LTPT for Runcorn projects on behalf of the Council, as the Accountable Body for the Programme.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In the 2024 Spring budget the Government announced Phase 2 of their Long-Term Plan for Towns programme which identified Runcorn as one of 20 additional towns across the country which would benefit from £19.5m “endowment-style” funding to invest over a 10-year period in local priorities.
- 3.2 Selection for funding allocation was undertaken by Government according to the Levelling Up Needs Index which considered metrics covering skills, pay, productivity, and health, as well as the Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- 3.3 The Government’s intention is that the £20m endowment style funding (25% revenue/75% capital) over a 10-year period will provide long-term certainty to deliver a range of interventions within three broad investment themes:
1. Safety and Security
  2. High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration
  3. Transport and Connectivity
- 3.4 To access the funding Halton will need to produce a Long-Term Plan for Runcorn. The funding will be devolved directly to Halton and any annual underspend will be able to roll over into future years. Halton Borough Council will be the accountable body and will remain responsible for ensuring good use of public funds through the existing duties of the Section 151 officer.
- 3.5 The Government issued guidance on 1 October 2023 which required each town to establish a Town Board to oversee the development of the Long-Term Plan. On 18 December 2023, the DLUHC published further guidance which provided details on the membership and methodology for establishing new Town Boards, information on capacity funding, and the required content of the Long-Term Plan.
- 3.6 Halton proposes to repurpose its existing Towns Fund Board, in line with Government guidance to ensure compliance with this guidance and to avoid duplication. Board member names must be submitted to DLUHC by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024.
- 3.7 The Terms of Reference for the Board will be based on learning from the Towns Fund Programme Governance model, adapting

**arrangements from the existing Town Deal Board. The new Board will review and finalise the Terms of Reference at its first meeting in July 24.**

- 3.8 The Long-Term Plan will include the ten-year Vision for Runcorn and a three-year Investment Plan, setting out how the funding will be allocated and spent, with the local authority as the body ultimately accountable for funding. The endowment approach means that funding is released over a 7-year period and local authorities have the flexibility to spend it over 10 years, with 'light touch' assurance from DLUHC.
- 3.9 DLUHC have released 50K of capacity funding to Halton Borough Council, to establish the Town Deal Board. A further £200k capacity funding will be issued to the local authority to develop the plan which is to be submitted by the 1 November 2024. Government expects this funding to be utilised for convening a Town Deal Board, community engagement, support to the Town Deal Board to develop the Long-Term Plan, and technical expertise for project development, including feasibility studies and business cases.
- 3.10 The Plan will need to include a vision statement, a strategic case for the future of the town, planned interventions across the three investment themes, evidence of community engagement, how the Board will attract additional investment and high-level milestones.
- 3.11 Government have provided a list of interventions which have already been assessed – **see Appendix 1** - as having a strong case for investment, value for money and benefit-to-cost ratio. Should the Board pursue these interventions, a business case will not be required as part of the assessment process. However, should the Board wish to pursue bespoke or 'off-menu' interventions an outline business will be required.
- 3.12 Government has advised there is scope to make representations to DLUHC to alter the Long-Term Plan investment boundary, where an amendment remains within the spirit of the programme and includes, as part of the revised area, the town that was originally selected and must remain contiguous. Any representation to amend the investment boundary need to be confirmed by 1 June 2024 and must be agreed by the Town Board.
- 3.13 A High Streets and Towns Task Force will provide bespoke support to individual places to assist with delivery of the Long-Term Plan.
- 3.14 Due to the challenging timescales, the Council may need to appoint consultancy services to provide the necessary expertise and support to the Board to help develop the Plan.



