

Public Document Pack



Executive Board

Thursday, 12 December 2024 1.00 p.m.
DCBL Stadium, Widnes

S. Young

Chief Executive

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

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Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
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*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, 16 January 2025*

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<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 RECOMMENDED 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>	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 14 November 2024 in the Boardroom, Municipal Building

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor P. Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, W. Rourke, D. Nolan, S. Waters and B. Holmes

Also in attendance: Councillors C. Loftus, K. Loftus and Philbin

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

	<i>Action</i>
<p>EXB48 MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>LEADER'S PORTFOLIO</p> <p>EXB49 URGENT DECISIONS</p> <p>The Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided information on an urgent decision taken since the last meeting of the Board.</p> <p>It was noted that the Council's Constitution gave authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decisions, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director Finance and/or the Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.</p> <p>One urgent decision had been made since the last meeting of the Board and full details were published on the Council's website.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the urgent decision taken since</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB50 TAXI LICENSING MATTER

The Board considered a report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services which provided details on amendments to the current taxi licensing policy/conditions.

The amendments set out in Appendix 1 had been submitted by the Taxi trade following a consultation exercise. The Regulatory Committee had previously considered the proposed changes and had recommended the position set out in Section 2 of the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Vehicle Age Policy is to be amended to remove the minimum age requirement from 5 years to 7 for a standard vehicle and maximum from 10 to 12 years and keep the minimum age of 13 years for a wheelchair accessible vehicle, whilst increasing the maximum to 18 years. (maintaining the same testing conditions as two per year);
- 2) the proposal for card readers to become mandatory be rejected (so no change in conditions);
- 3) the proposal to change the colour of purpose-built wheelchair vehicles be rejected (so no change in conditions);
- 4) the proposal to amend the condition for a spare wheel/space saver to be adopted (to remove the current policy requirement for a space saver/spare wheel in the vehicle, with the implication that the manufacturers specifications apply);
- 5) the proposal to remove the fire extinguisher be rejected (so no change in conditions); and
- 6) the age of Electric Vehicles to remain the same as the current age policy.

Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services

EXB51 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2024-25 HALF YEAR UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Director of Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Half Year Report as at 30 September 2024.

These reports updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market during the first half of the financial year to 30 September 2024, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The report provided supporting information on the economic outlook, interest rate forecast, short term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing and investments, budget monitoring, new long term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB52 2024/25 SPENDING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

The Board received a report from the Director of Finance, advising of the Council's overall revenue and capital net spending position as at 30 September 2024, together with a 2024/25 forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 September 2024 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. It was reported that in overall terms the net Council spend as at 30 September 2024 would be over the approved budget by £8.864m. The outturn forecast for the year estimates that net spending would be over budget by £20.642m if no corrective action was taken. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 September 2024, highlighting the schemes which had been revised. Appendix 4 detailed the Council approved savings covering 2024/25 and 2025/26, together with information on progress to date.

It was clear that Council reserves would not be sufficient to meet this pressure, and urgent corrective action should be taken as soon as possible across all Council services to identify spend reductions. It was recommended that the Council submit an application for the Government Exceptional Financial Support, to assist with funding the forecast overspend and future budget setting.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continue to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) Executive Directors identify reductions to their

Director of
Finance

directorate forecast outturn net spend position and urgently implement them;

- 3) Council be asked to agree to submit an application for Exceptional Finance Support to cover the deficit position for the year, as recommended within the Medium Term Financial Strategy report elsewhere on the agenda; and
- 4) future reports be submitted for information to all Council Boards.

EXB53 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 25/26 - 28/29 KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report from the Director of Finance, which presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2025/26 to 2028/29.

The MTFS sets out a three-year projection of the Council's resources and spending and was based on information that was currently available. The MTFS financial year sat outside the period of time covered by the most recent Public Sector Spending Review, published in October 2021. The Chancellor had commissioned a new Spending Review which was intended to set Government departmental limits over a three-year period. The Review was set to conclude in Spring 2025, which would not be in time to inform 2025/26 budgets. Details of the 2025/26 Local Government Finance Settlement are expected to be released in December 2024 on a provisional basis with a final settlement expected in January 2025.

The Board was advised that the uncertainty regarding 2025/26 financial resources meant the financial information included within the MTFS was based on a large number of assumptions and best estimates. The financial forecast would be updated as and when further information was known. Appendix 1 therefore detailed the MTFS from 2025/26 – 2028/29 using a prudent estimate of the financial conditions over the course of the next four years. Appendix 2 presented the Reserves and Balances Strategy and Appendix 3 outlined Approved Budget Savings for 2025/26.

Reason for Decision

To seek approval for the Council's MTFS for 2025/26 to 2028/29.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The alternative option of not maintaining a MTFS has been considered. However, this would not follow good financial management practice, as the MTFS is a key element in informing the Council's financial planning and budget setting processes.

Implementation date

The MTFS 2025/26 to 2028/29 will be implemented from 1 April 2025.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;
- 2) the 2025/26 base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Strategy;
- 3) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved;
- 4) the award of Council Tax Support for 2025/26 remains at the 2024/25 level of 21.55%; and
- 5) Council approve the submission of an application to Government for Exceptional Finance Support.

Director of Finance

EXB54 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2025/26 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Director of Finance, on the requirement for the Council to determine the Council Tax Base for its area and the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

The Council Tax Base was the measure used for calculating Council Tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (Cheshire Fire Authority, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), in the calculation of their Council Tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula which represented the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent Band 'D' dwellings.

Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 97% collection rate, the calculation for 2025/26 gave a base figure of 36,936 for the Borough as a whole. The Council Tax Base figure for each of the Parishes was noted.

Reason for Decision

To seek approval for the Council Tax Base for the Borough and also the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Council is required to determine annually the Council Tax Base and to notify the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the Environment Agency and Parish Councils.

Implementation date

The Council Tax Base 2025/26 will be implemented from 1 April 2025.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve:

Director of Finance

- 1) setting the 2025/26 Council Tax Base at 36,936 for the Borough and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) setting the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	674
Halebank	546
Daresbury	301
Moore	344
Preston Brook	373
Sandymoor	1,645

EXB55 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- 1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in

view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and

- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CORPORATE SERVICES

EXB56 DISPOSAL OF LAND TO THE REAR OF GUSSION TRANSPORT AT DITTON ROAD WIDNES

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval for the disposal of land to the rear of Gussion Transport, Ditton Road, Widnes.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the disposal of the freehold interest in land to the rear of Gussion Transport, Ditton Road, Widnes is approved on the terms reported in 3.4;
- 2) authorises the Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property, to arrange for all required documentation for the transactions to be completed to the satisfaction of the Director Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services; and
- 3) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, to

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

undertake further negotiations with the company to seek reasonable recompense for the preceding period when the company occupied the site.

EXB57 LEGAL SERVICES TRANSFORMATION REPORT - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Director Legal and Democratic Services, which outlined a Transformation Report that presented the most cost effective way in which to deliver Legal Services across the Council and options to alternate operating models.

Reason for Decision

Legal Services had gone through several years of overspend particularly in respect of Social Care (Children and Adult). The Transformation Report considered the most cost effective way in which to deliver Legal Services across the Council and options for alternate models.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The report provided three options and option three was recommended as the most effective means of delivery.

Implementation date

March 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) adopts Option Three within the Legal Services Transformation Report:

Interim structure with enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery moving towards consideration of viability around options of:

- Outsourcing;
- Formation of a collaboration/shared service with another Local Authority;
- Wholly owned subsidiary Legal Company.

- 2) Council be requested to approve the necessary funding set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO

EXB58 REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT CONTRACT

Director, Legal and Democratic Services

FORWARD PROCUREMENT ARRANGEMENTS - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval for the award of a contract for the re-settlement support contract.

Reason for Decision

To provide consistency in support for refugees arriving in Halton. The contract incurs expenditure and has a significant impact on both Halton's new and established communities. The integration of new cohorts and diverse communities had the potential to generate community tensions, the resettlement support is an approach to mitigate this.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The alternative would be to conduct an options appraisal to identify preferred options and progress appropriate procurement arrangements however, there is no capacity available currently to support a procurement process within timescales before the expiry date.

Implementation date

1 April 2025 to 31 March 2027.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve a VEAT (Voluntary Ex-ante Transparency) notice to enable the Council to directly award a two-year contract to the incumbent provider for the re-settlement support to ensure continuity of care in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.5.8.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB59 DOMICILIARY CARE SERVICE TENDER: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTRACT AWARD - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Adult Services, which sought approval to award contracts to providers for the provision of a Domiciliary Care Service across Halton.

Reason for Decision

The report relates to a service which is statutorily required.

The value of the contract is above £5m. The decision impacts on all wards and communities within the Borough.

Alternative options considered and rejected

There are no alternative options. The Council must award contracts to providers for the supply of a Domiciliary Care Service in compliance with its regulatory duties, to ensure continuity of service once the current contract ceases on 1 April 2025.

Implementation date

The proposed contract will be for an initial five years commencing 7 April 2025 until 6 April 2030 with the option to extend by 2 x 12 month periods, 7 April 2030 until 6 April 2031 and 7 April 2031 until 6 April 2032.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) the Board approves the recommendations for the award of contracts in relation to the provision of a Domiciliary Care Service across Halton, as per section 3.11 of this report; and
- 3) the Board approves an extension to the current contract as per section 3.12 and 3.13 of the report.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

MINUTES ISSUED: 19 November 2024

CALL-IN: 26 November 2024 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 19 November 2024.

Meeting ended at 3.17 p.m.

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	12 th December 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director - Finance
PORTFOLIO:	Corporate Services
SUBJECT:	Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider an application 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 Community Shop CIC, be rejected for the reasons outlined within the report;**

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 charity, a community amateur sports club or a not-for-profit organisation.
- 3.2 From 1st 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 An application for discretionary rate relief have been received as outlined below from Community Shop CIC.
- 3.4 Currently, where discretionary rate relief has been granted to charities and non-profit organisations, it has been provided until 31st March 2025 in order to provide the organisations with some degree of certainty.

Community Shop CIC, Priory House, Northway, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2FS

- 3.5 Community Shop CIC is part of Company Shop Group which is an

organisation who are the leading surplus redistributor in the UK. Their aim is to help keep food which otherwise would be wasted, out of landfill thereby reducing emissions, and to deliver financial benefits to people in need, through accessible food and life changing development programmes, and creating a more sustainable future.

3.6 Community Shop is a community interest company whose objectives are stated as follows:

- a) As the UK's first social supermarket chain, the principal activity of the business is the building stronger individuals and more confident communities. Community Shop is a trusted partner within the industry and across the communities it serves, delivering long-term, sustainable change.
- b) Community Shops sell everything you'd expect from a local supermarket, but at deeply discounted prices. The high-quality food, drink and household essentials are from donations made by retailers, manufacturers, and brands, helping to feed families and stop perfectly good products from going to waste.
- c) The money that is made in the Community Shop funds a Community Hub where "members build confidence and independence using The Success Plan". Community Shop Group provides "conversations, training, and tailored personal development programmes which help people build on their strengths to deliver an increased broad range of health and wellbeing outcomes including supporting people getting back into work".
- d) In addition, the Community Kitchen are spaces "where people can buy cooked food at great prices". Events are also run in the Community Kitchen to "get people out of the house, get strangers talking and bring communities together". CSG also provide food literacy training and children eat for free every day, all year round.

3.7 Their charitable aims are:

- a) the prevention or relief of poverty
- b) the advancement of education
- c) the advancement of health
- d) the advancement of citizenship or community development
- e) the advancement of environmental protection or improvement
- f) the relief of those in need.

3.8 Community Shop membership is free and open to those who live locally to a Community Shop store and receive a means-tested benefit. Community Shop has won the Queen's Award for Enterprise, in the Promoting Opportunity category. They aim to

address the physical and psychological impact that a prolonged lack of food access can bring, offering life-changing personal development support, helping to rebuild lives and develop long-term aspiration change in communities. The Healthy Holidays programme prevents holiday hunger, giving 15,114 children free healthy, balanced meals.

- 3.9 Through its range of bespoke personal development and mentoring programmes, Community Shop offers support with building confidence, budgeting, nutrition, employment and empowerment, enabling members to eventually return to mainstream shopping with increased skills, and a clear life plan. Through its sustainable model, Community Shop is able to work closely with members and communities on a long-term, sustained basis. This supports social mobility, promotes inter-generational aspiration, and helps to break long-term dependence on food aid. As a Community Interest Company all profits are re-invested into their social aims and are ring-fenced to Community Shop CIC.
- 3.10 Community Shop CIC has 13 outlets in total including one in London and one in Leicester and several in Yorkshire and the Northwest of England.
- 3.11 Community Shop CIC is already in receipt of 80% mandatory charitable relief. If granted the Council's policy is to only provide 15% with the organisation themselves meeting the remaining 5%. If 15% discretionary top-up relief were awarded in respect of Priory House, Runcorn with effect from 2nd January 2024, the costs to the Council would be as shown in the appendix.
- 3.12 Historically, the Council has chosen to only support organisations who operate solely or mainly within the Borough. Given that Community Shop CIC is part of Company Shop Group which operates on a national basis, the recommendation is to not award discretionary rate relief in this instance.

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 rate relief.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Through its range of bespoke personal development and mentoring programmes, Community Shop offers support with building confidence, budgeting, nutrition, employment and empowerment, enabling members to eventually return to mainstream shopping with increased skills, and a clear life plan. Community Shop supports social mobility, promotes inter-generational aspiration, and helps to break long-term dependence on food aid

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The aim is for members to return to mainstream shopping with increased skills and a clear life plan, and members receive support to gain employment

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Children eat free every day all year round in the Community Kitchen that is funded by Community Shop CIC. Budgeting and nutrition advice is provided

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The service is only available to those living locally and in receipt of means tested benefits.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Community Shop CIC is part of Company Shop Group who are the leading surplus redistributor in the UK, helping keep food which otherwise would be wasted, out of landfill, thereby reducing emissions, and creating a more sustainable future

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The aim is to address the physical and psychological impact that a prolonged lack of food access can bring, offering life-changing personal development support, helping to rebuild lives and develop long-term aspiration change in communities

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 applicant offers their services to all sections of the community, without any prejudice.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX

Ratepayer	Address	Annual Rates Liability 2024/25	Mandatory Rate Relief Awarded	Annual Cost of Mandatory Relief to HBC 2024/25	Discretionary Rate Relief Awarded	Annual Cost of 15% Disc. Rate Relief to HBC 2024/25	Actual Cost of Mandatory & Disc. Relief for 2024/25
		£		£		£	£
Community Shop CIC	Priory House, Northway, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2FS	62,790.00	80%	50,232.00	15%	9,418.50	59,650.50
Ratepayer	Address	Rates Liability 02.01.24-31.03.24	Mandatory Rate Relief Awarded	Cost of Mandatory Relief to HBC 02.01.24-31.03.24	Discretionary Rate Relief Awarded	Cost of 15% Disc. Rate Relief to HBC 02.01.24-31.03.24	Cost of Mandatory & Disc. Relief for 02.01.24-31.03.24
		£		£		£	£
Community Shop CIC	Priory House, Northway, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2FS	11,533.77	80%	9,227.02	15%	1,730.07	10,957.09

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 12 December 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Finance

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Sundry Debts Write-Off

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the write-off of a number of sundry debts, as the debtor has passed away and their estate has no remaining assets available to meet the outstanding debts.

2.0 RECOMMENDED That:

- (i) The write-off of debts against the bad debt provision, as outlined within the report, be approved.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2019 the Council's Fraud Investigation Team identified that a significant fraud had been perpetrated against the Council relating to the receipt of Adults Direct Payments. A subsequent Police investigation revealed that the individual involved had been carrying out similar frauds against Oldham Council (although on a much larger scale) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 3.2 The individual went to great lengths to commit and conceal the fraud over fifteen years. In June 2020, following a lengthy Police investigation supported by both councils and the DWP, the individual was found guilty on 34 charges and given a custodial sentence of three years and eight months. The case and the conviction received considerable media attention at the time, which was helpful as a deterrent.
- 3.3 In total, the fraud amounted to over £1m across the two councils and the DWP, of which £240,095 related to Halton. This comprised the following items for which debtor invoices were raised once the individual was convicted and the following amounts are still outstanding;
- In-eligible Direct Payments £188,825
 - Housing Benefit Overpayments £50,375
 - Council Tax Arrears £895

- 3.4 The Halton Registrars Service was notified a few months ago that the individual had passed away. Following the individual's passing, the Council continued to attempt to recover the debts from the individual's estate. However, we have been informed that the fraudulently obtained monies had been used to fund day to day living expenses, holidays etc. over many years. As a result, there are no assets remaining in the individual's estate from which the Council could obtain payment of the outstanding debts. The situation is the same for Oldham Council and the DWP.
- 3.5 Given the nature of these debts, it was at the time considered prudent to make bad debt provisions each year-end for the full amounts outstanding.
- 3.6 As the debts can no longer be recovered, approval is sought to write-off the outstanding debts, which will be fully funded from the bad debt provision.

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

There are no implications for the Council's priorities.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 There are no risks relating to this report.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 None.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None.

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

9.1 There are none within the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	12 December 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Director of Finance
PORTFOLIO:	Corporate Services
SUBJECT:	Recommendations from Audit and Governance Board
WARD(S):	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider two recommendations made to Executive Board by the Audit and Governance Board, as detailed below.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That;

- (i) Consideration be given to the recommendation from Audit and Governance Board as set out in paragraph 3.2 below, regarding membership of the Transformation Programme Board;**
- (ii) Consideration be given to the recommendation from Audit and Governance Board as set out in paragraph 3.4 below, regarding a request to the Executive/Corporate Directors.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 20 November 2024 the Audit and Governance Board received a report setting out the governance arrangements for the Council's Transformation Programme. A copy of the report is shown in the Appendix.

- 3.2 Following consideration of the report, Audit and Governance Board made the following additional recommendation;

“That Executive Board make changes to the governance of the Transformation Programme by making changes to the Transformation Programme Board to increase transparency, including the addition of two members of the Audit & Governance Board to the Transformation Programme Board, who should not also be Scrutiny (PPB) Chairs.”

- 3.3 At the same meeting, the Audit and Governance Board also received the Annual Auditor's Report 2023/24 from the Council's external auditor Grant Thornton UK LLP.

- 3.4 Following consideration of the report, Audit and Governance Board made the following additional recommendation;

“That Executive Board ask each Executive/Corporate Director to identify what items of non-staff related expenditure are defined as essential to the delivery of services within their Directorate, and provide written justification for the essential spend designation, outside of which no other spending will be permitted.”

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Changes to the membership of the Transformation Board will impact upon the Council's governance arrangements.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

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

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

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

5.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

5.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

There are no direct implications, however, the governance of the Transformation Programme and management of the Council's budget, support the delivery and achievement of all the Council's priorities.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 Delivery of the Transformation Programme and management of spending against the Council's budget are essential elements in managing the Council's financial risks.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1072

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

REPORT TO:	Audit & Governance Board
DATE:	20 November 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Corporate Director – Chief Executive’s Delivery Unit
PORTFOLIO:	Corporate Resources
SUBJECT:	Transformation Programme Governance Arrangements
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Board of the governance arrangements for the Council’s Transformation Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

the report is noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1

The Council’s Transformation Programme started to operate on 1st April 2023, since when it has grown in both scope and complexity. The programme is in place until 31st March 2026.

3.2

The governance of the Programme primarily sat with the Executive Board, who acted as the ‘Programme Board’.

3.3

As the programme entered its second year of operation, it was noted that the breadth and depth of the projects within the programme had grown, the monitoring of project performance, interface with other disciplines within the Council, and the monitoring and management of benefits, risks and issues has become more complex.

3.4

In August 2024 a Transformation Programme Board was established. This is formed of a working party consisting of the ten Executive Board members. A number of officers also form part of the Transformation Programme Board to facilitate and support its operation.

3.5 Where a project sits within an Executive Portfolio, the Portfolio Holder assumes the role of the 'Lead Member' within that transformation project.

3.6 A level of scrutiny operates across the projects within the programme through Topic Groups, led by the Chairs of relevant Policy & Performance Boards. Any recommendations emerging from this scrutiny are referred to the Transformation Programme Board, via the Lead Member for the respective project.

3.7 The Transformation Programme Board is in place to provide governance and oversight and has no delegated authority within the scope of the Council's Constitution. The Board may make recommendations to the Executive Board as and when required.

3.8 Where a formal decision is required following the Board's consideration of any matter within its purview, that decision is referred to be included in the agenda of the next available meeting of the Executive Board.

3.9 The Terms of Reference for the Transformation Programme Board are appended to this report.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct policy implications arising from this proposal.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The oversight provided by the Transformation Programme Board is a key element in the achievement of financial benefits within the Transformation Programme, which in turn contributes to the Council's financial standing.

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

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Failure to apply a sufficient level of governance and oversight to the Transformation Programme may result in opportunities being missed, financial and non-financial benefits not being achieved, with existing and future service delivery being compromised.

7.2 The Transformation Programme Board will monitor the programme risk register as part of its oversight role.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There is the possibility of the emergence of Equality & Diversity issues across the Council's service portfolio where transformation project work is undertaken. These issues would be addressed on a case-by-case basis and monitored by the Transformation Programme Board.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.



REIMAGINE HALTON

Small steps, big changes

TERMS OF REFERENCE

RE-IMAGINE HALTON TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME BOARD

Board: Reimagine Halton Transformation Programme Board

Status: Temporary until 31st March 2026

1.0 The Constitution

The Re-imagine Halton Programme Board is constituted of the ten Executive Members of the Council (refer to Membership section below).

The Board operates as a Working Party, set up following a decision of the Executive Board in July 2024.

The Board is supported and facilitated by a number of officer members (refer to Membership section below).

The Board is in place to provide governance and oversight and has no delegated authority within the scope of the Council's Constitution. Where a formal decision is required following the Board's consideration of any matter within its purview, that decision will be referred to be included in the agenda of the next available meeting of the Executive Board.

The Board may receive recommendations from Policy & Performance Board Topic Groups as part of the Council's scrutiny arrangements pertaining to Re-imagine Halton Transformation projects.

2.0 Scope and Purpose

The Re-imagine Halton Programme Board is the governance body responsible for monitoring of all initiatives within the Council's Reimagine Halton Transformation Programme portfolio. They shall be responsible for overseeing and supporting the delivery of Reimagine Halton Transformation Programme projects agreed by Full Council on 8 March 2023, as well as any additional projects added to the portfolio at the agreement of the board.

Current projects include;

Project Area	Transformation Initiative Owner	Lead Member
Children's and SEND	Director of Children's Services	Cllr Tom McInerney
Adults	Operational Director, Commissioning and Provision	Cllr Angela Ball
Employer of Choice	Divisional Manager, HR Service Service Manager Organisational Development	Cllr Mark Dennett
Customer Journey (including Data Services)	Operational Director, ICT & Support Services	Cllr Mark Dennett
Accelerating Growth	Operational Director Policy, Planning & Transportation	Cllr Dave Thompson
Waste *	Divisional Manager, Environment Services	Cllr Stef Nelson

* Currently being monitored as business as usual

The purpose of the board includes but is not limited to;

- Providing oversight, support and challenge to Transformation Initiative Owners, the Transformation Delivery Unit and each other as Lead Members
- Challenging the pace and impact of the Council's transformation programme; financial and non-financial benefits
- Holding to account Lead Members, Transformation Initiative Owners and the Transformation Delivery Unit for ensuring delivery at pace of the agreed Project Delivery Plans
- Providing a steer and making recommendations to meet strategic and political priorities
- Assessing the feasibility and appraisal of options where 'new work' requests are approved in principle.
- Approval of Delivery Plans
- Responsibility for reviewing escalated risks and issues within the programme; supporting the mitigation of these where necessary
- Sponsoring Programme wide communications which may have political ramifications
- Reviewing recommendations escalated by Scrutiny Topic Groups
- Supporting the delivery of any recommendations made by the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Membership

The Reimagine Transformation Programme Board mirrors the Council's Executive Board and consists of the following members;

- Leader
- Deputy Leader
- Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources
- Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People
- Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care
- Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing
- Portfolio Holder for Community Safety
- Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal
- Portfolio Holder for Employment, Learning, Skills and Community
- Portfolio Holder for Climate Change

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services will serve as the Programme Board Chair and the Leader as the Vice Chair.

The Board will consist of the following officer members to provide support and facilitation;

- Chief Executive
- Corporate Director, Chief Executive Delivery Unit
- Head of Transformation Delivery Unit
- Chief Accountant
- Senior Delivery Officer - Programme Management & Governance
- Lead Officer - Communications & Marketing
- Programme Management Office project officers

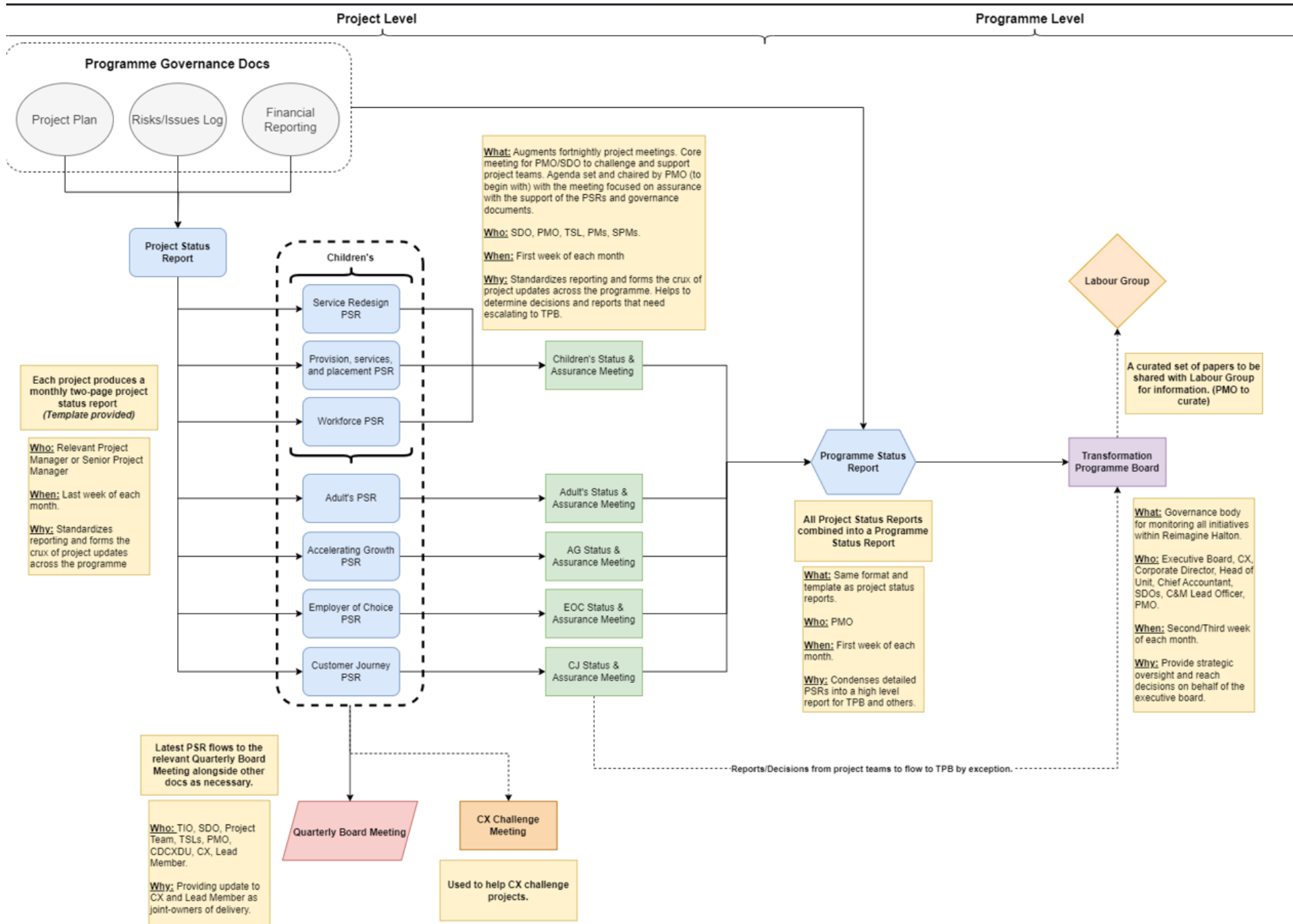
Delegates may be provided for 'officer members' of the board where necessary.

Additional members and / or officers may attend periodically at the request of the Programme Board Chair, in respect of specific agenda items, and may include (but not limited to);

- Scrutiny Chairs
- Transformation Initiative Owners or Transformation Service Leads
- Senior Delivery Officers – transformation projects
- Transformation Delivery Unit project officers
- Subject Matter experts or representatives of enabling services (HR, IT, Procurement, OD)

3.0 Governance Structure

The governance structure for the board is set out in the following diagram which demonstrates the flow of activity and reporting from project level Status and Assurance Meetings and Quarterly Project Board through the Programme level oversight by the Transformation Programme Board.



4.0 Responsibilities of core board Members

Chair /Vice Chair	<p>Chairs the Programme Board Meetings</p> <p>Provides a political steer and makes recommendations to meet political priorities</p> <p>Agrees non-standard agenda items</p> <p>Agrees exceptions to the reporting and meeting schedule</p> <p>Champions the Programme with Members and other key stakeholders</p> <p>Key point of escalation for engagement at a political level and mitigates issues with a political / resident impact.</p>
Sponsor (Chief Executive)	<p>Holds overall accountability for the deployment of officers across the Council to enable the objectives of the Transformation Programme to be achieved.</p>
Lead Member	<p>To be jointly accountable for the delivery of projects within their portfolio, providing directing, challenge and support, through the programme governance arrangements and beyond, to Transformation Initiative Owners.</p> <p>Provides a political steer and makes recommendations to meet political priorities</p> <p>Presents information and updates to fellow Board Members on projects within their portfolio</p> <p>Provides peer challenge and support to fellow Board Members</p> <p>Supports the resolution and mitigation of escalated programme risks and issues.</p> <p>Provides a link between the Programme Board and PPB Topic group to enable a transparent scrutiny process.</p> <p>Champions the Programme with Members and other key stakeholders</p> <p>Key point of escalation for engagement at a political level and mitigates issues with a political / resident impact.</p>
CD-CXDU	<p>Holds accountability for the correct planning and resourcing of transformation projects, to align with the</p>

	achievement of stated objectives and resulting financial and non-financial benefits.
Head of TDU	Responsible for the day-to-day performance management of transformation projects, tracking of benefits, risks and issues across the project portfolio.
Programme Management Office	<p>Manage programme governance through the co-ordination and administration of the board meetings. Including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scheduling of monthly Programme Board Meetings - Preparation and distribution of Board agenda and ensuring papers are available in advance of the meeting - Recording key discussion points, actions, changes and decisions and tracking attendance of members. - Highlight actions which have not yet been undertaken - Preparation of specified content for the Board, agreed by Head of Unit; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Programme Status Report o Budget and Financial reporting o Risk and Issue reporting (whole programme) <p>Facilitate the 'new work gateway' process, liaising with requestors and enabling services</p> <p>Facilitate the appointment and allocation of individuals to project teams</p>

5.0 Administration

Board meetings will be held on a monthly cycle, year round. Attendance shall be normally be in person.

A schedule of meetings shall be published by the Programme Management Office for the financial year.

A record of attendance will be recorded as part of the Board notes.

On occasion, it may be necessary to call extraordinary meetings to ensure that project progress is not stalled. Such meetings can be convened with agreement of the Chair and the ToR in this document shall be adhered to.

Papers will be made available to Board members at least 5 working days before the meeting unless otherwise agreed with the Chair that a paper can be submitted at short notice. Papers will be circulated electronically.

Decisions, discussions, changes and actions shall be recorded during the meeting by the Programme Management Office and shall be shared within 48 hours of the meeting with members of the board.

An urgent decision or change may be taken in between meetings, only in the event that a failure to do so would impede delivery of an objective, financial, or non-financial benefit within a critical project timeframe. Urgent decisions will be taken by the Chair, the Lead Member for the project, in consultation with the Corporate Director, CXDU.

Decisions that fall within the Powers and Duties of the Executive Board must be referred to the Executive Board for consideration in the normal way.

6.0 Quorum

All decisions will be made by a casting of votes from Elected Members. Core board members who are officers or advisors will not be entitled to vote. A quorum of 6 members is required. In the event that there is a tied vote, the Chair shall have the deciding vote.

7.0 Control Documents and Reporting Arrangements

All projects within the Programme will be expected to have a set of core project management documents which include;

- Delivery Plan (including Measurement Annex)
- Risk and Issues log
- Project Plan
- A Trajectory(ies)
- A Communications Plan
- Project Status Report
- Contribution to the Programme Status Report

The **Delivery Plan** will be produced by the Transformation Initiative Owners, with support from the Transformation Delivery Unit and contributions and feedback from the Lead Member. Accountability for delivery of the plan will be held jointly by the Lead Member and Transformation Initiative Owner. Delivery Plans

will be produced in accordance with the Programme's Delivery Plan Assessment Framework and will be subject to quality assurance by the relevant Senior Delivery Officer, moderation with key stakeholders such as enabling services, oversight of standards by the Programme Management Office.

Delivery Plans will provide an overview of project purpose, vision, activity and the resources required to deliver it. They will have clear delivery themes, priority actions and milestones associated with the activity and will be created alongside other project documentation such as the Project Plan, Communications Plan and Risk and Issues Log. Each Delivery Plan will include a Measurement Annex detailing performance indicators that will be used to monitor progress and performance, a Trajectory and Stakeholder mapping.

Lead Members will be required to bring the completed Delivery Plans to the Transformation Programme Board for approval. Following this, Transformation Initiative Owners should present the approved Plan to Management Team.

On approval of the Delivery Plan, the Lead Member will circulate a copy of the plan to the relevant Policy and Performance Board Chair with a request to convene a Policy and Performance Board Topic Group. The Topic Group will perform a scrutiny role, escalating any recommendations via the Lead Member, to the Transformation Programme Board for consideration.

Project Plans will be developed and maintained in the Microsoft Project application by Transformation Project Teams, on behalf of Initiative Owners. Plans will be reviewed as a minimum, every two weeks at the Project Team meetings and will feed into the wider Programme Plan which will be monitored by the Programme Management Office.

Trajectories will be developed for each project to provide a mechanism to forecast and monitor financial and non-financial outcomes associated with the delivery of activity outlined in the Delivery Plan. Performance and progress associated with the trajectories will be monitored using the performance indicators detailed in the **Measurement Annex** of the Delivery Plan.

Each project will hold a local **Risk and Issues log** which should be reviewed and maintained as part of the Project Team meetings. Escalated issues will form part of the Programme Risk and Issues Log which will be presented to the Board on a monthly basis, typically as part of the Programme Status Report. The Programme Board will provide support and guidance in addressing any escalated risks where necessary.

On a monthly basis each project will hold a Status and Assurance Meeting. This objective of this meeting is to provide a progress update and assurance to both the Senior Delivery Officer and the Programme Management Office. Ahead of the meeting, each project team and Transformation Initiative Owner, will be required to produce a **Project Status Report** detailing the status of activity, decisions, risks and issues and budget for their project. Information from the Project Status Reports will be collated by the Programme Management Office into a single Programme Status Report.

Programme Status Report will be produced on a monthly basis and presented to Board Members in advance of the Programme Board. Included in the report will be milestones, key dates and decisions taken in the reporting period, as well as and assessment of programme progress, risk and issues. Financial and non-Financial benefits tracking for the programme will accompany the report.

Project Closure documents should be completed as phases of the Projects are; transitioned back to 'business as usual', reach a conclusion, or are deemed unfeasible. Closure documents will be present to the Programme Board to agree formal closure or transitioning and to account for any financial implications.

A '**New Work Programme Gateway**' process has been established to assess new work coming into the programme. Requestees, with the support of their Executive Director, will submit a business case via the 'Help with Transformation' portal. The business case will be assessed for return on investment, financial impact, expected benefits, and timescales.

The Portfolio holder for Corporate Services and the Chief Executive will make decisions, in discussions with Programme Board and Management Team colleagues, to approve, in principle, areas of work for further exploration.

On provisional approval, a period of intensive data gathering, research and investigation will be conducted by operational services with the temporary allocation of Transformation Delivery Unit support to assess the feasibility of the work and present an Options Report to the Programme Board. A date to consider the Options Report at Programme Board will be pre-set by the Programme Management Office and shall not exceed 12 weeks.

Where the Transformation Programme Board agrees one or more options to be taken forward, a date should be agreed by the Board for the production of a Delivery Plan. The Programme Management Office will agree and allocate ongoing unit resource to support the work. Where the Transformation

Programme Board deems that the options presented are not feasible for continuation, the board should agree and document the closing of the project in the Minutes.

8.0 Keeping on Track

Alongside the Programme Status Report, the PMO will also produce a monthly Project Status Matrix. This document provides a high-level overview of all projects within the programme along with their associated RAG ratings (Summary, Time, Budget, and Risk). The Matrix will also indicate whether RAG ratings have improved, deteriorated, or remained unchanged from the previous months. With the support of the PMO, the Matrix will help the Board identify trends as well as projects that require closer inspection.

The development and monitoring of trajectories and associated data will provide a robust mechanism for monitoring progress and impact of priority actions against the desired goals. As projects develop it may be necessary to review and adjust how and what we deliver and where necessary a **Change Report** created to address required changes to delivery.

There may be occasions when things do not go to plan. In such cases it may be necessary for the Programme Board to instigate a **Priority Review**. A Priority Review is a rapid analysis of the state of delivery and the identification of action needed to strengthen the delivery over a short period of time, usually no more than 6 weeks. During the 6 week period, intensive work and analysis of the delivery chain, down to front line analysis should be carried out to establish firm evidence which is to be triangulated against the existing evaluations, data and evidence from the reviews. It should result in a strengthened plan action plan of delivery. This work will be facilitated by the Programme Management Office alongside project resource.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 12th December 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Directorate Performance Overview Reports for Quarter 2
2024 - 20205

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report the Council's performance for the second quarter period to 30th September 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

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 Overview Report – Chief Executive’s Directorate Quarter 2

Reporting Period: 1st July – 30th September 2024

1.0 Introduction

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

1.2 It covers key priorities for development or improvement in the various functional areas reporting to the Board in relation to the Council’s priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency i.e.:

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

1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 5 of this report.

1.4 Corporate Priorities



Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029
 Our Community, Our Priorities, Our Future

Plan on a Page



2.0 High Priority Equality Actions

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

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


3.0 Performance Overview

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

Finance


Key Objectives / milestones

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


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the in-year collection rate will be compared to the same point of the previous year		Council tax collection through to the end of September 2024 is 53.82% which is 0.11% lower than the collection rate at the same point last year. Debt relating to previous years continues to be collected, the

		<p>Council utilises powers through charging orders and attachment to earnings/benefits to secure debts. £1.44m has been collected in relation to previous years' debt.</p> <p>No comparable 2024/25 council tax collection information has yet been published, to compare the Council's in-year performance against other councils.</p> <p>For 2023/24 the Council's in-year council tax collection rate was 93.78% which compares to the national collection rate of 95.9%. Council tax collection rates are heavily impacted by deprivation, where it is evidenced that the higher the deprivation the lower the collection rate. Despite this Halton out-performs a number of unitary and metropolitan authorities who have a better deprivation ranking.</p>
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Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
FS02	Higher proportion of business rates income due for the year to be collected compared to previous year

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

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


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary																						
<p>On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target</p> <p>Q1 20.83 days</p>		<p>Q2 2023-24 24.79 days Q2 2024-25 19.58 days Q1 2024-25 20.83 days</p> <p>Processing new claims performance has improved by over 4 days compared to Q2 last year, and the main reason for the improvement is less staff sickness this year. There is a 1 day improvement for Q2 2024-25 compared to Q1 2024-25 which can be explained in part by more staff doing overtime recently.</p> <p>Q1 2024-25 New claims processing figures for a number of the Greater Manchester Councils (latest figures available).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Council</th> <th>Processing days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Halton</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blackpool</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bolton</td> <td>32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bury</td> <td>36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cheshire East</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Salford</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stockport</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tameside</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trafford</td> <td>46</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warrington</td> <td>38</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Council	Processing days	Halton	21	Blackpool	13	Bolton	32	Bury	36	Cheshire East	22	Salford	29	Stockport	17	Tameside	27	Trafford	46	Warrington	38
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Corporate Priority	Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
FS 04	Reducing the average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction by 1 day, compared to the previous year, to an average of 8.55 days.


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary																				
<p>On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target</p> <p>Q1 13.70 days</p>	<div style="background-color: yellow; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; margin: 0 auto;">U</div>	<p>Q2 2023-24 20.05 days Q2 2024-25 15.62 days Q1 2024-25 13.70 days</p> <p>Processing changes in circumstances has improved by over 4 days compared to Q2 last year. Lower levels of staff sickness this year has helped improve the performance. Performance in 2024-25 for Q2 compared with Q1 has worsened by nearly 2 days. This can be attributed to a significant increase in Department for Works and Pensions notifications related to the “managed migration” of housing benefit claimants to Universal Credit which commenced in May 2024.</p> <p>Q1 2024-25 Changes in circumstances processing figures for some Greater Manchester Councils (latest figures available).</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Council</th> <th>Processing days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Halton</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blackpool</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bolton</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bury</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cheshire East</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Salford</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stockport</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tameside</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trafford</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Council	Processing days	Halton	14	Blackpool	5	Bolton	11	Bury	4	Cheshire East	2	Salford	2	Stockport	16	Tameside	27	Trafford	16
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Blackpool	5																					
Bolton	11																					
Bury	4																					
Cheshire East	2																					
Salford	2																					
Stockport	16																					
Tameside	27																					
Trafford	16																					

		Warrington	11
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Corporate Priority	Priority Two - Building a strong, sustainable, local economy
FS 05	Ensuring 90% of all suppliers' invoices are paid within 30 days, including those which are disputed invoices.

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


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

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


Operational HR Division, Chief Executives Delivery Unit

Key Objectives / milestones

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


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

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



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

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

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

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


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

25/26 – 83%		
26/27 – 88%		

ICT


Key Objectives / milestones

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

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
2023 saw the delivery of the initial Microsoft M365 E5 platform – 2024 continues to deliver updates with key technical partners.		<p>The delivery of M365 has been a colossal undertaking, delivering a step change in the way the authority delivers technology to the end user. This undertaking has also crossed over the Customer Journey Transformation project delivering positive change to the end user experience linked to this change over to the Microsoft cloud. This programmes Phase 1 objective is the full transformation from legacy telephony and contact centre systems to modern, integrated communication and data infrastructure.</p> <p>It includes decommissioning outdated hardware, implementing new cloud-based contact centre solutions, building a secure on-premise and hybrid data Lakehouse, and delivering a business intelligence platform that supports the Halton operational and strategic goals.</p>


		<p>Successful completion of these works will enhance both internal and external communications, improve data-driven decision-making, and provide a scalable foundation for future growth and a clear foundation for further transformational project deliveries as the technologies become embedded and the environment continues to improve as the technology set and the team’s skills grow. With the programme of works underway with the Business Analysis programme started Q2 and the Contact Centre solution procurement and delivery, with the Data Lakehouse project deployment starting also in Q3 the programme is well underway.</p>
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<p>Corporate Priority</p>	
<p>ICT 02</p>	<p>LD2 Security Incidents across each reporting quarter</p>

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


		package and a system currently being procured and designed.
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Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
ICT 03	LD3 Number of resolved customer contacts – Contact Centre

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the delivered process and the number of contacts will be reported with an objective of delivering contact through all digital means, reducing wait times and improving resolution at 1 st contact for those services that will allow.		<p>28'603 individual call contacts across Quarter 2, For over 15 years the council has relied upon an on-premise Skype for Business Telephony System supported by a solution that is now struggling linking into the new technology platforms in the cloud both have more than served a purpose. The IT and Customer Service teams have operated and delivered high volume services through these technologies within the bounds of the austerity restrictions.</p> <p>Now, due to prolonged underinvestment and technical obsolescence, these systems are now failing and causing significant operational disruption.</p> <p>With a new phase of investment through the transformation programme and the increased IT capital programme, the Customer Journey and IT teams have embarked on a program to replace these outdated systems with the recently chosen contact centre telephony solution, that will be integrated with the Microsoft 365 Teams solution, also the IVR, to be</p>

		<p>linked to an interactive Ai driven bot to enhance customer service and one that will potentially deployed for internal services.</p> <p>This transition is part of a broader program of technology development linked to the use of business analysis skills aimed at aligning technological solutions with business goals.</p>
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Corporate Priority	Priority 4 - Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
ICT 04	LD4 Number of resolved contacts – One Stop Shop’s

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>The partnerships within the shop’s continue to increase at a pace and a programme of work linked to the Transformation programme owned by the department. This is currently under development to increase the levels of services available and looking to partner with key external agencies.</p>	<p></p>	<p>21’304 individual face to face interactions across Quarter 2</p> <p>The Customer Journey transformation strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to enhancing the full customer journey using a variety of technologies: Personalised web portals, chatbots, mobile technologies, social media integration, and the latest AI and chat technologies.</p> <p>The goal is to seamlessly link the authority's contact centre and shop’s with these technologies, improving both face-to-face and digital customer experiences while ensuring accessibility for all, including those with limited access to technology. This strategy will also integrate with existing CRM and Office 365 technologies to improve internal and external client interactions from contact to resolution. Digital poverty remains an issue within Halton as it does in many areas across the North West new ways of interacting with this client base will be part of the customer journey programme but</p>


		<p>the shops remain and essential aspect of the front door into the council for many.</p> <p>This programme of work will also be linked to a newly agreed partnership with NHS led Halton Health Hubs – discussions have taken place to evaluate the options for a presence within the new Runcorn Old Town hub and also to offer an NHS presence within the HBC locations. The management within this area are discussing options to increase the number of council services within the locations bringing services into the community on a face to face basis. Digital poverty and low digital skills make sure not all interactions can be digital.</p>
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Legal & Democracy


Key Objectives / milestones

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


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


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

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Inductions to be completed by June following election and offer of MAPs to be monitored on a quarterly basis		<p>All inductions were completed by the end of May and MAP meetings have been offered to all members.</p> <p>No MAPs have taken place in the quarter 1st July – 30th September 2024.</p> <p>Due to the elections in May and July, and subsequent holidays in July and August the Member Development Group were unable to meet until Thursday 26th September 2024.</p> <p>At the meeting on the 26th September, the group discussed the MAP Form and agreed that it needed to be updated. The Chair, Cllr Angela Teeling has asked the group to come together for a one item Agenda meeting on Thursday 10th October 2024, to discuss the form and how it can be updated.</p>

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
LD 03	Ensure that prosecutions are carried out expeditiously by monitoring average time taken to issue from receipt of full instructions. The target is within 10 working days.

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

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



Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target:</p> <p>Adults – 1 issued</p> <p>Children’s – 13 cases issued</p>		<p>For adult work, it’s not care proceedings, it is a welfare application in the court of protection. Once all finalised papers are received the target is to file applications within 5 working days. The target time is longer because there are not admin’ resources and one full time solicitor in the team.</p> <p>For care cases, once all finalised/approved paperwork is received by the legal team, care cases are issued within 3 working days, shorter if urgent.</p>


Catering Stadium & Registration Services

Key Objectives / milestones


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

	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Meeting space occupancy levels %		<p>Following the introduction of a central recharge from April 2024, which allows all council departments to book meeting space in the Executive Boxes at the Stadium for no additional cost, the Stadium has seen an increase in occupancy levels in comparison to the same period the previous year.</p> <p>2024 Q2 has seen meeting space occupancy at 42.3% which shows an increase of 22.3% from the same period in the previous operating year which was 20%.</p> <p>There was an expected drop in usage during Q2 in conference and function bookings in the Stadium’s suites, which is attributed to the summer break, however, even with the anticipated reduction 2024 Q2 occupancy is at 50.4% compared to 40% occupancy in Q2 2023 representing a 10.4% increase.</p>
Sports hall occupancy levels %		<p>Sports hall occupancy has increased in the Q2 period to 57.69% in comparison to 19.23% in Q2 2023.</p> <p>This increase can be attributed to the Stadium accommodating local dance schools for competitions and showcases, the ambition is to continue to grow this usage and the positive direction.</p> <p>Stadium Management have reviewed fees and charges to ensure they are in line with other</p>

		Council service areas and are currently in discussion with user groups, in addition Stadium Management are progressing with the development of additional usage packages for this area i.e. children's party packages.
4g pitch occupancy levels %	N / A	Winter occupancy only starts in QTR3.
Customer satisfaction % of 4/5 star reviews.		<p>96% of returns rated the stadium in terms of 'Quality of Venue' between 4 and 5 stars.</p> <p>95% of returns rated the stadium in terms of 'Quality of Catering' between 4 and 5 stars.</p> <p>98% of returns said they would likely or very likely use the stadium again.</p> <p>96% of customers would likely or very likely recommend the stadium to others. (1 star being very poor and 5 stars being excellent)</p> <p>Overall, 93% of customers rated the stadium very good or excellent.</p>

Corporate Priority	Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. Registrars
ERD 40	Provide accessible and efficient Registration Service to Halton residents.




Milestone: Quarterly updates on progress and annual performance data statistics to be reported to the relevant PPB	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Births (or declarations) within 5 working days of request		100% achievement. Appointment availability monitored to ensure births registered with required timeframe.


		Above National Benchmark set by GRO 95%
Deaths (or declarations) within 2 working days of request		99.04% achievement. Appointment availability monitored and adjusted to meet required deadline. Some delays in process due to new Death Certification Reform in Sept 2024.
Waiting times - % of customers seen early, on time or within 10 minutes of their appointment time.		97.38% achieved. Above National Benchmark 90% set by GRO

Property Services




Key Objectives / milestones

Corporate Priority	Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. Property Services
ERD 11	Rationalise the Council's main office accommodation to deliver revenue savings.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Exec Board approval to vacate the Municipal Building and progress with associated works – June 24.		Informal discussions held with Exec Board with regards the rationalisation of our office accommodation in September. Lead Member for Major Projects to present recommendations to Labour Group in November with a view to report going to Exec Board for approval thereafter.
Agreement to revised officer to desk ratio – September 24		Revised officer to desk ratio yet to be approved, this will be included in the Accommodation report to Exec Board in due course.
Complete options appraisal for Widnes office to present to members by March 25		RIBA stage 1 feasibility studies completed for 3 options. Report to be presented to Exec Board in due course with regards the recommendations.

<p>Agreed approach to provision of HBC staff accommodation by March 25</p>		<p>RIBA stage 1 feasibility studies completed for 3 options. Report to be presented to Exec Board in due course with regards the recommendations.</p>
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<p>Corporate Priority</p>	<p>Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. Property Services</p>
<p>ERD 12</p>	<p>Reduce Carbon Emissions from the Council’s Property Portfolio</p>

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>Deliver the leisure centre by Feb 3rd, 2025.</p>		<p>Works are progressing well and on programme to be delivered by 3rd Feb 2025</p>
<p>Commence works on site at St Pat’s & St Luke’s by December 2024.</p>		<p>Adult Services to report to Exec Board in respect of the future direction of Care homes in due course.</p> <p>All refurbishment works inclusive of decarbonisation work on hold until a decision is made by Exec Board. No works will commence on site prior to December 2024</p>
<p>Ensure year on year reduction in carbon emissions from the Council’s property portfolio. Baseline at 31st March 2023 - 6096 tonnes. target 3% after year 1, 5% reduction after year 3.</p>		<p>Carbon emissions from the Council property portfolio for 2023/2024 are 5593 tonnes, a reduction of 8.25% from the previous year.</p>

4.0 Financial Statements

Finance Department

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024

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

Comments on the above figures

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

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




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

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

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

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

Approved 2024/25 Savings**FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

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

Symbols are used in the following manner:

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

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

Amber

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

Red

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

Chief Executive's Delivery Unit**Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	3,304	1,605	1,623	(18)	(35)
Employees Training	99	50	52	(2)	(9)
Apprenticeship Levy	300	136	147	(11)	(21)
Supplies & Services	391	154	124	30	62
Total Expenditure	4,094	1,945	1,946	-1	-3
Income					
Fees & Charges	-223	-122	-118	(4)	(9)
Schools SLA Income	-565	-539	-509	(30)	(56)
Transfer from Reserves	0	0	-5	5	5
Total Income	-788	-661	-632	(29)	(60)
Net Operational Expenditure	3,306	1,284	1,314	(30)	(63)
Recharges					
Premises Support	174	87	87	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	1,209	605	605	0	0
Asset Rental Support	53	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-3,573	-1,787	-1,787	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,137	-1,095	-1,095	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	1,169	189	219	(30)	(63)

Comments on the above figures

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

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

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

Capital Programme 2024/25

Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation £000	2024/25 Revised Allocation £000	Q1 Spend £000	Q2 Spend £000	Q3 Spend £000	Q4 Spend £000	Total Spend £000	Allocation remaining £000
Chief Executives Directorate								
IT Rolling Programme	1,026.9	1,026.9					0.0	1,026.9
Halton Smart Microgrid	11,000.0	11,000.0					0.0	11,000.0
Transformation Programme	3,740.0	3,740.0	435	624			1,059.0	2,681.0
Total Chief Execs	15,766.9	15,766.9	434.7	624.3	0.0	0.0	1,059.0	14,707.9

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

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

Comments on the above figures

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

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

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

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

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

Capital Expenditure

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

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

Legal and Democratic Services Department
Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	1,511	873	864	9	17
Agency Related Expenditure	0	219	527	(308)	(616)
Supplies & Services	385	260	277	(17)	(33)
Civic Catering & Functions	23	9	3	6	12
Legal Expenses	218	19	126	(107)	(259)
Transport Related Expenditure	11	10	6	4	7
Other Expenditure	0	3	3	0	0
Capital Financing	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	2,148	1,393	1,806	(413)	(872)
Income					
School SLA's	-98	-78	-77	(1)	(20)
Licence Income	-301	-139	-129	(10)	(49)
Government Grant	-42	-42	-42	0	0
Reimbursement & Other Grants	-161	-161	-161	0	0
Fees & Charges Income	-74	-40	-21	(19)	(35)
Transfer from Reserves	-27	-27	-27	0	0
Total Income	-703	-487	-457	(30)	(104)
Net Operational Expenditure	1,445	906	1,349	(443)	(976)
Recharges					
Premises Support	53	26	26	0	0
Transport Support	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	275	139	139	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Support Costs Income	-2,391	-1,195	-1,195	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,063	-1,030	-1,030	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	-618	-124	319	(443)	(976)

Comments on the above figures

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


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

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

Approved 2024/25 Savings

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

LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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

Environment & Regeneration

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

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

Comments on the above figures

Finance communicates with the department on a regular basis to manage and analyse spending, identifying potential savings that could support current and future priorities. In an era of constrained budgets, achieving these goals is essential. The above report indicates that the department net spend will be under budget by £0.030m at year-end, compared to the month 4 projection of £0.025m under budget.

Supporting Information

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Although the Council has seen a significant increase in energy costs over the last few years, it is anticipated that costs this financial year will be £0.185m lower than in 2023/24, representing a decrease of over 14%. The department is forecasting that it will be £0.107m under budget by year-end.

Since contract prices are fixed until March 2025, projections are based on 2023/24 usage, using the unit price quoted by the supplier. However, if usage increases as more staff return to the office, these prices may rise. Due to a delay in securing a new security contract, the current provider has been granted a one-year extension. Based on spending over the last six months, spend is projected to exceed budget by £0.055m by the end of the year.

The Repairs and Maintenance program is under continuous review to ensure it stays within budget. This financial year is particularly challenging because the 2024/25 budget did not include an inflation adjustment and was further reduced by 10%. An exercise was conducted with the service to distinguish between capital and revenue expenditures, and the budgets have been adjusted accordingly. Despite these adjustments, revenue expenditure is projected to exceed the budget by £0.098m by the end of the year.

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

Approved 2024/25 Savings

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

APPENDIX A

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

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

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

Comments on the above figures

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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




Budget Savings**COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT**

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




5.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

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

Direction of Travel Indicator

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

Directorate Performance Overview Report Quarter 2
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REPORT TO: Senior Management team

DATE: 12th December 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Suzanne Salaman

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: Departmental Quarterly Monitoring Report
Quarter 2

WARD(S) Period 1st July 2024 – 30th September 2024
Borough-wide

1.0

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This quarterly monitoring report covers Adult Social Care Services second quarter period up to 30th September 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

RECOMMENDATION:

- i) **Receive the Quarter 2 monitoring report**
- ii) **Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification**
- iii) **Highlight any areas of interest or concern for reporting at future meetings**

3.0

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1

Senior Management Team has a key role in monitoring the performance of the Adult Directorate in delivering outcomes against its key health priorities. Therefore, in line with the Council's performance framework, the Board has been provided with a thematic report which identifies the key issues in performance arising in Quarter 2, 2024/25.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

Directorate Performance Overview Report Quarter 2
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4.2 **CQC IDENTIFIERS**

- Working with people
- Providing support
- How the LA ensures safety within the system
- Leadership

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

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

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The indicators presented in the report relate specifically to the delivery of health outcomes in Halton.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None identified.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None identified.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The indicators presented in the report relate specifically to the delivery of health outcomes in Halton.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None identified.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required for this report

Directorate Performance Overview Report Quarter 2

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None identified.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

1.0 Key Developments

Domiciliary Care

Tender moderation has now been completed and a report will be presented to Executive Board on 14th November 2024 outlining recommendations for contract award.

Homelessness

A working party, focusing on current homelessness provision, has been established and is being led by Councillor Marie Wright. The purpose of the working party is for Members to better understand the current arrangements in place in relation to Homelessness.

Carers

The Council is part of a Cheshire and Merseyside consortium who bid for funding against the Accelerated Reform Fund. The bid was successful and we have now had Year One funding for support with Carers Breaks. It's been agreed that this will be passported to Halton Carers Centre who have put forward a delivery programme to meet the outcomes of this project.

Urgent & Emergency Care Improvement Programme

New hospital discharge model for Halton patients introduced at Warrington & Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Supported Housing

Work continues through the Transformation programme to identify new supported housing opportunities which meet the needs of vulnerable adults across the borough.

Directorate Performance Overview Report Quarter 2

2.0 Emerging Issues

Domiciliary Care




During December and following Executive board approval, intention to award letters will be distributed to the bidders who have been successful in relation to the domiciliary care tender.

Urgent & Emergency Care Improvement Programme

Work will continue to embed the new hospital discharge model for Halton patients introduced at Warrington & Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in quarter 2 and during quarter 3 explore introduction of new hospital discharge model for Halton patients at Whiston Hospital.

3.0 Service Objectives/Milestones




3.1 Progress Against Objectives/Milestones

Total	6		6		0		0
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Appendix 1

4.0 Performance Indicators

4.1 Progress Against Performance Indicators

Total	8		8		0		0
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Appendix 2

5.0 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.

Directorate Performance Overview Report Quarter 2

6.0 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 priority actions were identified for the service for the period 2024-25.

7.0 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.

8.0 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

Service Objective 1	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.
Linked Indicators: ASC 09, 10, 11	

Milestones	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Monitor the Local Dementia Strategy Action Plan, to ensure effective services are in place.		The Dementia Delivery Plan was approved by One Halton Board in April 2024 and a Dementia Delivery Group has been established (meeting in October) to oversee the implementation of the delivery plan.
The Homelessness strategy be kept under annual review to determine if any changes or updates are required.		Draft strategy to be presented to Management Team November 2024


Appendix 1: Progress against objectives/milestones

Service Objective 2	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
Linked Indicators: ASC 01, 02, 03, 04, 12, 13	

Milestones	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
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"/>	<p>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.</p> <p>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 approach has enabled us to progress these redesigns quickly and allocate more resources to the team of first assessors and has improved both the speed and impact of this work. We are allocating all new referrals within 24/48 hours.</p>


Appendix 1: Progress against objectives/milestones

Service Objective 3	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.
Linked Indicators: ASC 05, 06, 07, 08, 14, 19, 20, 21 ASC 15,16,17,18	

Milestones	Progress Q2	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>All the Strengths based training has now been completed, with 250 staff trained and a train the trainer model in place.</p> <p>The changes to ways of working have led to a more productive workforce who have more time to speak to clients, reviews are more informed and Assessment work is more outcomes-focussed.</p> <p>The Social Care IT system changed 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 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Quarter 2	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+	347.50 22/23	600	NA	NA	NA	Figures will be updated as soon as possible.
AS//C 02	Total non-elective admissions into hospital (general & acute), all age, per 100,000 population.	Dec 23 to Jan 24 = 4,283	No plan set	0 Day LOS = 1862 >0 LOS = 2693 Total = 4555			Q2 data is not yet available and will not be until Mid-November. Unfortunately, the data is not available to NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit until around 6 weeks following the end of the month. This enables the data management teams to cleanse/process the information before its available to report on. However, the Q1 data has been provided.
ASC 03	Proportion of Older People (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital ASCOF 2D – (Formerly ASCOF 2B)	84% 23/24	85%	96.4%		NA	This measure replaces the previous measure which included discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services. Therefore no comparison can be made to previous quarters.

Appendix 2: Progress against performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
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Adults with Learning and/or Physical Disabilities:

ASC 04	Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within 7 working days (VI/DRC/HMS)	96%	97%	97.5%	NA	NA	This figure is for HMS equipment only so does not represent a true figure for Q2 and is not comparable with the same period last year. This is due to changes in our reporting system we are unable to provide VI or DRC data at present.
ASC 06	Proportion of people in receipt of DP ASCOF 3D (Formerly ASCOF 1C – people in receipt of long term support. Part 2. DP)	47.6	45%	41%	NA	NA	This ASCOF measure is new and reports on all people who receive a direct payment. No comparison can be made to previous quarters.
ASC 07	NEW The proportion of people who receive long-term support who live in their own home or with their family ASCOF 2E (Formerly ASCOF 1G)	NA	89%	82%		NA	This ASCOF measure is new and reports on all people who receive long-term support who live in their own home or with family. It replaces the previous ASCOF 1G measure which reported on the proportion of learning disability people with long-term support who live in their own home or with their family. No comparison can be made to previous quarters.



Homelessness:

Q2 – 2024/25 / ADULTS Directorate / Adult Social Care / QMR





Appendix 2: Progress against performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
ASC 09	Homeless presentations made to the Local Authority for assistance In accordance with Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Relief Prevention Homeless Advice Triage	756 290 163 121 201	3500	872 254 257 88 192 141			There continues to be an increase in homelessness nationally. Halton has seen a gradual increase in family presentations, due to no fault S21 notice seeking possessions, placing additional pressure upon temporary accommodation providers. The main emphasis is placed upon prevention, and many clients are prevented from homelessness, with officers fully utilising the prevention service incentives to support clients to secure suitable accommodation across both social and private rented sectors.
ASC 10	LA Accepted a statutory duty to homeless households in accordance with homelessness Act 2002	121	800	48			There has been an increase in the homelessness acceptance duty. This is partly due to the increase in no fault eviction notices and affordability, whereby, the rents charged are far greater than the awarded local housing allowance.

Appendix 2: Progress against performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
ASC 11	Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation Hostel Bed & Breakfast / Hotels	148 38 30 Singles 8 Families	800	151 109 singles 40 Families 0 Singles 2 Families		N/A	Due to the increase in homelessness this has placed additional pressure upon temporary accommodation providers, with concreted efforts by all officers to support clients with the move on process. For this quarter, we have seen a gradual decrease in hotel usage. However, the LA is still reliant upon hotel use, but has implemented a robust transition plan to ensure clients placed out of area are transferred back to commissioned services as quickly as possible. There continues to be an ongoing review of temporary accommodation to ensure that provision is available to meet the ongoing demand.
Safeguarding:							
	NEW The proportion of section 42 safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified and the reported outcome was that	NA	NA	Risk reduced 55.4%		NA	This is a new measure for 2024/25. We will continue to monitor this new measure to inform future performance.

Appendix 2: Progress against performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
	this risk was reduced or removed (ASCOF 4b)			Risk removed 29%			
ASC 12	Percentage of individuals involved in Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiries	34%	30%	39%			Current figures have exceeded last year's actual figures and look to improve further over the course of the year.
ASC 13	Percentage of existing HBC Adult Social Care staff that have received Adult Safeguarding Training, including e-learning, in the last 3-years (Previously PA6 [13/14] change denominator to front line staff only.	76%	85%	77%			Figures have already out performed last year's actual figures
Carers:							
ASC 15	Proportion of Carers in receipt of Direct payment	99%	99%	98.9%	NA	NA	This measure replaces carers in receipt of self-directed support. There is no comparison to previous quarters.
<p>Adult Social Care and Carer Survey measures are reported annually for service users and bi-annually for carers – these measures will be included in the Q4 2024/25 report or following publication of the NHS Digital Reporting. Further information can be found here</p>							

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COMMUNITY CARE**Revenue Budget as at 30TH September 2024**

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Residential & Nursing	13,372	6,302	7,279	(977)	(1,345)
Domiciliary Care & Supported living	12,890	5,867	5,846	21	46
Direct Payments	14,125	7,389	8,035	(646)	(1,155)
Day Care	648	389	274	115	7
Total Expenditure	41,035	19,947	21,434	(1,487)	(2,447)
Income					
Residential & Nursing Income	-13,182	-5,842	-5,849	7	6
Community Care Income	-2,270	-1,043	-1,048	5	11
Direct Payments Income	-1,014	-435	-441	6	8
Income from other CCGs	-135	-34	-34	0	0
Market sustainability & Improvement Grant	-2,796	-1,398	-1,398	0	0
Adult Social Care Support Grant	-5,167	-2,583	-2,583	0	0
War Pension Disregard Grant	-67	0	0	0	(11)
Total Income	-24,631	-11,335	-11,353	18	14
Net Operational Expenditure	16,404	8,612	10,081	(1,469)	(2,433)

Comments on the above figures:

The Community Care budget has been realigned since the last report to reflect more closely services commissioned.

At the end of September 2024 expenditure on Community Care services is over budget profile by £1.4m. It is anticipated that at the end of the financial year it will be overspent by £2.4m. This is an increase of £0.3m from the previous position reported at the end of July.

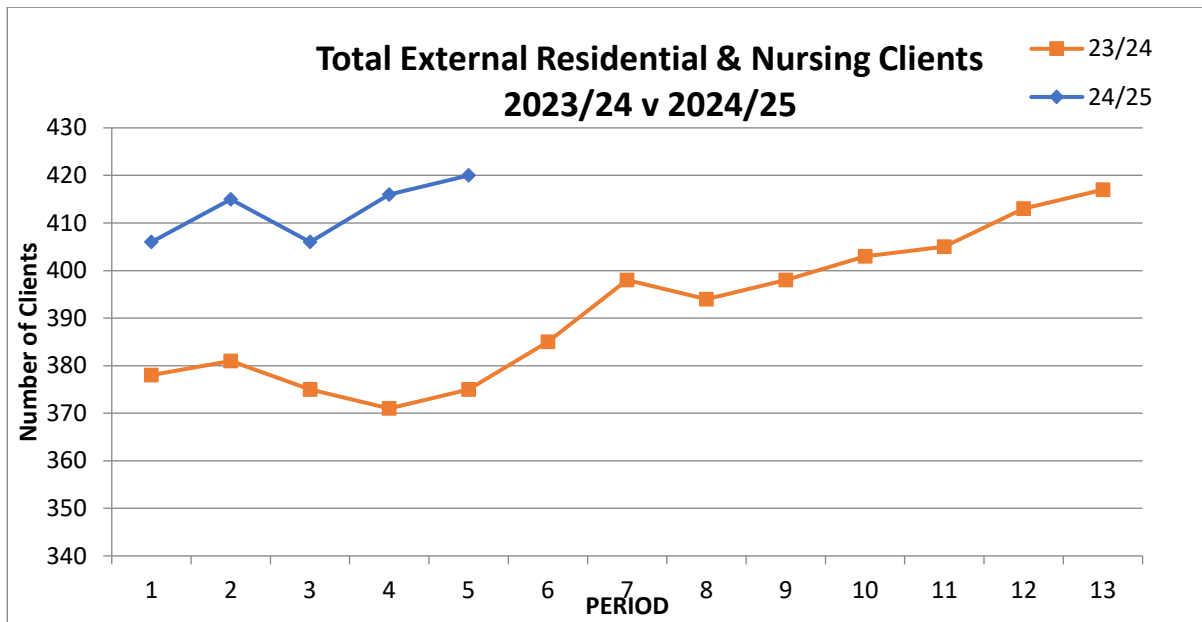
Further analysis of individual service budgets is provided below. Note service demand referred to in the report is based on the most up to date information as at the end of August 2024.

Residential & Nursing Care

There are currently 420 residents in permanent external residential/nursing care as at the end of August 2024 compared to 406 in April, an increase of 3.4%. Compared to the 2023/24 average of 390 this is an increase of 7.6%. The average cost of a package of care since April has increased from £866 to £881 a slight increase of 1.7%. Based on this average cost the 4 additional service users from July to August will cost approximately £0.127m to year end. In addition to these placements there are 94 residents placed within council internal care homes.

The graph below illustrates the demand for permanent placements.

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There are 25 external packages which charge a top up currently costing £2,592.14 per week which equates to £0.135m per annum.

Extra 1 to 1 hours in external care homes currently cost £13,379 per week and the forecast to year end for this is circa £0.422m. This is for 14 individuals to date. Last year 20 individuals received 1 to 1 care at a cost of £0.255m. This suggests that either people are receiving more hours, or the rate is higher than last year.

The table below shows the number of Permanent external packages over £1,000 per week.

Weekly Cost £	No of Permanent PoCs				
	PERIOD1	PERIOD2	PERIOD3	PERIOD4	PERIOD5
1000-1999	52	53	53	53	54
2000-2999	18	18	16	17	17
3000-3999	5	5	5	5	5
4000-4999	7	8	8	8	9
5000-5999	3	2	2	2	3
6000-6999	1	2	1	2	2
7000-7999		1	1	1	1
>10,000	1	1	1	1	1
Total	87	90	87	89	92
Over £1,000 Out of Borough	60	62	60	62	63
Over £1,000 Joint Funded	41	43	42	43	46

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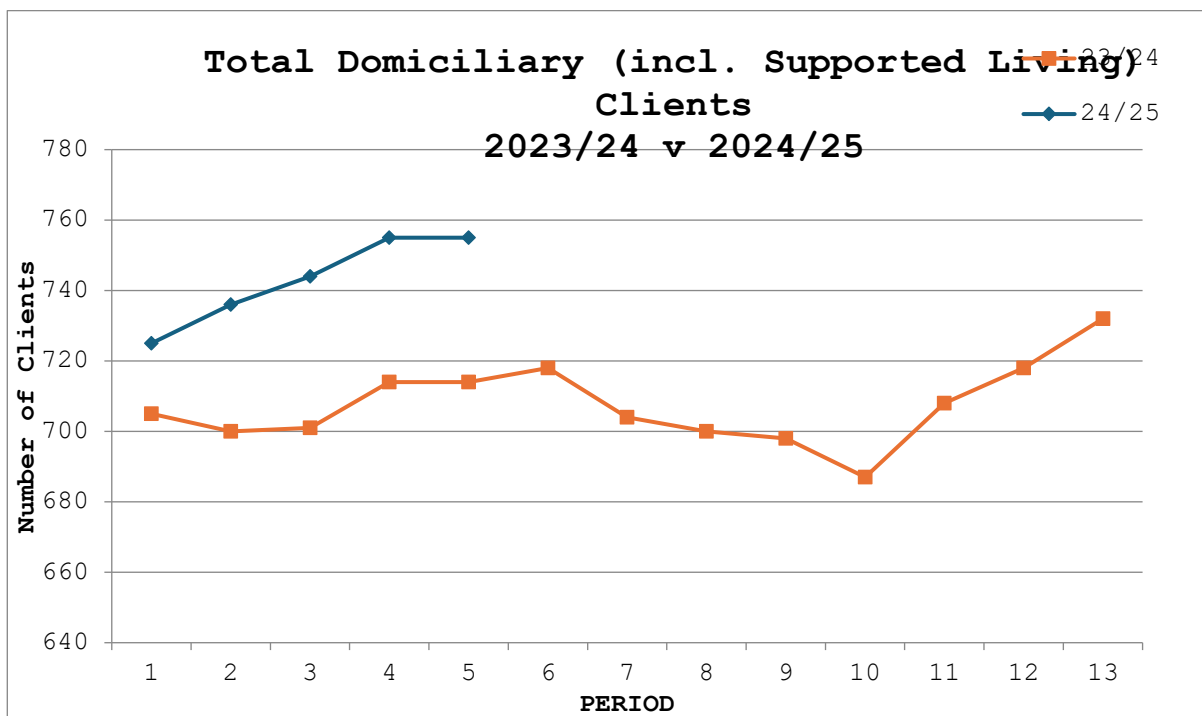
Between Period 4 and 5 the number of permanent packages over £1000 has increased by 3 at a cost of £6382.89 per week, circa £0.191m to year end.

Of the current 92 permanent placements 63 are out of borough and 46 are joint funded.

Domiciliary Care & Supported Living

There are currently 755 service users receiving a package of care at home compared to 744 in June, a slight increase of 1.5%. However, the average number of service users during 2023/24 was only 707, an increase of 6.7% which demonstrates demand for the service has increased this financial year.

The graph below illustrates the demand for the service from April 2023 to date.



However, the average cost of a package of care is currently £433.89 compared with £490.65 in April, a decrease of 11.5% which is helping to achieve a balanced budget for the service.

Direct Payments

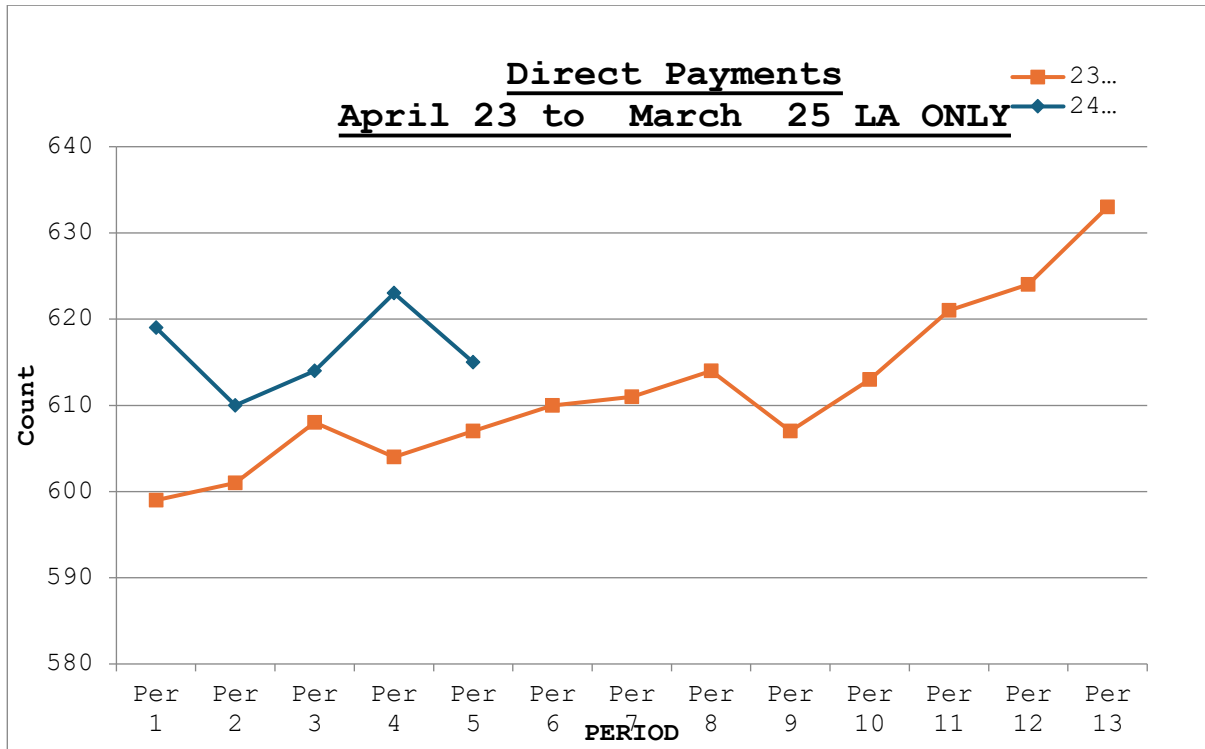
In August 615 clients received a Direct Payment (DP) compared with 619 in April a very slight decrease of 0.64%. However the average number of DP's in 2023/24 was 591, therefore there has been an increase of 4.06% on last year's average.

The average cost of a package of care has decreased since April from £529.04 to £455.65 in August, a reduction of 13.7%.

Currently there are 193 service users receiving a DP to pay care providers that have an hourly rate higher than the Council's domiciliary contracted rate of £21.18. This is an increase from period 4 of 32 clients and a financial increase of £5,860 per week (£0.152m to year end if this continues). This appears to be a trend and is exerting additional pressure on the budget.

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The forecast position for Direct Payments assumes an amount of £1.4m will be recovered from users following an audit to seek assurance the DP is spent in line with their care and support needs. Variations to the amount recovered will directly affect the forecast.



The Community Care budget as a whole is very volatile by nature as it is demand driven, with many influential factors such as the ageing population, deprivation within the borough and also links to the health care sector.

It will continue to be closely monitored and scrutinised throughout the rest of the financial year to quantify pressures on the financial performance. The Community Care budget recovery group continues to meet to identify savings to try to mitigate the risk of further overspend against this budget. So far, they have realised savings to the tune of £1.2m.

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Care Homes Division**Revenue Budget as at 30th September 2024**

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
<u>Madeline Mckenna</u>					
Employees	698	349	316	33	35
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	70	(70)	(152)
Other Premises	101	38	39	(1)	(3)
Supplies & Services	20	8	12	(4)	(2)
Food Provison	48	20	24	(4)	(1)
Total Madeline Mckenna Expenditure	867	415	461	(46)	(123)
<u>Millbrow</u>					
Employees	2,056	1,028	618	410	679
Agency - covering vacancies	3	3	458	(455)	(950)
Other Premises	129	51	70	(19)	(38)
Supplies & Services	61	27	49	(22)	(25)
Food Provison	78	33	39	(6)	1
Total Millbrow Expenditure	2,327	1,142	1,234	(92)	(333)
<u>St Luke's</u>					
Employees	2,884	1,442	1,012	430	740
Agency - covering vacancies	250	250	696	(446)	(1,023)
Premises	172	73	109	(36)	(67)
Supplies & Services	59	21	47	(26)	(26)
Reimbursement & Grant Income	-104	-104	-104	0	0
Client Income	-44	-44	-44	0	0
Food Provison	120	60	62	(2)	(3)
Total St Luke's Expenditure	3,337	1,698	1,778	(80)	(379)
<u>St Patrick's</u>					
Employees	1,839	919	590	329	566
Agency - covering vacancies	42	42	504	(462)	(1,001)
Other Premises	157	55	64	(9)	(17)
Supplies & Services	64	29	22	7	14
Food Provison	122	50	49	1	2
Reimbursement & Grant Income	-21	-21	-21	0	0
Total St Patrick's Expenditure	2,203	1,074	1,208	(134)	(436)
<u>Care Homes Divison Management</u>					
Employees	362	180	141	39	77
Supplies & Services	0	0	2	(2)	(4)
Care Home Divison Management	362	180	143	37	73
Net Operational Expenditure	9,096	4,509	4,824	(315)	(1,198)
Recharges					
Premises Support	264	88	88	0	0
Transport Support	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	683	228	228	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0	0	0
Net Total Recharges	947	316	316	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	10,043	4,825	5,140	(315)	(1,198)

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.

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The spend to 30th September 2024 across the division is over budget profile by £0.315m. The forecast for the end of 2024/25 financial year is an estimated outturn position of £1.198m over budget. This is assuming the level of agency continues at a similar rate and includes higher spend assumptions later in the financial year due to winter pressures surrounding staffing and utilities.

Comparison to Previous Year Outturn and Period 2 forecasted Outturn

The outturn position for financial year 2023/24 was £1.056m over budget. Based on the estimated outturn position for 2024/25, there is an expectation that the estimated outturn overspend will be £0.142m higher than the last financial year.

The outturn position for Period 4 was £1.290m over budget. Based on the estimated outturn position for Quarter 2, there is an expectation that the estimated outturn overspend will be £0.092m lower than the previous quarter.

Employee expenditure specifically agency spend continues to be a pressure across the care homes, Agency spend will continue to be monitored to ensure the forecast remains in line with spend.

Supporting Information**Employee Related expenditure**

Employee related expenditure is over budget profile at the end of September 2024 by £0.192m with the expected outturn position of employee related expenditure at the end of financial year 2024/25 as £1.029m over budget.

It has been assumed that the pay award offer of £1,290 will be accepted. This has been included within the forecasted outturn. This will result in an over budget spend of £0.188m across the Care Home Division.

Recruitment of staff is a continued pressure across the care homes. There remains a high number of staff vacancies across the care homes. A proactive rolling recruitment exercise is ongoing within the care homes and is supported by HR.

Due to pressures with recruitment and retention in the sector, heavy reliance is being placed on overtime and expensive agency staff to support the care homes. At the end of September 2024 total agency spend across the care homes reached £1.887m, the cost of this has partially been offset by staff vacancies.

Premises Related Expenditure

Premises related expenditure is over budget profile at the end of September 2024 by £0.065m and is forecast as an estimated overspend at the end of the financial year 2024/25 by £0.125m.

Repairs and maintenance continue to be a budget pressure across all the care homes. The recruitment of a facilities manager would help to reduce these costs. Budget for this post has been made available but the recruitment to this position has so far been unsuccessful.

Food Related Expenditure

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Food related expenditure is over budget profile at the end of September 2024 by £0.011m and is forecast as an estimated overspend at the end of the financial year 2024/25 by £0.010m.

Approved 2024/25 Savings

There are no approved savings for the care home division in financial year 2024/25

Occupancy Levels

Current occupancy at September stands at 120 residents, which represents 74% of total capacity. This figure has reduced from the 128 residents recorded in April 2024.

Risks/Opportunities

The demand for agency staff within the care homes has been significantly high for several years.

Currently agency staff are being used for a variety of different reasons, to cover vacant posts, maternity leave and sickness absence.

The forecasts for agency staff are continuously reviewed to account for fluctuations in demand, however, the difficulty in the recruitment of new staff and the inability to retain existing staff has resulted in continued reliance on agency staff. The expectation is that the use for agency staff will be an ongoing issue. The care homes and the transformation team are working actively to look at options to reduce the reliance on agency staff.

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COMPLEX CARE POOL BUDGET**Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Intermediate Care Services	5,220	2,109	2,226	(117)	(233)
Oakmeadow	1,831	884	921	(37)	(74)
Community Home Care First	2,111	818	649	169	338
Joint Equipment Store	871	276	276	0	0
Development Fund	582	66	0	66	133
Contracts & SLA's	3,243	98	98	0	0
Inglenook	127	55	41	14	28
HICafs	3,703	1,210	1,066	144	289
Carers Breaks	494	225	156	69	138
Carers centre	371	0	0	0	0
Residential Care	7,225	3,629	3,629	0	0
Domiciliary Care & Supported Living	4,227	2,113	2,113	0	0
Total Expenditure	30,005	11,483	11,175	308	619
Income					
BCF	-13,484	-6,742	-6,742	0	0
CCG Contribution to Pool	-2,865	-1,432	-1,432	0	0
Oakmeadow Income	-19	-16	-13	(3)	(4)
ASC Discharge Grant Income	-1,631	-816	-816	0	0
ICB Discharge Grant Income	-1,282	-1,282	-1,282	0	0
Other Income	-20	0	0	0	0
Total Income	-19,301	-10,288	-10,285	(3)	(4)
ICB Contribution Share of Surplus				0	(307)
Net Operational Expenditure	10,704	1,195	890	305	308

Comments on the above figures:

The financial performance as at 30th September 2024 shows the Complex Care Pool Budget is £0.305m under budget profile as this point of the financial year.

Intermediate Care Services are currently over budget to date predominantly due to the use of agency staff within the reablement team. This overspend is in contrast to the previous financial year which was underspent, and is the result of higher staffing costs and the absence of the Local Authority Urgent and Emergency Care (LAUEC) Grant this year.

Spend is over budget at this point in the year on Oakmeadow due to increased costs in utilities, food, supplies & services and the use of agency staff. The majority of vacant posts have now been recruited to, but a few remain and agency staff are required to cover staff

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sickness. This agency spend is currently being investigated by the service in order to ascertain as to whether it can be reduced in year.

The underspend on HICafs relates to the reduction in value of the Bridgewater contract due to the non-recruitment of two Pharmacy posts. This is offset by an overspend on staffing caused by unbudgeted spend on agency staff.

The underspend on Community Home Care First is due to agency costs being lower than expected at the start of the financial year, with current indications that this may continue throughout the financial year.

Expenditure on Inglenook is less than anticipated as although there are two clients using the service, one is now funded by Continuing Health Care which has reduced the pressure on this budget.

Expenditure on Carer's Breaks is £0.069m less than anticipated for the year to date, with a forecast outturn of £138m under budget as demand for services is still lower than pre-pandemic levels.

Based on current intelligence, the forecast outturn for year end is £0.615m under budget, however the year-end position will result in a balanced budget for the pool with any unallocated funds in year being split with the ICB in accordance with the terms of the pool budget to fund those services under extreme pressure – namely the Health & Community Care budget. This budget has historically always overspent due to limited resources and often relies on the pool budget underspend to offset pressures. It is important to note however, that it is not guaranteed that the Pool will always have the resources to contribute towards these underspends in the future.

Pooled Budget Capital Projects as at 30th September 2024

	2024-25 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation To Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Disabled Facilities Grant	1050	525	580	470
Stair lifts (Adaptations Initiative)	200	100	89	111
RSL Adaptations (Joint Funding)	150	75	77	73
Telehealthcare Digital Switchover	135	70	60	75
Oakmeadow & Peelhouse	40	0	0	40
Network Improvements				
Miadekine McKenna Refurb	100	50	82	18
Millbrow Refurb	50	25	34	16
St Luke's Care Home	50	25	24	26
St Patrick's Care Home	50	25	30	20
Total	1,825	895	976	849

Comments on the above figures:

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Allocations for Disabled Facilities Grants/Stair Lifts and RSL adaptations are consistent with 2023/24 spend and budget, and expenditure across the 3 headings is projected to be within budget overall for the financial year.

The £400,000 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 switch off of existing copper cable based systems. Procurement commenced in 2022/23 with an initial purchase to the value of £100,000. It is anticipated that the scheme will be completed in the current financial year, fully funded from the residual capital allocation of £135,000.

On 16th 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. Spend to 31 March 2024 amounted to £947,000, leaving available funding of £3.253M at the start of the current financial year.

Executive Board have approved an additional £2M capital allocation in respect of energy efficiency initiatives. At present, detailed costing proposals are in development, with further revisions to the capital allocations to be submitted to Executive Board later in the year.

Initial 2024-25 capital allocations against each home currently therefore reflect just anticipated minor refurbishment costs.

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ADULT SOCIAL CARE**Revenue Operational Budget as at 30th September 2024**

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	17,543	8,776	8,249	527	1,060
Agency- Covering Vacancies	0	0	580	(580)	(1,160)
Premises	481	263	247	16	0
Supplies & Services	511	297	319	(22)	(45)
Aids & Adaptations	37	18	21	(3)	0
Transport	242	120	152	(32)	(60)
Food & Drink Provisions	214	107	89	18	30
Supported Accommodation and Services	1,385	652	608	44	90
Emergency Duty Team	115	0	0	0	0
Transfer To Reserves	282	0	0	0	0
Capital Financing	13	0	0	0	0
Contracts & SLAs	1,090	537	534	3	0
Housing Solutions Grant Funded Schemes					
Homelessness Prevention	471	148	130	18	0
Rough Sleepers Initiative	167	48	49	(1)	0
Trailblazer	100	50	43	7	0
Total Expenditure	22,651	11,016	11,021	(5)	(85)
Income					
Fees & Charges	-873	-430	-393	(37)	(70)
Sales & Rents Income	-480	-311	-317	6	10
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-2,208	-658	-635	(23)	0
Capital Salaries	-121	-61	-61	0	0
Housing Schemes Income	-631	-626	-625	(1)	0
Total Income	-4,313	-2,086	-2,031	(55)	(60)
Net Operational Expenditure	18,338	8,930	8,990	(60)	(145)
Recharges					
Premises Support	529	264	264	0	0
Transport Support	581	291	400	(109)	(190)
Central Support	3,465	1,732	1,732	0	0
Asset Rental Support	13	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-112	-55	-55	0	0
Net Total Recharges	4,476	2,232	2,341	(109)	(190)
Net Departmental Expenditure	22,814	11,162	11,331	(169)	(335)

Comments on the above figures

Net Department Expenditure, excluding the Community Care and Care Homes divisions, is currently £0.169m above budget profile at the end of the second quarter of the financial year.

Current Expenditure projections indicate an overspend for the full financial year in the region of £0.335m

Employee costs, including agency, are currently £53,000 above budget profile. Spend projections are based on the current pay offer, costed on a full-year basis. This results in a projected full-year

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cost above current budget of £100,000. This relates to unbudgeted agency costs in respect of covering vacant posts, particularly in terms of front-line Care Management and Mental Health Team posts.

Agency expenditure across the department as a whole at the end of September 2024 stood at £0.580m, with a full-year spend of £1.160m projected. This compares with a spend for April to September 2023 of £0.404m, and a full-year spend for last financial year of £0.928m.

The projected £0.045m full-year spend above budget in respect of supplies and services relates to an increased volume of caseload in respect of Deprivation Of Liberty Standards (DoLs) assessments.

Transport and transport recharge costs were substantially above budget in the previous financial year. A review of costs, and apportionment of recharged costs between Children's and Adults Services is ongoing. Current projections imply a full-year spend above budget of £0.060m in respect of direct transport costs, and £0.190m in respect of internally recharged costs.

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







Income for the Department as a whole is broadly to budget for the year, although there is a projected full-year under-achievement of £0.070m in respect of transport income charged to service users.

It is currently projected that Departmental spend will be £0.335m overspent at the end of the financial year, as a result of the above factors.

Whilst some of the 2024/25 approved savings have been achieved, work is still ongoing on a number of items. The above projections account for the currently projected delayed or partially achieved items.

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Progress Against Agreed Savings Adult Social Care

	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
ASC1	Housing Solutions	474	Remodel the current service based on good practice evidence from other areas.	0	125		Anticipated to be achieved, currently under review.
ASC2	Telehealthcare	680	Explore alternative funding streams such as Health funding or Disabled Facilities Grants.	170	0		Currently Under Review
			Increase charges / review income.	170	0		Charges were increased by 40% w.e.f. April 2024, so this should be achieved
			Cease the key safe installation service.	15	0		Service still being provided
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.	0	0		Saving implemented
			Merge the service with the Safeguarding Unit.	50	0		

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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.	58	0	U	Service currently still provided in-house, although a balanced budget will be attained for 2024/25 as a result of current temporary savings, and work is ongoing to ensure the 2025/6 structure can achieve the permanent savings target
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.	200	100	✓	Anticipated to be achieved
ASC4	Positive Behaviour Support Service	349	Increase income generated in order to ensure full cost recovery, through increased service contract charges to other councils.	100	0	✓	Contracts being re-costed on renewal, saving anticipated to be achieved
				150	0	U	ICB funding not secured, although a balanced budget will be attained for 2024/25 as a result of current temporary savings, and work is ongoing to ensure the 2025/6 structure can

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			Review the Integrated Care Board contribution for Adults, to ensure the full recovery of related costs.				achieve the permanent savings target
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 provide this function.	424	0	✓	Costs now recharged to the ICB
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.	500	1,000	u	Under Review
Total Adult Social Care Department				1,837	1,225		




Appendix 4 Explanation of Symbols

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</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

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

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

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	12 th December 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director – Children’s Services
PORTFOLIO:	Children and Young People
SUBJECT:	High Needs Provision Capital Allocations – Proposed Expansion of Special Educational Needs & Disability Provision: Statutory Consultation feedback – Key Decision
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the responses received during the representation period for the statutory consultation to expand the number of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) places available at Ashley School in Widnes, to meet need for children and young people with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), taking the total number of places available at the school site from 112 to 152.
- 1.2 The report also requests the Executive Board’s approval to use any remaining balance from within the High Needs Provision Capital Funding to support further expansion of SEND provision within Halton, in discussion with relevant schools/educational settings as appropriate to meet identified SEND need.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- 1. the Board approves the expansion of Ashley School in Widnes for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder to become a 152 place school through the provision of four additional classrooms (subject to planning permission).**
- 2. The Board approves the use of any remaining balance from within the High Needs Provision Capital funding to support further expansion of SEND provision within Halton.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the Executive Board meeting on the 12th September 2024 it was agreed that a statutory consultation could be undertaken on a proposal to increase the SEND provision at Ashley School in

Widnes, taking the total number of places available for age 11-19 students at the School from 112 to 152, through a proposal to build four additional classrooms at the school.

- 3.2 A statutory notice was published on 23rd September 2024 with a four week consultation period which closed on 21st October 2024. The consultation was advertised in the local newspaper, on the Council's website, as well as available to view on the Council's Local Offer for SEND. It was also distributed to schools and educational settings, along with the link to the feedback form. Copies were shared with parents, staff and governors of the school, trade unions, neighbouring authorities, Diocesan authorities, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, parent carer representatives, local MP's and local Elected Members. All respondents were given the opportunity to complete the on-line feedback form.
- 3.3 As statutorily required, Local Authority Officers held two meetings at Ashley School on Tuesday 8th October 2024, the first with staff and governors, and the second with parents/carers, to outline the proposals regarding the expansion, and advise attendees on how to respond to the consultation.
- 3.4 At the close of the consultation 12 responses were received. Of the responses received, 8 agreed to the proposal and 4 disagreed – please see Appendix A detailing the responses received together with the Council's response to the 4 comments made disagreeing with the proposal. On the basis that the majority of the small number of total responses received were in support of the proposal, the School and the Local Authority would wish to progress with the expansion.
- 3.5 It is likely there will be a balance remaining within the High Needs Provision Capital funding should approval be given by the Board to the expansion at Ashley School. Officers have been in discussion with a number of other schools in Halton, to determine a priority of need to meet further demand for additional SEND places in borough, and would wish to prioritise and then progress with those smaller scale capital projects, subject to available funding, so that the Local Authority fully utilises the funding provided.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The consultation on proposals to expand existing provision, which if supported, would lead to a proposed programme of expansion/capital works, that would ensure that the Council can continue to offer and expand its in-borough special educational needs provision wherever possible, will help to reduce expensive out-borough placement and associated transport costs, thereby supporting priorities within Halton's SEND Strategy and SEND Sufficiency Strategy, and meet need more locally within Halton.

- 4.2 The Council has a duty under the Department for Education and Department for Health's "Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years" (2015) to support high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, with a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning. Through the offer of more localised specialist provision, the local authority can further build on its existing provision and continue to demonstrate the fulfilment of its duties in accordance with the code.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Any capital works proposed will be funded from the High Need Provision Capital Allocation Grant allocated to the Council by the Department for Education.

- 5.2 Should the initial overall value of the project proposed exceed the amount of capital funding available, then the project will be value engineered to be met within budget. This has already been discussed with the school.

- 5.3 By investing in additional SEND provision in-borough the Council will reduce its High Needs expenditure, which is currently funded through the High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, a significant amount of which is currently spent on out of borough provision. It is important that preventative action is taken now to help reduce financial costs to the Council in the future, and by retaining Halton resident pupils at local provision, this will help drive down placement and travel costs for the Council longer term.

- 5.4 Circa £1.8M has been set aside for any proposed capital works at Ashley School (based on an initial feasibility study), but these costs are subject to procurement processes and will be value engineered in agreement with the school to meet the capital funding available.

- 5.5 Any remaining balance will be used to support further (smaller) capital projects at Halton's schools to enhance SEND provision.

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

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

The proposal to expand Ashley School ensures that those children and young people with additional needs, whose needs can be met by the school are, in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice, helped in receiving successful preparation for adulthood, which includes preparation for independent living and employment.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Providing additional places at Ashley School will expand the offer in Halton of high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, evidences Halton's commitment to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person. It also helps them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood, as set out in the Department for Education and Department of Health SEND Code of Practice.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

By expanding existing provision at Ashley School, it is intended that more Halton resident pupils will have access to local specialist provision, and will therefore remain within the community, rather than having to attend out-borough specialist provision.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The demand for specialist support for children and young people with SEND is increasing. By continuing to expand existing provision, and creating additional places, children and young people can receive the support they need within the borough which in turn will help to reduce expenditure within the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

7.2 The Council has been allocated this funding from the Department for Education, as they also recognised a need for additional specialist places and provision in Halton, and through the proposed expansion of Ashley School, the Council will be able to demonstrate expenditure against need.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The High Needs Provision Capital Allocation provides capital funding to deliver new places, supporting learning in specialist

provision and allows Halton resident pupils to be educated in-borough where possible. The Equality Act 2010 is continually referenced throughout the SEND Code of Practice and ensures that Local Authorities and schools fulfil their obligations in this regard.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Through the introduction of additional local provision, there will be a reduction in the number of children and young people needing out of borough provision, which in turn will help reduce fuel costs/emissions. Any new build undertaken, would comply with the latest legislation and guidance and support energy efficiency in new buildings.

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

10.1 The Council is required to demonstrate appropriate identification of need against spend from the High Needs Capital Allocation Grant.

10.2 To deliver and implement the High Needs Provision Capital Funding programme.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

None.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

It is intended that the additional provision, if approved, could be offered from September 2026.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Department for Education High Needs Provision Capital Allocations guidance (March 2024).	Children’s Services Directorate	Martin West
Department for Education Making significant changes (‘Prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools” January 2023 guidance.	Children’s Services Directorate	Martin West

Department for Education and Department for Health's "Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years" (2015)	Children's Services Directorate	Martin West
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Ashley School consultation feedback summary

Do you agree or disagree to the proposal to increase the ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) provision at Ashley School in Widnes from 112 to 152 places?

Agree	8
Disagree	4
Total	12

Respondents	Number of responses
parent / carer of a pupil at Ashley School	7
parent / carer of a pupil with an ASD diagnosis and Staff member	2
parent / carer of a pupil with an ASD diagnosis	0
School Governor	0
Staff Member	0
Health Sector	0
Trade Union	0
Other (Hopeful future parent of a child at Ashley school)	1
Other (Parent of a child on ASD pathway)	1
Other (Councillor)	1
	12

With regard to the four who disagreed to the proposal, one disagreed with no reason given, the remaining three responders who disagreed provided reasons for disagreeing and their reasons, together with the Council's response, is detailed below:

Reasons for disagreement with proposal	Council Response to comments made
The reason the school works so well is because it's so small	Both the school and the LA's intention is to ensure that class sizes remain appropriate and in line with recommendations. The School are fully supportive of the proposal.
The School is fantastic and caters for all the children's needs. I think additional children and staff might make things harder to achieve the children's needs. The reason it works so well is because it's a small school.	As above.
My child is in their final year of school at Ashley, what has worked well for him and many other children who have gone there are the small class sizes, these small sizes allow the children to have their needs met and them to learn in a less chaotic environment. I appreciate that there is an absolute need for these spaces but over crowding schools is not the answers. There are now 3 specialist schools in Widnes that are for high school students, would the 64 places that	As above, both the school and the LA's intention is for class sizes to remain appropriate and in line with recommendations. With regard to reference to the RAISE Academy, this school offers different SEND provision, so would not currently be suitable for ASD pupils. In terms of early years the Council has already undertaken significant financial investment in an expansion of Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 Resource Base provision, and

<p>the raise Academy provide these additional spaces instead of adding extra pressure on to a school that has run extremely well for many years. Maybe if the council invested more in the early years our children may flourish sooner and potentially more could enter mainstream settings as they have been given the tools to succeed. As I parents who has 3 children with additional needs and 2 of which attend specialist schools, I appreciate and understand the need for these places which there is for children in our borough, maybe if the local authorities didn't allocate places for so many children out of area it would less the need. The only way this could possibly work is if the school was given a new larger site and more staff, but the potential impact that could have on the children who already attend the school could be very distressing.</p>	<p>should further capital funding become available from the Department for Education, it would be happy to explore this further. A key driver behind the proposal to expand Ashley School is to retain Halton resident pupils in local provision.</p>
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Where responders agreed with the proposal, two provided no comments and simply agreed, the remaining six responders who agreed to the proposals provided the following comments:

Reasons for agreement to proposals
<p>The major issue with Ashley is that currently does not offer its pupils the opportunity to reach their full potential as they do not allow pupils to carry out GCSE'S. This would need to be rectified, so that SEND Children who attend when they are able to do so can be given the opportunity. Parents are having to choose between their children getting an education or having their SEND needs met.</p>
<p>I understand that all children might not be capable of doing GCSES and in these circumstances they should be given opportunities to get alternative qualifications and/or prepare for adulthood. However there are currently children in Ashley who are academically capable of doing GCSSE but they are being denied their right to an equal education.</p>
<p>Therefore, moving forward if more places are going to be allocated at Ashley, then there has to be GCSE classes available for those who can and need these to be able to get jobs or go into further education.</p>
<p>I would like to raise these concerns for the council to look into its provision of places for children with SEND who need to be placed in SEND high schools but being able to do GCSE'S Etc.</p>
<p>Council comment: Whilst this responder agreed with the proposal to expand Ashley School, the comment regarding GCSE provision is noted. It is for the school to determine the curriculum it delivers, but this response comment will be shared with the school.</p>
<p>This school is amazing in both supporting and learning. It is very difficult for parents/carers with children who have Autism to find a school</p>

that is capable of giving children the safe space they need to learn. Increasing spaces available for children to be able to find a suitable setting will make a huge impact on SEND children who need the extra support both physically and mentally.

Ashley school can do this and has proven it.

Our community needs more schools like Ashley to come forward and put the effort in to make our children the best they can be.

Not enough provisions in Halton for children needing specialist schooling.

There are not enough places across Halton for the amount of children/young people with ASD and they are left without any adequate support. These additional numbers/classrooms are urgently needed so that more children/young people can thrive and not just survive.

I agree the proposed most desirable expansion

The area desperately needs these extra places! There are so many children that are in an educational setting that they really shouldn't be in, or are being homeschooled and some not attending any school as there is just nowhere for them to go where they can learn and grown in their own unique way!

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	12 th December 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Director of Public Health
PORTFOLIO:	Health and Wellbeing
SUBJECT:	Healthier Food and Drink Advertising Policy
WARD(S)	Borough Wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report focuses on the opportunity to implement a healthy food and drink advertising policy to ensure unhealthy products are replaced by healthier alternatives on local authority advertising spaces. This report outlines what the policy will look like, background across the region to this policy and how the policy will help us prioritise our residents health and tackle health inequalities

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the board agrees to the proposed policy and the benefits of its implementation

RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Implementation of a Healthy advertising policy will support Halton Borough Council meet multiple priorities including:

- a) Reducing health inequalities in Halton and inequalities between Halton wards.
- b) Improved health outcomes and a subsequent reduction in the cost of treating obesity-related illness.

Reduction in childhood overweight and obesity rates.

3.2 Obesity directly costs the NHS £6.5 billion a year and is the second biggest preventable cause of cancer. A research study by Frontier Economics estimates the wider social cost of obesity is £58bn a year when taking into account its impact on additional health costs such as mental health and costs to society through a loss of productivity and demand for social care. With rates of obesity higher in more deprived areas such as Halton the cost will disproportionately place strain on our services. 78% of Adults in Halton are overweight or obese compared to 64% nationally.

- 3.3 Adverts often promote high fat, salt and sugar food and drink as part of a normal diet, with marketing frequently targeted at young people and associated with fun cartoon characters or toy collections, specifically aimed at children. By the time children reach reception age (4-5) in Halton 14% are obese compared to 9.2% nationally. This rises to 26% by the time they finish primary school again exceeding the national average of 22.7%.
- 3.4 Furthermore, obesity rates are much higher in areas with higher rates of deprivation with the discrepancy rising substantially since 2014. Individuals living in areas with the highest rate of deprivation are twice as likely to be admitted to hospital with obesity-related health problems than the average. 48.7% of Halton's population live in the top 20% most deprived areas in England, with 1 in 5 children living in relative low income households. These areas have greater exposure to adverts in general, for example, on bus shelters telephone boxes or billboards, as well as direct marketing placement decisions for this cheap, energy dense 'family-friendly' food. This all contributes to increasing the size of health inequalities in the Borough, with life expectancy in the most deprived ward in Halton 13.7 years worse for men and 9.3 years worse for women compared to the least deprived ward.
- 3.5 Carrying excess weight, particularly to the level of obesity, diminishes almost every other aspect of health from respiratory functions to memory. Obesity increases the risk of wider illnesses including diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers increasing costs for the system. More importantly than adding costs to the system, obesity decreases both the length and quality of life for the individual.
- 3.6 The causes of overweight and obesity are complex and often a consequence of multiple variables related to individual biology, eating behaviours and physical activity all set within a social, cultural and environmental landscape. Tackling these causes requires a whole-system approach. Adopting a healthier food and drink advertising policy should be just one part of a wider approach, however, it is one within the gift of the council.
- 3.7 Healthy advertising policies have now been implemented by 20 Boroughs in England with many more in the process of implementing their own. In Cheshire and Merseyside, Knowsley, Sefton, Liverpool, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester have already passed replicable policies, with all other Boroughs in the region working to follow suit. A consistent policy in force across the region opens up possibilities to work collectively to influence advertising on services that cross over boundaries, for example, regional bus services, and provide a clear foundation for private advertising space that wanted to follow similar policies.

3.8 An independent evaluation of Transport for London's policy conducted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine found there has been an estimated 6.7% decrease in average weekly household purchases of energy from high fat, salt and sugar products, and the average weekly purchases of chocolate and sweet confectionery fell by 19.4%. This equates to a 1000 calorie decrease in energy from unhealthy food purchases in Londoners' weekly shopping.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The policy uses the Nutrient Profiling Model to differentiate food and non-alcoholic drinks that are high in fat, salt and sugar and healthier alternatives. The model was created by the Food Standards Agency in 2004-2005 as a tool for Ofcom to tackle unhealthy food and drink advertising on children's TV programming, which at the time made up 80% of all advertising during these shows. As such, the introduction of the standard within our own commercial spaces to safeguard residents continues best practice in place nationally.

4.2 The NP model was subject to rigorous scientific scrutiny, extensive consultation and review. It is supported by the independent Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) and a wide range of nutrition experts. The NP model has been used continuously by Ofcom since April 2007, with technical support for the NP model transferred from the Food Standards Agency to the Department of Health.

4.3 The NP model uses a scoring system based on the nutritional content of 100g of a product. For drinks with nutritional information given in millilitres, the product will be converted to 100g using the appropriate specific gravity (density) of the product. Products are given points based on their energy, sugar, saturated fat, and sodium. This number is subtracted from for fruit, vegetables, nut content, protein and fibre. Foods scoring 4 or more points and drinks scoring 1 or more points are classed as 'less healthy' and would therefore be restricted from advertising.

4.4 As some brands are strongly associated with unhealthy products, for example fast food, all adverts for a food and drink brand must include prominent promotion of a compliant product.

4.5 All adverts where food and drink that are high in fat, salt and sugar are featured are restricted even if they are not the central focus of the adverts or business. For example, an advert for a travel agency that features ice cream would need to amend and remove the ice cream to be compliant.

4.6 The food and advertising industry is familiar with the NPM model

having been in place for 17 years as a nationally recognised standard. It was initially developed as a way to regulate advertising on television during children's TV shows, with 80% of adverts at this time high in fat, salt and sugar. The model was again used in 2022 as the government brought in restrictions on supermarkets selling goods in this category at till displays. Furthermore, the government has announced it will stick to the previous governments plan to extend the restriction on junk food advertising to all paid for TV advertising before 9pm. This will come into force from October 2025 with the NPM again used as the standard to which products will be judged. Research from the Obesity Health Alliance found that 8 out of 10 adults support the government restricting unhealthy food advertising to children on TV (79%) and online (81%).

4.7 The policy is written in such a way that it can be replicated by other local authorities. As noted within Cheshire and Merseyside Knowsley, Sefton, Liverpool, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester have already passed replicable policies. A standardised approach safeguards residents as they travel across neighbouring local authorities, creates a simple unified approach for advertisers to follow in the region, while opening up the possibility for future collective initiatives.

4.8 The four main areas of council advertising space consist of Active Halton, the DCBL stadium, main council website and roundabout advertising. In 2017 the councils communication team, working alongside Public Health, created the current advertising protocol used across the councils advertising estate (Appendix 1). This is a list of items we wouldn't consider for advertising which includes unhealthy food alongside items such as E-cigarettes and gambling. Therefore, introducing a healthy advertising policy wouldn't create major changes to income generation whilst providing a more robust set of guidelines for settings to follow in line with national standards.

5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 **One Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027**

The One Halton Health and Wellbeing strategy is targeted at all stages of the life course as well as a focus on how this is influenced by the wider determinants of health. A healthy advertising policy, and the subsequent effects of a reduction in unhealthy food purchases and consumption, will improve health outcomes across the life course. Furthermore, with overweight and obesity a driver of health inequalities and vice versa, this policy will contribute to tackling the causes and effects of inequality in some of Halton's most deprived communities.

6.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The advertising company is responsible for verifying its products meet the rules including the Nutrient Profiling Model, therefore, no additional administration is required by council officers.

6.2 A healthy food and drink policy was implemented across the entire Transport for London network. No revenue losses were reported as a result of advertisers facing restrictions with advertisers willing to work constructively to produce advertising that adheres to the policy, with many already having to follow the NP model guidelines elsewhere in their advertising campaigns. Furthermore, TFL saw a rise in new advertisers who were more willing to advertise their healthier products with guidelines ensuring these wouldn't be alongside unhealthy alternatives. The implementation of this policy would be subject to review if it impacted significantly on revenue from advertising, although this has not been seen in other areas, and is not anticipated.

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

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

A healthy food and drink advertising policy will ensure unhealthy products are not advertised to residents in Halton. The promotion of unhealthy products not only encourages brand switching within a product category but increases consumption of particular categories of food including fast food and sugary soft drinks.

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

A healthy food and drink reduces the risk to the individual in terms of reduced healthy life expectancy and overall life expectancy from carrying excess weight. This in turn reduces the risk of being unable to work due to ill health costing the local economy by reducing the available workforce.

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

Child obesity in Halton shows a significant rise in overweight and obesity between the ages of 5-11. Childhood obesity is associated with increased morbidity and premature death with those obese as children more likely to be obese as adults compared to those who grow up a healthy weight. Ensuring we tackle obesity at a young age will help us improve life chances for children in Halton and reduce future costs to the system of tackling obesity related illness.

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

The greatest rates of adult obesity are seen in the most deprived parts of the country. An NHS health survey for England showed that

39% of women in the most deprived areas are obese, compared to 22% in the least deprived. Therefore, the effects of junk food consumption disproportionately affect those in Halton living in the most deprived areas

7.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

Unhealthy food has a particularly high amount of carbon emissions associated with its supply chain. Methane emissions from cattle farming, a key requirement for most fast food chains, produce a large amount of greenhouse gases. Producing 3.5 ounces of protein leads to 110 pounds of greenhouse gases being released.

7.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

Locally, individual packaging and the convenience of 'drive through' and 'food on the go' options for foods high in fat, salt and sugar increases the amount of and opportunities for littering. Although no brand is banned from advertising this policy could lead to a modest reduction in these types of purchases.

7.7 **Resilient and Reliable Organisation**

Twenty Boroughs have already passed a similar policy across the country with five of these in the Liverpool City region with all other Boroughs in the region working towards a similar outcome. Furthermore, the recent commitment from national government to expand the advertising ban on unhealthy foods on television shows the continued direction of travel towards restricting these products being advertised. Passing a local healthy advertising policy ensures we remain in line with our regional partners and have a foundation to build on if changes are made nationally in the coming years.

8.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 With the rates of overweight and obesity rising there is great risk from the future costs to the system this poses. Costs of treating obesity related illness to the NHS are increasing year on year and with higher than average rates of overweight and obesity in Halton these costs will disproportionately affect services locally.

9.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 Health inequalities are a significant factor across Halton. Those suffering from poorer health are more likely to live in the more deprived areas of the borough and more likely to be living in poverty. For males and females there is a 13 year gap between life expectancy at birth for those in most deprived ward in Halton, compared to the least deprived ward (Halton Lea vs Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor).

10.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Food and drink with low nutritional value and a big climate impact pose a double threat. These products sacrifice the environment, while also not meeting dietary requirements and encouraging over-consumption. Globally, food contributes roughly 30% of overall greenhouse gas emissions. Beef, palm oil, sugars and cocoa are leading causes of deforestation and extinction and very prominent in high fat, salt and sugar products.

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

11.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

Appendix

Appendix 1- Current Halton Advertising Protocol

The protocol below is currently in use covering the main areas of council advertising space comprising Active Halton, DCBL stadium, banners on the council website and roundabout advertising. It was developed in 2017 between Public Health, Communications Team and Legal.

Advertising Protocol:

We will consider advertising on a case-by-case basis. However, we will not accept advertising from any organisation wishing to promote:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- E-cigarettes
- Medicines; illegal substances; or legal highs
- Gambling
- Weaponry
- Unhealthy foods
- Violence
- Messages of a sexual nature
- Pay-day lending services
- Messages that conflict with our position as an equal and diverse organisation
- Political parties (in accordance with Part 2 of the Local Government Act 1986 ('A local authority shall not publish any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party'))

We will also not accept advertising from any organisation that is in financial or legal dispute with the council, and we will also show caution when accepting advertising or sponsorship where:

- an organisation is in the process of a planning application;
- an organisation who is in the process of a tender application;
- an organisation is in conflict with local residents over a planned development in the borough; and
- association with an organisation may conflict with the work of the council and our partners

Appendix 2 – Draft policy

Healthier Advertising Policy (food and non-alcoholic drink)

Healthier Advertising Policy (food and non-alcoholic drink) guidance

1. Background

- 1.1. Evidence shows that advertisements for unhealthy food and drink products directly and indirectly impact what we eat.¹ Young people who recall seeing junk food adverts every day are more likely to be obese.² Halton Council has high rates of child and adult excess weight and widening health inequalities. In 2021, 78% of adults in Halton were overweight or obese.
- 1.2. There are significant inequalities in child excess weight levels with higher rates reported for children living in disadvantaged households, children with disabilities and children from specific ethnic backgrounds. Both children and adults from lower socio-economic groups are 50% more likely to be exposed to such advertisements for high fat, salt, or sugar (HFSS) foods.³
- 1.3 Transport for London (TfL) and twenty other Local Authorities have introduced an advertising restriction on all food and non-alcoholic drink products that are high in fat, salt and/or sugar (HFSS). This restriction is across all advertising opportunities on the TfL estate and Local Authority owned sites (including bus stops, taxi wraps and stations).

2. General Principles

- 2.1. Consistent with similar advertising policies implemented by Bristol City Council, Barnsley Council, the London Boroughs of Haringey, Southwark, Merton, Greenwich, Tower Hamlets and within the region Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, the UK Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM) has been adopted by Halton Council to identify HFSS products.
- 2.2. The UK Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM) is widely used and has been subject to rigorous scientific scrutiny, extensive stakeholder consultation, and review. Furthermore, the scoring system it uses balances the contribution made by beneficial nutrients that are particularly important in children's⁴ diets with components in the food that children should eat less of. It has therefore been concluded that the NPM model is the best way of identifying food that contributes to child obesity. Such food and drink is not only purchased directly by children but is bought for them by others.
- 2.3. Guidance on how to identify whether a product is considered HFSS under the NPM is available [here](#). All potential advertisers should familiarise themselves with the NPM's technical guidance on how to identify whether a product is considered HFSS under

¹ Critchlow, N. et al. (2020) 'Awareness of marketing for high fat, salt or sugar foods, and the association with higher weekly consumption among adolescents: a rejoinder to the UK government's consultations on marketing regulation'. Accessed via: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32434618/>

² <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-us/cancer-news/press-release/2018-03-15-obesity-risk-doubles-for-teens-bombarded-with-junk-food-adverts>

³ Yau, A. et al. (2021) 'Sociodemographic differences in self-reported exposure to high fat, salt and sugar food and drink advertising: A cross-sectional analysis of 2019 UK panel data', Accessed via: <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/11/4/e048139>

⁴ Child/Children means a person/s below the age of 18. This is in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child's definition: www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text

the NPM. In any case of doubt, it is for the advertiser to show that the featured product is not HFSS.

2.4. Any revisions to the NPM will be reflected in the advertisement decisions made by the council.

2.5. It is the responsibility of advertisers and their agents to verify the status of the products featured using the NPM.

2.6. Halton Council or its representatives may request evidence of nutrition information of food and drink products advertised, and in line with the Food Standards Agency recommendations, Halton Council expects any laboratory used for nutrition analysis to have ISO 17025 accreditation and this should be by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

3. Content featuring only non-HFSS products

3.1. These would normally be approved but would still need to comply with existing principles and procedures relating to any advertising carried by Halton Borough Council.

4. Content featuring only HFSS products

4.1. Where proposed content features only food and/or drink which is rated HFSS, such copy would be rejected.

4.2. It is therefore recommended that, before committing to advertising production agreements, advertisers should discuss their eligibility with the council or its agents.

5. Content where there is a range of food/drink featured, some of which is HFSS

5.1. The advertising or promotion of HFSS products is unacceptable under the policy, so a range or meal could not feature them (e.g. fish, chips and peas could only be advertised if all products were non-HFSS). This would also apply to any meal settings being shown, including those for restaurants, aggregator platforms and delivery services.

5.2. It is the responsibility of advertisers and their agents to verify the status of the products featured using the NPM.

6. Content where no food or drink is featured directly but the advertisement is from or features a food and/or non-alcoholic drink brand

6.1. This may include:

- advertisements where the brand's logo is included but no products, such as a brand values campaign,
- directional signage to a store, app or website,

- promotional advertising which is price-led but features no products such as '50% off everything' or similar,
- advertising about a business or its performance

6.2. Food and drink brands (including food and drink service companies or ordering services) will only be able to place such advertisements if the advertisement promotes healthier options (i.e. non-HFSS products) as the basis of the copy.

6.3. Where advertisers are uncertain about the classification of proposed copy under these guidelines, they should discuss this with the council or its agents.

7. Advertisements where food and drink is shown 'incidentally' i.e. it is not the subject of the advertisement but is included (or implied) by visual or copy

7.1. HFSS products should not be promoted by being featured in advertisements for other products. It is the responsibility of advertisers and their agents to verify the HFSS status of the products featured using the NPM.

7.2. Where a food or drink item is featured incidentally and does not relate to a specific identifiable product which can be assessed for its HFSS status, advertising copy may be rejected by the council or its agents on the basis that the advertisement promotes the consumption of HFSS products.

8. Advertisements where food and drink is referenced in text, through graphical representations or other visual representation

8.1. HFSS products should not be promoted through references in text, graphical images or other visual representations of food and drink. Where a food or drink item is featured in this way and does not relate to a specific identifiable product which can be assessed for its HFSS status, copy may be rejected by the council or its agents on the basis that it promotes the consumption of HFSS products.

9. Indirect promotion of HFSS food and/or drink

9.1. Where a product is non-HFSS but falls within a category covered by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities recommendations for sugar or calorie reduction, the product should always carry a prominent product descriptor to help differentiate it from noncompliant products (e.g. where an advertisement features a non-HFSS pizza or burger, the image should be accompanied by prominent text that names the specific product and retailer).

9.2. Children should not usually be shown in advertisements for products which are compliant in a category which is covered by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities recommendations for sugar or calorie reduction.

10. Portion sizes

10.1 The NPM model is based on nutrients per 100g of a product, rather than recommended portion size. Advertisers should always ensure that they promote products in portion sizes which encourage healthy eating. For products that are non-HFSS but fall within

a category covered by PHE’s recommendations for sugar or calorie reduction, the product should be displayed as a single portion.

10.2If advertisers and/or agencies are unsure about how to interpret this, or any other aspect of these guidelines, they are encouraged to get in touch with the council or its agents and work together on a solution to avoid submitted copy requiring changes or being rejected.

11. Exceptions

There are no standard exceptions to the policy offered on council-owned advertising sites.

12. Alignment Council-wide

Halton Council will consider the potential impact of HFSS advertising when looking at planning applications which include advertising sites. Unhealthy food and drink marketing is an important consideration upon healthy town centres and is therefore considered in planning applications.

Appendix: Guidance for decisions regarding advertising including high fat, salt, or sugar food and non-alcoholic drinks

1. Example Decision Table

The table below, adapted from Barnsley Council’s Advertising policy, outlines examples of a range of advertisements and what the policy outcome would likely be.

Advertisement Content	Outcome	Example(s)	Notes
Only non-HFSS products featured	Approved	An advertisement for fresh fruit and vegetables	Subject to compliance with our overall Advertising Policy.
Only HFSS products featured	Rejected	An advertisement for sweet pastries	
A range of products, some of which are HFSS and some of which are non-HFSS	Rejected	An advertisement for a meal deal that includes a chocolate bar (HFSS) as well as fruit (non-HFSS)	All food/drink items being advertised must be non-HFSS.
No food or drink directly displayed but the advertisement is	Possibly approved – only if healthier options (non-HFSS) are being promoted	A fast-food business advertising only non-HFSS products (approved)	Many brands and their logos have strong HFSS product

from (or features) a food/drink brand		A fast-food business advertising a competition or an affiliation to an event (rejected).	association. Some HFSS products also share the same name as the actual brand name, making it difficult to separate the brand name from the associated product.
Food and drink is shown 'incidentally' i.e., it is not the subject of the advertisement but is included (or implied) by visual or copy	Possibly approved – only if healthy products (non-HFSS) are being displayed	A travel firm advertising holiday offers which happens to contain images of oranges (approved)	If the advertisement can be reasonably considered to promote HFSS products it will be rejected regardless of whether the food is intended focus of the advertisement.
Food and drink is referenced in the text, through graphical representations or other visual representation (not a real product being advertised)	Possibly approved – only if healthy products (non-HFSS) are being promoted	A travel firm advertising holiday offers which happens to contain images of ice creams (rejected)	
Indirect promotion of HFSS food and/or drink	Possibly approved – only if prominent text accompanies the image naming the product and retailer	An advertisement that contains a cartoon image of carrots (accepted)	If the advertisement can be reasonably considered to promote HFSS products it will be rejected regardless of whether the food is an actual product.
		An advertisement that contains a cartoon image of chocolate (rejected)	
Indirect promotion of HFSS food and/or drink	Possibly approved – only if prominent text accompanies the image naming the product and retailer	An advertisement featuring a non-HFSS ice cream that includes prominent text that accompanies the image naming the specific product and retailer (accepted)	A prominent product descriptor helps to differentiate it from non-compliant products. This is necessary where the product falls into a category typically associated with HFSS products (such as ice cream).
		An advertisement featuring a non-HFSS ice cream but with no accompanying explanatory text (rejected)	

<p>Portion sizes</p>	<p>Possibly approved – see Notes column</p>	<p>An advertisement for a non-HFSS 16-inch pizza that displays a portion (e.g., 3 slices) and that also displays clear text naming the product and retailer as per the row above (accepted)</p>	<p>Advertisers should always ensure that they promote products in portion sizes which encourage healthy eating. For products that are non-HFSS but fall within a category covered by OHID’s recommendations for sugar or calorie reduction, the product should be displayed as a single portion.</p>
		<p>An advertisement for a non-HFSS 16-inch pizza that displays an image of the full pizza (rejected)</p>	

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	12 th December 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Payments to Voluntary Organisations - Impact Mitigation Plan
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to set out proposals for how the Council might best support and assist the community and voluntary sector in the future. This follows the Council's decision to reduce the grants it provides to the community and voluntary sector.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board approves the proposals set out in sections 3.3 - 3.12 of the report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 For many years the Council and community and voluntary sector have worked collaboratively to deliver shared priorities and ambitions for our residents, communities and businesses in Halton.
- 3.2 The Council has provided support to the sector in a number of ways including:
- Access to the Council's premises and accommodation, sometimes with below commercial market rents and leases.
 - Providing funding advice and support.
 - Grant management and the administration of grants.
 - Advice on government legislation, including policies and procedures.
 - Support for events.
 - Promoting and facilitating networks and partnerships across a wide range of Council departments.
 - Building in community grant opportunities in regeneration funding programmes for example, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Long Term Town Plans.
 - Advice on setting up a social enterprise, or organisation including developing a constitution and producing business plans.

- Providing of knowledge and experience on respective governance boards (for example, as trustees)
- 3.3 On the one hand, the Council's decision to reduce and remove the grants it provides to the community and voluntary sector is a negative outcome, but on the other hand, this presents a positive opportunity for the Council to take stock, prioritise and reset its relationships within the sector.
- 3.4 It is proposed that any Impact Mitigation Plan should go beyond a short-term focus on the immediate impact of reduced financial resources on the sector but should incorporate a longer-term and coherent strategy which places co-design and co-development of priorities with partners at the forefront of the Council's approach to delivering services in the future.
- 3.5 In recent years Council support has been directed to smaller and grass roots organisations, and with success. However, input at a strategic level has reduced, primarily as a result of reducing capacity within the Council, and the fact that Council managers are taking on responsibility for a much broader range of services. This has resulted in less "think time" being available to allow for strategic conversations with the sector to take place. In the past this would have ensured that maximum value is obtained from long-established relationships between respective partners.
- 3.6 Therefore, it is suggested that there are a number of areas where joint working and sharing of resources, knowledge and experience could be reenergised and subsequently pooled to provide best value to residents, communities and businesses in Halton.
- 3.7 One area where an immediate and positive impact would be felt is if the Council were to clearly designate a lead officer for promoting and coordinating the Council's interface with the community and voluntary sector.
- 3.8 A lead officer would be assigned to work collaboratively with representatives from the sector to develop and agree shared key strategic priorities. In order to do this effectively, the lead officer would need to take into account the agreed actions that were contained in the recent Council Internal Audit Report on Payments to Voluntary Organisations. For example, the report states that "The current commissioning and contract management arrangements will be reviewed, and a commissioning policy and performance management framework will be developed to introduce a consistent Council-wide approach". "...Performance targets for new and existing high-cost contracts will be developed to ensure that the achievement of expected outcomes can be monitored effectively..."

3.9 If a Commissioning Framework were to be developed, There would be merit in aligning it to the principles of Community Wealth Building (CWB) concept. CWB promotes a broader approach to local economic development that aims to build prosperity for everyone and seeks to increase and retain wealth within local economies. Halton and other Liverpool City Region (LCR) Local Authorities have been working with the Combined Authority through CLES to set out some pillars of CWB as follows:

1. Socially productive use of land and property.
2. Making financial power work for local places.
3. Progressive procurement.
4. Fair employment and just labour markets.
5. Plural ownership.

3.10 Further information on the work being progressed in the LCR is contained in the presentation outlined in Appendix 1. It is proposed that, ultimately these pillars could provide headings for workstreams which are translated into actions, milestones and key performance indicators

3.11 It is acknowledged that it will take some time to develop the Commissioning Framework as outlined above.

3.12 There are, however, some short to medium actions that would feed into the Commissioning Framework and which could be explored now, for example:

- Consideration to preparing a portfolio of community assets to be declared surplus and investigate the merits of accelerating the principles of assets of community value.
- Reinvigorating the Halton Foundation concept and aligning this with work undertaken by the Council's Business Growth Team to support businesses in the borough. It is suggested that this will help partners letter shape the ask of the private sector in respect or corporate social responsibility. This will also reinforce the principle of community wealth building described above.
- Undertaking a mapping exercise to confirm where Council departments work with the community and voluntary sector.
- Introduce regular meetings and workshops aimed at developing and agreeing shared priorities.
- Consider through the Transformation Programme identifying Council services which could be delivered by the community and voluntary sector.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The content of a Commissioning Framework could also be broadened to reflect recommendations made by the Local Government Association's Peer Challenge Report which advised the

Council that in developing its 'place-shaping role' "... it should develop how it works with other partners as well as build on examples of strong partnerships".

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 At this stage no specific financial implications have been identified because the focus of the report is to generate an initiative-taking discussion on how the collective human and financial resources of the Council and its voluntary and community sector partners are used effectively and efficiently to deliver valuable services to Halton residents. It is anticipated that the lead officer role would be drawn initially from existing resources. However, any financial ask may need to be reviewed as the Commissioning Framework is being developed. It is worth noting that sources of funding may be available from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Long-Term Plan for Towns Fund, which promote innovation in the way in which services can be provided for and by the community to deliver community initiatives.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The report sets out proposals for how the Council can work with partners in the community and voluntary to deliver the Council's priorities in an effective and efficient way.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

As above

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

As above

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

As above

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

As above

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The report reaffirms the importance of proactively engaging with the community and voluntary sector to where appropriate, lead and or support the delivery of the borough's strategic priorities.

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 Any potential risks to the delivery of services to vulnerable and disadvantaged residents will be considered. However, as previously mentioned, to mitigate against any potential reductions in service quality, it is anticipated that the proposals contained in this report will promote a mechanism for allocating and prioritisation of resources based on evidence of need, demand and impact.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Consideration will be given to how we continue to deliver services to some of our most disadvantaged and vulnerable residents in the borough and reinforces the fact that the community and voluntary sector plays a vital role in supporting this strategic aim.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Although not directly related to climate change per se, the proposals emphasise the need to use resources efficiently and carefully to provide services that are sustainable from both an economic and environmental perspective.

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

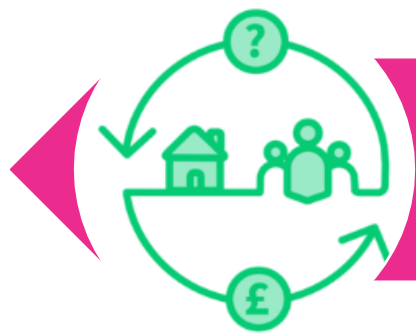
10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

Community Wealth Building – Towards a City Region Approach



**LIVERPOOL
CITY REGION**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

METROMAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION



What is Community Wealth Building (CWB)?

- An approach to local economic development that aims to build prosperity for everyone. It seeks to increase and retain wealth within local economies.

Why is it important?

- It focuses on disrupting the economic drivers of deprivation and maintaining sustainable systems of local (re)investment.
- It is important for complementing existing approaches to economic development.

City Region level commitment

- The Plan for Prosperity (2022) set out our high-level ambitions to delivering CWB.
- The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) – national leaders in CWB - have been working with us to advise on the role LCRCA can play in promoting CWB in LCR <https://cles.org.uk/what-is-community-wealth-building/the-principles-of-community-wealth-building/>



Leverage and Power of Anchor Institutions at the centre of CWB

- Local government
- NHS/Police/Fire and Rescue
- Universities and colleges
- Housing associations
- Large private businesses



Five Pillars of CWB



Socially productive use of land & property



Making financial power work for local places



Fair employment & just labour markets



Progressive procurement



Plural ownership of the economy

Some examples of LCRCA support for CWB

Pillar 1 – Plural ownership

- Kindred - providing financial and wider business support for socially trading organisations.
- Both a social economy and a ‘place based’ business support focus within UKSPF and the Business Support Policy Framework

Pillar 2 – Use of financial power

- Direct financial support for grassroots voluntary sector via VS6
- Juno – market disrupting CIC providing homes where young people thrive, inspired by LA commissioners

Pillar 3 – Fair Employment

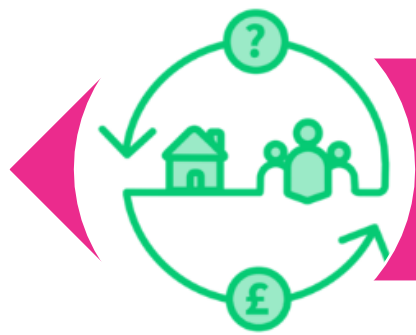
- Development of LCR Fair Employment Charter

Pillar 4 – Progressive procurement

- Social Value Frameworks – including the LCRCA policy
- LCR Community Suppliers Network
- Examples of supporting supply chains across the local authorities

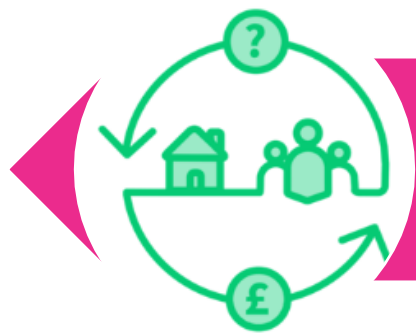
Pillar 5 – Land/property assets

- LCR Land Commission which developed recommendations to advance generative forms of land ownership and stewardship.
- Related One Public Estate activity, actions around Community Land Trusts. At the LA level, good examples of Community Asset Transfer policies



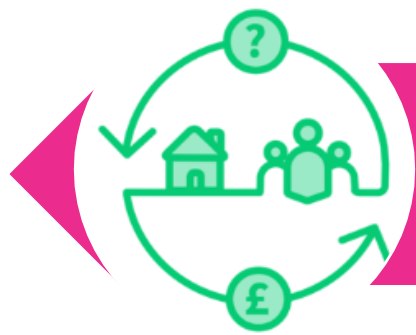
CLES Recommendations

1. Advocacy for CWB and agreeing a comprehensive measurement framework in LCR.
2. Create a knowledge hub to strengthen understanding and confidence around CWB, with a view to developing a 'living lab'.
3. Using progressive procurement by:
 - (i) Analysing collective levels of local authority spend in the Liverpool City Region;
 - (ii) Mapping local suppliers;
 - (iii) Drawing upon the goods and services needs of other key anchors.
4. Support convening of LA procurement leads and over time extend into an anchor procurement knowledge sharing network.
5. Advocacy for anchor employment practice that removes the barriers experienced by those furthest from the labour market.
6. Explore options around the LCR Land Commission recommendations.



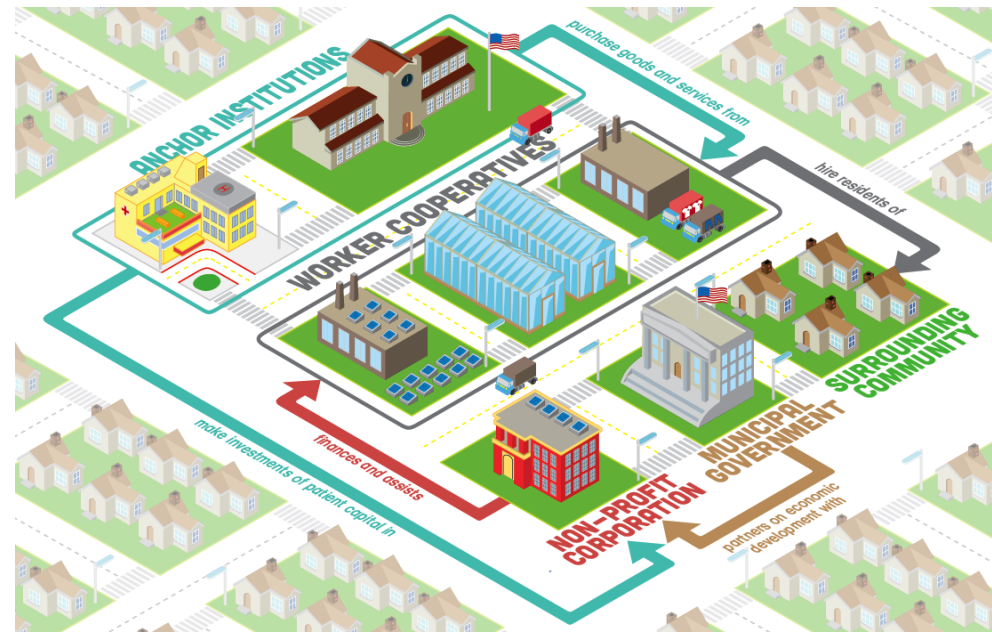
Next Steps

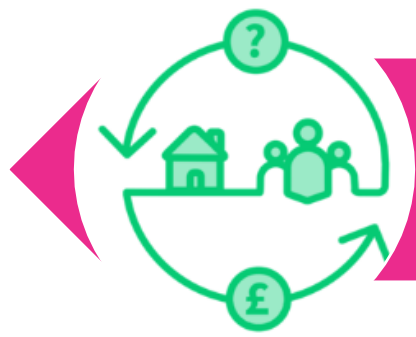
- Considering short, medium, and long term, steps to translate and take the CLES recommendations forward – some of these are already being done in some capacity. Currently considering the following:
 - Determining what a CWB Knowledge Hub will look like and partners to work with in developing this.
 - Exploring options for analysis of procurement data to identify ‘influenceable’ spend – potential starting point for further knowledge sharing and collaboration to maximise impact on local economy.
 - Working with Kindred and Power to Change around the City Region becoming a UK Social Investment Pathfinder.
 - Reflecting on Heseltine Institute’s [report](#) on Asset Ownership in LCR’s Social Economy to drive social innovation.
- Developing a Community Wealth Building Framework or Commitment, setting out explicitly how we will embed its principles into mainstream economic development policy and activity (workstreams to be attached to this).
- Strategy for systemic anchor institution engagement – key in making CWB work effectively.



Case Study – Preston Model

- Preston Practitioners Procurement Group
 - £70m more for city economy
 - £200m more for regional economy
 - Created 1,600 more jobs
 - 4,000 more people being paid the real living wage
- Food co-op and tech co-ops supported by anchors
- Using local pension funds to invest in local area
- Local at municipal energy/bank
- Preston has moved up deprivation index
- Most improved place to live in UK





Questions/Observations?

- Keen on working with local authority colleagues around:
 - Understanding and collating local good practice.
 - Working in collaboration across the different CWB pillars.
 - Making the connections to other anchor institutions and helping to drive momentum.
 - Securing buy-in to the principles and development of a document that enshrines CWB approaches in City Region economic development practice.

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

Document is Restricted