



**Executive Board**

**Thursday, 10 July 2025 2.00 p.m.  
The Boardroom, Municipal Building**

S. Young

**Chief Executive**

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

**PART 1**

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<b>1. MINUTES</b>	<b>1 - 8</b>
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b>  Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
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## PART II

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.

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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, 12 June 2025 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building*

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Bevan, Ball, Dennett, Harris, T. McInerney, P. Nolan, Thompson, Wall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner, Z. Fearon, G. Ferguson and K. Appleton

Also in attendance: None

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

**EXB1 MINUTES**

*Action*

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**DEPUTY LEADER'S PORTFOLIO**

**EXB2 WIDNES TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION  
FRAMEWORK – CREATION OF WIDNES TOWN CENTRE  
STRATEGIC BOARD**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which set out the structure of the Widnes Strategic Board. The purpose of the Board was to:

- provide advice, insight and challenge to Halton Borough Council on the regeneration and development of Widnes town centre;
- represent the interest of local residents, businesses and community organisations;
- support the delivery of the Widnes Regeneration Framework and related projects; and
- champion Widnes town centre and promote civic

pride.

The Widnes Strategic Board would consist of up to 15 members drawn from the local community. A copy of the Terms of Reference was attached as an appendix to the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the structure of the Widnes Strategic Board and delegated authority be given to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects to finalise its members; and
- 2) approves the draft Terms of Reference appendix 1 and delegated authority be given to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects to update and adapt the Terms of Reference as the projects contained within the Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework evolve.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

## CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

### EXB3 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented three applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, for consideration.

It was noted that under the amended provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council was able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer. This relief had previously only been available to organisations that were a registered charity, a community amateur sports club or a not for profit organisation.

The report outlined details of the three applications, in relation to their respective addresses. Appended to the report was the potential annual cost to the Council of granting the discretionary rate relief.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) discretionary rate relief for any new applications received during 2025/26 be awarded at the rates approved on 25 February 2025 for the renewal of existing awards, as outlined in paragraph 3.5;

Director of  
Finance

- 2) the application for discretionary rate relief from the Cathie Stankevitch Foundation in respect of Unit 9, Foundry 10, Waterside Lane, Widnes with effect from 1 July 2024 be approved at 10%;
- 3) the application for discretionary rate relief from The Autism Wellbeing Project in respect of Suite A8, The Business Hub, Simms Cross, Widnes Road, Widnes with effect from 14 March 2025, be approved at 75%; and
- 4) the application for discretionary relief from The Autism Wellbeing Project in respect of Suite B2, The Business Hub, Simms Cross, Widnes Road, Widnes with effect from 14 March 2025, be approved at 75%.

EXB4     DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS  
FOR QUARTER 4   2024 - 2025

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director – Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the fourth quarter period to 31 March 2025, for the Children and Young People Directorate; and the Enterprise, Community and Resources Directorate.

The Board was advised that the Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary of key issues arising from the relevant quarter for each Directorate and was aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council's performance management arrangements and Executive Board had a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability. Performance Management would continue to be important in the demonstration of value for money and strengthening accountability.

RESOLVED: That the report, progress and performance information be noted.

EXB5     2024/25 SPENDING AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position for the 2024/25 financial year.

A summary of spending against the Council's revenue and capital net spending position for 2024/25 was presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and these provided

detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms net spending as at 31 March 2024 was £16.073m over budget. This was an improvement from the forecast outturn position of £18.906m reported at the end of January 2025. Whilst an improved position, given the scale of the budgetary overspend the Council would need to access the exceptional financial support provisionally approved by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 24 February 2025.

The report also detailed a review of the Council General Reserve as at 31 March 2025. Other than the General Fund reserve of £5.149, there were no further reserves available to help fund future budgets.

In addition, it was noted that Capital Spending at 31 March 2025 totalled £46.517m, which was 91.7% of the planned spending £50.748m (which assumed a 20% slippage between years). Appendix 2 presented details of spending against all capital schemes. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 31 March 2025.

It was noted that the 2025/26 budget had been slightly increased to reflect the increased spending against all the high-pressure areas.

A report on the 2025/26 budget monitoring position as at 31 May 2025 along with an initial outturn forecast, would be presented at the earliest opportunity to allow for any urgent corrective action to be taken.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Council's 2024/25 outturn position as presented in the report be noted;
- 2) Directorates take all possible steps to manage spending in line with budget during 2025/26;
- 3) priority is given to the acceleration of the Council's Transformation Programme, to ensure it is sufficiently developed to deliver the savings required to meet the medium-term financial gap and help the Council replenish its reserves; and
- 4) this report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board, in order to ensure they have a full appreciation of the councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility.

Director of  
Finance

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

### EXB6 HOMELESSNESS CONTRACTS: WAIVER TO EXTEND CURRENT CONTRACT TERMS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Adult Social Care, which sought approval for two Non-Emergency Waivers in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of part 3 to allow the continuation of contracts with the incumbent providers until new procurement processes have been undertaken and completed. This would ensure business continuity. The two contracts were in relation to the following Homelessness services that were due to end in 2025:

- Single Homelessness Supported Accommodation Service
- Homeless Families Supported Accommodation Service

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board approve a Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders, to grant extensions to the current Homeless contracts as per sections 3.8 and 3.9 of this report.

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

## ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

### EXB7 CEMETERY INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which provided details of essential work required to be undertaken to refurbish aging infrastructure and update the grounds with a range of environmental enhancements at three of the Council's cemeteries located at Widnes, Runcorn and Halton cemeteries.

RESOLVED:

- 1) the proposals set out within the report be approved;
- 2) Council be asked to include £1.971m within the Council's Capital Programme over 4 years to fund the proposed works as set out within the report; and

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration



- 3) authority be delegated to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal, to prepare and approve all necessary documents, contracts and funding arrangements required to complete the proposed works.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

### EXB8 NEW CO-OPTED MEMBER OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES POLICY & PERFORMANCE BOARD

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Children's Services, to Co-Opt a new independent member of the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board to provide assurance and challenge.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended that Stuart Smith OBE, be Co-Opted to the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board for a period of 12 months, to be reviewed at the end of that period.

Executive Director  
of Children's  
Services

### EXB9 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.

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB10 FUNDING FOR EXTENSION**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Children's Services, that outlined details of a loan to carers to build an extension on their property to accommodate four children in their care.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the loan be agreed, subject to the legal and financial arrangements being finalised in detail and due diligence being undertaken; and
- 2) the Executive Director - Children's Services be asked to finalise the details of the arrangement in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Families.

Executive Director  
of Children's  
Services

## **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB11 EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITION: STAFF UNPAID LEAVE**

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director Chief Executives Delivery Unit, that provided details on a proposed scheme for a Christmas closure utilising a variation of the previously proposed four days unpaid leave arrangement.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the scheme and the commencement of formal negotiations with Trade Unions to finalise and implement the scheme for a Christmas closure.

Corporate  
Director - Chief  
Executive's  
Delivery Unit

*N.B. Councillor Wright declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the following item of business as she is a member of Halton Housing Trust Board.*

EXB12 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT CROW WOOD LANE, WIDNES

The Board considered a report which sought approval for the disposal of land owned by the Council at Crow Wood Lane, Widnes to Halton Housing to enable the construction of 13 homes for adults with disabilities and complex needs.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) approves the disposal of the freehold interest in land at Crow Wood Lane for the terms outlined in paragraph 5.2; and
- 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 of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

Director  
Economy,  
Enterprise &  
Property

**MINUTES ISSUED: 17 June 2025**

**CALL-IN: 24 June 2025 at 5.00 pm.**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 24 June 2025.**

*Meeting ended at 2.20 p.m.*

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

**PORTFOLIO:** Deputy Leader

**SUBJECT:** Plan for Neighbourhoods Fund, Runcorn

**WARD(S)** Runcorn Wards

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Plan for Neighbourhoods (PfN) funding programme; this programme was formerly called Long Term Plan for Towns and was originally allocated to Runcorn in the Spring Budget 2024.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board**

- 1. Acknowledge the new name of the Board – Runcorn Town Neighbourhood Board as directed by MHCLG/central Government;**
- 2. Note the updated Terms of Reference to reflect the change of name and requirements of the new Plan for Neighbourhoods directive;**
- 3. Note the updated list of interventions (funding themes); and**
- 4. Note the timeline for submission of key documents to MHCLG and for delivery.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In the 2024 Spring budget the then Government announced Phase 2 of their Long-Term Plan for Towns programme which identified Runcorn as one of 20 additional towns across the country which would benefit from an allocation of £19.5m to invest over a 10-year period in local priorities.
- 3.2 Selection for the funding allocation was undertaken by then Government according to the Levelling Up Needs Index which considered metrics covering skills, pay, productivity, and health, as well as the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

- 3.3 In March 2025 the Long Term Plan for Towns was renamed Plan for Neighbourhoods (PfN) by the new Government administration and the timeline for commencing delivery was pushed back to April 2026. The intention remains that the £19.5m funding (25% revenue/75% capital) over a 10-year period will provide long-term certainty to deliver a range of interventions.
- 3.4 These interventions have been updated under the following headings:
- Regeneration, High Streets, Heritage
  - Housing
  - Work, Productivity and Skills
  - Cohesion
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Transport
  - Safety and Security
  - Education and Opportunity
- 3.5 A full list, including Sub-Interventions is provided at Appendix 1.
- 3.6 The list of interventions have been assessed as having a strong case for investment, value for money and benefit-to-cost ratio. Should the Board pursue these interventions, a business case will not be required, but a robust assessment process for determining which projects are taken forward will need to be developed. This will be undertaken by a sub-panel of the Board alongside HBC officers. Should the Board wish to pursue bespoke or 'off-menu' interventions, an outline business will be required.
- 3.7 To access the funding Halton will need to produce a Regeneration Plan for the agreed area by the end of November 2025, along with a four year investment plan. The funding will be devolved directly to Halton Borough Council.
- 3.8 The Council will be the accountable body and will remain responsible for ensuring good use of public funds through the Programmes Office and the Section 151 officer.
- 3.9 MHCLG has directed that the name of the Board be revised to a Neighbourhood Board and that the Terms of Reference be updated to reflect this.
- 3.10 In April 2025 an extraordinary meeting of the Board was held to receive and approve the new directives, including change of Board name, new interventions, updated Terms of Reference etc.
- 3.11 The updated arrangements include a further £200k capacity funding in 2025-26 and £150k in 2026-27 to undertake further consultation and feasibility work. The capacity funding is to support the board's ability to engage the local community and build the capacity of the

board and local voluntary and community sector, to support the development of the Regeneration Plan or the technical elements of plan development and delivery. It can also be used towards the management costs and for branding and publicity activity.

- 3.12 Key roles and responsibilities in the delivery of the programme include:  
Officer lead – Director EEP  
Member lead – Deputy Leader  
Secretariat for Board – Programmes Office, HBC  
Monitoring and Compliance – Programmes Office, HBC  
Project Delivery – Regeneration Team, plus partners  
Project shortlist/decision-making – Sub-panel of Board/HBC officers  
Communications and Publicity, including Reconnecting Runcorn website - Vivid
- 3.13 Board Membership:  
Chairs should work with the local authority to consider the wider membership of the Neighbourhood Board, ensuring an inclusive and representative selection of people from across the local community.
- 3.14 Places may have set up ‘Town Boards’ to deliver the previous administration’s Long-Term Plan for Towns programme, with an existing board membership. Should the chair agree, the membership can be rolled over fully to act as the Neighbourhood Board. However, to ensure the board can deliver on the strategic objectives of the programme and the widened scope of interventions, broadening the membership to bring in additional relevant expertise may be considered.
- 3.15 Neighbourhood Boards must include the following members:
- The relevant local MPs, for example, MPs whose constituencies sit within the boundary of the place must sit on the board
  - Two local councillors
  - Police and Crime Commissioner
- 3.16 The Board should comprise representatives from a cross-section of the local community to promote community leadership, and boards should ensure there is greater representation from non-elected members than elected, in line with the ‘community-first’ principle of the programme. Council officers may provide secretariat support and can sit as an observer to the board discussions if agreed with the chair.
- 3.17 The Chair, supported by the local authority, must ensure the right people are around the table to fully reflect the priorities of the place. Chairs will want to consider the following groups:
- 3.18 Community partners, such as:

- community groups
  - faith groups
  - local charities
  - neighbourhood forums, neighbourhood watch or local tenancy groups
  - youth groups
  - local councils for voluntary service (CVS) in England, Third Sector Interface (TSI) in Scotland, or Third Sector Trustee Network in Northern Ireland
  - workplace representatives, for example trade unions
- 3.19 Local businesses and social enterprises, such as:
- the chair or board members for the local Chambers of Commerce or Business Improvement District (BID) where these exist
  - key local employers or investors in the place
  - registered social housing providers
- 3.20 Cultural, arts, heritage and sporting organisations, such as:
- local sports club directors or fan representatives
  - local heritage groups
  - director of a local museum
- 3.21 Public agencies and anchor institutions, such as:
- local schools, higher education and further education institutions
  - mayors of combined authorities or their representatives
  - relevant government agencies for that area, for example, Integrated Care Boards or Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland
  - relevant health care providers, for example GPs from local practices or senior NHS staff
  - relevant senior local authority officers, for example, a Director for Economic Development to ensure coordination with wider plans
  - a representative from other relevant local agencies
- 3.22 The Board membership is currently representative of the above; a number of new members were invited to join the Board when the Long Term Plan for Towns was originally announced.
- 3.23 Board Chair:  
Each Neighbourhood Board will be led by an independent chair, appointed by the local authority acting as accountable body, following consultation with the local MP. The chair should act as a champion for the place and provide leadership for the board, ensuring it is community-led and embedded within the local area. The chair should be someone who holds a prominent role in the community and has a passion for the place.

- 3.24 Having set up 'Town Boards' to deliver the previous administration's 'Long-Term Plan for Towns,' many places will have an incumbent chair. Subject to consulting the respective local MP, the local authority may seek to retain that individual as the chair for the Neighbourhood Board
- 3.25 The Board has approved a co-chair set up of the head of Halton Chamber of Commerce and the Head of Cultivate/Director of A Place for Us, a local youth theatre company.
- 3.26 Document development and Timelines:
- 3.27 A Regeneration Plan must be submitted to HMCLG by 28 November 2025. This Plan must be underpinned by evidence of engagement to reflect local investment priorities for the short, medium and long-term. The plan must be reviewed and approved by the Neighbourhood Board. The Chief Finance officer must also review the plan, however there is no requirement by MHCLG for sign off by elected members. The Combined Authority and MP also need to be consulted during the development of the plan.
- 3.28 The programme will be divided into 3 investment periods with a formalised progress review at the end of each investment period.
- 3.29 These periods are:  
Period 1 financial year 2026/27 to financial year 2029/30 (4 years)  
Period 2 financial year 2030/31 to financial year 2032/33 (3 years)  
Period 3 financial year 2033/34 to financial year 2035/36 (3 years)
- 3.30 The review will allow MHCLG to consider whether the programmes strategic objectives are being delivered. Further guidance on this will be available in summer 2025.
- 3.31 Each period will have an investment plan developed in consultation with the community. This will detail the priorities and the interventions that the Board in consultation with the community wishes to pursue and how these fit with the delivery of the 10 year vision as well as outline the funding spend. Boards are strongly encouraged to explore opportunities to access additional funding.
- 3.32 There is a wealth of experience now in terms of developing and operating a Board, establishing a governance model and documentation, agreeing a project pipeline and delivering that pipeline; this experience and lessons learned can be utilised in relation to the emergence of the Widnes Strategic Board.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The potential significant investment described in this report will align with the Council's strategic policies contained in the Local Plan, the



Mersey Gateway Plus Regeneration Strategy, The Cultural Strategy and the Local Transport Plan.

4.2 These strategic documents are supported at a more detailed level by documents that capture the Council's ambitions at a more focused scale, for example, the Runcorn Station Quarter Masterplan, Runcorn Vision documents and The Runcorn Town Investment Plan.

4.3 The vision for Runcorn in the Town Investment Plan is building on our strong local economy and strategic location, we will reconnect the Old Town to Runcorn and the wider region so that it becomes an attractive and vibrant place to work, live in and to visit.

4.4 The ambition for the Runcorn Old Town area is:

- Build a stronger town centre
- Improve linkages, accessibility and movement
- Utilise assets, waterways, culture and heritage
- Grow the residential offer
- Realise the full potential of the mainline station and
- Connectivity to major cities.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Plan for Neighbourhoods Regeneration Plan when submitted in November 2025, will cover an initial four year period of investment. This Plan will be reviewed after that four year period and it may become necessary to prepare a revised plan.

5.2 When the initial 4-year plan is finalised, the financial implications will be clearer. If applicable as part of the project proposals, they will be asked what the future (on-going) service costs are and how they will be funded.

5.3 There is no match funding requirement; however, opportunities for drawing in additional funding should be considered to add value.

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

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

The Plan for Neighbourhoods interventions include Health and Wellbeing and the programme of projects has the opportunity to support a range of activities which meet this theme to the benefit of local communities.

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

The Plan for Neighbourhoods interventions include Work, Productivity and Skills and in the long-term there are strong prospects of new job creation as a result of the potential projects brought forward by this funding, in particular as the funding comprises 25% revenue.

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

The Plan for Neighbourhoods interventions include Education and Opportunity which could support a range of activities targeted at children and young people.

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

There is no specific intervention covering inequality; however, there are a range of sub interventions aimed at supporting those most in need, including tackling homelessness and poverty-related inequalities.

**6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future**

There is no specific intervention covering environmental or climate change; however, a number of sub-interventions cover this area, including; creating and improving green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments in the local area, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces; support for non-domestic energy efficiency measures and decarbonisation in local businesses, high streets, and community infrastructure; provide healthy and climate-resilient homes support locally; reducing vehicle emissions

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

The guiding principle for the Plan for Neighbourhoods funding programme is to meet local needs and attract further investment into the town. This will ensure social value through place making and job creation and support existing businesses and will proactively support the provision of social value outcomes. One of the interventions for funding is Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

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

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

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 While the programme is foreseen to have significant and positive impact on people, the Plan for Neighbourhoods Regeneration Plan has not yet been developed. Equality and diversity implications will continue to be considered in the development of the Regeneration

Plan, and it is likely that Equality Impact Assessments will be part of the delivery stage.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

'None under the meaning of the Act.'

Appendix 1: Plan for Neighbourhoods Interventions

Appendix 2: Plan for Neighbourhoods Term of Reference

Appendix 3: List of organisations/roles represented on the Board

<b>Regeneration, high streets and heritage</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Work, productivity and skills</b>	<b>Cohesion</b>	<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Transport</b>	<b>Safety and security</b>	<b>Education and opportunity</b>
Funding for improvements to town centres, neighbourhoods, and high streets, including capital spend and running costs	Provide safe and supportive environments for people with experience of homelessness and rough sleeping	Support to improve awareness of, and access to, local provision that moves people closer to and into sustained employment, in line with an area's Get Britain Working Plan ( <i>England and Wales only</i> )	Measures to improve community cohesion	Supporting community-level health provision	Support for active travel enhancements in the local area	Design and oversight of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out' crime and encourage positive behaviour	School-based programmes to support young people's development
Creating and improving green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments in the local area, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces	Modernisation of social housing	Enabling community wealth building	Funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local place	Integration and co-location of health and wellbeing services	Funding can be used to improve local bus services	Policing interventions to target crime prevention in specific locations, in particular town centres	Support to both reduce levels of child poverty and to prevent the negative impacts of child poverty on children and families
Support for non-domestic energy efficiency measures and decarbonisation in local businesses, high streets, and community infrastructure	Support wider neighbourhood renewal by improving the attractiveness and liveability of homes and their surroundings	Developing and expanding existing local business support and networks for smaller businesses and social enterprises	Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society, youth and community groups	Funding for local sport and activity facilities, events, teams and leagues, to foster community engagement and connection	Funding for new, or improvements to local road networks to improve access within and to the town	Interventions to tackle anti-social behaviour, crime and minimise reoffending	Support for families and young children
Funding for new community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects, or for improvements to existing ones, including facilities that house public services or enhance community resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding. This could cover both capital spend and operational costs	Provide healthy and climate-resilient homes support locally	Skills provision tailored to local opportunities and skills gaps, such as those identified in an area's Local Skills Improvement Plan (England only)		Funding to support preventative public health initiatives and campaigns	Funding to improve rail connectivity and access	Co-location of crime reduction services	Funding to help families with the cost of childcare where it may alleviate cost of living pressures, or support employment
Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and historic institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer	Establish land trusts for the purpose of creating community-led housing to meet local needs	Funding to support the development, improvement, and promotion of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, historical trails, cultural tours, campaigns and other related tourism products		Provide drug and alcohol support for people with experience of homelessness and rough sleeping	Reducing vehicle emissions	Improved town centre management	Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises
Funding for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative initiatives	Support local community initiatives that support people in bringing down their home energy bills and improve the energy efficiency of their homes					Initiatives to reduce burglary	Support for community-based learning and development
Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities							



## Runcorn Town Neighbourhood Board

### TERMS OF REFERENCE - Updated May 2025

#### 1.0 Purpose of the Runcorn Town Neighbourhood Board

- 1.1 The purpose and function of the Runcorn Town Neighbourhood Board (RTNB) is to bring together those with a deep connection to the local area, and work in partnership with their local authority to develop a plan for their local area and distribute funding to the projects to deliver on this vision.
- 1.2 The RTNB shall:
- Develop a clear programme of interventions for the Plan for Neighbourhoods (PfN) driving forward a community-led vision for change, consistent with the Vision Statement agreed by the Board
  - Continue to monitor the delivery of the Town Deal funded projects over the life of the programme
  - Perform a strategic function, overseeing and ratifying the decisions and papers presented to the Board for the Town Deal and PfN
  - Influence efforts to attract additional funding, promote the Town Vision and Reconnecting Runcorn branding, and monitor, guide, advise and support the delivery of the Town Deal funded programme, in accordance with the agreed Terms and Conditions of the RTNB.
  - Work positively with Halton Borough Council to support the regeneration of Runcorn over the next decade

#### 2.0 Board Membership - The Chairperson (or Co-Chair)

- 2.1 The RTNB will be led by an independent Chair (or Co-Chair), appointed by the local authority who are acting as accountable body and following consultation with the local MP. The role is voluntary, analogous to that of a school governor or charity trustee and should not be compensated.
- 2.2 The Chair (or Co-Chair) should be someone who holds a prominent role in the community and has a passion for the place, such as: the head of a local charity, a local campaigner, a philanthropist, head of a further education college, a director for the NHS Trust, a director of a football club.
- 2.3 The Chair (or Co-Chair) cannot be an elected representative
- 2.4 The Role of the Chair (or Co-Chair) is to:
- Uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles)
  - Lead the Board in achieving its objectives, maintain an activity overview and champion and support partnership working.
  - Run an effective Board, manage conflicts and ensure that the business is discussed in line with the agenda.
  - Manage relationships with stakeholders.
  - Ensure the Board makes decisions by sound governance.
- 2.5 A Chair (and/or Co-Chair) is invited initially for a 24 months term of office, with options to extend for a further 12 months by agreement with the local authority and the Board.

#### 3.0 Board Membership - The Vice Chair



- 3.1 The Board may agree to elect a Vice Chair.
- 3.2 The Vice Chair should be someone of equal standing to the Chair (or Co-Chair).
- 3.3 The Vice Chair will be asked to Chair the meeting in the case that neither the Chair or the Co-Chair are available.
- 3.4 The Vice Chair is invited initially for a 24 months term of office, with options to extend for a further 12 months by agreement with the Local Authority and the Board.

#### 4.0 Board Membership - Board Members

- 4.1 The RTNB is to be made up of members representing all relevant sectors, ensuring an inclusive and representative selection of people from across the local community.
- 4.2 The Board **must** include the following members:
  - The local MP
  - Two local Councillors
  - A Senior Representative from the police, e.g. the Police Crime Commissioner or delegated representative
  - Other representatives from the police as deemed appropriate
- 4.3 The Chair, supported by the Local Authority, shall ensure that the right people are round the table to fully reflect the priorities of the place.
- 4.4 Membership should also include representatives of the following groups:
  - **Community Partners**, e.g.: community or faith groups, local charities, neighbourhood forums, local councils for voluntary services (CVS), or workplace representatives
  - **Local Business and Social Enterprises**, e.g. the Chair of the local Chamber of Commerce or Business Improvement District, key local employers and registered social housing providers
  - **Cultural, arts, heritage and sporting organisations**, e.g.: local sports club directors or fan representatives, local heritage groups or director of a local museum
  - **Public agencies and anchor institutions**, e.g. schools, higher education and further education institutions, mayors of combined authorities or their representatives, relevant government agencies such as Integrated Care Boards, relevant health care providers, e.g. GPs or senior NHS staff.
  - **Senior local authority officers**, e.g. Chief Executive or Regeneration Director

The organisational structure chart is attached as Appendix 1

- 4.5 The selection and appointment process of Board Members will be invitation-led. It is the responsibility of the Chair and Halton Borough Council to ensure that the Board (and any sub-Board), includes a wide variety of key stakeholders who collectively bring relevant experience and expertise to the Board. The following criteria will be taken into consideration:
  - Demonstrable passion and commitment to the development of the town's future
  - Record of commitment of time and resources into local social and economic infrastructure
  - Willingness to engage with the local authority, RTNB and any associated Boards, abiding by the Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct and any agreed decision-making processes.
  - Respected and credible local community leader
  - Ability to meet the time commitments of the Board and attend Board meetings regularly.
  - Domain knowledge or expertise, pertinent to the business of the Board
- 4.6 The duration of Board Membership will be for a period of 36 months and tenure will be staggered to allow for continuity of membership



- 4.7 With the agreement of the Chair and the local authority, each year one third of the membership will be considered for re-election. This will take place at the March Board meeting each year.
- 4.8 If the current Chair is no longer fulfilling the role of Chair, they may be elected as a Board member for a period of 36 months, as per regular Board members
- 4.9 Board Members will be required to adhere to the governance standards and policies of Halton Borough Council including whistle blowing, conflicts of interest and complaints as well as the Nolan Principles. Members will be asked to sign the Code of Conduct form to confirm their agreement and relevant documents will be made available to Board members
- 4.9 Supporting observers from Halton Borough Council and supporting consultants as appropriate and agreed in advance by the Chair may also attend but will not have any voting rights.
- 4.10 A Board member shall cease to be a member of the Board in the following circumstances:
  - Resignation, Bankruptcy or Death
  - Removed by resolution of the Board, for instance, due to falling short of the expected conduct of a Board member.
- 4.11 The RTNB will be comprised of not more than 30 members.

## **5.0 Meeting Procedures for Runcorn Town Neighbourhood Board**

- 5.1 The Board will meet between four and six times per annum, at an accessible and appropriate venue, or online. Additional meetings may be added if required.
- 5.2 Secretariat support for the Board will be provided by officers of Halton Borough Council, recording the business, decisions and actions of the Board.

Halton Borough Council will be responsible for ensuring that the RTNB:

- Aligns with the governance standards and policies of Halton Borough Council, including whistle blowing, conflicts of interest and complaints.
  - Meetings are open by default in terms of how the Board conducts its business whilst recognising commercial sensitivity.
  - Makes publicly available all evidence and supporting documents, whilst recognising commercial sensitivity
- 5.4 Board meetings will be closed to press and public unless specially invited. Designated observers will be permitted to attend with the Chair's agreement. Observers will not be allowed to comment on or address the Board unless asked by the Chair.
  - 5.5 Halton Borough Council and the Chair are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the minutes for Board meetings. Minutes remain draft until formally approved by the relevant Board.
  - 5.6 Agendas, decisions and actions agreed by a Board (where required) will be made available to Members of the Public by Halton Borough Council, by publishing the minutes of the meetings on the Reconnecting Runcorn Website.
  - 5.7. Costs of hosting the meeting will be met by Halton Borough Council. Costs of travel to Board meetings will not be met, but reasonable pre-approved expenses to carry out agreed business of the Board, may be met.
  - 5.8 Members will endeavour to attend all Board meetings; however, they should submit their apologies to Halton Borough Council, Programmes Office Team, before the meeting if they cannot attend.

## **6.0 Decision-making**





- 6.1 All Board members have a responsibility to ensure that adequate discussion of issues occurs before recommendations are made.
- 6.2 Board Members are expected to attend regularly, and meetings will be diarised to ensure optimal attendance. However, if Board members are not able to attend, they are still required to read the Board papers and make their views known to the Chair of the Board in advance of the Board meeting.
- 6.3 If consensus cannot be agreed by the Board, in the first instance, the Chair will mediate towards satisfactory resolution, based on an evidenced-led approach. If the Board still cannot reach consensus, decisions will be made on the basis of voting.
- 6.4 In the event that a decision needs to be made by casting a vote, each Board member is entitled to one vote. Board Members are not entitled to cast a vote if they are not in attendance when the decision is formally agreed at a Board Meeting.

## **7.0 Delegating Tasks and Powers**

- 7.1 Sub-committees may be established by the Board to act as Task and Finish Groups for specific and appropriate elements of the Board's business. The Board should agree which Sub-Committees are required.
- 7.2 Additional non-Board members may be invited to provide skills, resources, insight and capacity to the task, but must abide by the decision-making structures, Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference of the Board.
- 7.3 Each Sub-Committee should be chaired either by a Board Member or a Board-approved nominated representative.
- 7.4 Progress on tasks of the Sub-committees should be updated and reported to the Board, to a schedule agreed by the Board as appropriate to its agenda.
- 7.5 Procurement processes will be governed by the Financial Regulations and Procurement Procedures for any goods or services procured by funds for which Halton Borough Council is the accountable body.

## **8.0 Standards of Behaviour**

- 18.1 Members of all Boards agree to comply with the Nolan Principles, the 7 principles of public life which apply to anyone who works as a public officeholder.
- 8.2 One Code of Conduct will cover all Members of the RTNB with respect to its purpose and objectives, its sub-committees and all public sector officers supporting the development and delivery of the Town Deal funded Programme and the PfN. This will also apply to any consultants and contractors.
- 8.3 Board Members and supporting officers will be made aware of the importance and significance of upholding these standards at their inaugural Board Meeting and through regular training processes if required.
- 8.4 Board Members will be asked to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest at every Board meeting. These will be publicly recorded. Where the Board agrees that a conflict is inappropriate, the member should be excluded from both the discussion and decision making.
- 8.5 Particular care will be taken where Board members have a live, concurrent post which could give rise to conflicts of interest. Any conflict of interest for Board Members will be established at the start of the selection process and actively managed to ensure there are no material factors impeding independence of judgement.





- 8.6 Board Members will demonstrate visible independence which is vital to ensure that there is no bias or favouritism towards or against particular projects or decisions. This freedom of action is needed to reassure investors, competitors, residents, employees and all tiers of government.
- 8.7 Halton Borough Council will publish the list of Board Members and keep records of any declarations of interest, gifts or hospitality given to the Neighbourhood Board or individual members.

## **9.0 Accountable body arrangements**

- 9.1 Halton Borough Council (acting as Lead Council and Accountable Body) is responsible for:
- Developing a delivery team, delivery arrangements and agreements
  - Ensuring all Boards make decisions by sound governance principles.
  - Ensuring transparency and publication of information, including Board Agendas and Minutes, on the Reconnecting Runcorn website.
  - Promoting Plan for Neighbourhood's Vision and selected projects via the Reconnecting Runcorn website, press releases and social media
  - Developing agreed projects in detail and undertaking any necessary feasibility studies
  - Undertaking any required environmental impact assessment or public sector equality duty assessments
  - Signing Heads of Terms with the government
  - Monitoring and evaluating the overall delivery of the Town Deal funded programme and the PfN Funding
  - Receiving and accounting for Runcorn's funding allocation
  - Supporting the RTNB and any sub-boards or working groups.
- 9.2 Halton Borough Council remains accountable for all the monies received for the Town Deal Programme and PfN Funding

## **10.0 Legal Status**

- 10.1 The Board is not a legal entity. It is not the accountable body for any grant or funding regime.
- 10.2 This Terms of Reference does not change, replace, substitute or amend in any way the statutory duties or other responsibilities of partners.

## **11.0 Updating the Terms of Reference**

- 11.1 The Government may publish further guidance on the operation and function of the Boards administering the Town Deal Programme and the PfN. These Terms of Reference must be reviewed alongside any such guidance.
- 11.2 Boards will review these Terms of Reference annually and at any other time that may be relevant or necessary.

**Appendix 1**

	<b>RUNCORN TOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD</b>	
	<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Sector/Agency Representation</b>
1	Rachael Owen, CEO Chamber of Commerce	<b>Co-Chair</b> & Business Sector rep
2	Chris Bastock, Director A Place for Us & Chair of Cultivate	<b>Co-Chair</b> & Cultural Sector rep
3	Paul Mullane, Director of Development & Sales, Halton Housing	<b>Vice-Chair</b> & Housing Rep (Public Agencies & Anchor Institutions)
4	Sarah Pochin	Parliamentary Rep/MP - TBC
5	Cllr Dave Thompson, Deputy Leader	Local Councillors
6	Rosie Leck, Local Ward Councillor	Local Councillors
7	Stephen Young, Chief Executive	Local Authority rep
8	Damian Cooke, Director for Economy, Enterprise & Property	Local Authority Rep
9	Mary Murphy, Principal, Riverside College	Education Rep (Public Agencies & Anchor Institutions)
10	Lucy Gardner, Chief Strategy and Partnerships Officer, Warrington & Halton Hospitals	Health Sector Rep (Public Agencies & Anchor Institutions)
11	Lynsey Carr, Halton People into Jobs	Employment Sector Rep
12	Claire Bradbury, CEO, Power in Partnership	Youth Sector Rep
13	Graham Wallace, Chair, Runcorn Locks Restoration 6	Community Sector Rep
14	Josh Downes, Executive Director of Development, Langtree27	Business Sector Rep
15	Richard Millington, Managing Director, Sandon Global	Business Sector Rep
16	Jessica Shaw, Resident & Property Professional	Business Sector Rep
17	Sally Yeoman, Chair, Halton & St Helens VCA	Voluntary & Community Sector Rep
18	Claire Pitt, Hazlehurst Arts Collective	High Street, Regen & Heritage Intervention
19	Rob Sanderson-Thomas, CEO of Norton Priory	High Street, Regen & Heritage Intervention
20	Tony Collacott, Wat Phra Singh Temple	High Street, Regen & Heritage Intervention
21	Dan Price, Police Crime Commissioner for Cheshire	Safety & Security Intervention
22	Chief Inspector – Amber Hodson	Safety & Security Intervention
23	Cath Jones – Area Commander Halton	Safety & Security Intervention
24	TBC – Nick Smith Avanti	Transport & Connectivity
25	TBC – Connecting Cheshire rep	Digital Infrastructure



RUNCORN TOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD	
Observer	Sector/Agency Representation
Jack Sneddon - Business & Trade	Government Observers & Advisers
Wesley Rourke, Exec Director Regeneration & Environment	Local Authority Rep
Iain Lewis	LCR Combined Authority

RUNCORN TOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD	
Facilitators	Sector/Agency Representation
Steph Davies	Programmes Office Manager – team provide secretariat
Sara Munikwa	Regeneration Manager – team leads on delivery of Town Deal Projects
Vivid	Vivid commissioned to provide Comms & Marketing support for Town Deal & Neighbourhood Funded Projects

	<b>RUNCORN TOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD</b>	
	<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Sector/Agency Representation</b>
1	CEO Chamber of Commerce	<b>Co-Chair</b> & Business Sector rep
2	Director A Place for Us & Chair of Cultivate	<b>Co-Chair</b> & Cultural Sector rep
3	Director of Development & Sales, Halton Housing	<b>Vice-Chair</b> & Housing Rep (Public Agencies & Anchor Institutions)
4	<a href="#">Sarah Pochin - TBC</a>	Parliamentary Rep/MP for Runcorn and Helsby
5	Deputy Leader, HBC	Local Councillors
6	Local Ward Councillor	Local Councillors
7	Chief Executive, HBC	Local Authority rep
8	Director for Economy, Enterprise & Property, HBC	Local Authority Rep
9	Principal, Riverside College	Education Rep (Public Agencies & Anchor Institutions)
10	Chief Strategy and Partnerships Officer, Warrington & Halton Hospitals	Health Sector Rep (Public Agencies & Anchor Institutions)
11	Lead Officer, Halton People into Jobs	Employment Sector Rep
12	CEO, Power in Partnership	Youth Sector Rep
13	Chair, Runcorn Locks Restoration 6	Community Sector Rep
14	Executive Director of Development, Langtree27	Business Sector Rep
15	Managing Director, Sandon Global	Business Sector Rep
16	Resident & Property Professional	Business Sector Rep
17	Chair, Halton & St Helens VCA	Voluntary & Community Sector Rep
18	Director, Hazlehurst Arts Collective	High Street, Regen & Heritage Intervention
19	CEO, Norton Priory	High Street, Regen & Heritage Intervention
20	Director, Wat Phra Singh Temple	High Street, Regen & Heritage Intervention
21	Police Crime Commissioner for Cheshire	Safety & Security Intervention
22	Police Chief Inspector	Safety & Security Intervention
23	Police Area Commander Halton	Safety & Security Intervention
24	<a href="#">Avanti Rep</a>	<a href="#">Transport &amp; Connectivity</a>
25	<a href="#">Connecting Cheshire Rep</a>	<a href="#">Digital Infrastructure</a>

<b>RUNCORN TOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD</b>	
<b>Observer</b>	<b>Sector/Agency Representation</b>
Jack Sneddon - Business & Trade	Government Observers & Advisers
Wesley Rourke, Exec Director Regeneration & Environment	Local Authority Rep
Investment Associate LCR	Combined Authority Rep

<b>RUNCORN TOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD</b>	
<b>Facilitators</b>	<b>Sector/Agency Representation</b>
Steph Davies	Programmes Office Manager – team provide secretariat
Sara Munikwa	Regeneration Manager – team leads on delivery of projects
Vivid	Vivid commissioned to provide Comms & Marketing support for Town Deal & Neighbourhood Funded Projects

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 10 July 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Director of Finance

**PORTFOLIO:** Corporate Services

**SUBJECT:** 2025/26 Spending as at 31 May 2025

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

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report the Council's overall revenue net spend position as at 31 May 2025 together with a 2025/26 forecast outturn position.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That;**

- (i) **Executive Directors continue to implement the approved 2025/26 saving proposals as detailed in Appendix 3;**
- (ii) **Executive Directors continue to identify areas where they can further reduce their directorate's spending or generate income, in order to reduce the council wide forecast outturn overspend position;**
- (iii) **This report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board, in order to ensure they have a full appreciation of the councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Revenue Spending**

- 3.1 Appendix 1 presents a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 31 May 2025 and Appendix 2 provides detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms, net Council spending as at 31 May 2025 is £0.833m over budget. The outturn forecast for the year estimates that net spending will be over budget by £6.185m if no corrective action is taken.
- 3.2 The forecast position is of great concern and action to reduce net spend must be taken immediately. Without action being taken the Council will not be in a position to provide a balanced budget by financial year-end and will further add to borrowings which will need to be taken through Exceptional Financial Support (EFS).

- 3.3 On 10 February 2025 Government issued a letter to the Council confirming it was minded to approve a capitalisation direction of a total not exceeding £52.8 million. The total is broken down by each financial year of the Council's request:
- £20.8 million in 2024-25.
  - £32 million in 2025-26.
- 3.4 Consistent with those councils that have previously sought Exceptional Financial Support, in order for Government to provide a final capitalisation direction, the council is required to undergo an external assurance review which will include, but will not be limited to, an assessment of the council's financial position and governance arrangements. It is expected this review will be undertaken later in the summer although no date has been fixed as of yet.
- 3.5 Council approved the annual budget of £183.052m on 05 March 2025, in doing so they agreed to the use of EFS totalling £29.385m. If no action is taken to reduce the forecast outturn position of £6.185m it will increase the level of EFS required for the current year to £35.570m, above the provisionally approved limit.
- 3.6 The cost of EFS is significant over the long term for the Council, for every £1m borrowing undertaken it is estimated will cost the Council approximately £100k over each of the next 20 years. It is imperative that action is taken now to reduce the level of planned spend over the remainder of the year and that approved saving proposals are implemented with immediate effect
- 3.7 The figures reflect a prudent yet realistic view of spend and income levels through to the end of the year. Work will continue to progress on updating the financial position as more information is made available.
- 3.8 In setting the 2025/26 budget Council approved significant levels of growth to ensure the budget was more relevant to the planned level of spend. Budget growth of £33.555m (22%) was added to the 2025/26 budget to bring the approved net budget to £183.052m. That the Council are forecasting an overspend against 2025/26 budget is a huge concern.
- 3.9 There are continued demand pressures on the budget which are above growth levels provided in the 2025/26 budget, these are more notable against adults community care and home to school transport. Levels of demand covering children in care appear to be under control for the first two months of the year, although still too high for an authority the size of Halton. Further information is provided within the report on the main budgetary pressure areas.
- 3.10 In setting the 2025/26 budget, inflation of 2% was provided for the pay award. Based on the initial 3.2% pay offer to Trade Unions it is now clear that budgetary growth for the pay award is insufficient, it is currently forecast the additional cost of the 3.2% pay offer will add approximately

£1m to the Council's running cost for the year. This additional cost is included within the reported forecast position for the year.

- 3.11 Another major factor in achieving a balanced budget position for the year is that all approved savings are fully achieved to the agreed levels. In total, savings of £7.225m were agreed for the current year, Appendix 3 provides detail on progress against the approved savings, it is clear significant work needs to be undertaken to ensure these are achieved. As per Appendix 3, savings have been RAG rated to inform on progress, high level summary of this is provided below.

Department	On-course to be achieved	Uncertain or too early to say	Highly likely or certain will not be achieved
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adult Social Care	100	1,780	0
Finance	0	150	40
Legal	6	0	0
Children & Family Services	0	1,900	22
Education, Inclusion and Provision	0	300	0
Community and Greenspaces	282	0	0
Economy, Enterprise and Property	0	100	0
Planning & Transportation	0	0	100
Public Health	45	0	0
Corporate	0	2,400	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>6,630</b>	<b>162</b>

- 3.12 The use and cost of agency staff continues to be one of the main contributing factors to the overspend position for the year. This is mostly evident within the Children & Families Department and the Council's in-house Care Homes. Initiatives and support from the Transformation Programme are ongoing to reduce reliance upon agency staff.

- 3.13 Analysis of agency spend for the year to date, together with comparative analysis of 2024/25 costs, is included in the table below.



	2025/26		2024/25
	As at 31 May 2025		As at 31 March 2025
	£'000		£'000
Adult Social Care	955		6,035
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	130		810
Children & Family Services	574		5,220
Community & Greenspace	71		447
Economy, Enterprise & Property	60		417
Education, Inclusion & Provision	54		295
Finance	3		114
Legal & Democratic Services	63		881
Planning & Transportation	2		210
Public Health & Public Protection	0		22
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,912</b>		<b>14,451</b>

### Revenue - Operational Spending

3.14 Operational net spending for the first two months of the year is higher than the budget to date by £0.833m Based on current forecasts it is estimated net spend will be over budget for the year by £6.185m if no further corrective action is taken.

3.15 Within the overall budget forecast position for the period, the key budget pressure areas are as follows;

#### (i) Children and Families Department

The net departmental expenditure is estimated to be over budget profile at the end of financial year by £2.387m with the majority relating to social care services.

Growth budget of £12.1m and £3.9m of Children's Improvement Fund has been provided to the Children's and Families Department for financial year 2025/26. Unfortunately, this has not been sufficient to support the increasing costs across the service.

Although initial forecasts for financial year 2025/26 are showing a reduction in overspend of £6.047 compared to 2024/25 outturn, it's important to note that this is due to the increase in budget not the level of expenditure reducing in the service.

#### Employee Expenditure

Employee costs are forecast to be over budget profile by the end of financial year 2025/26 by £1.449m this is a similar level compared to the outturn for financial year 2024/25.

The level of agency has consistently reduced since October 2024 and is due to agency staff converting to Halton BC employees,

external recruitment and the employment of newly qualified social workers. The expectation is that agency will continue to reduce throughout the remainder of the year. Forecasts will be updated as and when changes are known.

Agency spend across the department remains high with spend totalling £0.574m.

One area of concern relates to the number of staff that remain in addition to the establishment (IATE). These are staff that are currently not allocated to an established role within their respective team. This figure currently stands at 9 across the service. Work should now be undertaken to reduce the level of staff that are in addition to the establishment if they do not form part of the redesign improvement plan.

### Supplies and Services

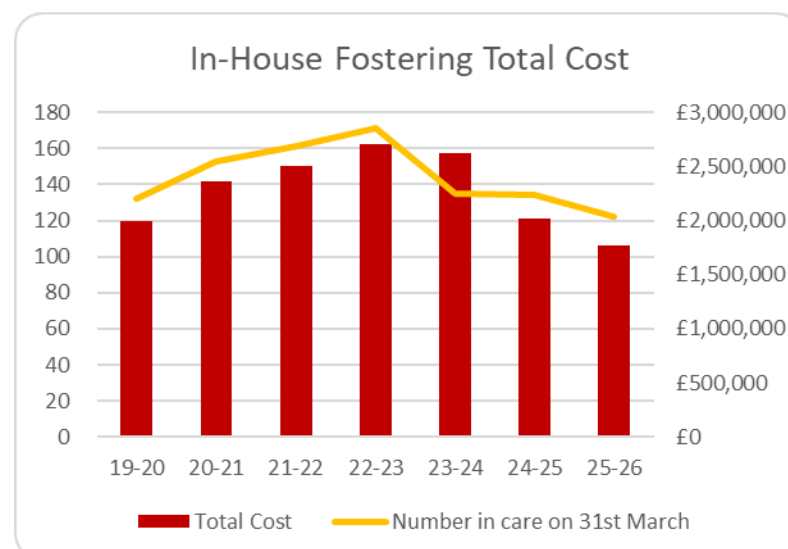
Supplies and services expenditure is forecast to be £1.057m over budget profile at the end of the financial year. Supplies and Services is diverse and covers a number of areas including nursery fees, consultancy, translation costs, equipment and support provided to young people.

A number of initiatives are being looked into to target specific areas of spend within supplies and services.

The creation of the Edge of Care and Family Time Teams should support the reduction of Supplies and Services expenditure. There is hope that particular tasks will no longer need to be outsourced which could result in the reduction in supplies and service.

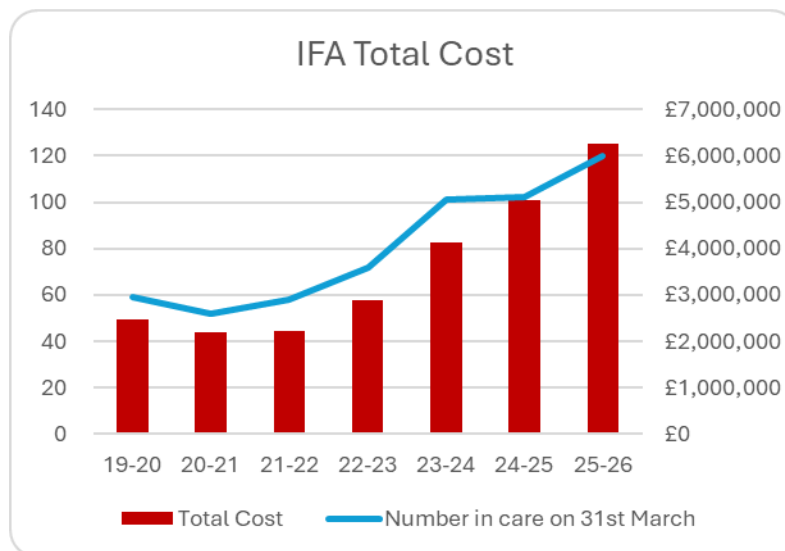
### Fostering

Inhouse fostering placements is estimated to be £0.515m under budget profile for financial year 2025/26.



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

Increasing numbers of children in care and insufficient in-house fostering provision has meant increased reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA). Higher numbers of children placed within IFA provision and increased IFA rates has resulted in an estimated forecast overspend for the end of 2025/26 as £0.785m.



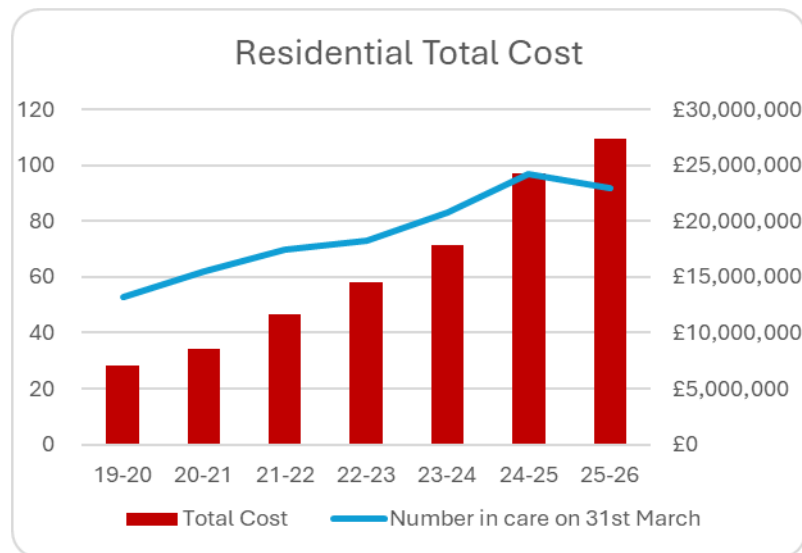
### Residential Care

Out of Borough Residential Care continues to be a budget pressure for the Children and Families Department as the costs of residential care have continue to rise year on year. The numbers of young people in residential placements remains high and the cost of placements is rising significantly year-on year.

Residential care costs are forecast to be under budget profile by £0.038m, although this is a significant reduction of £5.994m overspend compared to financial 2024/25, it's important to note that residential care budgets have been increased by more than £10m.

The level of forecast expenditure for residential care is £1.8m higher than the outturn spend for 2024/25.

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



## (ii) Adult Social Care Directorate

### Community Care

The net spend position for the community care budget at the end of May 2025 is currently £0.502m over the available budget and the year end forecast shows net spend to be £2.627m over the annual budget.

This forecast is as things stand at the moment assuming no material changes, apart from increased demand of 4.9% and the agreed fee increase of 8% with care providers. However there is a risk that the forecast could be significantly more as the ICB carry out a formal “turnaround” reviewing all NHS spend which may impact on the community care budget and could result in more challenges to social care funding requests.

To mitigate this financial risk a number of actions are being considered for implementation to reduce costs and help bring spend back in line with budget. These are detailed below:

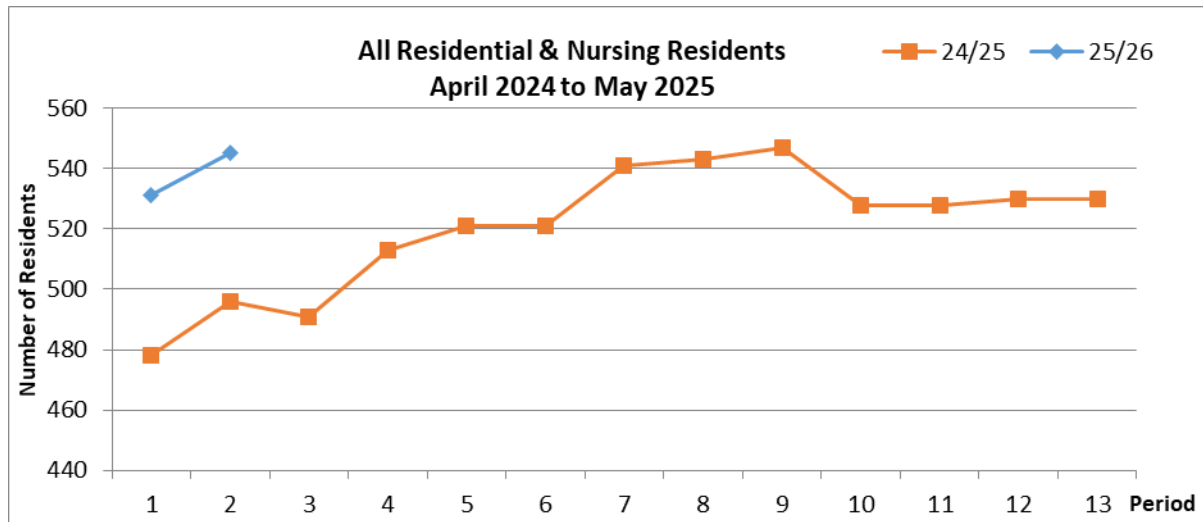
- Reduction of 1 to 1 packages of care if health’s responsibility
- Review 15 minutes packages of domiciliary care to identify medicine prompts which are health’s financial responsibility
- Ensure assessments carried out on discharge from hospital are complete and appropriate
- Maximise internal care home capacity

### Residential & Nursing Care

There are currently 545 residents in external residential/nursing care as at the end of May 2025 compared to 530 at the end of 2024/25, an increase of 2.8%. Compared to the 2024/25 average of 520 this is an increase of 4.8%. The average cost of a package

of care is currently £940.85 compared to £850.24 at the end of 2024/25 an increase of 10.6%. Supplementary invoice payments so far amount to £86k.

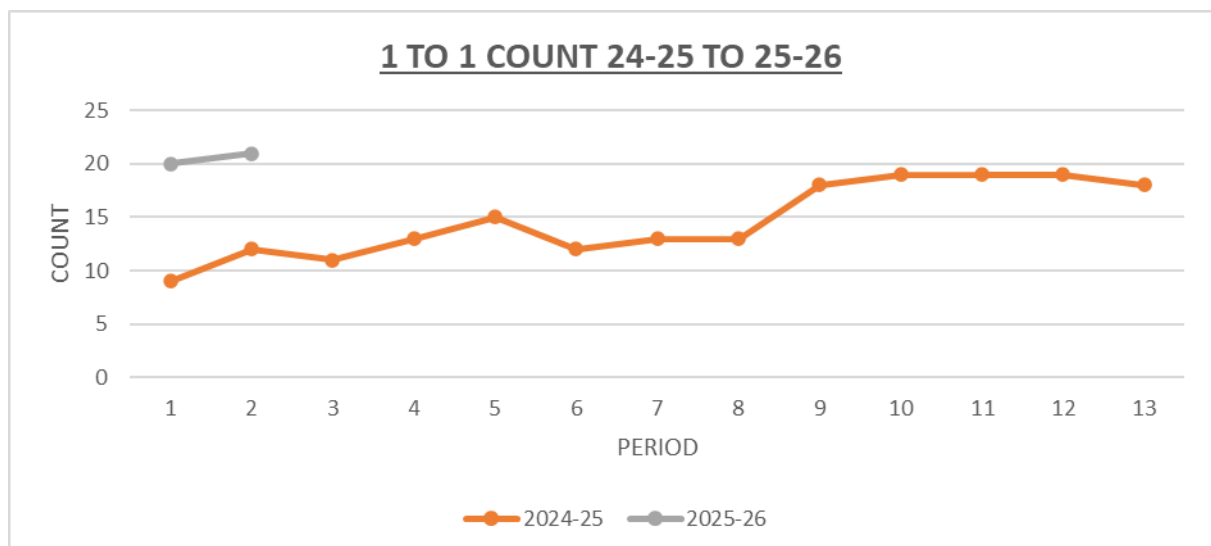
The graph below illustrates the demand for all residential and nursing placements.



### 1 to 1 Support In Care Homes

Payments for 1 to 1 support continue to exert pressure on the budget, due to increasing demand. This is generally to mitigate the risk from falls particularly on discharge from hospital. The full year cost for 2024/25 was £837,882.

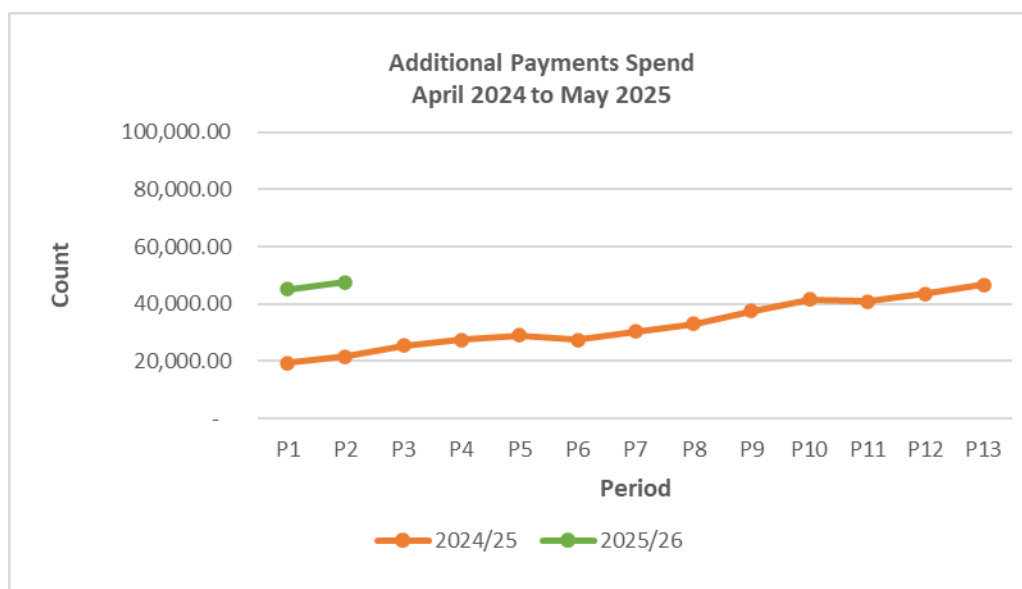
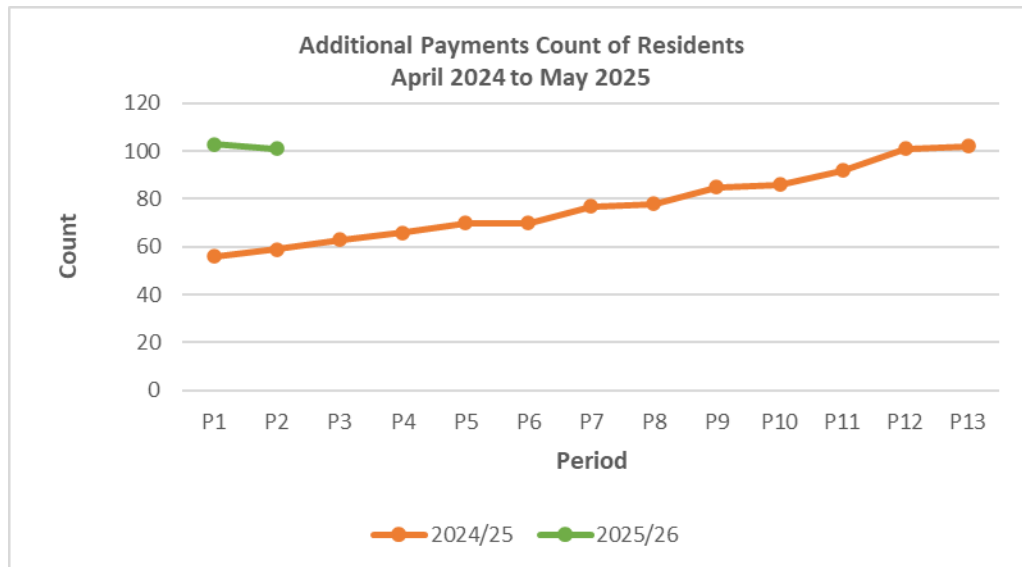
The graph below shows the count of service users receiving 1 to 1 care by period and clearly demonstrates an increase, particularly compared with the same period last year rising from 12 to 21. This is an increase of 75%.



### Additional Payments 2025/26

Additional payments to providers rose sharply throughout 2024/25, both in and out of the borough. These are where the care home charges an additional amount on top of the contracted bed rate. The cost of this for 2024/25 was £423,894.

The graph below illustrates the count of service users with an additional payment by period. This clearly shows a steady increase in numbers and costs for 24/25. The spend up to Period 2 2025/26 is £92,526.32. If numbers and costs remain the same (101) the forecast spend for the year will be approximately £0.615m.

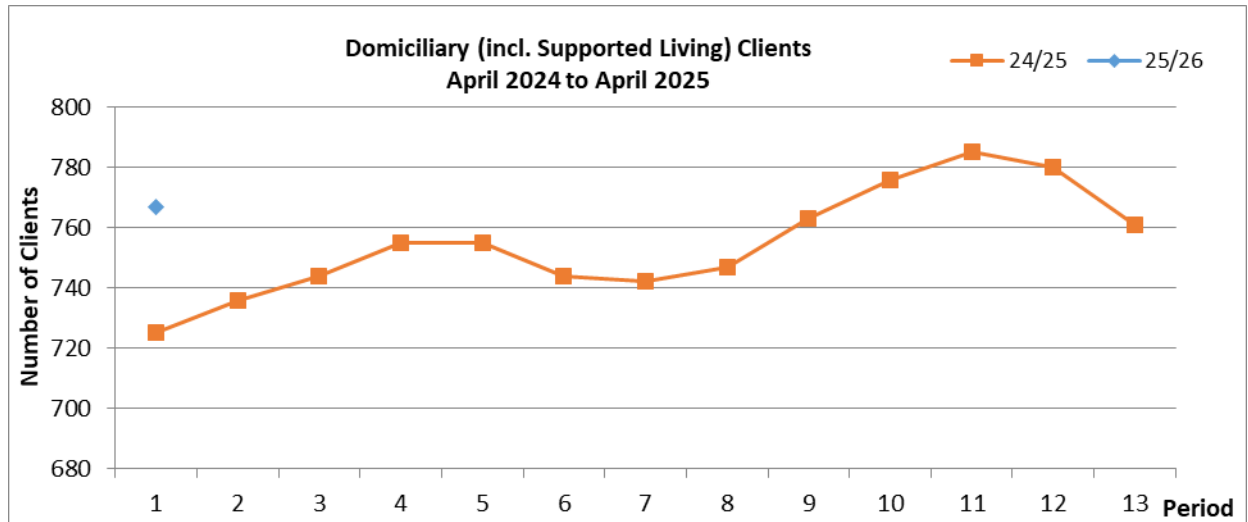


### Domiciliary Care & Supported Living

There are currently 767 service users receiving a package of care at home, compared to the average in 2024/25 of 754, an increase of 1.7%. However compared with April 2024 the increase is

5.8%. The average cost of a package of care is currently £452.39 compared with £450.64 in 2024/25.

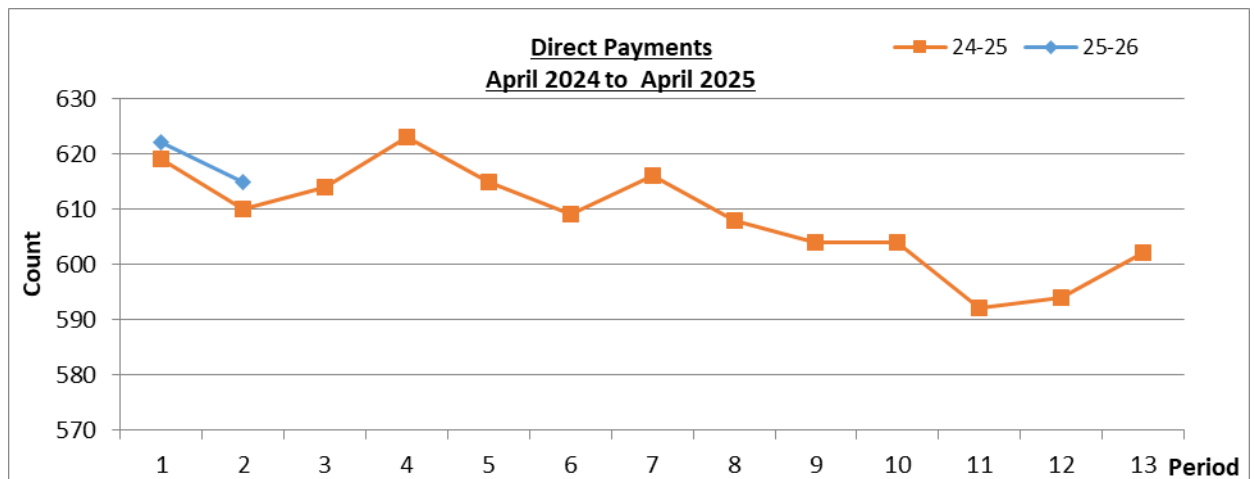
The graph below illustrates the demand for the service from April 2024 to April 2025.



### Direct Payments

The average number of clients who received a Direct Payment (DP) in Period 2 was 615 compared with 622 in Period 1, a decrease of 1.1%. The average cost of a package of care has also decreased from £571.26 to £511.50, a reduction of 10.46%.

The graph below shows movement throughout the year.



### Care Homes

Employee related expenditure is over budget profile at the end of May 2025 by £0.064M, with the expected outturn at the end of financial year being £0.517m over budget. Projections take into account agency spending patterns over the previous 3 financial

years, which consistently show increased spending patterns in the latter half of the financial year.

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 May 2025 total agency spend across the care homes reached £0.585M, the cost of this has partially been offset by staff vacancies.

### (iii) Education, Inclusion and Provision

Schools Transport is the main budget pressure for Education, Inclusion and Provision. The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils with transport. This is split into two main areas of SEN pupils attending In Borough and out of Borough Schools.

The table below illustrates the split between the two areas, and how each areas spend compares to the budget.

2025-26 as at May-25					
Area	Number of Users	Budget £000	Projected Spend £000	Variance £000	Average Cost per User
In Borough	484	1857	2066	(209)	£3,743.62
Out of Borough	145	1214	1612	(398)	£9,263.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>3071</b>	<b>3678</b>	<b>(607)</b>	

Note the above table excludes efficiency savings of £0.300m approved for the 2025/26 budget.

A Home to School transport consultation has been undertaken with stakeholders and partners with regard to implementing a new Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The consultation has been completed and the results have been analysed and recommendations put to Executive Board for possible policy changes from the beginning of the new academic year. However, it is too early to say if the savings can be achieved.



The current records show 629 service users, the majority of which attend schools within the Borough. The Out of Borough overspend has decreased compared to the previous year's overspend of £0.799m due to £0.712m added to the budget in 2025/26 for growth. The demand for the School Transport service is increasing in line with the increasing number of pupils with SEN within the Borough. The graphs below show the number of SEN children using this service, it is anticipated that these figures will increase, based on historic information. The demand for the School Transport service continues to increase in line with the increasing number of pupils with SEN within the Borough.

**(iv) Corporate and Democracy**

The Corporate & Democracy budget is currently forecasting an underspend against budget of £1.860m at the end of the financial year, there are a number of reasons for this.

Included within the budget are council wide saving proposals of £2.4m, it is currently estimated that only £0.5m of these savings will be achieved by 31 March 2026. Further details of the agreed savings are included at Appendix 3.

The additional cost of the pay award over the approved budget is estimated to cost the Council an additional £1m in the current financial year. This estimate has been included within Corporate and Democracy until the pay award is agreed and implemented.

Contingency of £4.251m is included and assumed will not be called upon (for new spend) through to 31 March 2026. The high level of contingency was included within the budget to allow for the gradual reduction in agency costs, demand and general cost pressures.

**Collection Fund**

- 3.16 The council tax collection rate through to the end of May 2025 is 18.53% which is 0.05% lower than the collection rate at the same point last year.

Debt relating to previous years continues to be collected, and the Council utilises powers through charging orders and attachment to earnings/benefits to secure debts. £0.785m has so far been collected this year in relation to previous years' debt.

- 3.17 Business rate collection through to the end of May 2025 is 24.43% which is 1.22% lower than the collection rate at the same point last year.

£0.344m has so far been collected this year in relation to previous years' debt.

**Review of Reserves**

- 3.18 As at 31 May 2025 the Council's General Reserve is unchanged from the previous period at £5.149m, which represents 2.81% of the Council's 2025/26 net budget. This level of General Reserve is considered to be insufficient and provides little to cover unforeseen costs. Within the Medium Term Financial Strategy, growth to reserves will be included at a rate of £2m per year.
- 3.19 There is a regular review of earmarked reserves undertaken to determine whether they can be released in part or in full to assist with funding the Council's current financial challenges, recognising that this only provides one-year funding solutions.

### Reserves Summary

- 3.20 A summary breakdown of the Council's reserves is presented in the table below, showing the balance of reserves as at 31 May 2025.

Summary of General and Earmarked Reserves	
Reserve	Reserve Value £m
<b>Corporate:</b>	
General Fund	5.149
Capital Reserve	0.499
Insurance Reserve	0.849
<b>Specific Projects:</b>	
Adult Social Care	0.710
Fleet Replacement	0.454
Highways Feasibility Costs	0.102
Local Development Framework	0.544
Community & Environment	0.546
Mersey Valley Golf Club	0.480
Mersey Gateway	34.351
CCLA Property Fund	0.263
Various Other	0.562
<b>Grants:</b>	
Building Schools for the Future	6.529
Public Health	1.504
Supporting Families Performance Payments	0.204
Children's & Education	1.225
Domestic Abuse	0.915
Enterprise & Employment	0.787
Food Waste Collection	0.237
Various Other	0.156
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>56.066</b>

- 3.21 The above table shows the diminishing level of reserves available to assist with funding any future budget overspends and balancing future budgets. Only the £5.149m of the General Fund could now be used for

these purposes, as all remaining reserves are committed for specific purposes.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 As at 31 May 2025, net revenue spend is forecast to be £6.185m over the budget to date despite significant levels of growth being included within the budget.
- 4.2 Urgent corrective should be taken as soon as possible across all Council services to identify spend reductions and ensure that agreed savings are fully implemented in a timely manner.
- 4.3 Departments should ensure that all spending continues to be limited to what is absolutely essential throughout the remainder of the year, to ensure that the forecast outturn overspend is minimised as far as possible and future spending is brought in line with budget.

#### **5.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

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

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

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

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 There are a number of financial risks within the budget. However, the Council has internal controls and processes in place to ensure that spending remains in line with budget as far as possible.
- 7.2 A budget risk register of significant financial risks has been prepared and is included at Appendix 4.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None

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

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



# Summary of Revenue Spending to 31 May 2025

## APPENDIX 1

Directorate / Department	Annual Budget £'000	Budget To Date £'000	Actual To Date £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	May 2025 Forecast Outturn (o'spend) £'000
Adult Social Care	24,522	3,896	3,841	55	0
Care Homes`	7,932	1,486	1,768	(282)	(794)
Community Care	27,061	3,004	3,506	(502)	(2,627)
Complex Care Pool	13,189	1,227	1,225	2	0
<b>Adults Directorate</b>	<b>72,704</b>	<b>9,613</b>	<b>10,340</b>	<b>(727)</b>	<b>(3,421)</b>
Finance	5,430	1,413	1,404	9	(113)
Legal & Democratic Services	-170	-60	0	(60)	(482)
ICT & Support Services	197	1,285	1,253	32	70
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	1,110	342	347	(5)	(21)
<b>Chief Executives Directorate</b>	<b>6,567</b>	<b>2,980</b>	<b>3,004</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>(546)</b>
Children & Families	53,903	4,939	5,378	(439)	(2,387)
Education, Inclusion & Provision	12,095	1,115	1,307	(192)	(1,239)
<b>Children's Directorate</b>	<b>65,998</b>	<b>6,054</b>	<b>6,685</b>	<b>(631)</b>	<b>(3,626)</b>
Community & Greenspace	23,602	1,170	1,212	(42)	(134)
Economy, Enterprise & Property	2,602	236	268	(32)	55
Planning & Transportation	9,256	449	561	(112)	(672)
<b>Environment &amp; Regeneration Directorate</b>	<b>35,460</b>	<b>1,855</b>	<b>2,041</b>	<b>(186)</b>	<b>(751)</b>
Corporate & Democracy	443	574	129	445	1,860
Public Health Directorate	1,880	-1,759	-1,810	51	299
<b>Total Operational Net Spend</b>	<b>183,052</b>	<b>18,808</b>	<b>19,890</b>	<b>(1,073)</b>	<b>(6,185)</b>



## Adult Social Care

## APPENDIX 2

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	18,077	3,038	2,778	260	1,302
Agency- Covering Vacancies	0	0	280	(280)	(1,567)
Premises	498	124	122	2	16
Supplies & Services	698	145	155	(10)	(52)
Aids & Adaptations	37	6	6	0	(4)
Transport	341	57	42	15	79
Food & Drink Provisions	228	38	24	14	78
Supported Accommodation and Services	1,408	235	184	51	269
Emergency Duty Team	157	0	0	0	(13)
Transfer To Reserves	295	0	0	0	0
Contracts & SLAs	1,050	189	189	0	0
					0
<u>Housing Solutions Grant Funded Schemes</u>					
Homelessness Prevention	548	196	193	3	0
Rough Sleepers Initiative	139	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>23,476</b>	<b>4,028</b>	<b>3,973</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-1,044	-111	-62	(49)	(300)
Sales & Rents Income	-538	-175	-208	33	150
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-2,089	-96	-103	7	42
Capital Salaries	-117	0	0	0	0
Housing Schemes Income	-687	-687	-687	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-4,475</b>	<b>-1,069</b>	<b>-1,060</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>(108)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>19,001</b>	<b>2,959</b>	<b>2,913</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	789	132	132	0	0
Transport	792	132	142	-10	0
Central Support	4,039	673	673	0	0
Asset Rental Support	13	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-112	0	-19	19	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>5,521</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>24,522</b>	<b>3,896</b>	<b>3,841</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0</b>



## Care Homes

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<b><u>Madeline Mckenna</u></b>					
Employees	770	122	116	6	52
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	10	(10)	(77)
Other Premises	90	14	5	9	15
Supplies & Services	26	3	6	(3)	(12)
Food Provison	51	4	9	(5)	(5)
Private Client and Out Of Borough Income	-127	-7	-5	(2)	(24)
Reimbursements & other Grant Income	-23	-2	-3	1	10
<b>Total Madeline Mckenna Expenditure</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(41)</b>
<b><u>Millbrow</u></b>					
Employees	2,280	350	199	151	1,088
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	178	(178)	(1,308)
Other Premises	117	16	19	(3)	(13)
Supplies & Services	72	11	16	(5)	(30)
Food Provison	81	7	13	(6)	(10)
Private Client and Out Of Borough Income	-13	-2	-5	3	11
Reimbursements & other Grant Income	-742	-62	-67	5	10
<b>Total Millbrow Expenditure</b>	<b>1,795</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>(33)</b>	<b>(252)</b>
<b><u>St Luke's</u></b>					
Employees	3,595	614	392	222	1,603
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	252	(252)	(1,777)
Other Premises	156	19	29	(10)	(55)
Supplies & Services	67	10	13	(3)	(10)
Food Provison	128	21	26	(5)	(30)
Private Client and Out Of Borough Income	-152	-19	-15	(4)	0
Reimbursements & other Grant Income	-1,080	-83	-82	(1)	0
<b>Total St Luke's Expenditure</b>	<b>2,714</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>(53)</b>	<b>(269)</b>
<b><u>St Patrick's</u></b>					
Employees	2,031	338	365	(27)	700
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	145	(145)	(927)
Other Premises	144	17	24	(7)	(20)
Supplies & Services	67	9	12	(3)	(10)
Food Provison	127	21	17	4	0
Private Client and Out Of Borough Income	-99	-8	-5	(3)	(10)
Reimbursements & other Grant Income	-684	-83	-48	(35)	(94)
<b>Total St Patrick's Expenditure</b>	<b>1,586</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>(216)</b>	<b>(361)</b>
<b><u>Care Homes Divison Management</u></b>					
Employees	322	54	30	24	129
<b>Care Home Divison Management</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>7,204</b>	<b>1,364</b>	<b>1,646</b>	<b>(282)</b>	<b>(794)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	65	11	11	0	0
Transport Support	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	663	111	111	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>7,932</b>	<b>1,486</b>	<b>1,768</b>	<b>(282)</b>	<b>(794)</b>

## Community Care

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Residential & Nursing	20,674	1,340	1,395	(55)	(333)
Domiciliary Care & Supported living	15,564	691	861	(170)	(1,343)
Direct Payments	15,513	3,430	3,644	(214)	(972)
Day Care	712	62	60	2	13
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>52,463</b>	<b>5,523</b>	<b>5,960</b>	<b>(437)</b>	<b>(2,635)</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Residential & Nursing Income	-11,881	-729	-732	3	14
Community Care Income	-3,115	-230	-159	(71)	(210)
Direct Payments Income	-1,034	-77	-80	3	204
Income from other CCGs	-420	0	0	0	0
Market sustainability & Improvement Grant	-2,796	-466	-466	0	0
Adult Social Care Support Grant	-6,102	-1,017	-1,017	0	0
War Pension Disregard Grant	-54	0	0	0	0
				0	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-25,402</b>	<b>-2,519</b>	<b>-2,454</b>	<b>(65)</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>27,061</b>	<b>3,004</b>	<b>3,506</b>	<b>(502)</b>	<b>(2,627)</b>

**Complex Care Pool**

	<b>Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Budget to Date £'000</b>	<b>Actual Spend £'000</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend) £'000</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn £'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Intermediate Care Services	6,312	494	500	(6)	(31)
Oakmeadow	1,995	299	295	4	22
Community Home Care First	1,941	142	132	10	42
Joint Equipment Store	880	0	0	0	0
Contracts & SLA's	3,262	0	0	0	0
Inglenook	134	14	8	6	34
HICafs	3,720	98	121	(23)	(124)
Carers Breaks	445	27	20	7	47
Carers centre	365	0	0	0	0
Residential Care	7,236	906	906	0	0
Domiciliary Care & Supported Living	4,336	723	723	0	0
Pathway 3/Discharge Access	426	0	0	0	(2)
HBC Contracts	72	22	22	0	0
Healthy at Home	28	0	0	0	0
Capacity	30	0	-4	4	12
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>31,182</b>	<b>2,725</b>	<b>2,723</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Income</b>					
BCF	-15,032	-1,253	-1,253	0	0
CCG Contribution to Pool	-2,959	-246	-246	0	0
Oakmeadow Income	-2	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-17,993</b>	<b>-1,499</b>	<b>-1,499</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>13,189</b>	<b>1,227</b>	<b>1,225</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

## Finance Department

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	7,242	1,163	1,149	14	86
Insurances	1,042	546	521	25	169
Supplies & Services	1,103	58	71	(13)	(76)
Rent Allowances	31,500	4,275	4,275	0	0
Concessionary Travel	1,902	0	-45	45	91
LCR Levy	1,902	0	0	0	0
Bad Debt Provision	223	4	0	4	25
Non HRA Rent Rebates	70	12	3	9	57
Discretionary Social Fund	106	16	0	16	97
Discretionary Housing Payments	279	41	40	1	2
Household Support Fund Expenditure	420	420	420	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>45,789</b>	<b>6,535</b>	<b>6,434</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>451</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-342	-123	-131	8	52
Burdens Grant	-58	-59	-63	4	24
Dedicated schools Grant	-150	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Liability Order	-670	-64	-55	(9)	(50)
Recovery of Legal Costs	-10	-2	0	(2)	(10)
Business Rates Admin Grant	-157	0	0	0	1
Schools SLAs	-319	-2	0	(2)	(10)
LCR Reimbursement	-1,902	0	0	0	0
HB Overpayment Debt Recovery	-300	-47	-35	(12)	(75)
Rent Allowances	-30,700	-4,262	-4,142	(120)	(684)
Non HRA Rent Rebate	-70	-14	-13	(1)	(5)
Discretionary Housing Payment Grant	-279	-93	-93	0	(2)
Housing Benefits Admin Grant	-453	-76	-76	0	0
Housing Benefits Award Accuracy	0	0	-22	22	22
Universal Credits	-5	-1	0	(1)	(5)
Household Support Fund Grant	-420	326	326	0	0
VEP Grant	0	0	0	0	5
CCG McMillan Reimbursement	-89	0	0	0	0
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-185	0	-21	21	173
Transfer from Reserves	-21	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-36,130</b>	<b>-4,417</b>	<b>-4,325</b>	<b>(92)</b>	<b>(564)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>9,659</b>	<b>2,118</b>	<b>2,109</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>(113)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	493	82	82	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	2,092	349	349	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-6,814	-1,136	-1,136	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-4,229</b>	<b>-705</b>	<b>-705</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>5,430</b>	<b>1,413</b>	<b>1,404</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>(113)</b>

**Legal Services**

	<b>Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Budget to Date £'000</b>	<b>Actual Spend £'000</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend) £'000</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn £'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	1,836	244	261	(17)	(101)
Agency Related Expenditure	34	34	63	(29)	(174)
Supplies & Services	163	63	60	3	16
Civic Catering & Functions	21	1	1	0	5
Legal Expenses	422	2	5	(3)	(145)
Transport Related Expenditure	8	2	3	(1)	(1)
Other Expenditure	0	1	1	0	(1)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,484</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>-47</b>	<b>(401)</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges Income	-75	-10	-4	(6)	(40)
Reimbursement & Other Grants	0	0	0	0	2
School SLA's	-100	-4	0	(4)	(23)
Licence Income	-341	-37	-34	(3)	(20)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-516</b>	<b>-51</b>	<b>-38</b>	<b>(13)</b>	<b>(81)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>(60)</b>	<b>(482)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	62	10	10	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	275	46	46	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-2,475	-412	-412	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-2,138</b>	<b>-356</b>	<b>-356</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>-170</b>	<b>-60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(60)</b>	<b>(482)</b>

## ICT &amp; Support Services Department

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	5,827	958	901	57	223
Supplies & Services	1,169	262	295	(33)	(199)
Capital Finance	100	19	6	13	73
Computer Repairs & Software	2,019	1,724	1,697	27	160
Communication Costs	133	25	41	(16)	(92)
Premises	139	55	56	(1)	(6)
Transport	3	0	0	0	1
Other	4	3	4	(1)	(6)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>9,394</b>	<b>3,046</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-849	-217	-217	0	2
Schools SLA Income	-659	-14	0	(14)	(86)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-1,508</b>	<b>-231</b>	<b>-217</b>	<b>(14)</b>	<b>(84)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>7,886</b>	<b>2,815</b>	<b>2,783</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	373	62	62	0	0
Transport	22	4	4	0	0
Central Support	1,391	232	232	0	0
Asset Rental Support	1,494	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-10,969	-1,828	-1,828	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-7,689</b>	<b>-1,530</b>	<b>-1,530</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>1,285</b>	<b>1,253</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>70</b>

## Chief Executives Delivery Unit

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	3,522	558	548	10	65
Employees Training	99	42	38	4	21
Apprenticeship Levy	330	54	61	(7)	(41)
Supplies & Services	397	132	130	2	12
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4,348</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-226	-26	-24	(2)	(9)
Schools SLA Income	-577	-12	0	(12)	(69)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-803</b>	<b>-38</b>	<b>-24</b>	<b>(14)</b>	<b>(78)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>3,545</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(21)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	157	26	26	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	1,008	168	168	0	0
Asset Rental Support	53	9	9	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-3,653	-609	-609	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-2,435</b>	<b>-406</b>	<b>-406</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(21)</b>

## Children &amp; Families

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	19,364	2,808	3,029	(221)	(1,449)
Other Premises	392	92	97	(5)	(39)
Supplies & Services	1,592	0	94	(94)	(1,057)
Transport	367	49	19	30	180
Direct Payments	1,220	261	245	16	94
Commissioned services to Vol Orgs	224	168	168	0	0
Residential Care	27,517	2,130	2,238	(108)	38
Out of Borough Adoption	97	0	0	0	97
Out of Borough Fostering	5,469	248	399	(151)	(785)
In House Adoption	557	24	20	4	22
Special Guardianship Order	2,604	346	323	23	130
In House Foster Carer Placements	2,766	371	283	88	515
Lavender House Contract Costs	279	24	23	1	4
Home Support & Respite	494	67	63	4	25
Care Leavers	434	37	39	(2)	(10)
Family Support	81	10	7	3	15
Contracted services	3	1	1	0	(1)
Emergency Duty	184	0	0	0	0
Youth Offending Services	461	0	0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>64,105</b>	<b>6,636</b>	<b>7,048</b>	<b>(412)</b>	<b>(2,221)</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-33	-9	-7	(2)	(14)
Sales Income	0	0	0	0	0
Rents	-82	0	0	0	0
Reimbursement & other Grant Income	-486	-52	-27	(25)	(153)
Transfer from reserve	-15	0	0	0	1
Dedicated Schools Grant	-50	0	0	0	0
Government Grants	-13,477	-2,293	-2,293	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-14,143</b>	<b>-2,354</b>	<b>-2,327</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>(166)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>49,962</b>	<b>4,282</b>	<b>4,721</b>	<b>(439)</b>	<b>(2,387)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	736	123	123	0	0
Transport	10	2	2	0	0
Central Support	3,331	555	555	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-136	-23	-23	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>3,941</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>53,903</b>	<b>4,939</b>	<b>5,378</b>	<b>(439)</b>	<b>(2,387)</b>



## Education, Inclusion &amp; Provision

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	8,792	1,305	1,314	(9)	248
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	29	(29)	(204)
Agency - in addition to establishment	43	24	24	0	6
Premises	15	1	0	1	3
Supplies & Services	3,012	300	309	(9)	(54)
Independent School Fees	10,155	3,004	3,004	0	0
Schools Contingency	400	2	2	0	0
Transport	43	3	6	(3)	(20)
Schools Transport	2,771	158	259	(101)	(907)
Early Years Payments including Pupil Premium	15,615	1,954	1,954	0	0
Commissioned Services	2,249	196	194	2	9
Inter Authority Special Needs	1,419	166	166	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	115	0	1	(1)	(66)
Capital Finance	4,604	712	712	0	1
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>49,233</b>	<b>7,825</b>	<b>7,974</b>	<b>(149)</b>	<b>(984)</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges Income	-337	-126	-129	3	20
Government Grant Income	-6,534	-1,549	-1,549	0	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	-30,161	-5,027	-5,027	0	0
Inter Authority Income	-446	-94	-59	(35)	(211)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-1,773	-298	-298	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-538	-12	-2	(10)	(59)
Government Grant Income	-491	-142	-142	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-40,280</b>	<b>-7,248</b>	<b>-7,206</b>	<b>(42)</b>	<b>(250)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>8,953</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>(191)</b>	<b>(1,234)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	405	68	68	0	0
Transport Support	773	146	147	(1)	(5)
Central Support	1,947	324	324	0	0
Asset Rental Support	17	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>3,142</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(5)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>12,095</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>1,307</b>	<b>(192)</b>	<b>(1,239)</b>

## Community & Greenspaces

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	15,296	2,506	2,410	96	580
Agency - in addition to establishment	16	16	69	(53)	(237)
Premises	3,304	416	440	(24)	(139)
Supplies & Services	3,101	258	287	(29)	(176)
Transport	117	2	4	(2)	(10)
Other Agency Costs	240	63	81	(18)	(111)
Other Expenditure	172	0	0	0	6
Waste Disposal Contracts	7,121	0	0	0	(22)
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	41	9	7	2	16
Transfers to Reserves	97	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>29,505</b>	<b>3,270</b>	<b>3,297</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>(93)</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Sales Income	-1,342	-268	-275	7	42
Fees & Charges Income	-6,019	-1,524	-1,510	(14)	(89)
Rental Income	-1,111	-174	-159	(15)	(85)
Government Grant Income	-3,861	-1,288	-1,288	0	0
Reimbursement & Other Grant Income	-801	-115	-115	0	0
SLA Income	-23	0	0	0	0
Internal Fees Income	-223	0	-18	18	155
Capital Salaries	-236	-6	0	(6)	(35)
Transfers From Reserves	-30	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-13,646</b>	<b>-3,375</b>	<b>-3,365</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>(12)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>15,859</b>	<b>-105</b>	<b>-68</b>	<b>(37)</b>	<b>(105)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	1,657	276	276	0	0
Transport	2,433	424	429	(5)	(29)
Central Support	4,297	716	716	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-843	-141	-141	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>7,743</b>	<b>1,275</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(29)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>23,602</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>1,212</b>	<b>(42)</b>	<b>(134)</b>

## Economy, Enterprise & Property

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	4,124	773	710	63	376
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	85	(85)	(270)
Repairs & Maintenance	1,690	133	150	(17)	(98)
Premises	173	136	136	0	(1)
Energy & Water Costs	1,080	93	87	6	37
NNDR	659	629	629	0	0
Rents	157	0	0	0	1
Economic Regeneration Activities	88	0	0	0	0
Security	603	4	3	1	3
Supplies & Services	383	63	62	1	8
Supplies & Services - Grant	576	97	97	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	72	11	12	(1)	(1)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>9,605</b>	<b>1,939</b>	<b>1,971</b>	<b>(32)</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges Income	-561	-103	-103	0	0
Rent - Commercial Properties	-883	-158	-158	0	0
Rent - Investment Properties	-38	-8	-8	0	0
Government Grant	-594	-55	-55	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-120	-241	-241	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-55	0	0	0	0
Recharges to Capital	-454	0	0	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-602	-522	-522	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-3,307</b>	<b>-1,087</b>	<b>-1,087</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>6,298</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>(32)</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	2,738	456	456	0	0
Transport	26	5	5	0	0
Central Support	2,878	480	480	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-9,342	-1,557	-1,557	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-3,696</b>	<b>-616</b>	<b>-616</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>2,602</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>(32)</b>	<b>55</b>

## Planning & Transportation Department

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	5,975	967	947	20	125
Efficiency Savings	-100	-17	0	(17)	(100)
Premises	188	62	56	6	38
Hired & Contracted Services	380	3	15	(12)	(74)
Supplies & Services	117	41	65	(24)	(148)
Street Lighting	1,643	1	32	(31)	(191)
Highways Maintenance - Routine & Reactive	1,803	99	169	(70)	(425)
Highways Maintenance - Programmed Works	812	43	0	43	259
Fleet Transport	1,467	206	201	5	32
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	14	0	0	0	(3)
Bus Support	506	36	36	0	0
Agency Related Expenditure	8	1	1	0	3
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	31	31	31	0	0
NRA Levy	75	0	0	0	0
LCR Levy	1,553	0	0	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	359	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>14,831</b>	<b>1,473</b>	<b>1,553</b>	<b>(80)</b>	<b>(484)</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Sales & Rents Income	-97	-16	-11	(5)	(27)
Planning Fees	-798	-198	-159	(39)	(232)
Building Control Fees	-251	-39	-33	(6)	(35)
Other Fees & Charges	-971	-193	-186	(7)	(40)
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-174	-36	-36	0	0
Government Grant Income	0	-4	-5	1	0
Halton Hopper Income	-15	-3	-2	(1)	(6)
Recharge to Capital	-210	0	0	0	0
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-1,553	0	0	0	0
Contribution from Reserves	-129	-129	-129	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-4,198</b>	<b>-618</b>	<b>-561</b>	<b>(57)</b>	<b>(340)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>10,633</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>(137)</b>	<b>(824)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	739	123	123	0	0
Transport	808	118	120	(2)	(13)
Central Support	2,505	420	420	0	0
Asset Rental Support	918	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-6,347	-1,067	-1,094	27	165
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-1,377</b>	<b>-406</b>	<b>-431</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>9,256</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>(112)</b>	<b>(672)</b>

## Corporate &amp; Democracy

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	369	61	80	(19)	(16)
Contracted Services	12	0	0	0	0
Supplies & Services	102	38	16	22	0
Premises Expenditure	24	8	8	0	0
Transport Costs	1	0	0	0	0
Members Allowances	994	166	171	(5)	0
Interest Payable - Treasury Management	4,258	710	676	34	200
Interest Payable - Other	215	36	36	0	0
Bank Charges	0	0	0	0	0
Audit Fees	0	0	0	0	0
Contingency	5,158	709	0	709	4,251
Capital Financing	3,346	584	584	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	300	300	263	37	0
Debt Management Expenses	20	3	3	0	0
Precepts & Levies	244	244	244	0	0
Pay Award over 2%	0	0	0	0	(1,000)
<b>Efficiency Savings:</b>					
Purchase of Additional Leave	-100	-17	0	(17)	(50)
Voluntary Severance Scheme	-200	-33	0	(33)	(100)
Apprenticeship First Model	-200	-33	0	(33)	(50)
Agency Staff Reduction	-1,700	-283	0	(283)	(1,700)
Review Existing Contracts	-200	-33	0	(33)	(100)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,643</b>	<b>2,460</b>	<b>2,081</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>1,435</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Interest Receivable - Treasury Management	-3,045	-507	-578	71	425
Interest Receivable - Other	-19	-3	-3	0	0
Other Fees & Charges	-146	-18	-13	(5)	0
Grants & Reimbursements	-334	-56	-56	0	0
Government Grant Income	-6,272	-1,045	-1,045	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-9,816</b>	<b>-1,629</b>	<b>-1,695</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>425</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>2,827</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>1,860</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	22	4	4	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	898	158	158	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-3,304	-419	-419	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-2,384</b>	<b>-257</b>	<b>-257</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>1,860</b>

## Public Health




	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	5,627	802	772	30	177
Other Premises	6	1	0	1	6
Supplies & Services	322	87	100	(13)	(78)
Contracts & SLA's	7,206	253	219	34	200
Transport	4	0	0	0	1
Other Agency	24	24	24	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>13,189</b>	<b>1,167</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-122	-12	-11	(1)	(4)
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-154	-59	-59	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-59	0	0	0	0
Government Grant Income	-12,435	-3,098	-3,098	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-12,770</b>	<b>-3,169</b>	<b>-3,168</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>-2,002</b>	<b>-2,053</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	209	35	35	0	0
Transport Support	24	4	4	0	(3)
Central Support	1,897	316	316	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-669	-112	-112	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>1,461</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,880</b>	<b>-1,759</b>	<b>-1,810</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>299</b>



## Progress Against Agreed Savings

## Appendix 3




### Adult Social Care

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Housing Solutions	474	Remodel the current service based on good practice evidence from other areas.	125	0		Currently Under Review
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.	100	0		Achieved
Community Wardens/Telecare Service		Community Wardens/Telecare Service – a review will be undertaken of the various options available for the future delivery of these services, with	0	280		Currently Under Review




		support from the Transformation Delivery Unit.				
Care Management Community Care Budget		Community Care – continuation of the work being undertaken to review care provided through the Community Care budget, in order to reduce the current overspend and ongoing costs.	0	1,000	U	Unlikely to be achieved – currently forecast overspend position
Various		Review of Service Delivery Options – reviews will be undertaken of the various service delivery options available for a number of areas including; Day Services, Halton Supported Housing Network, In-House Care Homes, Reablement Service and Oak Meadow.	0	375	U	Currently Under Review
<b>Total ASC Directorate</b>			<b>225</b>	<b>1,655</b>		



## Finance

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Internal Audit	300	Restructure in light of potential retirements over the next two years within the Internal Audit Team.	50	0		It appears unlikely that the proposed £50k budget saving will be fully realised this year, if at all
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	0		Increase in costs to be applied from 2026/27.
Debt Management		Debt Management – undertake a review of debt management policies and procedures, in order to implement a more robust approach to debt management and debt recovery, considering options such as seeking payment in advance wherever possible, to improve cashflow and reduce the risk of non-recovery.	0	100		Currently part of workstream being undertaken by the Transformation Programme.
<b>Total Finance Department</b>			<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>		

## Legal and Democratic Services

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Members		Deputy Mayor – cease provision of the Deputy Mayor's allowance, whilst retaining a nominated Deputy Mayor.	0	6		Achieved.
<b>Total Legal and Democratic Services</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>		

## Children and Families Department

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Children's Centres	1,293	Review the operation of Windmill Hill Children's Centre, where there is the potential to save on premises and staffing costs.	22	0		With the implementation of the family hubs the review of Windmill Hill will no longer be viable. The centre is located in an area of deprivation and the role of the centre as a family hub is a priority in the Children's social care review and supporting families at an earlier level, improving access to services for the most vulnerable and ensure a positive start for all children. These fit with the council priorities
Children's Residential Care		Residential Placements – continuation of the work being undertaken to review residential placements, especially high cost placements, and identify opportunities to step-down placements or find alternatives, in order to reduce the current overspend and ongoing costs.	0	1,500		Residential placements were all reviewed in early 2024 with some reduction in costs established. As part of the longer term plan included in the sufficiency strategy, Halton has partnered with a not for profit organisation, Juno, who are awaiting registration from OFSTED - this approach is part of the LCR approach working with NFP organisations. in



						addition significant changes have been made to reduce the numbers of children coming into care. Mocking bird constellation is in place and evidenced support has resulted in appropriate transition so the need for residential is mitigated. A property has been identified for care leavers and further properties identified for additional semi-independent provisions. Juno will focus on their second home after July
Fostering		Independent Fostering Agencies and Out of Borough Fostering – continuation of the work being undertaken to review placements, to increase use of In-Borough foster carers wherever possible and thereby reduce costs, in order to reduce the current overspend and ongoing costs.	0	200	U	Recruitment campaign has been launched to attract in house foster carers so Council reliance on IFA's is reduced. Unfortunately there is a national shortage of foster carers and as a result the reliance on IFA's continues
Legal Costs		Court Costs – implementation of measures in conjunction with Legal Services, to reduce the backlog and ongoing number of Children's cases going to court, thereby reducing the timescales	0	200	U	Progress has been made on reducing the cost of court with success in reducing the number of applications, the reduction in timeliness of proceedings, further work is currently underway to reduce the number of C2 applications to court.

		involved and cost of court proceedings, in order to reduce the current overspend and ongoing costs.				PLO process is proving effective for some families in diverting away from legal proceedings and safely maintaining children with parents, further exploration is taking place on the use of in house psychologists to undertake assessments in the court arena to further reduce court costs
<b>Total Children &amp; Families Department</b>			<b>22</b>	<b>1,900</b>		


## Education, Inclusion and Provision Department

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Home to School Transport		Home to School Transport – undertake consultation with stakeholders and partners with regard to implementing a new Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.	0	300	<div>U</div>	The consultation with stakeholders and partners has taken place. The results have been analysed and recommendations put to Executive Board for possible policy changes from the beginning of the new academic year.
<b>Total EIP Department</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>300</b>		


## Community and Greenspace Department

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
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.	12	0		School meals service has ceased and is reflected in the 25/26 budget.
Green Waste		Green Waste – increase green waste charges from £43 to £50 per annum, to bring Halton onto a comparable basis with charges levied by neighbouring councils.	0	100		Green waste charges have been increased to £50.




Service Area	Net Budget	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
Area Forums		Area Forums – cease the funding for Area Forums.	0	170		Area forum budgets have been removed in 25-26
<b>Total Community &amp; Greenspace Dept</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>270</b>		


## Economy, Enterprise and Property Department

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Asset Management		Accelerate the lease or sale of surplus land, non-operational buildings, surplus space within building, etc. to either generate lease rentals or capital receipts to help fund capital schemes and thereby reduce future capital financing costs.	0	100		It is currently too early to establish if this can be achieved. Although all options will be explored.
<b>Total EEP Dept</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>		

## Policy, Planning and Transportation Department



Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
Highways		LED Advertising Screens – install LED advertising screens at appropriate locations within the Borough in order to generate advertising revenue. The estimated annual income is the Council's share of advertising revenue net of capital financing costs for the installations.	0	100		It is not anticipated that this income will be achieved this financial year as the LED screens are no closer to being installed.
<b>Total PPT Dept</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>		

## Public Health Directorate Department

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
Environmental Health		Pest Control – increase charges for pest control on the basis of benchmarking data, to bring Halton onto a comparable basis with charges levied by neighbouring councils.	0	45		Charges Increased
<b>Total Public Health Directorate</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>		

## Corporate and Democracy

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
Chief Executives Delivery Unit		Purchase of Additional Leave – development of a voluntary scheme to enable staff to purchase additional annual leave.	0	100		Scheme being considered by Executive Board, uncertainty to timing and sign-up to the scheme.
Chief Executives Delivery Unit		Voluntary Severance Scheme – development of a policy whereby staff may be offered voluntary severance in appropriate circumstances, but without creating a significant pension strain liability.	0	200		Scheme to be designed and approved. Uncertainty to timing and sign-up to the scheme.
Chief Executives Delivery Unit		Apprenticeships - implement an “Apprentice First” policy, with all appropriate vacant posts assessed initially to determine whether they might be suitable	0	200		Scheme being developed, uncertainty to take up of the scheme.

		as an apprenticeship. This will build longer term resilience into the organisation's workforce and provide short term cost savings by drawing down funding from the apprenticeship levy. The scheme will be co-ordinated by the newly appointed Apprenticeship Officer, funded and supported by the Transformation Delivery Unit.				
Council Wide		Agency Staff Reduction – continuation of the work being co-ordinated by the Transformation Delivery Unit to reduce the reliance upon agency workers across the Council, in particular within Adults and Children's Social Care. Target net savings of £1.7m for 2025/26, £1.3m for 2026/27 and £1.1m for 2027/28.	0	1,700		<p>There is evidence of reduced agency usage within the Children's directorate but targets have been built into directorate budget which duplicate what is included here.</p> <p>Uncertainty with regard to reductions across Adult Social Care.</p> <p>Highly unlikely the £1.7m saving will be achieved in the current financial year.</p>
Council Wide		Review all existing contracts across the Council to re-consider their requirements and performance on the basis of outputs achieved.	0	200		Currently part of workstream being undertaken by the Transformation Programme.

Total Corporate & Democracy	0	2,400		
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**Symbol**

**Objective**



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



Indicates that it is uncertain or too early to say at this stage whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.



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

## 2025/26 Budget Risk Register as at 31 May 2025

## Appendix 4

Risk No	Risk Identified	Impact	Likelihood	Risk Score	Risk Control Measures	Assessment of Residual Risk with Control Measures Implemented			Responsible Person	Timescale for Review	Progress Comments	Date Updated
						Impact	Likelihood	Risk Score				
1	<b>Pay costs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay award</li> <li>Staff Turnover Saving Target</li> <li>Agency, casuals and overtime</li> <li>National Living Wage</li> <li>Pension Costs</li> </ul>	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget based upon individual staff members/vacancies</li> <li>Budget monitoring</li> <li>Contingency</li> <li>Balances</li> <li>Medium Term Forecast</li> <li>Engage with Cheshire Pension Scheme and</li> </ul>	3	3	9	ED/SB/ Directors	Monthly	2025/26 budget includes pay growth at forecast 2% pay award. Initial pay offer to trade unions was set at 3.2%, this will cost approximately a further £1m to the budget  Agency costs and usage remain high	31/5/25



					<p>pension actuary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market supplement paid in multiple service areas</li> <li>• Employer of Choice Initiative</li> <li>• Connect to Halton – Review of Scheme</li> </ul>						<p>although some evidence of reduction in numbers within Children Social Care.</p> <p>Market Supplements paid to a number of service areas.</p> <p>Connect to Halton scheme went live September 2024, agency and casual appointments to be covered by the scheme.</p>	
2	<b>Redundancy and Early Retirements</b>	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits Tracking Process</li> <li>• Future savings to take into account cost of redundancy and early retirements.</li> <li>• Seek Government approval to use capital receipts to fund transformation costs.</li> <li>• Develop policy for voluntary severance</li> </ul>	2	3	6	ED/SB	Quarterly	<p>Tracker created to monitor redundancy costs in current year.</p> <p>Look to capitalise redundancy costs where possible where evidence exists it creates a longer term saving.</p> <p>£0.200m saving included in 25/26 budget for</p>	31/05/25

					scheme						savings from voluntary severance scheme.	
3	<b>Savings not achieved</b>	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget monitoring</li> <li>Contingency</li> <li>Rigorous process in approving savings.</li> <li>Review of savings at departmental and directorate level</li> <li>Monthly budget monitoring</li> <li>Medium Term Financial Forecast</li> <li>RAG monitoring of savings included in bi-monthly monitoring reports.</li> <li>Transformation saving targets reported monthly through Transformation Programme Board.</li> </ul>	4	2	8	RR/ED/SB/Directors	Monthly	<p>Savings for 2025/26 have been written into Directorate budgets.</p> <p>Budget savings monitored closely and if necessary offsetting savings sought.</p> <p>Transformation Programme Board meeting on monthly basis to discuss progress against programme.</p>	31/05/25

4	<b>Price inflation</b>	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prudent budget provision</li> <li>• Latest forecast information used eg. utilities</li> <li>• Budget monitoring</li> <li>• Contingency</li> <li>• Balances</li> <li>• CPI/RPI monitoring</li> <li>• MTFS</li> </ul>	3	3	9	ED/SB	Monthly	<p>CPI for May 2025 is 3.4% and RPI is 4.3%. Both running higher than inflation included in 2025.26 budget.</p> <p>Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast inflation to be 3.2% in 2025 and 2.1% through to 2027. Rates are higher than forecast that at 2025/26 budget setting and remain above Governments 2% target.</p>	31/05/25
5	<b>Review of LG Finance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business rates retention – 100% Pilot and Review</li> <li>• Fair Funding</li> </ul>	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPs</li> <li>• SIGOMA / LG Futures</li> <li>• Liverpool City Region &amp; Merseyside Treasurers</li> </ul>	3	3	9	ED/SB/NS/M W/MG	Weekly/ Monthly	<p>Business rate retention pilot continues through to March 2027.</p> <p>Government are</p>	31/05/25

	<div>Review<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>National Public Spending Plans</li><li>Social Care Green Paper</li></ul></div>				<div>Group<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Medium Term Financial Strategy</li><li>Member of business rate retention pilot region</li><li>Dialogue with DCLG</li><li>Responding to reviews and consultations</li></ul></div>						<div>committed to providing more certainty on LG Finances through multi year settlements.</div> <div>Government issued the Fair Funding consultation on 20 June 2025, with a closing date of 15 August.</div> <div>Resetting the Business Rates Retention consultation was issued by Government in April 2025 with Halton submitting a response prior to the 02 June deadline.</div>	
6	<div>Treasury Management<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Borrowing</li><li>Investment</li></ul></div>	2	3	6	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Treasury Management Strategy</li><li>Link Asset Services advice</li><li>Treasury Management</li></ul></div>	1	3	3	ED/SB/MG	Daily / Quarterly	<div>BoE base rate reduced to 4.25%.</div> <div>Impact of Exceptional Financial Support request to be</div>	31/05/25

					planning and monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance at Networking and Benchmarking Groups</li> <li>Officer and Member Training</li> </ul>						assessed with regards to timing of future borrowing.	
7	<b>Demand led budgets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children in Care</li> <li>Out of borough fostering</li> <li>Community Care</li> <li>High Needs</li> </ul>	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget monitoring</li> <li>Contingency</li> <li>Balances</li> <li>Review service demand</li> <li>Directorate recovery groups</li> <li>Monthly budget monitoring</li> <li>Children Improvement Plan Investment Funding</li> </ul>	4	4	16	ED/SB/NS/MW	Monthly	Numbers of children in care and with protection plans reviewed on a weekly basis.  Community care costs and numbers on increase, reviewed on a regular basis.  Investment in Children Services following OFSTED inspection to be monitored with regard to control and reduction of future costs.	31/05/25
8	<b>Mersey Gateway Costs</b>	4	2	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular monitoring with Crossing Board</li> </ul>	2	1	2	ED/SB/MG	Quarterly	Arrangements in place to monitor spend and	31/05/25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs</li> <li>Toll Income</li> <li>Funding</li> <li>Accounting treatment</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital reserve</li> <li>Government Grant</li> <li>Liquidity Fund</li> </ul>						availability of liquidity fund.	
9	<b>Council Tax Collection</b>	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council tax monitoring on monthly basis</li> <li>Review of Collection Rate</li> <li>Collection Fund Balance</li> <li>Provision for bad debts</li> <li>Review recovery procedures</li> <li>Benchmarking</li> </ul>	3	2	6	ED/PG/SB/PD/BH/MG	Monthly	<p>Collection rate to 31 May 2025 was 18.53% which is marginally lower than the rate of 18.58% at the same point last year.</p> <p>To 31 May 2025 £0.785m was collected in relation to old year debt.</p>	31/05/25
10	<b>Business Rates Retention Scheme</b>	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and monitoring of latest business rates income to baseline and estimate for year.</li> <li>Prudent allowance for losses in collection</li> <li>Prudent provision set</li> </ul>	3	1	3	ED/SB/LB/MG	Monthly	<p>Collection rate to 31 May 2025 was 22.81% which is 1.22% lower than the rate at the same point last year.</p> <p>To 31 May 2025 £0.344m was</p>	31/05/25

					aside for losses from valuation appeals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular monitoring of annual yield and baseline / budget position</li> <li>Benchmarking Groups</li> <li>Review recovery procedures</li> </ul>						collected in relation to old year debt.	
11	<b>Income recovery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncertainty to economy following cost of living and high inflation</li> </ul>	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate charging policy</li> <li>Budget monitoring</li> <li>Contingency</li> <li>Balances</li> <li>Income benchmarking</li> </ul>	3	2	6	ED/MM/SB	Monthly	Income shortfalls identified and cause of increased concern in certain areas are being closely monitored.  Additional posts created within Adult Social Care Directorate, responsible for improving the overall collection of social care debt.	31/05/25
13	<b>Capital Programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs</li> <li>Funding</li> </ul>	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Management</li> <li>Regular monitoring</li> <li>Detailed financial</li> </ul>	3	2	6	Project Managers/ED /SB/LH	Quarterly	Capital receipts have been fully committed therefore new capital schemes need to bring	31/05/25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Major Projects</li> <li>• Clawback of Grant</li> <li>• Availability and timing of capital receipts</li> <li>• Cashflow</li> <li>• Contractors</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analysis of new schemes to ensure they are affordable</li> <li>• Targets monitored to minimise clawback of grant.</li> <li>• Contractor due diligence</li> <li>• Dialogue with Government departments.</li> </ul>						own funding.	
14	<b>Academy Schools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of transfer upon Council budget</li> <li>• Loss of income to Council Services</li> </ul>	2	4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early identification of school decisions</li> <li>• DfE Regulations</li> <li>• Prudent consideration of financial transactions to facilitate transfer</li> <li>• Services continue to be offered to academies</li> <li>• Transfer Protocol</li> </ul>	1	3	3	ED/SB/NS	Monthly	Consideration given in MTFS for loss of funding.	31/05/25
15	<b>Reserves</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diminishing reserves, used to balance budget, fund overspend positions.</li> </ul>	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitored on a bi-monthly basis, reported to Management Team and Exec Board</li> <li>• Benchmarking</li> </ul>	3	3	9	ED/SB	Quarterly	Monitored and reported on a regular basis. Council reserves at historic low levels.	31/05/25



[illegible]







**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

**PORTFOLIO:** Corporate Resources  
Employment, Learning, Skills and Community

**SUBJECT:** Health and Leisure in Halton

**WARD(S)** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Executive Board to consider the relationship between increasing the cost of local authority leisure facilities to residents and the potential impact on health inequalities in the borough. Executive Board is also asked to consider whether it would wish to subsidise leisure activities for certain groups in the borough. The report sets out options for how this might be implemented.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board is requested to consider the proposals outlined in section 4 of this report.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Priority one of the Council's Corporate Plan is "Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence". The priority is underpinned by the need to "encourage good quality health, wellbeing and social care, by involving everyone in our community to support the people of Halton to feel safe, be active, happy and lead their best lives".
- 3.2 It is considered that a lack of physical activity can affect a person's health and wellbeing. Research would suggest that the cost of using leisure centres can be a particular barrier for households that do not have much money, and offering reduced entrance charges can support people to lead more active lives.
- 3.3 Although not a statutory requirement, the Council has demonstrated its commitment to improving leisure facilities in Halton with the development of the £30 million state of the art Halton Leisure Centre. However, the repayment of the loan on the capital expenditure requires the Council to operate the facility on a commercial basis and alongside cuts in funding, the Council needs

to take difficult decisions about whether to subsidise leisure facilities or conversely increase entrance charges.

- 3.4 This dilemma recently came to the fore when the Head of Service for Leisure Services was approached by Halton Walking Football Club which had seen an increase in its subscription fees and requested a subsidy to meet the increased costs. The club has approximately 80 members.
- 3.5 Research published by the NIHR school for Public Health Research some years ago suggests that offering concessions to people over 60 years helped slow down the decline into inactivity that often occurs as people get older.
- 3.6 The club accepted that the fee needed to rise to reflect the improved leisure facilities that the Council provided. At the same time the club members argue that going forward some members of the club will be priced out of participation.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Using the Halton Walking Football club as a case study. In summary, the Leisure Services team has been working with the club to agree a rental of space at the new leisure centre. The current proposal is as follows:
1. 'Pay as you play' was until 31 March 2025 (£1.90 with a Halton Leisure Card and £2.80 without)
  2. From 1 April 2025 – 31 December 2025 £45 for a 1.5-hour session (includes 30 minutes free hire)
  3. From 1 January 2026 - £67.50 for a 1.5-hour session (and subject to annual increases on 1 April)
- 4.2 Both 2 and 3 reflect a discount of 25% discount.
- 4.3 The club members have asked that the Council considers several factors that they feel demonstrates that they are contributing to reducing the Council's budget through 'costs avoidance' i.e. healthier lifestyles, as well as improved health and well-being.
- 4.4 The club members make some valuable points, but this presents a broader corporate question that goes beyond rents and room hire at the leisure centre but focuses on how the Council promotes cross-directorate collaboration to contribute to delivering wider corporate priorities.
- 4.5 Leisure services staff have worked with the club to arrive at a compromise position to cover the period up to the end of the year.

- 4.6 This has been accepted but the increase from January 2026 has not. Ultimately, though, the Council's Leisure Services team is running a business and must recover our costs, and, therefore, it is not able to support a further subsidy from January 2026 as the club has requested.
- 4.7 This leaves the following potential scenarios:
1. The club pays the increase.
  2. The club does not pay the increase and does not use the facilities.
  3. The club reduces the number of sessions per week or reduces the length of the session.
  4. The Council subsidises their activities.
- 4.8 Regarding point 1, there is scope for the club to make a contribution and some of the gap might be covered through further negotiation as well as some club members subsidising less well-off members. Regarding point 2, if the club ceases to use these facilities, the Council would still be able to generate income as there are other organisations that would take up the space. However, the 'wider' benefits to residents described above would be lost. Regarding point 4, for parity, the Council would need to apply the same levels of subsidy to similar groups.
- 4.9 Given the points the club makes regarding the health and wellbeing benefits gained from participation in physical activity Executive Board is asked to consider whether, it supports the principle of subsidising leisure activities for groups **specifically** using the **new leisure centre on Moor Lane**.
- 4.10 The reason for focusing on the new leisure centre is as follows:
- To offer subsidies at all Council venues would be unworkable and not financially viable.
  - Secondly, it is reasonable to suggest that there are exceptional circumstances regarding fees and charges for groups/organisations that are transitioning from Kingsway Leisure Centre to Halton Leisure Centre.
- 4.11 It should be noted that many groups at the former Kingsway Leisure Centre received favourable and 'below market' terms given the state of the building and the equipment and facilities available.
- 4.12 The new facility presents an opportunity for the Council to increase fees and charges to reflect the improved offer provided by a state of the art facility.
- 4.13 However, given the points raised in section 4.1 there are some options Members may wish to consider.

- 4.14 Option 1 - Establish/Repurpose the Sports Development Grants programme.
- 4.15 The criteria for the current grants programme would need to be amended as the grant does not allow for grant to be spent on ongoing room hire.
- 4.16 It is worth noting that many groups/organisations already receive a grant. The maximum grant is currently £300.
- 4.17 This is not a preferred option because the existing grants programmes is for a specific purpose i.e. to promote sports development. Members are asked to note that the sports grants budget has been reduced from £20,000 to £11,000.
- 4.18 Option 2 - Introduce a transitional grant for organisations affected by a change to the fees and charges arising from the move from Kingsway Leisure Centre to Halton Leisure Centre on Moor Lane.  
**PREFERRED OPTION**
- 4.19 This would be **specifically** for groups using Halton Leisure Centre to facilitate the transition from lower rents at the former Kingsway Leisure Centre.
- 4.20 It is suggested that criteria would need to be introduced as follows.
- The grant would be for a period of six months to enable clubs/groups to prepare for the step up to increased costs.
  - The grant would be used for room hire at Halton Leisure Centre.
  - Individuals would not be eligible to apply.
  - The grant would apply to groups of 20 or more. The reason for this is that the impact of the intervention will be greater.
  - The maximum discount for the six-month period would be 50%.
  - The grant would only apply during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026
  - It would apply to Halton based groups/clubs residents.
- 4.21 Although there are advantages and disadvantages of this option, this is the preferred option because it strikes a balance between supporting our clubs and groups whilst acknowledging that the Council's financial position prevents it from applying a long-term subsidy to this type of activity. It provides planning time to enable organisations to prepare for increased charges. Members may recall that similar principles were applied to protect the viability of organisations facing financial constraints during Lockdown/COVID-19.
- 4.22 Option 3 - Apply a Concession.  
With this option, groups would make an application, and their



proposal would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Cases could then be determined by the Head of Service for Leisure Services in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder. The difficulty with this approach is that it places an additional workload on the Head of Service and Portfolio Holder and could lead to further time burden were requests to be unsuccessful and appeals would need to be considered.

- 4.23 Option 4 - Do Nothing.  
This is an option but would not reflect the points raised earlier in this report.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 It is estimated that by extending this subsidy to other organisations, including the walking football club, would cost the Council approximately £20,000 in lost income/additional expenditure. The other option would be to reduce income targets, for Leisure Services, but ultimately this would then mean that the Council would still need to find resources from somewhere to cover the subsidy.

- 5.2 An ongoing subsidy would be unsustainable, but it is suggested that the Council might wish to provide some transitional support as outlined above.

- 5.3 This could be funded by a contribution of £6,666 from Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure Services.

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

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

The introduction to this report outlines proposals for supporting this priority.

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

One of the barriers to productivity in Halton's economy is the high levels of ill-health the borough experiences either preventing people from accessing work or making it difficult for people to remain in work.

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

Using the case study as an example, a healthier fitter society enables individuals to proactively engage with family members in a positive way.

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

The report suggests that it is often the people who are most in need that are prevented from accessing the Council's services. Where services are non-statutory and there is a fee, low income can be a

barrier to participation.

**6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future**

If residents are fit and well, they are more likely to be able to use the walking and cycling networks being brought forward through the Liverpool City Region Sustainable Transport network.

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

The approach outlined in the report present a positive news story for the Council where it demonstrates that it has listened to the views of the community, recognised the benefits of working collaboratively and has delivered a cross-directorate approach to meeting corporate priorities.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 There is a danger of a precedent being set i.e. if one group is provided with a subsidy then other requests will follow. The risk of this could be reduced if the Council were to introduce qualifying criteria to determine when and if subsidies would apply.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 The report outlines the challenges to equality of access when the Council is faced with increasing costs, which can inadvertently exclude members of the community who are on low incomes.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Reference is made to supporting the corporate objective of a greener future in section 6.5 of the report.

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

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration

**PORTFOLIO:** Environment and Urban Renewal

**SUBJECT:** Highway structures major maintenance

**WARD(S)** Borough wide

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

- 1.1 To seek approval to proceed with the procurement of major maintenance works to key structures on the Runcorn Busway under the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme using the SCAPE Framework.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That The Board approves the Director Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder - Environment and Urban Renewal, to be delegated to deal with any matters relating to the procurement and delivery of the scheme to refurbish the Shopping City Busway Viaduct (North) and associated structures.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 It is proposed that refurbishment to the Shopping City North Viaduct and other adjacent structures on the Runcorn busway be undertaken via the SCAPE framework.
- 3.2 Due to the age of the structures, the required works include concrete repairs, replacement of bridge joints, renewal of waterproofing systems, resurfacing and drainage repairs. This work is essential to ensure the longevity of the structures and minimise the occurrence of safety issues or disruption to the travelling public associated with the deterioration of highway infrastructure.
- 3.3 Scheme design and contract development have been undertaken to Feasibility stage within the SCAPE framework with the contractor Balvac. As such, the budget estimate for the scheme is understood to be approximately £1.5m, and the construction period will be around 6 months. The earliest start for the site works is anticipated to be during August 2025.
- 3.4 The cost of this major maintenance scheme will be met from the

approved CRSTS capital budget allocation for Structures.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The method of procurement conforms to the Council's procurement policies.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The contract works to be covered by the CRSTS Capital grant funding agreement, with no requirement for HBC match funding.

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

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

Maintaining high quality transport infrastructure provides residents with opportunities to walk and cycle, and hence live healthier, more independent lifestyles.

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

Maintaining network links to employment areas and investing in transport infrastructure will improve the attractiveness of the borough for residents and businesses.

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

Well maintained transport infrastructure ensures that the public can travel quickly and easily around the borough.

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

Efficient and affordable public transport infrastructure is essential to tackling inequality and helping those most in need.

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

An efficient urban rapid transport system reduces congestion and promotes modal shift to a lower carbon travel choice compared to the private car.

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

Well maintained highways ensure the public can travel quickly and easily around the borough.

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 Failure to deliver essential maintenance works to key structures would breach HBC's statutory requirements as Highway Authority in addition to the terms of grant funding agreements with the Liverpool City Region.

**8.0      EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1      None identified.

**9.0      CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1      The bus viaducts are an essential part of the busway network in Runcorn, providing urban rapid transport and promoting modal shift to a mode that reduces congestion and offers a lower carbon travel choice to the private car.

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

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

**PORTFOLIO:** Environment and Urban Renewal

**SUBJECT:** Procurement of Services for Capital Funded Highway Improvement Schemes

**WARD(S)** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval to proceed with the procurement of services for the delivery of capital funded highway improvements across the Borough. The existing contract will expire on 5 August 2026.
- 1.2 The current contract is held by Lambros Ltd, a local company, who have delivered schemes such as the successive Active Travel Fund cycleway schemes along the Busway and other elements of the Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan. The contract is utilised when lower value capital improvements are undertaken on the highway network, for example new sections of footpath. Higher value schemes undergo a separate and bespoke procurement process.
- 1.3 This contract differs to the Highway Term Maintenance Contract that has been jointly procured with Warrington BC, and is held by Tarmac which covers the repair and restoration of the existing highway network which is funded from the City Region Sustainable Travel Settlement Grant alongside Revenue Budgets

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That The Board approve a procurement process to secure a delivery contractor for capital funded highway improvement works.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the new tender is set up for a 3-year period with an option to award a one-year extension. This is in line with current capital funding arrangements through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA). The anticipated tender date is October 2025 with a commencement date being 6th August 2026.
- 3.2 Based on current funding via LCRCA, it is anticipated that the

annual value of the contracts in total is likely to be in the region of £2.0m thus making the value of a four year contract in the order £8.0m. This figure is above the Procurement Act 2023 and Public Contract Regs 2024 threshold value and will be tendered accordingly. The open procedure will be used whereby expressions of interest are first obtained and then assessed.

3.3 The Council will comply with its duties under the Procurement Act 2023 for contracts exceeding £5 million including VAT by setting and publishing three KPIs in the public domain. At least once in every twelve month period during the lifetime of the contract and on termination, the Council will assess the supplier's performance against those KPIs and publish certain information in relation to that assessment in the public domain.

3.4 The tender submissions will be evaluated on both price and quality; this being on a 40% price, 60% quality ratio and the most economically advantageous tender will be reported to this Board.

3.5 The cost of the works delivered through this contract will be met from approved budget allocations for capital funding received via LCRCAs grants themselves from the Department for Transport.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The method of procurement conforms to the Council's procurement policy. The tender process will be carried out in conjunction with the Procurement Centre of Excellence, using 'The Chest' procurement portal.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The above contract will ensure that we continue to deliver capital funding in a cost effective manner ensuring the Highway Authority fulfils its capital funding obligations statutory duties.

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

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

Improved sustainable links provides residents with opportunities to walk and cycle and hence live healthier lifestyles.

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

Providing improved network links to employment areas and investing in the public realm will improve the attractiveness of the borough, thereby making Halton a desirable location for investors and those who may wish to live here.

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

None identified.

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

Constructing cycle routes helps those with least financial support to actively travel.

**6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future**

Cycle routes and cycling when taken as an alternative to combustion engine travel reduce pollution contributing to improvements in air quality.

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

None identified.

**7.0 Risk Analysis**

7.1 Failure to procure a replacement contract would mean that the delivery of Highway capital funded projects would be delayed, leading to decreased opportunities to secure future funding.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Whilst construction works are generally carbon intensive, this can be reduced through careful selection of materials, such as warm asphalt rather than hot which reduces the heat used in production, ensuring durable products are used which have a longer lifespan for similar carbon investment and bitumens more resistant to warmer climates are used compared to traditional specifications.

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

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’



**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director, Adults

**PORTFOLIO:** Adult Social Care

**SUBJECT:** Home-Based Respite Care Service in Halton

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

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from Executive Board for a Non-Emergency Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv) of part 3 is sought to allow the granting of an extension to the current contract in place for the provision of the Home-Based Respite Care Service in Halton, to be delivered by Care at Home Group Limited for a further 2-year period from 19<sup>th</sup> October 2025 to 18<sup>th</sup> October 2027.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board**

- 1) Note the contents of the report; and**
- 2) Approve a Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv) of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders, for the contract extension for the provision of the Home-Based Respite Care Service in Halton delivered by Care at Home Group Limited for the period from 19<sup>th</sup> October 2025 to 18<sup>th</sup> October 2027.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Home Based Respite care provides practical help, personal care and emotional support to people in their own homes, replacing the care normally provided by their informal carer and allowing that carer to have respite from their caring. The Service therefore supports carers and the cared for to help them remain independent for as long as possible.

The service aims to support both the carer and the cared for in enabling regular carers respite. This allows carers to have time away from their role as informal carer, whilst maintaining a safe and consistent level of support to the individual.

- 3.2 Respite is often used as an umbrella term, referring to a broad spectrum of activities encompassing home based services. It is generally acknowledged that respite varies according to its nature, circumstances of provision, who it is provided by, or to and when it is available. For the purposes of this contract

the service:

- is for planned respite;
- offers flexibility in service provision and service delivery;
- supports carers of people who live at home with a long-term condition that restricts their ability to get out of their home on their own;
- is delivered to Halton residents;
- is available to adults over 18; and
- is for any adult carer who is identified as having a need.

3.3 Care at Home Group Limited (CAHG) have been delivering the Home-Based Respite Care Service in Halton since April 2023, when they were commissioned to deliver the service following the previous provider going into liquidation and no longer being in a position to deliver it.

3.4 As well as being registered with the Care Quality Commission for the provision of personal care, to ensure that the service delivered by CAGH is of the necessary quality, we have robust contract management arrangements in place, which consists of monthly and quarterly provision of both quantitative and qualitative information and half-yearly monitoring meetings with the provider.

3.5 A waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv) of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders is sought to award CAHG a 2-year contract extension from 19<sup>th</sup> October 2025 to 18<sup>th</sup> October 2027.

3.6 It should be noted that following discussions with the Procurement Division, a reprioritisation exercise was undertaken in respect to waivers/contracts which were due to end during 2025 which took into consideration the extended work required to support the new Domiciliary Care contract. As such a number of extensions via waivers will be sought to stagger activity linked to new tenders that will be required; the Home-Based Respite Care Service being one of these extensions.

Towards the end of the contract period, we will commence a procurement process for the supply of a Home-Based Respite Care Service in Halton.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Continuing this service supports the Council in its development of out of hospital services with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside and in respect to the One Halton placed based approach. It also supports our commitment to providing breaks for carers in line with local and national targets and to assist people to live in their own homes and remain independent for as long as possible.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Waiver in compliance with Standing Order 1.14.4 of part 3: Non-Emergency Procedures (exceeding a value threshold of £100,000) on the basis that a full tender process would result in the Council having to forego a clear financial or

commercial benefit (1.14.4 iv).

- 5.2 Awarding the contract extension to the existing provider would support continuity of care for a vulnerable client cohort and allow for sufficient time to undertake a new procurement process.
- 5.3 The waiver would be effective for the period 19<sup>th</sup> October 2025 to 18<sup>th</sup> October 2027.
- 5.4 The cost of this contract will be met within existing Better Care Fund budget allocations.

The total financial cost to the pooled budget for the 2-year contract extension would be £249,480.

- 5.5 Home Based Respite Care is usually provided on a regular weekly basis for between 1 - 4 hours. The actual number of hours that are delivered to an individual will be based on need. This figure will be determined as part of the development of the individuals care plan, this can be completed through an agreed assessment and may be required at evenings/weekends and in some circumstances may require sleeping/waking nights.

Based on the contract value, during the course of the contract there would be expectation that CAHG would provide c.10,900 hours of respite care. This is based on the current Domiciliary Care provider rate of £22.87 per hour. Please note that as the contract would run into the financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28, then we would review the hourly rate with the provider towards the end of each financial year, to explore an inflationary uplift to the hourly rate.

This would result in a reduction in the number of hours delivered over the course of the contract and not in an increase in the overall financial cost – all hours would be delivered within the financial envelope outlined in paragraph 5.4.

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

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

This service makes an important contribution to the health and social care system 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**

None identified.

**6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future**

None identified.

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

None identified.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 This contract falls below the current EU Light Touch Regime threshold of £663,540 and subsequently the risk of challenge will be negligible.

7.2 The Service will continue to be monitored to ensure that the Council, NHS Cheshire & Merseyside and Halton residents receive value for money.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no environmental or climate implications as a result of this report.

**10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

10.1 Approval of the extension to the current contract to Care at Home Group Limited for a 2-year period would support continuity of care for a vulnerable client cohort and allow for sufficient time to undertake a new procurement process for the service.

**11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

11.1 1. Allow the Home-Based Respite Service to cease.

**12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

12.1 The 2-year extension to the contract would take effect from 19<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

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

13.1 None identified.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Leader's
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Report by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough-wide

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To notify members that the Local Government Ombudsman has issued a report against the Council following an investigation of a homelessness case.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report and the actions taken to address the issues raised by the Ombudsman be noted.

### 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Local Government Ombudsman has issued a report against the Council following their investigation of a homelessness complaint (A copy of the report is enclosed separately).
- 3.2 The Ombudsman has found there has been fault on the part of the Council. Although the LGO found fault with the way the Council handled the case, there were areas of the case where the Council did not agree with the Ombudsman's findings.
- 3.3 That said the Council has agreed to take the action which the Ombudsman regards as providing a satisfactory remedy.
- 3.4 The Council has completed all the non-service specific recommendations and the Ombudsman has confirmed that they are happy with the steps the Council has taken. In implementing the recommendations the individual has confirmed they no longer wished to proceed with the Property Pool Plus scheme and do not want the Council to offer them temporary accommodation.
- 3.5 The LGO report highlights that in many areas the Council followed due process. It had created a Housing Plan for the individual and offered temporary accommodation which had been refused and the individual had been placed in temporary relief.

- 3.6 The main area of concerns raised by the LGO was over the submission of evidence to support a decision around the main housing duty. The LGO felt this information had been provided but the Council felt it had shown the necessary financial information required to make a decision fell short of what was required.
- 3.7 The Council eventually closed the case when we felt information had not been provided but the Ombudsman felt we should have completed the assessment and offered the main duty. The Council had a letter on file closing to the case but we could not evidence it was sent which the Ombudsman felt was fault. The Council has accepted fault in the way the case was closed.
- 3.8 As a result of the case, the Ombudsman undertook a wider review into around 16 similar cases we had closed in similar ways. In all but three cases the LGO was satisfied the Council had dealt with these correctly after we had provided them with evidence.
- 3.9 The report does highlight that we could have done more to work with Halton Housing to try and resolve registration on Property Pool Plus and we need to review and make sure of our record keeping around closure of cases.
- 3.10 As part of this the Service are currently undertaking a review of
- how they ensure they give written decisions about whether it owes a main housing duty
  - how they ensure applicants can access the Property Pool Plus scheme and its support for vulnerable users.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Service is undertaking a review of specific areas to see if any changes or improvements are needed.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The report sets out a compensation payment which the Council has paid.

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

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

**6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future.**

None.

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

None.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Service reviews are taking place to highlight if any changes in practice are required.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None.

**9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None.

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

10.1 None, under the meaning of the Act.

**Report by the Local Government and Social Care  
Ombudsman**

**Investigation into a complaint about  
Halton Borough Council  
(reference number: 23 005 581)**

**19 March 2025**



## The Ombudsman's role

We independently and impartially investigate complaints about councils and other organisations in our jurisdiction. If we decide to investigate, we look at whether organisations have made decisions the right way. Where we find fault has caused injustice, we can recommend actions to put things right, which are proportionate, appropriate and reasonable based on all the facts of the complaint. We can also identify service improvements so similar problems don't happen again. Our service is free.

We cannot force organisations to follow our recommendations, but they almost always do. Some of the things we might ask an organisation to do are:

- > apologise
- > pay a financial remedy
- > improve its procedures so similar problems don't happen again.

We publish public interest reports to raise awareness of significant issues, encourage scrutiny of local services and hold organisations to account.

Section 30 of the 1974 Local Government Act says that a report should not normally name or identify any person. The people involved in this complaint are referred to by a letter or job role.

Key to names used

Mr X            The complainant

## **Report summary**

### **Housing - Homelessness**

Mr X complained the Council did not properly consider his homelessness application after he became homeless in July 2022 due to fleeing domestic violence. He says the Council did not carry out its duties towards his application, which meant he missed out on accommodation opportunities.

### **Finding**

Fault found causing injustice and recommendations made.

### **Recommendations**

The Council must consider the report and confirm within three months the action it has taken or proposes to take. The Council should consider the report at its full Council, Cabinet or other appropriately delegated committee of elected members and we will require evidence of this. (Local Government Act 1974, section 31(2), as amended)

In addition to the requirements set out in the paragraph above, the Council should take the following actions to remedy the injustice identified in this report.

Within three months of the date of this report, the Council should:

- write to Mr X and apologise for the handling of his homelessness application and for failing to accept the main housing duty;
- pay Mr X £500 to recognise the distress caused to him;
- pay Mr X £150 a month, from March 2023 for loss of accommodation that he would otherwise have had the opportunity to access;
- pay Mr X £200 to recognise the time and trouble in pursuing his complaint;
- write to Mr X and accept the main housing duty, backdating this to 56 days after the relief duty was accepted;
- discuss with Mr X whether he currently needs temporary accommodation; and
- register Mr X on the Property Pool Plus (PPP) scheme and provide him with the support to access the scheme. His account should also show as backdated in line with the previous recommendations.

Within 3 months of the date of this report the Council should review how it ensures:

- it is giving written decisions about whether it owes a main housing duty; and
- applicants can access the PPP scheme and its support for vulnerable users.

## The complaint

1. Mr X complained the Council;
  - did not provide refuge accommodation when he was in priority need;
  - did not provide enough support for Mr X to complete his applications;
  - did not complete the referral to other Local Authorities;
  - failed to properly communicate with him about his applications;
  - failed to provide him with the requested private bond information;
  - failed to understand its duties to someone fleeing domestic abuse; and
  - delayed considering his complaint.
2. Mr X complained the Council's actions caused further distress at an already difficult time for him as he was fleeing domestic abuse. He says this meant he missed opportunities to secure accommodation.

## Legal and administrative background

### The Ombudsman's role and powers

3. We investigate complaints about 'maladministration' and 'service failure'. In this report, we have used the word 'fault' to refer to these. We must also consider whether any fault has had an adverse impact on the person making the complaint. We refer to this as 'injustice'. If there has been fault which has caused an injustice, we may suggest a remedy. (Local Government Act 1974, sections 26(1) and 26A(1), as amended)
4. The law says we cannot normally investigate a complaint when someone could take the matter to court. However, we may decide to investigate if we consider it would be unreasonable to expect the person to go to court. (Local Government Act 1974, section 26(6)(c), as amended)
5. When considering complaints, we make findings based on the balance of probabilities. This means that we look at the available relevant evidence and decide what was more likely to have happened.
6. We may investigate matters coming to our attention during an investigation, if we consider that a member of the public who has not complained may have suffered an injustice as a result. (Local Government Act 1974, section 26D and 34E, as amended)
7. We cannot investigate late complaints unless we decide there are good reasons. Late complaints are when someone takes more than 12 months to complain to us about something a council/care provider has done. (Local Government Act 1974, sections 26B and 34D, as amended)

### Homelessness law and guidance

8. Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities set out councils' powers and duties to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

### Homelessness applications

9. If someone contacts a council seeking accommodation or help to obtain accommodation and gives 'reason to believe' they 'may be' homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, the council has a duty to make

inquiries into what, if any, further duty it owes them. The threshold for triggering the duty to make inquiries is low. The person does not have to complete a specific form or approach a particular department of the council. (Housing Act 1996, section 184 and Homelessness Code of Guidance paragraphs 6.2 and 18.5)

10. Councils must complete an assessment if they are satisfied an applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness. Councils must notify the applicant of the assessment. Councils should work with applicants to identify practical and reasonable steps for the council and the applicant to take to help the applicant keep or secure suitable accommodation. These steps should be tailored to the household, and follow from the findings of the assessment, and must be provided to the applicant in writing as their personalised housing plan (PHP). (Housing Act 1996, section 189A and Homelessness Code of Guidance paragraphs 11.6 and 11.18)

### **The relief duty and interim accommodation**

11. Councils must take reasonable steps to help to secure suitable accommodation for any eligible homeless person. This is called the relief duty. When a council decides this duty has come to an end, it must notify the applicant in writing. (Housing Act 1996, section 189B)
12. A council must secure interim accommodation for an applicant and their household if it has reason to believe they may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need. This is called interim accommodation. (Housing Act 1996, section 188)
13. Examples of applicants in priority need include people with dependent children, pregnant women, people who are vulnerable due to serious health problems or disability, and victims of domestic abuse.
14. The relief duty ends when the applicant accepts or refuses an offer of accommodation which is suitable and likely to be available for at least 6 months, or, failing this, if 56 days have passed.

### **The main housing duty and temporary accommodation**

15. If a council is satisfied an applicant is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance, and has a priority need, it has a duty to secure that accommodation is available for their occupation. This is called the main housing duty. (Housing Act 1996, section 193 and Homelessness Code of Guidance 15.39)
16. The accommodation a council provides until it can end the main housing duty is called temporary accommodation. If a council ends its interim accommodation duty, but then goes on to accept the main housing duty, it still has a duty to provide temporary accommodation. Interim and temporary accommodation can be the same physical property. What changes is the legal duty under which a council provides it.

### **Domestic abuse and homelessness**

17. The law says it is not reasonable for someone to continue to occupy accommodation if it is probable this will lead them to experience violence or domestic abuse. (Housing Act 1996, section 177)
18. Councils should be alert to the wider role they play in ensuring safety for victims of domestic abuse. They should take account of any social considerations, including risk of violence or abuse within a particular locality, which might affect the suitability of accommodation offered to an applicant to prevent or relieve

homelessness, or under the main housing duty. (Homelessness Code of Guidance paragraphs 21.15 and 21.43)

### **Circumstances in which both prevention and relief duties may end**

19. Councils can end the prevention and relief duties because of an applicant's deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate.
20. Where a council ends the relief duty for this reason the main housing duty will not apply. However, the council will be required to secure that accommodation is available for an applicant who has priority need and is unintentionally homeless, until it makes a final accommodation offer or the duty comes to an end for another reason.
21. Before bringing either duty to an end by issuing a section 193B(2) notice, the council must first issue a warning letter to the applicant. This should tell the applicant that if they deliberately and unreasonably refuse to take any of the steps in their PHP after receiving the warning, the council intends to issue a notice bringing the prevention or relief duty to an end.
22. The warning must explain the consequences of a notice being given and the council must allow a reasonable period after the warning is given before issuing a notice. There is no set reasonable period, but councils should ensure sufficient time is given to allow the applicant to rectify the non-co-operation and prevent a notice being issued to end the prevention or relief duty.
23. Notices issued must explain why the housing authority are giving notice and its effect, and inform the applicant of their right to request a review of the decision to issue the notice.

### **Property Pool Plus scheme**

24. The Council uses a scheme to access housing in its area and other Local Authority areas. When applicants make a homelessness application to the Council, it encourages them to register with the scheme to bid for local housing.
25. The scheme says one of the aims is to prevent homelessness and give adequate priority to homeless people to reduce the use of temporary accommodation.
26. The Council uses a housing company acting on its behalf to manage its applications and property access on the scheme.

### **How we considered this complaint**

27. We produced this report after examining relevant documents and discussing the complaint with Mr X.
28. We also considered:  
  
Code of Guidance for Local Authorities;
  - Homelessness (Review Procedure etc.) Regulations 2018; and
  - Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002.
29. We gave Mr X and the Council a confidential draft of this report and invited their comments. The comments received were taken into account before the report was finalised.

## What we found

### What happened

30. Mr X made a homelessness application with the Council in October 2021. He told the Council he was fleeing domestic abuse.
31. The Council recognised Mr X may be in priority need and offered to find him accommodation in a refuge. Mr X refused the refuge accommodation and said he would stay with a friend temporarily.
32. Mr X asked the Council to refer him to a different Local Authority. The Council asked Mr X to provide documentation, to finish the homelessness assessment and register for its Bond Guarantee Scheme.
33. The Council says it continued to try and contact Mr X about his application until January 2022, but as it had no response from him, it closed his application.
34. Mr X contacted the Council again after his application was closed. The Council say it tried to return his calls but again could not reach him.
35. Mr X contacted the Council for a third time in July 2022 and told the Council he was homeless and fleeing domestic abuse. Mr X said he had been refused applications by other Local Authorities and told to present to the Council. Mr X told the Council he now wanted to progress a homelessness application.
36. The Council completed its homelessness application with Mr X on 18 July 2022 and offered Mr X temporary accommodation. Mr X declined the temporary accommodation and said he would stay with family until he could find settled accommodation.
37. The Council emailed Mr X letters accepting the relief duty and his personal housing plan, as well as asking him to register on Property Pool Plus (PPP). It said this would activate his priority banding to bid on suitable properties.
38. The Council also advised Mr X he could search for a private rented property and could apply for the Bond Guarantee Scheme.
39. On 22 July, Mr X asked the Council to refer him to another Local Authority. The Council told Mr X that he needed to finish his registration with PPP, which would enable the Council to specify his preference of area.
40. Mr X continued to ask the Council for the referral to the other Local Authority, and was told his caseworker would respond to his request when they were back from leave. The Council says it checked with Mr X in this time whether he needed temporary accommodation, but he declined.
41. When Mr X's caseworker returned from leave, they discussed Mr X's request for a referral, and his other options, including private renting. The Council again asked Mr X to complete the PPP application. Mr X asked the Council for a list of nearby refuges and said he was having issues registering for PPP as his abuser had registered an account in his name that he could not access. The Council sent Mr X a list of refuges and contact details to support him with his PPP application.
42. On 28 July Mr X asked the Council to refer him to a specific refuge. The Council completed the referral and sent it to the refuge.
43. Mr X also asked for more information about the bond guarantee scheme, and the Council sent him details of how to apply.
44. On 2 August, Mr X asked to move to an alternative specific area and to access the bond guarantee scheme to do this. The Council told Mr X he would need to

make a claim for Universal Credit (UC). Mr X said he could not make a claim for UC until his PPP account was rectified, for which he was still waiting. The Council said it could not progress an application with the bond scheme until Mr X made a claim for UC.

45. Mr X completed his UC claim on 10 August 2022. The Council again asked Mr X to complete his PPP application to activate his property banding. Mr X told the Council he felt he was being forced to stay in the local area and did not know how to private rent. The Council again gave Mr X advice on private renting and the bond guarantee scheme.
46. On 26 August 2022, Mr X emailed the Council about rent charges and affordability. The Council confirmed the allowance that Mr X would be entitled to and again encouraged him to complete his PPP application. Mr X confirmed with the Council that he was still considering his choices.
47. The Council tried to contact Mr X in August and September to seek more information about his UC claim and an update on his PPP application. Mr X sent the Council his UC evidence and said he had not registered a PPP application.
48. Mr X continued to send emails in September and October 2022 about the bond guarantee scheme but did not receive a response.
49. The Council then closed Mr X's case. In its records, it said it closed his case because he had stopped engaging and had not provided the documents needed.
50. In April 2023 Mr X complained to the Council. In his complaint he said:
  - he told the Council in June 2022 that he needed accommodation;
  - the Council did not explain the refuge process to him and he never heard the result of his referral;
  - the Council told him if he provided evidence of his UC application that he would be able to access the bond scheme;
  - the Council had not supported him to access the PPP application despite his abuser using his details; and
  - he had provided all the information asked and had had no further contact from the Council.
51. Mr X did not receive a response to his complaint and so complained to us. We asked the Council to consider Mr X's complaint.
52. The Council's initial complaint response said it had:
  - reviewed Mr X's complaint but a response was not sent to him;
  - completed the homelessness assessment and advised him of the options and services available;
  - made several attempts to contact Mr X about his application before closing his case; and
  - registered Mr X's PPP application in August 2022 and it was currently active.
53. Mr X asked the Council to consider his complaint at stage two in July 2023. The Council sent Mr X an acknowledgement in September 2023 which said the response was delayed.
54. The Council issued its final complaint response in November 2023. In the response it said:

- at times it was difficult to contact Mr X as he did not respond;
- it provided him with a relief duty letter, PHP and details of how to register on PPP to access his priority banding to bid. He was also provided with advice about private renting and the bond guarantee scheme;
- it had found Mr X to be in priority need and had offered him temporary accommodation, but he had declined this;
- Mr X had asked for a referral to another Local Authority, but the Council could not do this until he activated his PPP account. It had provided Mr X with contact details to resolve the PPP account issues;
- it had continued to provide advice on Mr X's options, including details of the bond guarantee scheme, private renting, and available refuges;
- had sent Mr X a case closure letter in November 2022 setting out his appeal rights, however no appeal was lodged;
- a separate agency was responsible for supporting Mr X to access his PPP application and the Council had provided Mr X with the details to contact them. It also contacted the agency on his behalf to ask it to reset Mr X's account. However, Mr X's preference at the time was to live outside the area, and so the Council was satisfied it had done enough. It accepted that the previous information given to Mr X about him having an active application was wrong;
- it accepted it did not respond to some emails in September and October 2023, however it was satisfied that it had already provided the relevant advice for these matters; and
- the case officer had advised Mr X of the outcome of the referral to the refuge.

## Analysis

### Relief duty and main housing duty

55. The Council accepted it had a relief duty to Mr X and gave him a personal housing plan. Once 56 days passed, the Council had to decide if it owed Mr X a main housing duty.
56. The Council did not issue Mr X with a decision as to whether it owed him a main housing duty. Instead, the Council closed Mr X's case and did not issue a decision or give Mr X his appeal rights. When we asked the Council why it did this, it initially said it had closed the case due to Mr X's deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate.
57. The Council also initially said it accepted it did not follow the legislation to be able to close the case for this reason, but that it remained of the view the decision was right.
58. If the Council did not believe it owed Mr X a main housing duty because of deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate, it should have told him this and set out its reason. It should have also given Mr X the right to appeal the decision.
59. In response to our draft report, the Council changed its view about what legislation it had used to close Mr X's case. It said it had mistakenly told us that it had closed it under deliberate and unreasonable refusal to engage, but that it had lost contact with Mr X and believed him to have withdrawn his application.



60. In response to our draft report, the Council produced a lost contact letter it says it sent Mr X in November 2022, confirming he had withdrawn his application and setting out his appeal rights.
61. We asked the Council to provide evidence the letter was created and sent to Mr X when it said it was. The Council has been unable to provide any evidence to show this. The evidence provided by the Council shows the letter was likely created in September 2023, 11 months after the Council says it was sent. The Council also says it posted this to Mr X, however there is no evidence to support this, and all previous communication with Mr X was via email or phone due to his homelessness. On the balance of probability, we find Mr X did not receive a decision.
62. The Council has continued to say that it could not engage Mr X and that it tried multiple times to contact him before closing the case. The Council's own records do not support this. There are no entries to show any attempts to contact Mr X after his email on 14 September 2022 and before the closure of his case.
63. The Council has said Mr X did not provide the documents needed for it to be able to make a decision, and this is why it believed it was correct in making the decision to close the case. Having reviewed the communication between Mr X and the Council, it is clear the Council asked Mr X to provide evidence, and Mr X responded providing what he believed to be the evidence asked of him. The Council did not tell Mr X that it did not meet the criteria it needed. Additionally, there were times during the communication where the Council told Mr X that if he could not provide what was being asked, the Council would work with him to find another alternative. It reassured him that it knew he was homeless and in priority need, and its duty to him would not end after 56 days.
64. We remain of the view the correct legislation to close this case if contact had failed would be deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate, and it remains our view that the Council has failed to follow this legislation when closing Mr X's case.
65. As set out in paragraph six, we may investigate matters coming to our attention during the course of an investigation. In response to the draft report, we asked the Council to provide details of other cases during the same time period where the Council relied on the legislation of deliberate and unreasonable refusal to engage. We established there were several other homelessness applicants where the Council did not follow the legislative process and a separate decision will be issued in respect of these applicants.
66. Mr X was led to believe he had done what was being asked of him, and the support was in place to help him be able to complete the application. The Council did not tell him he had not complied, nor did it issue a warning about this according to the legislation to give him the opportunity to correct this.
67. The Council closed Mr X's case despite him continuing to engage and provide the evidence he believed the Council was asking for. It also failed to respond to him when he asked for updates about his case and what he needed to do next. We cannot see the criteria for closing the case under the legislation for unreasonable engagement has been met, and so the decision was made with fault.
68. On the balance of probabilities, we are satisfied that if the Council had told Mr X he needed to provide alternatives, and issued him a formal warning letter about not providing what was needed, he would have provided it.

69. If the Council had correctly carried out its duties, it would have decided it owed Mr X a main housing duty. This would have been dated from 56 days after the relief duty decision was issued.
70. Failure to accept the main housing duty and issue a decision is fault by the Council, causing Mr X significant injustice. We are recommending the Council write to Mr X and accept the main housing duty, backdating this to 56 days after the relief duty was accepted.

### **Accessing the housing scheme**

71. Mr X asked for a referral to another Local Authority the day after the Council accepted the relief duty. However, it told him it needed to complete a full assessment to do the referral.
72. The Council was already satisfied that Mr X was homeless and eligible, as it had accepted the relief duty. The Council's communication to Mr X and us also says that Mr X needed to be registered with the PPP scheme for the Council to refer him to another Local Authority. This is beyond what the law requires and there is no legal requirement for Mr X to be registered to the scheme before a referral can happen. This was fault by the Council. However, we accept that Mr X accessing the PPP scheme would have provided the same result as a referral and been an easier process with a larger stock of available housing.
73. Mr X told the Council on several occasions that he could not access the PPP account as his abuser had created an account on his behalf which restricted his access. The Council gave Mr X the details to contact the scheme and resolve these issues. However, as the scheme is acting on the Council's behalf, it remained the Council's responsibility to support Mr X in resolving this. The Council has said that it does not consider it could have done more to help, as Mr X expressed a want to move to a different area. However, the areas that Mr X was asking to move to were areas the Council had insisted he needed to be registered with the scheme to access.
74. Additionally, the scheme has a section for assistance of vulnerable people who cannot access the PPP scheme. The Council should have explored this further with Mr X and provided support for him to access the scheme. The handling of Mr X's registration and support for the scheme was fault by the Council.
75. The Council has already told Mr X that he would be in priority band A on the scheme if he registered. We have reviewed the stock of housing on the PPP scheme that Mr X would have had access to if the Council had accepted the main housing duty and resolved his registration issues in a timely manner. There were many suitable properties that Mr X would have had the opportunity to bid on if the Council had registered him and accepted the main housing duty. On the balance of probabilities, having seen the timeframe which people in similar circumstances to Mr X have been offered properties through the scheme, we are satisfied Mr X would have received an offer within six months, and by March 2023.
76. As a result, Mr X has been without the opportunity to bid and has missed offers on suitable accommodation. We are recommending a monthly payment to recognise the impact this has had on Mr X. This will be dated six months after the Council should have accepted the main housing duty, as we are satisfied from this point Mr X would have been housed. We are also recommending the Council register Mr X on the scheme and backdate the application to September 2023, as if the Council had addressed the registration issues, this is likely to be the point Mr X would have had access.

77. This should ensure Mr X receives an offer in a timely manner, while still allowing him the flexibility and choice of where he would like to live.

### **Temporary accommodation**

78. For reasons already explained, the Council should have told Mr X it owed him the main housing duty. The Council had a duty to secure accommodation that was available for Mr X, and the accommodation a council provides until it can end this duty is called temporary accommodation. (Housing Act 1996, section 193)
79. The Council's records show there were occasions where it offered to arrange temporary accommodation for Mr X, but says he declined this. We have reviewed the emails between Mr X and the Council and are satisfied the Council did give advice about who to contact if Mr X needed temporary accommodation.
80. On the occasion Mr X asked for a referral to a refuge, the Council carried this out.
81. However, the Council has said it told Mr X the result of the referral to the refuge. Mr X says the Council did not tell him. The Council has not been able to evidence that it told Mr X of the outcome until during the complaints process. The Council says an officer told Mr X, but there is no record of this. On the balance of probabilities, we are satisfied the Council did not tell Mr X the outcome of the referral until its complaint response. If the Council had told Mr X of this, he would not have continued to ask what the outcome was. This was fault by the Council causing Mr X further distress and uncertainty. It has also caused Mr X lost opportunity, if the Council had told him of this, Mr X would have had the opportunity to seek alternatives sooner.
82. Once the refuge had refused Mr X, the Council should have told him of the outcome and asked if he needed temporary accommodation. We cannot see that temporary accommodation was discussed or explored after the refuge refused Mr X. This was fault by the Council causing Mr X uncertainty and distress.

### **Communication**

83. Part of Mr X's complaint is the Council did not properly communicate with him about his applications. There is a significant amount of communication between Mr X and the Council about various options. Having reviewed the emails, we are satisfied that on most occasions, Mr X's request for information was answered. However, there were occasions in September and October 2022 where his queries about different schemes went unanswered. The Council then closed his application due to no communication, despite Mr X having sent emails seeking information.
84. Part of Mr X's complaint is the Council did not provide information about the private bond scheme. We can see the Council did give Mr X some information about the scheme when he requested it. However, if the Council had accepted the main housing duty and registered Mr X on the scheme, as previously reasoned, this would have resolved the issues in communication and confusion about different schemes and entitlement.

### **Complaint handling**

85. The Council has already accepted that it did not initially respond to Mr X's complaint and then delayed the stage two response. However, it did not recognise any injustice that this caused to Mr X.
86. There was further fault by the Council in failing to consider Mr X's complaint and then delaying the final response. This caused Mr X time and trouble pursuing his complaint.

## Conclusions

87. We find fault with the Council because it failed to:
  - meet its homelessness duties to Mr X in line with the law and statutory guidance, and properly explain these duties to him;
  - tell Mr X about key decisions for temporary accommodation;
  - support Mr X to complete his homelessness application; and
  - consider his complaint without delay or any injustice caused to Mr X.
88. When we find fault, we then consider whether that fault caused injustice. There was significant injustice to Mr X from the Council's faults in this case.
89. The Council's failure to follow the legislation and guidance for closing a case due to deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate meant that its decision cannot stand, and Mr X was not given the opportunity to re-engage or given his appeal rights to seek a review of the decision.
90. The Council's failure to accept the main housing duty or tell Mr X about key decisions for his temporary accommodation has meant that Mr X has missed opportunities to secure accommodation.
91. The Council's failure to register Mr X on the PPP meant that he has missed opportunities to bid on properties he would have been successful on.
92. The Council's delay in considering Mr X's complaint and the injustice caused to him has caused him further distress and time and trouble.

## Recommendations

93. The Council must consider the report and confirm within three months the action it has taken or proposes to take. The Council should consider the report at its full Council, Cabinet or other appropriately delegated committee of elected members and we will require evidence of this. (Local Government Act 1974, section 31(2), as amended)
94. In addition to the requirements set out in the paragraph above, the Council should take the following actions to remedy the injustice identified in this report.
95. Within three months of the date of this report, the Council should:
  - write to Mr X and apologise for the handling of his homelessness application and for failing to accept the main housing duty;
  - pay Mr X £500 to recognise the distress caused to him;
  - pay Mr X £150 a month, from March 2023 for loss of accommodation that he would otherwise have had the opportunity to access;
  - pay Mr X £200 to recognise the time and trouble in pursuing his complaint;
  - write to Mr X and accept the main housing duty, backdating this to 56 days after the relief duty was accepted;
  - discuss with Mr X whether he currently requires temporary accommodation; and
  - register Mr X on the PPP scheme and provide him with the support to access the scheme. His account should also show as backdated to September 2022, the date the Council should have accepted the main housing duty.

96. Within three months of the date of this report the Council should review how it ensures:
- it is giving written decisions about whether it owes a main housing duty; and
  - applicants can access the PPP scheme and its support for vulnerable users.

### **Decision**

97. We have completed our investigation into this complaint. There was fault by the Council which caused injustice to Mr X. The Council should take the action identified in paragraphs 91 to 94 to remedy that injustice.

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director, Adults

**PORTFOLIO:** Housing and Environmental Sustainability

**SUBJECT:** Property Pool Plus Policy Amendments and future delivery options

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the implementation of several changes to the Property Pool Plus Housing Allocations Scheme and consideration of the future of the service.
- 1.2 The current Housing Allocations Scheme was implemented in January 2024. However, the sub-regional Contract Board which oversees the allocations scheme reviewed the policy and identified several changes, which are required to improve its effectiveness in meeting local housing need and responding to the increased demand on homelessness services and associated temporary accommodation. The contract for this service is due to expire in March 2026.
- 1.3 If approved the amended Allocations Scheme will support at least two of the objective aims.
- **To prioritise those with the greatest need.**
  - **To deliver council services within the means of the council budget.**
- 1.4 This matter is a Key Decision as it affects all wards, and all households currently registered for rehousing via the scheme, and any household wishing to apply for an allocation of social housing through the scheme in the future.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) approve the proposed changes to the Housing Allocations**

## **Scheme Policy (Property Pool Plus)**

### **3) The relevant Policy and Performance Boards to review PPP Housing Allocation Scheme during the current year.**

#### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Property Pool Plus (PPP) Housing Allocations Scheme is a jointly administered scheme across the five Local Authority areas of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, and Wirral. The scheme has been in operation since July 2012. In 2019 the PPP partner councils commissioned an independent review of the scheme which resulted in the approval of a revised PPP allocations policy and upgraded IT system which was implemented in January 2024.
- 3.2 Halton Housing have maintained the housing register and allocations contract for a number of years. As the contract is due to cease in March 2026, it is necessary to consider the future validity of the administration of the scheme. Options that are being discussed for consideration are:
- LCR central allocations administration scheme – which may prove more cost effective
  - Bring Allocations administrations service back into the Local Authority
  - Continue to outsource the service.
- 3.3 The PPP scheme meets the requirements on the Local Authority to allocate social rented housing in accordance with statute, statutory guidance, and regulations and orders issued by the UK Parliament and the UK Government. The PPP scheme is a sub-regional scheme which enables people seeking social and affordable housing to register on-line. Applicants are required to meet a range of eligibility and qualification criteria relating to issues such as immigration status, local connection, previous tenancy conduct, acceptable behaviour, home ownership and savings. Applicants are required to provide a range of documents to verify the information provided on their registration form. Administering partners check applicants' eligibility and qualification to join PPP when they initially apply and when an allocation of a property is made.
- 3.4 Once accepted onto the scheme applicants are prioritised based on the urgency of their housing need using detailed criteria set out within the policy priority banding system. Statute stipulates that some applicants must be afforded a reasonable preference for rehousing, and that the local authority may frame the allocation scheme to give

additional preference to particular descriptions of people who fall within the statutory reasonable preference categories and have urgent housing needs. Under the PPP scheme Band A includes those applicants who have been determined to have an additional preference and Band B includes those with a reasonable preference. Applicants with no additional or reasonable preference are placed in Band C. Band D consists of applicants who have exhausted their right to refuse an allocation of social rented housing.

3.5 PPP operates on a Choice Based Lettings model whereby properties becoming available for letting are advertised on the scheme website for registered applicants to express an interest (bid), subject to meeting the property eligibility criteria e.g. property size. At the end of the property advertising cycle applications for each property are sorted into a shortlist order based on their level of priority for rehousing i.e. their priority band. Where two or more applicants have the same priority band, then the earliest band effective date receives preference. In situations where the priority band and band effective date are the same, then the earliest registration date would take preference, following this, those making a community contribution as defined in the scheme policy would take preference.

3.6 Since the implementation of the policy in January 2024, there has been a reasonable settling in period, allowing time for the PPP Scheme Local Authorities to evaluate the new policy at scale. This has resulted in a recognition that some amendments need to be made to the policy including:

- **Three significant changes** which will have an impact on a substantial proportion of those applying for rehousing via the PPP scheme. Local Authorities are proposing these changes in direct response to the increased demand on the partner local authority homelessness services and associated temporary accommodation costs. If implemented, these changes will assist the local authorities to manage the increased demand on their homelessness services more efficiently.
- **Minor policy changes** which will have a limited impact on a minority of applicants, but which will improve the local authority's ability to administer the policy and meet housing need more effectively.
- **A range of wording changes** to improve clarity, and to correct identified errors and inconsistencies.

3.7 **Significant Changes.**



- 3.7.1 There are three significant policy changes being proposed, which will impact a considerable proportion of those currently on the housing register.
- 3.8 Increase to Band A for Local Authority commissioned homeless supported / hostel move on cases.
- 3.8.1 Since the current PPP policy was approved by the participating local authorities in 2022 the demand for social housing in the scheme area has increased as a direct result of an increased demand on Homelessness services. This has resulted in a steady increase in the proportion of property allocations to applicants in Band A, with fewer properties going to lower bands including those in Band B who are ready to move on from Local Authority commissioned homeless supported / hostel accommodation. In addition, the increase in priority to Band A for young people leaving the care of the local authority introduced in January 2024 has been a key driver in the increase in the proportion of properties going to Band A, with a significant proportion of allocations to Band A going to this group rather than other groups in Band A such as homeless cases. Although the impact of this change is beginning to ease as those care leavers who have been waiting for accommodation for a long time are being housed, the overall impact will be long term due to the increase in priority for this group.
- 3.9 Any reduction in allocations to Band B applicants moving on from LA commissioned hostel / supported homeless provision causes issues for the homelessness service. They are unable to refer new clients who need this provision due to a lack of availability, resulting in less appropriate accommodation options having to be used. Moving these applicants to independent accommodation will free up space to enable the Homeless Team to manage caseloads and associated temporary accommodation costs more effectively. This will also enable those who are ready for independence to move on with their lives without the restrictions that residence in supported accommodation places on them such as preventing take up of employment due to the reduction in benefits, and prohibitive costs of funding the accommodation independently.
- 3.10 Under the existing policy those who are ready to move on from short term supported / hostel accommodation are awarded Band B Reasonable Preference. For those whose accommodation is local authority contracted, this priority is backdated to the date the applicant moved into the short term supported / hostel

accommodation. The proposed change would see a proportion of these applicants who are currently included in the Band B provision for move on, having their priority increased to Band A Additional Preference. This change would only apply to those applicants who are ready to move on from local authority contracted / grant funded short term supported / hostel accommodation which is local authority homeless provision. All other move on cases would remain in Band B in line with the current arrangements.

3.11 Most applicants moving to Band A under this proposal would no longer benefit from a backdate to their band date, as they do currently in Band B. This would mean that the Band A priority would only be awarded from the date the applicant is assessed as being ready to move to independence.

3.12 Any young people meeting this new Band A criteria who are Section 17 child in need cases, will have their Band A backdated to the date they moved into the supported accommodation. This is to allow for situations where a young person may not qualify for PPP when they move into the supported accommodation due to being under 18 and not having a trustee in place. This change, together with the change to the qualification criteria for this group to allow individual local authority protocols to prevail, will facilitate local authority Housing and Children's Services to work closely together to plan the most appropriate pathway for young people accessing these services. As Care Leavers in Band A are awarded a Band backdate to their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, they will still receive a higher priority than section 17 young people in local authority homeless / hostel provision who are awarded Band A.

3.13 The proposed changes to Band A will assist the local authority homelessness teams to better manage the demand on homelessness services and the associated temporary accommodation costs.

#### 3.14 Amendments to the Discretion criteria

3.14.1 The discretion criteria set out in the current policy is limited in scope and only covers certain groups of people including:

- Providing protection to people who need to move away from another local authority area, to escape violence, harm, or intimidation.
- In circumstances where an applicant needs to move due to a serious offence (equal to MAPPA level 2 or 3), as defined by the Serious Crime Act 2007, Part 1, Schedule 1, there will be joint

working with the Police, Probation Services, Adult Care Services, health professionals, registered providers, and other bodies, to manage any risk to the community.

- In circumstances where a member of the Armed Forces community has been disadvantaged in respect of their ability to access suitable housing through their own or their family member's service in the Regular Armed Forces or Reserve Forces.

3.15 Since the current policy was implemented in January 2024 local authorities have already identified cases that have an exceptional urgent welfare need and require intervention to assist with rehousing more quickly than can be facilitated via the policy. This has resulted in the recommendation to add an additional point to those listed above to allow for intervention in these exceptional welfare cases via a direct offer of accommodation. Additionally, the criteria have been amended to make clear that where discretion is applied this should only be in situations that are exceptional in nature and where the consequences of not applying discretion have been considered. To ensure that discretion is applied consistently across the sub-region, a discretion register will be introduced once the policy is approved.

3.16 The discretion criteria have also been amended to allow local authorities to vary their policy to implement a period where a proportion of lettings will be offered via direct lettings to key groups. This flexibility allowing local authorities to implement a period of direct lettings will enable them to respond to crisis situations such as the recent extreme demand on homelessness services and associated temporary accommodation costs. Another example would be the housing crisis experienced during the COVID pandemic.

3.17 A further point has been added to the discretion criteria to allow local authorities the flexibility to implement pilot trials of new ways of working to inform future service delivery and potential scheme improvements to meet local housing need. Any variation to the scheme being proposed, either in the form of a pilot trial or a period of direct lettings, will only be implemented following approval via a separate decision by the individual local authority, with full details of the variation published on the PPP website. Any variation will also take account of the local authority's Housing Strategy and Tenancy Strategy.

### 3.18 Cross Boundary Moves

3.18.1 Since the new policy was implemented in January 2024 some of the

local authorities have experienced a significant increase in the proportion of properties in their area being allocated to applicants who are not current residents in that local authority area. This is due to the removal of the previous 5% cross boundary mobility cap. To maintain a balanced approach giving existing residents of a local authority a reasonable chance of securing accommodation in their area, it is proposed that the 5% cross boundary mobility cap is reintroduced.

- **Each local authority** will monitor the proportion of all their properties advertised through the scheme which are allocated to applicants living outside that local authority area. This will include all applicants who are not living in the allocating local authority area, regardless of whether they can demonstrate a local connection to that local authority area as detailed in section 3.2.8. of the policy.
- **If the number of allocations to non-resident applicants** exceeds 5% net in any 12-month period, then that local authority may choose to implement an allocations approach whereby properties will be advertised giving preference to residents in that local authority area. Where this is implemented, it will be monitored on a quarterly basis and either removed / or continued as required, to maintain a maximum of 5% net inward migration. Where properties are advertised giving preference to local authority residents under this provision, exemptions will be afforded to the following groups:
- **Members of the Armed Forces** Community who are exempt from local connection criteria as defined in section 3.2.14.
- **Persons who are victims of domestic abuse or threats of domestic abuse**, or escaping domestic abuse or harm, will be exempt from local connection requirements, as will those who have sought a place of safety in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation in the local authority area.
- **Care leavers** – persons aged up to age 25, who are owed a duty under the Children Act 1989, section 23C, by one of the scheme partner local authorities.

### 3.19 Minor changes

- 3.19.1 There are several minor changes identified that will improve the Policy in terms of the local authority's ability to administer the policy and meet housing need more effectively. These are detailed in the following points.

### 3.20 Qualification - Section 17 Child in need cases

- 3.20.1 The existing qualification criteria does not extend to persons defined as a child in need as a result of a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989 section 17.
- 3.20.2 The existing policy includes a stipulation that any protocol agreed between the local authority's Housing Services and Children's Services will be taken into consideration when making qualification decisions about care leavers, but this does not currently extend to child in need applicants who are not care leavers.
- 3.20.3 The policy changes proposed will extend this provision to incorporate Section 17 children in need applicants who are not care leavers.
- 3.20.4 The changes will enable local authority Housing Services and Children's Services to set up joint protocols to better manage and respond to the housing needs of young people accessing these services.
- 3.21 Qualification – Unacceptable behaviour.
  - 3.21.1 The existing policy includes scope to disqualify applicants who are unsuitable to be a tenant due to unacceptable behaviour which includes reference to causing annoyance or nuisance to staff carrying out housing management functions.
  - 3.21.2 The proposed changes expand this criteria to include applicants where they, or any member of their household, has displayed abusive or threatening behaviour towards members of staff involved in the administration of the PPP Scheme.
  - 3.21.3 It is not anticipated that this will impact many applicants but there have been incidents in the past where there has been abusive or threatening behaviour toward PPP staff which is considered serious enough to make an applicant unsuitable to be a tenant.
  - 3.21.4 This change will allow local authorities to disqualify such applicants until such time as they can demonstrate improved behaviour.
- 3.22 Qualification – Local connection.
  - 3.22.1 The proposed changes recommend that the policy criteria for local connection are expanded to make clear that those who have been newly granted refugee status and are owed a statutory homeless duty by one of the Scheme local authorities, as well as those placed in the area under the 'Homes for Ukraine Scheme' are exempt from the local connection criteria.
  - 3.22.2 This is in line with current processes and local authority statutory responsibilities to assist applicants in these situations.

3.23 Qualification - Care Leavers.

- 3.23.1 The existing policy includes criteria relating to care leavers who are placed out of the borough but are owed a duty by one of the local authority areas under the Children Act.
- 3.23.2 The existing policy wording allows for a continued local connection to the area up to age 21, or 25 if they are pursuing a programme of education agreed in their pathway plan.
- 3.23.3 The criteria have been extended to age 25 regardless of education status. This change is in line with the local authority statutory parenting responsibility.

3.24 Qualification – Savings exemption.

- 3.24.1 Two new disregards to the qualification criteria for the savings threshold are being proposed for:
  - ***Those who are ready to be discharged from hospital / residential care but are unable to do so because their current home is unsuitable for their needs to the extent that they would be at risk in the property, and where other potential short term and long-term solutions such as adaptations, have been considered but deemed unfeasible. This brings the criteria in line with the existing disregards to the homeownership qualification criteria and recognises the urgent housing need of this group and the need to move them quickly to free up space in hospitals / residential care.***
  - ***Applications which include a household member who is severely disabled and requires rehousing to a substantially adapted property, and where adaptations to the owned property have been assessed by the LA's department responsible for adaptations but deemed unfeasible, and where the equity available in the owned property together with any savings are insufficient to source a suitable adapted / adaptable property in the area. This change takes account of the barriers in accessing substantially adapted accommodation for those who need this type of accommodation.***

3.25 Qualification – Homeownership exemption.

- 3.25.1 Two new disregards to the homeownership criteria for:
  - ***Households that include a person with disabilities who needs a move to a substantially adapted property in line with the savings***

*disregard.*

- ***Those who cannot return to their property*** due to safety concerns e.g. *Ukrainian Refugees who own a property in Ukraine.*

3.26 Qualification – Domestic abuse victims.

3.26.1 Additional disregard for tenancy related debt added to the qualification criteria for victims of domestic abuse.

3.26.2 This change is in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and recognises the need to remove barriers to rehousing for these applicants due to the urgency of their housing need.

3.27 Qualification – Armed Forces

3.27.1 Removal of the five-year time limit on the disregard to local connection criteria for those who have served in the Regular Armed Forces.

3.27.2 This is to incorporate the December 2024 amendment to the Allocation of Housing Statutory Guidance for the qualification criteria for Armed Forces.

3.28 Prioritisation Band A – Care Leavers.

3.28.1 The Band A criteria for care leavers has been updated to reflect the original intention in the existing policy to award Band A, including a backdate to the 16<sup>th</sup> birthday for those leaving the care of the local authority for the first time, at the point they are ready for independence. The existing policy does not make this clear.

3.28.2 The proposed amendments provide further clarity and explicitly stipulates that if a care leaver up to age 25 needs to be rehoused again following their initial move to independence, then they can be awarded Band A, but only if there is a recognised housing need, and the applicant is actively engaging with the Local Authority Care Leaver Teams, and that team is supportive of a move.

3.28.3 The proposed change also makes clear that if Band A is awarded for a subsequent move, then a backdate to the 16<sup>th</sup> birthday will not be applied. This change brings the policy in line with the original intention, whilst still recognising the local authorities' corporate parenting responsibility for care leavers up to age 25.

3.29 Kinship Carers.

3.29.1 The Band A criteria for those approved by the local authority who need to move to a larger property has been extended to include long term kinship arrangements in line with statutory requirements.

3.30 Prioritisation Band D – Failure to bid.

3.30.1 The criteria in Band D for those who have failed to bid on more than three properties in a rolling 12-month period has been removed. This is due to the complexity of implementing this within the IT system, as well as the administrative burden of implementing something which penalises applicants who may make an informed choice not to bid for properties that they have no realistic chance of being offered.

3.30.2 This element of the policy has never been implemented and will not adversely impact any applicants.

3.31 Clarification and Corrections.

3.31.1 Following implementation of the current policy it has become apparent that there are sections of the policy that need clarification, to ensure the wording is explicit and adequately detailed to fully describe the way the policy is applied in practice.

3.31.2 In addition to the above there are a small number of changes being proposed to make the policy easier to read and understand for all those accessing it. The proposed amendments for clarification purposes do not change the meaning of the policy or the way it is applied currently.

There are a small number of changes which are corrections e.g. incorrect references, spelling, punctuation etc.

These proposed changes for correction purposes do not change the meaning of the policy or the way in which it is applied currently.

3.32 Engagement / Consultation.

3.32.1 The existing PPP Allocations scheme which was implemented in January 2024 was the subject of a full public consultation prior to implementation. The proposed recommendations are for changes to be made to the existing scheme.

3.32.2 In line with current statutory guidance and legal requirements a consultation exercise was undertaken in relation to the proposals which extended to registered providers of social housing who the local authority has nominations agreements with, other partner organisations, and scheme applicants.

3.32.3 The consultation ran for a 28-day period from Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2025. The responses to each proposal present a mix of those in favour and those opposed to the change. The local authority's original considerations when devising the policy



changes included a strong rationale for each change, as detailed in the consultation.

### 3.33 Policy Impact

- 3.33.1 As stated above, the amendments to the policy are aimed to ensure that vulnerable households are awarded the priority banding to enable them to access secure social housing.
- 3.33.2 The main changes to the policy are banding priorities, with many client groups being awarded Band A, which identifies the level of housing needs and offers priority housing status.
- 3.33.3 The policy changes will have a vast impact upon Band A, which will result in a further increase in the number of clients registered in that banding. Although, this will give clients a higher priority when allocating available properties, it will also further minimise property allocations to those clients within the lower PPP bandings.

## 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The social housing allocations scheme is a core service and the outlined amendments to the Allocations Policy and Procedures for Property Pool Plus will reflect the latest legislation changes.
- 4.2 LAs must adhere to the law regarding the allocation of Social Rented Housing, as set out in the Housing Act 1996, Part 6 Allocation of Housing Accommodation. Every local housing authority in England must have a scheme (their “allocation scheme”) for determining priorities and as to the procedure to be followed, in allocating housing accommodation. For this purpose, “procedure” includes all aspects of the allocation process, including the persons or descriptions of persons by whom decisions are taken.”

## 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no resource implications arising from the recommendations of this report. There are existing revenue budgets in place to fund the operation of an allocations service, which is currently performed by Halton Housing. There is an existing revenue budget to fund the annual operation of an IT system.

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

- 6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**  
Facilitate a choice-based lettings process to promote access to suitable social housing, to promote stability, thus improving health and wellbeing, resulting in greater independence.

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

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity and resilient communities with the provision of suitable secure tenancies with social landlord's supports community stability.

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

Many vulnerable people rely on accessing social housing for a home to live in and providing access to a stable home supports community wealth building on providing sustainable and resilient communities. The opportunity to have a settled affordable accommodation also offers stability for employment and enables people to thrive, particularly those with vulnerabilities, children and care experienced young people.

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

The proposed policy changes will tackle inequality and identifies that those most in need will be awarded high priority banding to secure social housing.

**6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future**

Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community. The policy reflects the process to allow clients to secure social housing, therefore promote community stability within the Borough.

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

None.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The Local Authority has a public law duty to accept applications from any member of the public, for an allocation of social rented housing. The Allocations Scheme must meet all relevant statutory and legal requirements. Failure to operate such an allocation system will mean the Council is in breach of this duty.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Halton Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone.

8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help the Council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.

8.3 A comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in relation to the recommendations for changes to be made to the PPP Scheme Policy.

## **9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no environmental, biodiversity or climate change implications arising from these recommendations.

### **KEY DECISION ON THE FORWARD PLAN**

## **10.0 REASONS FOR DECISION**

- 10.1 To ensure that the Allocations Policy is in line with current legislation, case law, good practice, and meets local priorities it is necessary to periodically update and review the current iteration. The existing scheme has been in operation since January 2024.
- 10.2 The changes being proposed fall into three categories: three significant changes to assist the participating local authorities to respond more effectively to the demand for social housing; minor policy changes that will impact a relatively small number of applicants; minor changes to improve clarity.

## **11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 11.1 The option to continue to operate the current scheme policy without change has been considered but discounted due to the need for the Council to improve its ability to meet housing need in the area and to respond to the increased demand on homelessness services and associated temporary accommodation pressures.

## **12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

- 12.1 The Property Pool Plus (PPP) Housing Allocations Scheme is a jointly administered scheme across the five Local Authority areas of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral.

Each Local Authority will seek approval from their respective Management Boards, with a view that the policy will be implemented July/August 2025.

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

- 13.1
- | <b>Document</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Place of Inspection</b> | <b>Contact Officer</b>                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Property Pool Plus Allocations Policy<br><br>Housing Allocations Policy can be found on Property Pool Website<br><a href="https://www.propertypoolplus.org.uk">https://www.propertypoolplus.org.uk</a> | Runcorn Town Hall          | Patricia Preston,<br>Principal Homelessness Manager |

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

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