- 3.15 The Government guidance requires the Council to act as the Accountable Body for the programme and funding.
- 3.16 In accordance with the guidance the make-up of the Town Board should be comprised of:
- Public sector agencies (e.g. schools, police, and health sector) subject to local priorities. Police representation is expected to be the local Police and Crime Commissioner, although (subject to agreement from the Chairperson) a local senior representative can act as substitute; and,
  - The local Member of Parliament, a representative of the Mayoral or Combined Authority or Upper Tier Authority were relevant, and relevant local authority representatives. In terms of the local authority representation, the guidance limits elected Councillor representatives to two in order to promote community leadership.
- 3.17 Other membership should be tailored to local context and is at the Chairperson's discretion, but might comprise:
- Local businesses and social enterprises (including key local employers and investors).
  - Key cultural, arts, heritage and sporting organisations.
  - Community partners from community groups, faith groups, charities, neighbourhood forums and the local Council for Voluntary Service
- 3.18 The Council should invite a Chairperson for the Town Board, after considering who is "best placed to convene partners and is a respected figure in the community with an obvious passion for the place".

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The potential significant investment described in this report flows from the Council's strategic policies contained in the Local Plan, the Mersey Gateway Plus Regeneration Strategy, and the Local Transport Plan.
- 4.2 These strategic documents are supported at a more detailed level by documents that capture the Council's ambitions at a more focussed scale, for example the Runcorn Station Quarter Masterplan, Runcorn Vision documents and The Runcorn Town Investment Plan.
- 4.3 The vision for Runcorn in the Town Investment Plan is building on our strong local economy and strategic location, we will reconnect the Old Town to Runcorn and the wider region so that it becomes an attractive and vibrant place to work, live in and to visit.

- 4.4 The ambition for the Runcorn Old Town area is:
- Build a stronger town centre
  - Improve linkages, accessibility and movement
  - Utilise assets, waterways, culture and heritage
  - Grow the residential offer
  - Realise the full potential of the mainline station and
  - Connectivity to major cities.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Long-Term Plan when submitted on the 1 November 2024 will cover an initial three-year period of investment. The Long-Term Plan will then be reviewed after that three-year period and it may become necessary to prepare a revised plan, which could come at costs not dissimilar to the initial capacity funding provided by Government.

5.2 When the initial 3-year plan is finalised, the financial implications will be clearer. If applicable as part of the project proposals, they will be asked what the future (on-going) service costs are and how they will be funded.

## **6.0 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?**

### **6.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

The Long-Term Plan funding for Runcorn could support activities for our young people.

### **6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

In the long-term there are strong prospects of new job creation as a result of the potential projects bought forward by this funding.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

The Long-Term Plan funding for Runcorn will support well-being and cultural activities for our communities. One of the key strands is High Street, Heritage & Regeneration.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

The Long-term Plan funding programme will support a safer Halton. One of the key strands is Safety & Security.

### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The guiding principle for the LTPT funding programme is to meet local needs and attract further investment into the town. This will ensure social value through place making and job creation and support existing businesses. Projects in the Long-Term Plan will proactively support the provision of social value outcomes.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 With any funding and regeneration programme there are risks associated with uncertainty arising from various aspects of the process, such as securing further funding, material availability and fluctuating prices, severe weather, securing regulatory consents, environment factors and from unexpected issues when work starts (such as contamination, uncharted utilities). These risks are impossible to eradicate and are dealt with by the inclusion of contingencies to draw upon. Consequently, if any of these key risks arise in project delivery, the consequence usually translates into increased costs and extended programmes for completion of the works.

7.2 To mitigate these risks, detailed project planning and survey work is always undertaken.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 While the programme is foreseen to have significant and positive impact on people, the Long-Term Plan has not yet been developed. This report seeks approval for the Council to be the Accountable Body for the funding and this in itself does not have a direct impact on people. Equality and diversity implications will continue to be considered in the development of the Long-Term Plan and it's likely that Equality Impact Assessments will be part of the delivery stage.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The development of the Long-Term Plan and the initial three-year investment strategy will look to ensure that proposals make a positive contribution towards the Council's commitment to achieving "Net Zero" emissions, supporting the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

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

## Appendix 1

### Safety and security interventions

S1: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'. This might include:

- promoting the active use of streets and public spaces throughout the daytime and evening
- improvements to streetlighting
- installation of new CCTV

S2: Engage with Police Force and together consider interventions to focus on visible crime prevention in defined areas places. Interventions could include:

- hotspot policing
- problem-oriented policing

S3: Measures to prevent anti-social behaviour, crime and reduce reoffending. These might include:

- sports programmes designed to prevent crime and reduce reoffending.
- mentoring
- police-led pre-charge diversion models for young offenders
- focused deterrence strategies
- halfway house programmes

S4: Measures to reduce repeat burglary. These might include:

- Neighbourhood Watch
- provision of crime prevention advice
- property marking
- target hardening (increasing the security of a property)
- cocoon watch (provision of crime prevention advice, support and guidance to neighbours and surrounding addresses of burgled properties)
- alley gating

## High streets, heritage and regeneration interventions

H1: Funding for place-based regeneration and town centre and high street improvements, which could include better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs. This might include:

- regenerating a town square or high street
- public realm improvements, for example street furniture or other decorative improvements
- the delivery of outreach, engagement and participatory programmes for community spaces, including youth centres and public libraries

H2: Funding for new or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects and assets including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding, and support for decarbonisation of facilities, energy efficiency audits, and installation of energy efficiency and renewable measures in community buildings (including capital spend and running costs). This might include:

- building new or updating existing defences to increase communities' resilience to natural hazards like flooding or coastal erosion.

H3: Creation of an improvement to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments. Improvements to the natural environment and the incorporation of more of these natural features into wider public spaces. This might include:

- development of a new park, particularly in areas with the least access to greenspace
- development of a new park or community garden
- improvements to a canal towpath, particularly in more deprived neighbourhoods
- urban or riparian tree planting
- changes to management of green spaces and verges
- regeneration of existing parks or community gardens, particularly in areas with poor quality parks and gardens
- improving access to existing parks

H4: Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and historic institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer. This might include:

- the delivery of events programmes for community spaces, including youth centres and public libraries
- the development, restoration or refurbishment of local natural, cultural and heritage assets and sites

H5: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. This might include:

- funding for maker spaces
- funding for local art galleries, museums, libraries for exhibitions
- support for displays for artists to showcase work.
- locally led music and theatre performances, tours, author events and film screenings
- funding for cultural, heritage and creative events
- support for outreach, engagement, participatory programmes as part of wider local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.
- support for the establishment and development of cultural, heritage collaborative networks to share knowledge locally.

H6: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area. This might include:

- campaigns promoting the local area and its culture, heritage, leisure and visitor offer to residents and visitors.
- campaigns to encourage visitors from further afield to visit and stay in the region, collaborating with other places where appropriate.

H7: Funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. This might include:

- funding for local volunteering groups, such as youth charities and carer's groups
- support for people to develop volunteering and social action projects locally.

H8: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together. This might include:

- renovation and maintenance of existing sports facilities
- support for community sports leagues.
- regeneration of an unused area to build sports facilities.
- creation of new 3G sports pitches and other sports facilities

H9: Investment in capacity building, resilience (which could include climate change resilience) and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. This might include:

- funding for community spaces, such as village halls, libraries or community centres for local civil society and community groups to use.

- support for people to develop volunteering and social action projects locally.

H10: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.

H11: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses. This might include:

- funding to support the establishment and ongoing running of a new open-air market.
- business support activity for entrepreneurs

H12: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally. This might include:

- development of local visitor trails and tours
- grants for the development, promotion and upkeep of local tourist attractions
- development of other local visitor experiences based around the local offer.

H13: Grants to help places bid for and host international business events and conferences that support wider local growth sectors. This might include:

- grants to bid for, secure and hold a conference for a leading sector locally.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	13 June 2024
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director Environment & Regeneration
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Environment and Urban Renewal
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	East Runcorn Connectivity (ERC) Project A56 Construction Gateway
<b>WARDS:</b>	Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor

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

- 1.1 A report was considered in October 2022 recommending that approval to procure contractor input via the scape process into the ERC Project up to and including preconstruction stage which was agreed.
- 1.2 This report seeks Executive Board approval to now enter into a delivery agreement and commence Stage 5 of the Scape framework process awarding a contract to deliver the A56 major maintenance works to Balfour Beatty. The contract will commence in July subject to approval and is programmed to complete September 2025.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1. The Board approves Halton awarding a contract the contractor named in 1.2 via the SCAPE framework to complete the A56 Major Maintenance Scheme;**
- 2. The Director Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, be delegated to accept the Grant Funding Agreement and enable timely delivery of the contract; and**
- 3. Director Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, be delegated to deal with any matters relating to procurement and operation of this contract.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Since the last report, much work has been completed by our designers, Mott MacDonald, Balfour Beatty as potential contractor and internal Halton officers to design and develop this scheme and complete outline



and final business cases to the satisfaction of the Liverpool Combined Authority (LCA) to secure the necessary funding.

- 3.2 The final business case (FBC) was submitted in April 2024 and has passed the officer sign off stages. It is due to be formally approved by the LCA on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024 which is subsequent to the deadline for submitting reports to Haltons June Exec Board. Consequently this report has been drafted on the assumption that approval and therefore funding has been secured. The reporting officer will provide a statement to confirm this position.
- 3.3 The reason for making the approval process as efficient as possible with regard to time is to enable a mobilisation period prior to the Creamfields event due to be held on 22 – 25 August at Daresbury adjacent to the site. Whilst some preparatory works will take place prior to the event, the main works programme needs to start in earnest once Creamfields is complete to ensure substantial completion for Creamfields 2025.
- 3.4 In line with current capital funding arrangements through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA), and HBC's proposed match funding it is anticipated that the value of the contract in total is likely to be in the region of £18m. This figure is above the Public Contract Regulations 2015 thresholds and the Scape process has followed the necessary procedures.
- 3.5 The cost of the works will in the main be met from approved budget allocations for capital funding received via LCRCA in the form of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) which has replaced the historic capital funding streams including the Integrated Transport Block and Highway Maintenance Block.
- 3.6 It is proposed that mobilisation of the contract will be necessary as described above and with the substantive start date fixed due to the Creamfields event contracts are proposed to be signed in July once the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) has been received and secured from the LCA.
- 3.7 The Major Maintenance works involve the resurfacing of the entire length of the A56 Chester Road from M56 J11 to the Borough boundary with Warrington. There will also be substantive reconstruction works to remove the underlying issues creating the ridges in the surfacing.
- 3.8 In addition, a new traffic signal controlled junction will be installed at Delph Lane which will provide a pedestrian link from the existing footway to a new footway to be constructed from Delph Lane to Keckwick Lane. This will provide residents of the new Daresbury Garden Village safe passage into the existing facilities within Daresbury village. A new bus layby is also to be created adjacent to the Delph Lane junction to service any future bus routes passing through Daresbury village in addition to those that utilise A56 Chester Road.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The method of procurement has complied with the Public Contract Regulations, 2015 and the Council's own Procurement Standing Orders being carried out in conjunction with the Procurement Centre of Excellence.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The work to be covered by this Contract will mainly be funded from the CRSTS Capital funding alongside HBC match funding.

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

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The completion of the new signal controlled junction at Delph Lane and the adjoining footway will enable children living in the Daresbury Garden Village and beyond safe passage to the Daresbury Primary School.

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Well maintained Highways ensure that the public can travel quickly and easily on the highway network.

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

The new footway will encourage residents of the Daresbury Garden Village to utilise the existing facilities within Daresbury Village for this short journey improving their health and hence develop healthier lifestyles as well as the heling the environment.

##### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

The traffic signal controlled crossing will enable safe passage across the existing dual carriageway providing a safe link in and out of Daresbury Village.

##### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The existing road surface has a undulating and poor ride quality which isn't attractive to visitors and businesses looking to invest in East Runcorn. Well maintained highways help to ensure the borough remains attractive to inward investment and existing businesses.

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 Failure to proceed with the works would be detrimental to the Growth Plan for East Runcorn and would mean that a long standing issue buried within A56 Chester Road since its construction would remain unsolved requiring ongoing maintenance that cures the symptom but not the cause.

#### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATION**

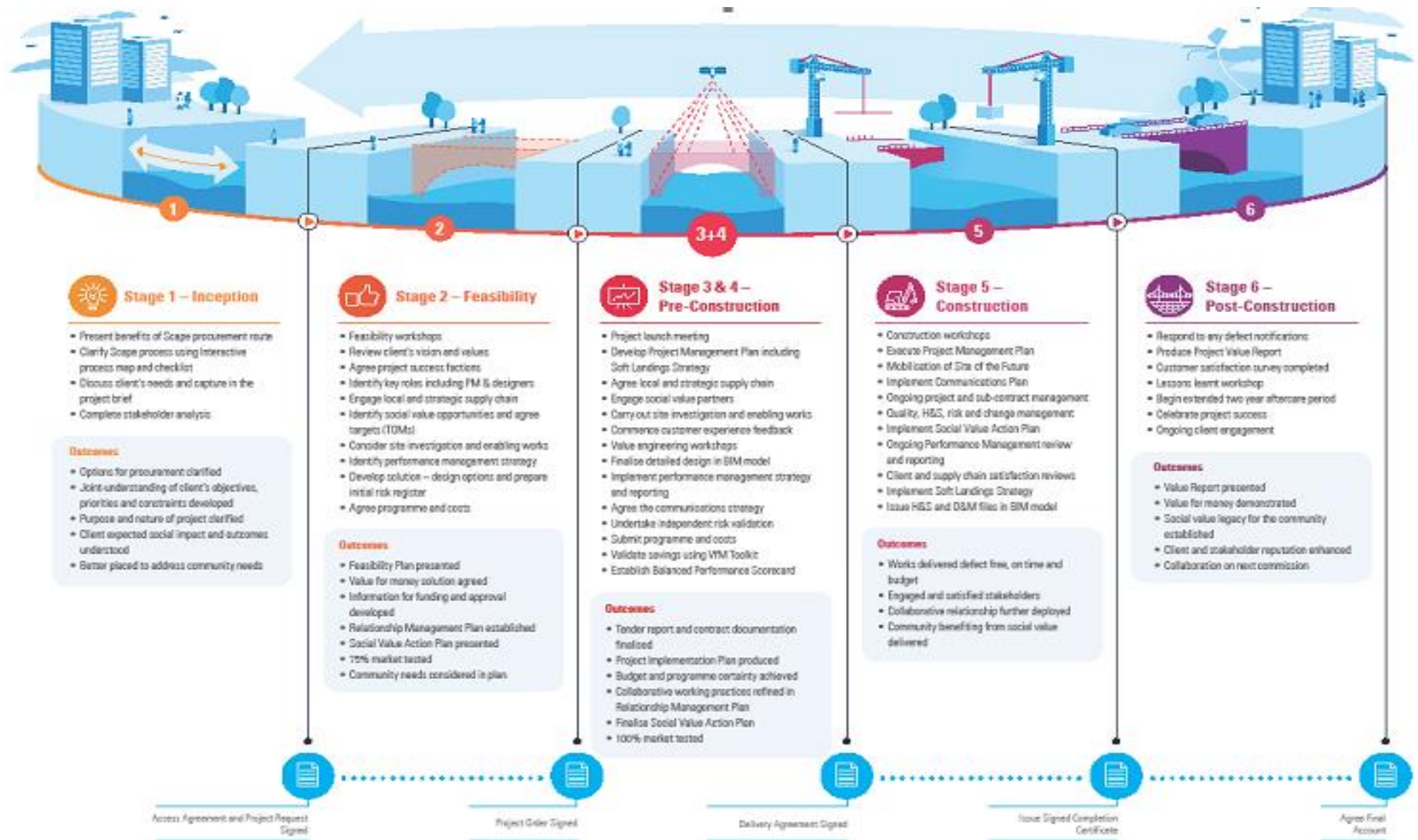
None

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

**10.1** Report to Executive Board on October 2022

**10.2** Appendix 1 – Scape Framework Process Map

# Appendix 1 – Scape Framework Process Map



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted