



Executive Board

Thursday, 13 November 2025 2.00 p.m.
The Boardroom, Municipal Building

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Alcock', is centered on the page.

Interim Chief Executive

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

PART 1

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2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
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*Please contact Gill Ferguson 0151 511 8059 or
gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 11 December 2025*

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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.	
10. CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO	
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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, 23 October 2025 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Dennett and P. Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, R. Rout and J. Rosser

Also in attendance: D. Trust Dickinson, C. Deadman and A. Hogarty – Halton Housing Trust

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

	<i>Action</i>
EXB48 MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record. <i>N.B. Councillor Harris declared an Other Registrable Interest in the following item of business as he is a tenant of Halton Housing. Councillor Wright declared an Other Registrable Interest in the following item of business as she is a member of the Halton Housing Trust Board.</i> HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PORTFOLIO EXB49 HALTON HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT The Board received the Halton Housing (HH) Annual Report, which provided an update on their activities since the last report to Executive Board. The Chair welcomed Debbie Trust Dickinson, who presented the report to the Board – <i>Annual Report to HBC Executive Board, October 2025</i>; and her colleagues Amanda Hogarty and Clive Deadman (Chair of the Halton Housing Trust Board).	

The report outlined the key achievements over the past year which included:

- customer satisfaction levels across all 12 Tenant Satisfaction perception measures had increased compared to 2024/25 performance;
- there had been significant and sustained improvement in repairs service delivery;
- compliance across five out of six building safety measures was 100% at the end of March 2025;
- performance against the Trust's target to have 86% of homes with a stock condition survey of no more than five years old had been achieved with a year-end figure of 89.5%;
- several community events had been arranged; and
- external accreditations included a gold award by the Council Health Inclusion Team.

The presentation also highlighted the future focus as outlined in the Trust three-year Corporate Plan. This included the Halton Housing Deal for tenants and delivering new homes.

RESOLVED: The Board thanked Halton Housing for the presentation and noted the report.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB50 URGENT DECISION

The Board received a report from the Interim Chief Executive, which provided information on urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Board.

It was noted that the Council's Constitution gave authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decisions, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director Finance and/or the Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.

One urgent decision had been made since the last meeting of the Board and full details were published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the urgent decision taken since the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB51 PENSIONS DISCRETIONS STATEMENT 2025/26 REVISED

The Board received the annual Pensions Discretions Statement for 2025-26 for Halton Borough Council.

The Council was required to publish a Pension Discretion Statement annually, to advise the discretions it intended to exercise under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) – this was appended to the report.

It was reported that the Pensions Discretion Statement for 2025-26 was based upon the statement for 2024-25, which was approved by Executive Board in March 2023. It was noted that there had been a revision to the agreed Pensions Discretion Statement 2025/26 incorporating an element to reflect the implementation of the unpaid leave element as required by the pensions fund.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Pensions Discretions Statement for 2025-26.

Chief Executive

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB52 ALL AGE COMMUNITY CARE PROCESSES AND NEXT STEPS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Adults, that presented a summary of the current operational and financial process for All Age Community Care (AACC) and the associated financial risks facing the Council in the current landscape. The report considered the financial impact of the changes Cheshire & Mersey Integrated Care System (C&M ICS) had brought about as part of their financial recovery agenda.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the financial pressures facing the Community Care budget outlined in the report be noted; and
- 2) moving forward, financial processes are aligned to reflect contractual financial obligations of the Council and C&M ICS.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB53 ASC WORKFORCE STRATEGY

The Board was advised that early in 2025, Skills for

Health were commissioned to work with the Council to develop an ASC Workforce Strategy for Halton. Following extensive engagement, which include online surveys capturing views across the workforce, one to one interviews with operational leaders and analysis of workforce data, vacancy trend, pay benchmarks and training uptake, the strategy was presented to the Board for approval.

RESOLVED: That the draft Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy for Halton be approved.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB54 ANNUAL CONSULTATION EXERCISE - FEE RATES

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Adults, that sought approval to enter into consultation with care providers in relation to the annual uplift for 2026/27. The approach to setting fees and agreeing to appropriate uplifts included consulting with all stakeholders and reassuring them that arrangements for determining fees and uplifts were robust. The approach also allowed for uplifts to be considered on an annual basis with consideration given to changes, business costs and the conditions faced by providers.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to actively enter into consultation with care providers in relation to the annual uplift for 2026/27.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB55 JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS - CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE: STAGE 1 DELEGATION

The Board considered a report that sought approval to delegate Stage 1 consideration of substantiation variation to health services, where necessary, when Joint Health Scrutiny (JHS) arrangements may apply. The proposal had previously been presented to the Health and Social Care Policy and Performance Board on 23 September 2025, and the protocol was endorsed.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorse the proposal for Stage 1 delegation as outlined and recommends for onward approval by Council.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB56 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.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB57 DIRECT AWARD OF THE HALTON INTEGRATED SEXUAL HEALTH PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE CONTRACT 2026 VIA PROVIDER SELECTION REGIME – DIRECT AWARD PROCESS C. WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL BE THE LEAD COMMISSIONING AUTHORITY - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, that sought approval to proceed with a procurement process to grant a direct award to Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Axess) for the delivery of the Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS).

Reason(s) for Decision

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 set out a local authority's statutory responsibility for commissioning the Integrated Sexual Health Service.

The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced a new procurement regime for selecting providers of healthcare services in England: The Provider Selection Regime (PSR).

Therefore, Public Health wish to use this procurement route to award a new contract via PSR Direct Award Process C to the current provider Axess. The contract will be jointly commissioned with Warrington the lead commissioning authority.

The justification to use PSR Direct Award Process C to direct award to Axess is noted below:

- The existing provider is satisfying the existing contract and is likely to satisfy the new contract and the proposed new contracting arrangements
- This will minimise the impact on local families, staff and the wider health and social care economy
- This will ensure continuity of service
- This will reduce bureaucracy and cost associated with a tender exercise
- This will ensure a flexible and proportionate process for selecting providers of health care services, so that all decisions are made in the best interest of people who use the services.

The Public Health can legally and without prejudice, use the PSR route should it be passed at executive board level. The Public Health Department have sought guidance and direction from both the Legal Department and the Procurement Department.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative option is to undertake a full competitive tender exercise. This was rejected for the reasons mentioned in section 10. The report recommendation will strengthen and stabilise the current system, especially the Family Hub, Women's Hub, other neighbourhood models and the transformation model. It will also strengthen the existing Partnership and collaborative working streams.

Implemented Date

It was intended that the process to provide a direct award would be undertaken following the Executive Board approval, with the new contract to begin on 1 October 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) note compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.3.5 – Preliminary Estimates Report, Contracts exceeding £5,000,000 in Value; 2) note compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.4.2(iii) - Joint or Partnering Arrangements with another body or bodies and, under that arrangement another body is the commissioning body, the Standing Orders of that other body shall apply to contracts entered into under the arrangement subject to the prior approval of the Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal and Democratic Services). Warrington Borough Council's Standing Orders will be applicable as the lead commissioning authority; 3) note the Local Authority's statutory responsibility for commissioning public health services for the specialist integrated sexual health services (ISHSs). Including testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), the provision of HIV PrEP and provision of the full range of contraception. (Health and Social Care Act 2012); 4) approves the use of the new procurement regime for selecting providers of healthcare services in England: The Provider Selection Regime (PSR), Direct Award Process C, to Axess; 5) approval to proceed with a procurement process to grant a direct award to Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Axess) for the delivery of the Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS) period 1st October 2026 to 30th September 2031, with the option of 2 x plus 1-year, pre-determined extension periods up to 30th September 2033. This contract is jointly commissioned with Warrington Borough Council, who will be the lead commissioning authority; and 6) note the content of the report. | <p>Director of Public Health</p> |
|---|----------------------------------|

MINUTES ISSUED: 28 October 2025

CALL-IN: 4 November 2025 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 4 November 2025.

Meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 13 November 2025
REPORTING OFFICER: Interim Chief Executive
PORTFOLIO: Leader
SUBJECT: Urgent Decisions
WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To bring to the attention of Executive Board urgent decision/s taken since the last meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report is noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council's Constitution gives authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decision/s which are required before the next formal meeting of Executive Board.

These must be made in consultation with the Leader of the Council where practicable, and with the Operational Director – Finance and/or Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary. They must also be reported for information to the next practically available meeting of the Board.

- 3.2 More information on each can be found on the Council's website:

<http://councillors.halton.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?bcr=1>

- 3.3 The urgent decision/s taken since the last meeting of Executive Board:

Date Decision taken	Decision details
3 October 2025	Waiver sign off for provision of a Speech, Language and Communication Service for children with needs identified in an EHCP.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are none other than the constitutional requirement to report urgent decisions for information.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The report is for information, and there are no risk issues arising from it.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

9. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no climate change implications.

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

10.1 No background papers were used in the preparation of this report. Further information on the decision/s taken is available from the link in Paragraph 3.2.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 13th November 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) report presented in July 2025. It will be accompanied by a presentation from the consultancy Hope Street Strategy Company who are drafting the Vision and Regeneration Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board note the update and associated presentation.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In the 2024 Spring budget the then Government announced Phase 2 of their Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPT) 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 LTPT 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. **A funding profile is provided at Appendix 1.**
- 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 2.
- 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 RTN Board alongside HBC officers. This currently consists of Dan Price (Police Crime Commissioner), Cllr Rosie Leck, Chris Bastock (Cultivate), Sally Yeoman (VCA), Andrew Darron (Groundwork) and a number of HBC Officers.
- 3.7 To access the funding Halton will need to produce a Regeneration Plan for the agreed area by 28th November 2025, along with a four-year investment plan. Hope Street Strategy Company have been employed to develop the Regeneration Plan and are working with HBC officers and the subgroup to produce this.
- 3.8 The funding will be devolved directly to Halton Borough Council. 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 and this was ratified by the Board in April.
- 3.10 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, to build the capacity of the Board and the 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.
- 3.11 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

– see above.

Communications and Publicity, including Reconnecting Runcorn website - Vivid.

- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 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; **a full list of Board Members is included at Appendix 3.**
- 3.14 Document development and Timelines:
- 3.15 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.
- 3.16 The programme will be divided into 3 investment periods with a formalised progress review at the end of each investment period. 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)
- 3.17 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.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As reported at the Executive Board in July 2025, 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.

Projects and initiatives to be presented in the Investment Plan are a culmination of a detailed consultation and engagement process which began over 12 months' ago where local people, groups and local Councillors have had an opportunity to share ideas for Runcorn Old Town to help shape where investment is made feeding into a sub-group of the Neighbourhood Board as outlined above.

In practical terms, an interactive website has been established, as well as drop in sessions which have ultimately helped the Council prioritise proposals that will have the greatest impact for the town.

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 four 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 PRIORITIES

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 bought 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.

In addition, the funding will be top sliced each year to provide a pot of grant funding that can be bid into by community groups and local residents.

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: Funding Profile

Appendix 2: Interventions and Sub-Interventions

Appendix 3: List of Board Members

Regeneration Plan Guidance – funding allocation

Grant type	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	Total
Revenue funding (capacity)	200	150	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	600
Revenue funding (grants)	-	232	256	432	432	432	432	437	450	450	450	3,999
Capital funding (grants)	-	360	1,736	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	14,936



Regeneration, high streets and heritage	Housing	Work, productivity and skills	Cohesion	Health and wellbeing	Transport	Safety and security	Education and opportunity
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 DEVELOPMENT BOARD	
	Board Member	Sector/Agency Representation
1	Rachael Owen, CEO Chamber of Commerce	Co-Chair & Business Sector rep
2	Chris Bastock, Director A Place for Us & Chair of Cultivate	Co-Chair & Cultural Sector rep
3	Paul Mullane, Director of Development & Sales, Halton Housing	Vice-Chair & Housing Rep (Public Agencies & Anchor Institutions)
4	Sarah Pochin MP	Parliamentary Rep/MP
5	Cllr Dave Thompson, Deputy Leader	Local Councillors
6	Rosie Leck, Local Ward Councillor	Local Councillors
7	Stephen Young, Chief Executive	Local Authority rep NOW LEFT
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	Nick Smith - Avanti	Transport & Connectivity
25	Ian Lewis – Investment Manager, CA	LCR Rep

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 13 November 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Finance

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Determination of Council Tax Base 2026/27

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council is required to determine annually the Council Tax Base for its area and also the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes.
- 1.2 The Council is required to notify the Council Tax Base figure to the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency by 31st January 2026. The Council is also required to calculate and advise if requested, the Parish Councils of their relevant Council Tax Bases.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) Council set the 2026/27 Council Tax Base at 37,115 for the Borough, and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- (2) Council set the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	675
Halebank	540
Daresbury	424
Moore	338
Preston Brook	368
Sandymoor	1,739

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council Tax Base is the measure used for calculating Council Tax and is used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (Cheshire Fire Authority, Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), in the calculation of their Council Tax requirements.
- 3.2 The Council Tax Base figure is arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula, and represents the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough, expressed in terms of the equivalent of Band 'D' dwellings.
- 3.3 The Council Tax Base is calculated using the number of dwellings included in the Valuation List, as provided by the Valuation Office Agency, as at 13 October 2025. Adjustments are then made to take into account the estimated number of discounts, voids, additions and demolitions during the period 13 October 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- 3.4 The tax base calculation has included an element for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The estimated amount of Council Tax Support payable for 2026/27 is converted into the equivalent number of whole properties which are deducted from the total.
- 3.5 The tax base calculation will include an element for Care Leavers Discretionary Discount. The estimated amount of Care Leavers Discount payable for 2026/27 is converted into the equivalent number of whole properties which are deducted from the total.
- 3.6 The tax base calculation will include an element for Foster Carers Discretionary Discount. The estimated amount of Foster Carers Discount payable for 2026/27 is converted into the equivalent number of whole properties which are deducted from the total.
- 3.7 An estimated percentage collection rate is then applied to the product of the above calculation to arrive at the Council Tax Base for the year.
- 3.8 Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 97.0% collection rate, the calculation for 2026/27 provides a tax base figure of **37,115** for the Borough as a whole.

- 3.9 Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 97.0% collection rate, the appropriate Council Tax Base figure for each of the Parishes is as follows

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	675
Halebank	540
Daresbury	424
Moore	338
Preston Brook	368
Sandymoor	1,739

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council Tax Base will enable the Council to set the level of Council Tax to be charged for 2026/27.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS 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, council tax revenue supports the delivery and achievement of all the Council's priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 There would be significant loss of income to the Council if the Council Tax Base were not agreed, as it would not be possible to set the level of Council Tax to be charged for 2026/27.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 None.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

10.0 REASON FOR THE DECISION

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

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

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

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

12.1 The Council Tax Base 2026/27 will be implemented from 1st April 2026.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Working Papers	DCBL Stadium	Stephen Baker

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 13 November 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Finance

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: 2025/26 Councilwide Spending as at 30 September 2025

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report the Council's overall revenue net spend position as at 30 September 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 ensure the council wide forecast outturn overspend position for the year remains within budget.
- (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.
- (iv) Council be asked to approve the revisions to the capital programme set-out in paragraph 3.25 and incorporated within Appendix 4;

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Revenue Spending

- 3.1 Appendix 1 presents a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 September 2025 (period 6) and Appendix 2 provides detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms, net Council spending as at 30 September 2025 is £2.658m over budget. The outturn forecast for the year estimates that net spending will be over budget by £4.672m if no further corrective action is taken. This compares with the position at the end of July 2025 (period 4) where forecast spend for the year was estimated to be £5.572m over budget.

3.2 The improved position on the forecast outturn from that reported at the end of July 2025 can be linked across a number of areas, including:

- Adult Social Care Directorate – The forecast outturn for the Care Homes Division has dropped from £0.832 at period 4 to £0.603m. Position has been improved through additional funding being provided for 1:1 care packages within the setting. The overspend position against Community Care has also improved since period 4, the outturn position benefitting from a focussed financial improvement plan. Finally, the Pool Budget with ICB is forecast to underspend against budget largely as a result of review of contracts and reduced agency spend against the Community Home Care First programme. These measures have improved the forecast outturn for the department by £0.899m
- Finance – There has been a review of the Council liability for supported accommodation non-registered provider costs where the Council receive a reduced housing benefit contribution. The overall impact of this has improved the departmental outturn by £0.565m.
- Children Directorate – The outturn position for the directorate has improved by £0.538m, this has been helped by a reduction in staffing costs and slightly lower annual forecast of school transport costs.
- Environment and Regeneration Directorate – Outturn position for the directorate has improved by £0.279m, largely as a revised forecast of staffing costs within Highways and Transportation, and improved forecast of income within the leisure division.
- Corporate and Democracy – There is a downturn in the forecast underspend of £1.351m since last reported at the end of July 25. This has been as a result of review of contingency budgets which have been set aside to fund costs associated with unfunded grant spend, agreed market supplements and revision to the unbudgeted cost of the recently agreed pay deal increasing by £0.2m to £1.2m.

3.3 The forecast position remains a matter of great concern and action to reduce net spend must continue at pace. 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).

3.4 As part of the action to ensure spend for the year remains within budget, recovery meetings have been put into action where directorate leads will provide action points on how they aim to keep net spend within the approved budget.

3.5 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.

- 3.6 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. There is uncertainty in when MHCLG will commission this review and therefore the Council has taken a proactive and commissioned to support a review of the Council's financial resilience and financial management arrangements. The review will be undertaken on the basis of the latest specification for such reviews required by MHCLG for councils requesting EFS.
- 3.7 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. As a minimum the Council must aspire to ensure that spend for the year remains within the approved budget to ensure the provisional capitalisation direction is not breached.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 Within the Corporate and Democracy table (included at Appendix B), current year costs relating to EFS have been included. It is forecast the cost of EFS interest will be £1.096m with repayment of the principal debt totalling £0.500m
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 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 four 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.
- 3.13 In setting the 2025/26 budget, inflation of 2% was provided for the pay award. The pay award has been agreed at 3.2%, therefore budgetary growth for the pay award is insufficient, the revised forecast of the additional cost of the 3.2% pay offer will add approximately £1.2m to the

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

- 3.14 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. 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	1,500	280
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	100	2,100	200
Totals	533	6,050	642

- 3.15 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.

- 3.16 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 July 2025	As at 30 September 2025	Total 2025/26 To Date	As at 31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adult Social Care	955	1,687	805	3,447	6,035
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	130	145	146	421	810
Children & Family Services	574	739	594	1,907	5,220
Community & Greenspace	71	59	52	182	447
Economy, Enterprise & Property	60	77	86	223	417
Education, Inclusion & Provision	54	72	48	174	295
Finance	3	0	1	4	114
Legal & Democratic Services	63	59	43	165	881
Planning & Transportation	2	0	0	2	210
Public Health & Public Protection	0	0	0	0	22
Total	1,912	2,838	1,775	6,525	14,451

Revenue - Operational Spending

- 3.17 Operational net spending for the first four months of the year is higher than the budget to date by £2.658m Based on current forecasts it is estimated net spend will be over budget for the year by £4.672m if no further corrective action is taken.
- 3.18 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 outturn position is estimated to be over budget profile at the end of financial year 2025/26 by £1.810m with the majority relating to Social Care Services.

Since last reported at 31 July 25 there has been a reduction in overspend of £0.381m. It's important to remember that although there has been a reduction in forecast outturn the Children's and Families Department has received significant budget increases for 2025/26. The level of spend remains high across the service.

Employee costs are forecast to be over budget profile by the end of financial year 2025/26 by £0.726 this is a reduction of £0.478m since last reported on 31 July 25. The reduction mainly relates to vacant posts that remain unfilled that are not being covered by agency and an increase in staffing budgets due to the higher than anticipated salary uplift costs.

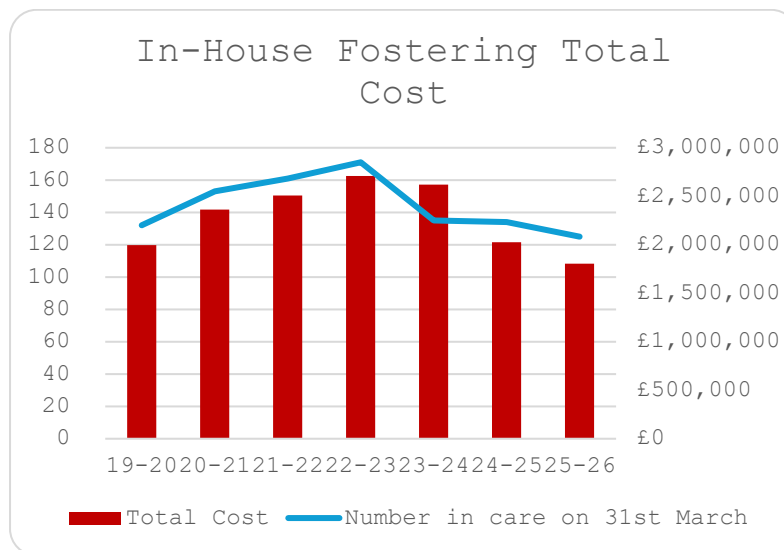
Supplies and Services

Supplies and services expenditure is forecast to be £0.584m 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.

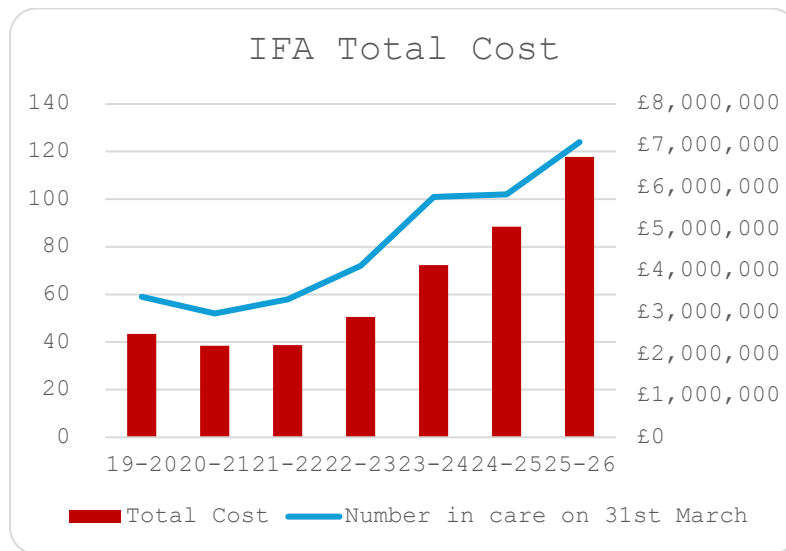
Fostering

Inhouse fostering placements is estimated to be £0.476m 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 £1.263m. This is an increase since last reported at 31 July 2025 of £0.193m.

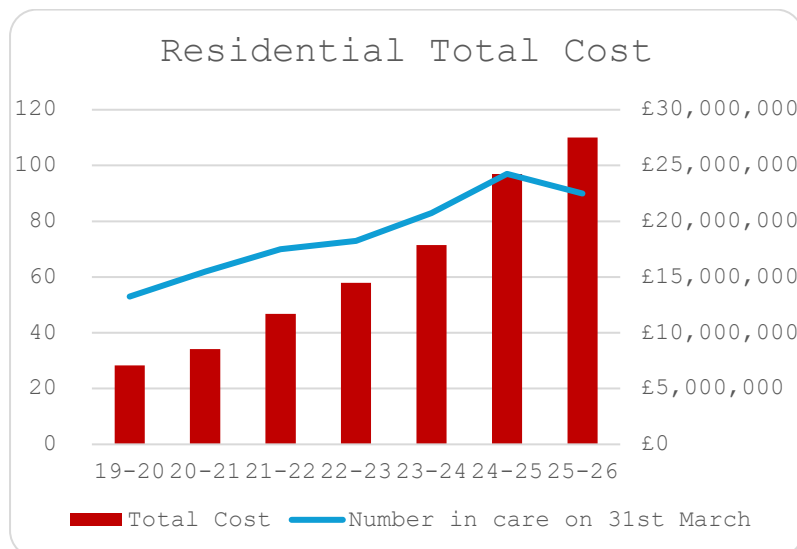


Residential Care

Out of Borough Residential Care continues to be a budget pressure for the Children and Families Department as the costs of residential care have continued 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 over budget profile by £0.058m, this is a reduction in forecast overspend since last reported.

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 September 2025 is currently £1.219m over the available budget and the year-end anticipated spend is forecast to be £2.315m over planned budget.

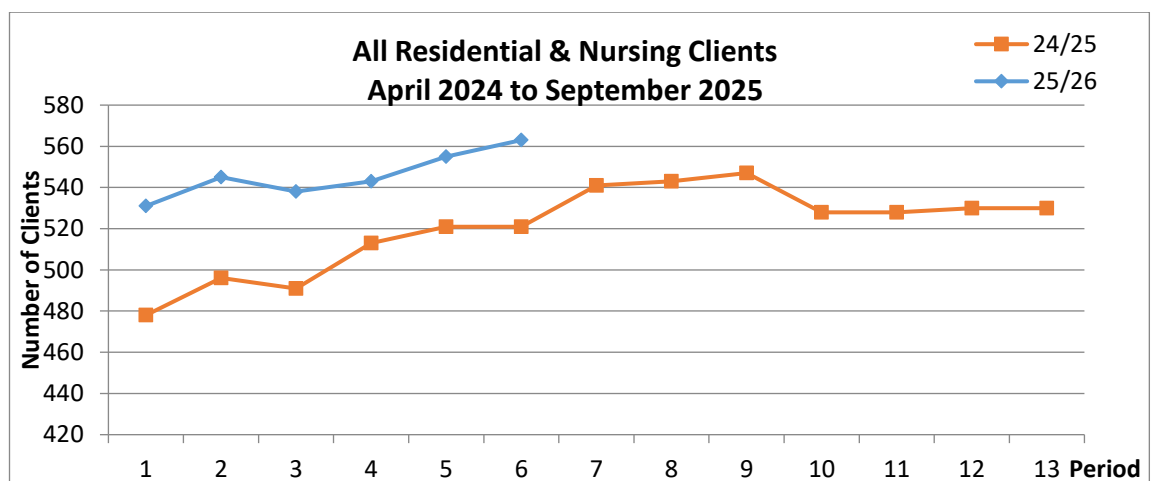
As previously reported, there has been a change to the methodology of the forecast for these services. The monthly actual financial performance is being tracked closely against predicted spend and in September we reduced our expected year-end forecast from £2.627m to £2.315m due to the impact of the recovery plan. Currently focus is on the following areas to try to reduce spend.

- 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 responsibility
- Ensure assessments carried out on discharge from hospital are complete and appropriate
- Maximise internal care home capacity

Residential & Nursing Care

There are currently 563 residents in external residential/nursing care as at the end of September 2025. In April there were 531, therefore an increase of 6%. Compared to 530 at the end of 2024/25, an increase of 6.2%. Compared to the 2024/25 average of 520 this is an increase of 8.2%. The average cost of a package of care is currently £931.27 compared to £850.24 at the end of 2024/25 an increase of 9.5%. Supplementary invoice payments so far amount to £293k.

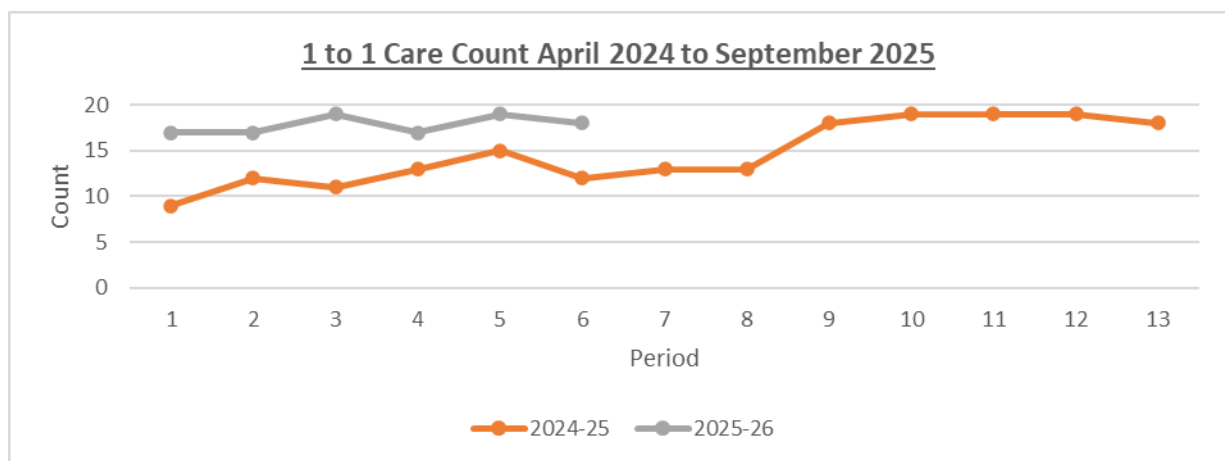
The graph below illustrates the demand for all residential and nursing placements.



Payments for 1 to 1 support continue to exert pressure on the budget. These are 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. Currently there are 18 compared to 13 at the same point last year. This is an increase of 38%, and an increase of 5% since last reported in July. These should reduce as packages continue to be reviewed, however some new packages coming through are still including 1 to 1 care.

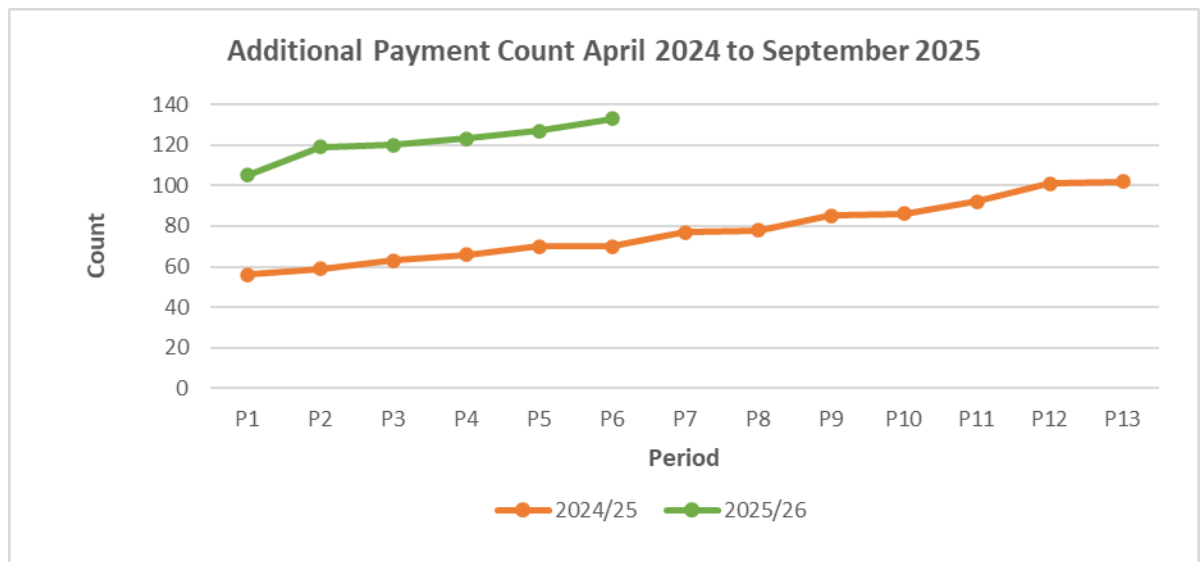
Care homes are being asked to provide monitoring reports as part of the review process to establish if there is a need for 1 to 1 care.



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 graphs below illustrate the count of service users with an additional payment by period.

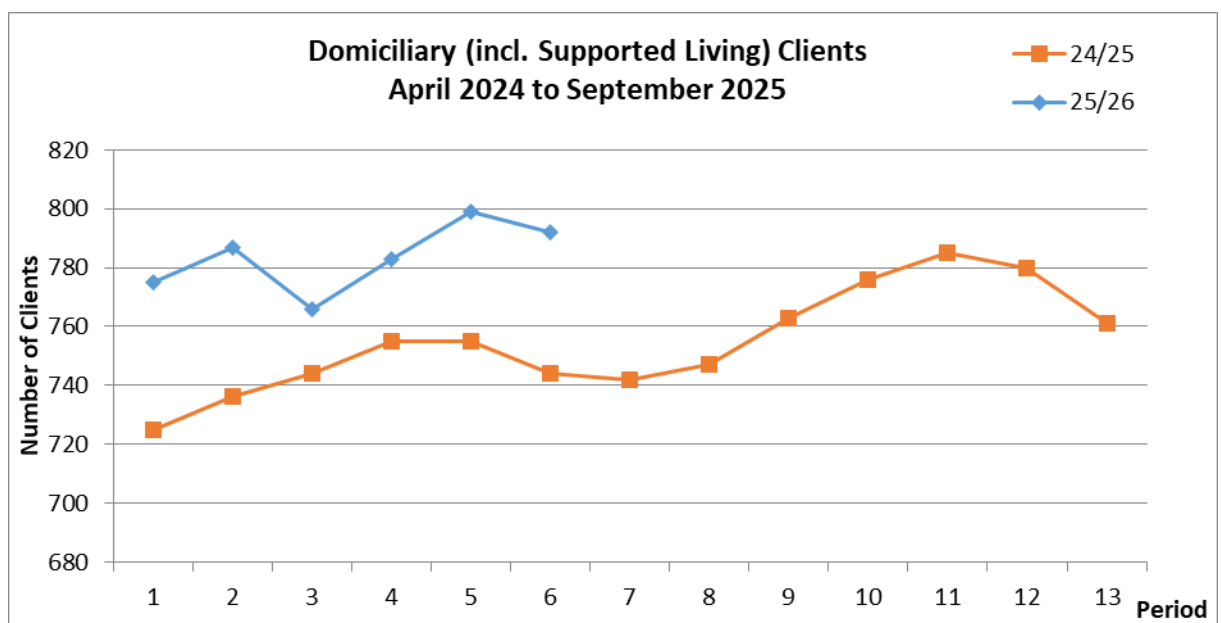
This clearly shows a steady increase in numbers and costs for 2025/26, the spend up to September is £298,913.80. If numbers and costs remain the same the forecast spend for the year will be approximately £711k. This is an increase of 17.5% from July where the estimate was £605k.



Domiciliary Care & Supported Living

As at September there are 792 service users receiving a package of care at home, compared to the average in 2024/25 of 754, an increase of 5%. However compared with September 2024 the increase is 6.5%. The average cost of a package of care is currently £521.71 compared with the average of £450.64 in 2024/25 an increase of 15.7%.

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

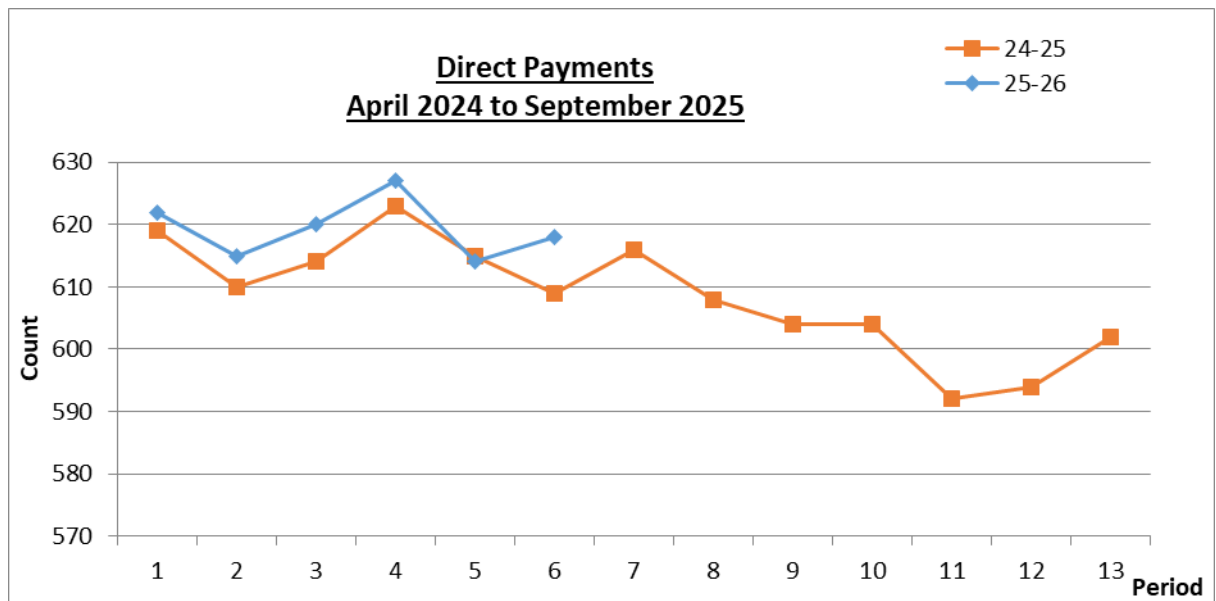


Direct Payments

The average number of clients who received a Direct Payment (DP) in September was 618 compared with 622 in April, a small decrease. The average cost of a package of care has also decreased from £571.26 to £485.80, a reduction of 14.9%. The

financial impact of this is a reduction in spend of approximately £200k per month.

The graph below shows movement throughout the year.



Care Homes

The spend for the first six months of the 2025/26 Financial Year to 30th September is £0.250M above profile, with an estimated spend above budget for the year of £0.603M. This primarily relates to unbudgeted agency staffing costs.

The projected outturn compares favourably to the previous report based on spend until the end of July, when a net overspend of £0.832M was projected for the full year. A number of residents who receive funding for 1:1 support have now had funding to the homes confirmed, and income has been received for the first 6 months 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 September 2025 total agency spend across the care homes reached £2.050M, the cost of this has partially been offset by staff vacancies.

Adult Social Care (excluding Care Homes and Community Care)

Net Department Expenditure is currently £0.347m over budget profile at the end of the sixth period of the financial year. Current expenditure projections indicate an overspend for the full financial year in the region of £0.751m.

Factors relating to the projected overspend include;

Unbudgeted agency costs are in respect of covering vacant posts, particularly in terms of front line Care Management and Mental Health Team posts. However, there has been a reduction in Agency staff use by 3 Agency staff members since June 2025, the reduction of use of these Agency staff members has been reflected in the forecasted spend until the end of the financial year. Agency spend across the division as a whole at the end of September 2025 stood at £0.906m, with a full year spend of £1.454m projected. This is partially offset by a forecasted underspend on the staffing budget of £0.983m.

Within period 4 reports, it was reported of an unbudgeted Market Supplement which has been awarded to social workers across the division. To assist with easing budgetary pressures, the budget to cover the market supplement has been provided on a temporary basis, initially for 12 months, resulting in an increase in budget of £0.391m. This increased budget is reflected within the figures above and has assisted in the reduction of the full-year forecasted over budget spend between this report and the report from period 4.

Income for the Department as a whole is under the budgeted income target by £0.271m with a projected under achieved target at the end of the financial year being £0.566m. The main areas making up the under achievement of target income are Community Meals, Telehealthcare and Transport. Within the projected income figures for the remainder of the financial year is a further reduction of income for Community Meals in the run up to the end of the service in March 2026. There has been a drop in forecast income for the Supported Housing Network, funding of a significant care package through to the end of the year will no longer materialise.

(iii) Education, Inclusion and Provision

Net departmental expenditure is £0.445m over budget at the end of September, based on available information. The forecast outturn for 2025/26 is currently an overspend against budget of £1.026m.

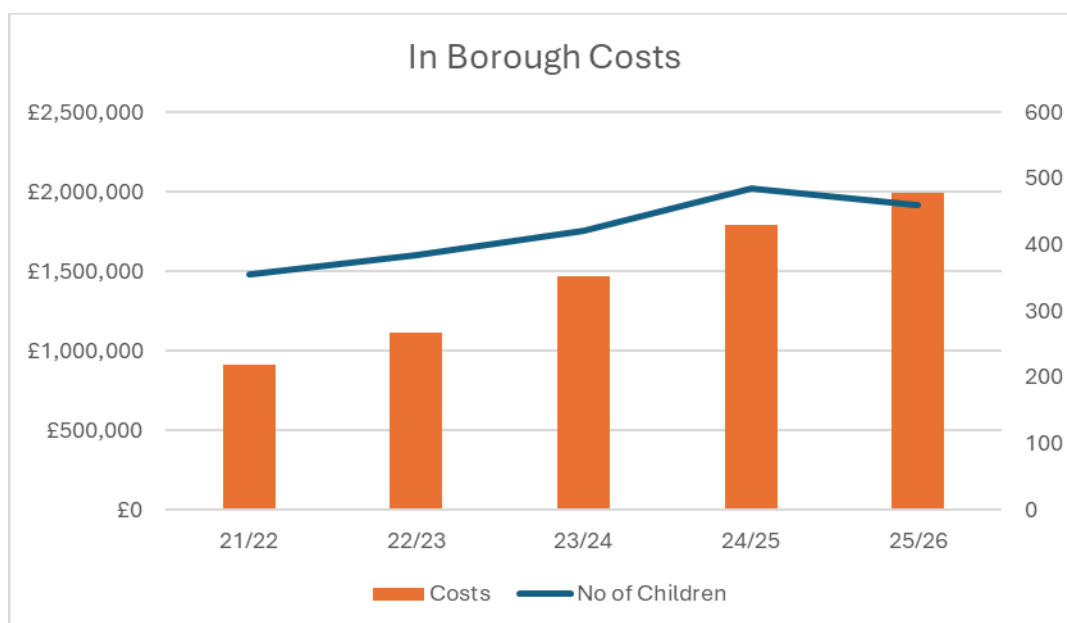
Schools Transport is the main budgetary demand pressure for Education, Inclusion and Provision. The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils with transport. This is split into two main areas of SEN pupils attending In Borough and out of Borough Schools.

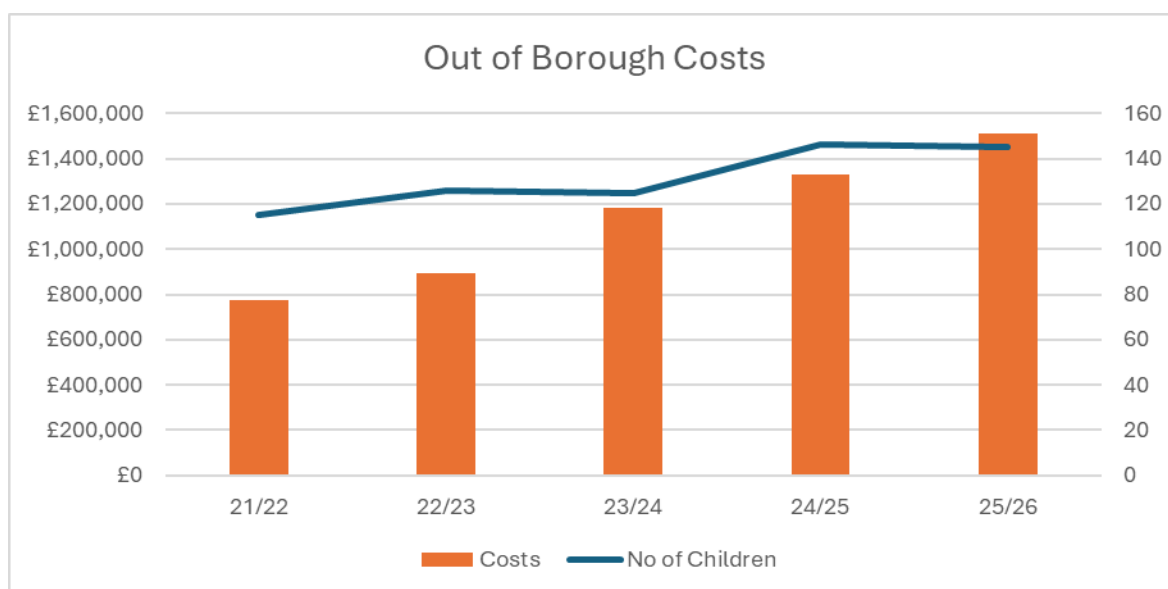
The table below illustrates the split between the two areas, and how each areas spend compares to the budget.

2025-26 as at Sep-25					
Area	Number of Users	Budget £000	Projected Spend £000	Variance £000	Average Cost per User
In Borough	461	1857	1997	(140)	£3,930.40
Out of Borough	145	1214	1510	(296)	£9,263.98
Total	606	3071	3508	(437)	

The current records show 606 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 appears to have stabilised for the moment at least. The graphs below show the number of SEN children using this service. It is too early to say whether the levelling off will continue or merely represents a blip, with demand increasing in future years in line with the historical and national trends.

The graphs below show the trend in the number of SEN children using this service and the associated costs.





The overspend position is also due to efficiency savings of £0.300m for Home to School Transport to undertake a 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. The consultation has been completed, and the results have been analysed and recommendations will be put forward for review. However, it is too early to say if the savings can be achieved.

Collection Fund

- 3.19 The council tax collection rate through to the end of September 2025 is 53.71% which is 0.11% 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. £1.634m has so far been collected this year in relation to previous years' debt.

- 3.20 Business rate collection through to the end of September 2025 is 58.60% which is 0.16% lower than the collection rate at the same point last year.

£0.736m has so far been collected this year in relation to previous years' debt.

Review of Reserves

- 3.21 As at 30 September 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.

- 3.22 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

- 3.23 A summary breakdown of the Council's reserves is presented in the table below, showing the balance of reserves as at 30 September 2025.

Summary of General and Earmarked Reserves	
Reserve	Reserve Value £m
Corporate:	
General Fund	5.149
Capital Reserve	0.398
Insurance Reserve	0.849
Specific Projects:	
Adult Social Care	0.711
Fleet Replacement	0.454
Highways Feasibility Costs	0.102
Local Development Framework	0.537
Community & Environment	0.542
Mersey Valley Golf Club	0.480
Mersey Gateway	33.542
CCLA Property Fund	0.263
Various Other	0.154
Grants:	
Building Schools for the Future	6.529
Public Health	1.147
Supporting Families Performance Payments	0.204
Children's & Education	1.257
Domestic Abuse	0.915
Enterprise & Employment	0.782
Food Waste Collection	0.237
Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust	0.492
Various Other	0.154
Total Earmarked Reserves	54.898

- 3.24 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.

Capital Spending

3.25 Council approved the 2025/26 Capital Programme on 5 March 2025. Since then the capital programme has been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles and funding as schemes have developed. Appendix 4 brings all the separate elements together and report on the Council's total planned capital programme expenditure. The schemes which have been revised within the programme are as follows:

- i. Madeline McKenna Residential Home
- ii. St Lukes
- iii. Open Spaces Schemes
- iv. Spike Island / Wigg Island
- v. Pickerings Pasture Café
- vi. Stadium Steelwork Repairs
- vii. Brindley Lighting
- viii. Grangeway Court Refurbishment
- ix. CCTV Infrastructure Works
- x. Warm Homes Plan
- xi. LCWIP phase 2 Daresbury
- xii. Mersey Gateway Crossings Board

3.26 Capital spending at 30 September 2025 totalled £19.560m, which represents 40% of the total Capital Programme of £40.870m (which assumes a 20% slippage between years).

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 As at 30 September 2025, net revenue spend is forecast to be £4.672m 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 5.

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 30 September 2025

APPENDIX 1

Directorate / Department	Annual Budget £'000	Budget To Date £'000	Actual To Date £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	September 2025 Forecast Outturn (o'spend) £'000
Adult Social Care	25,141	12,288	12,635	(347)	(751)
Care Homes`	8,079	4,181	4,431	(250)	(603)
Community Care	27,905	12,353	13,572	(1,219)	(2,315)
Complex Care Pool	13,249	2,004	1,581	423	413
Adults Directorate	74,374	30,826	32,219	(1,393)	(3,256)
Finance	5,663	3,749	3,590	159	234
Legal & Democratic Services	323	64	23	41	80
ICT & Support Services	269	485	483	2	4
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	1,157	241	272	(31)	(62)
Chief Executives Directorate	7,412	4,539	4,368	171	256
Children & Families	55,374	21,518	22,886	(1,368)	(1,810)
Education, Inclusion & Provision	12,134	4,865	5,310	(445)	(1,026)
Children's Directorate	67,508	26,383	28,196	(1,813)	(2,836)
Community & Greenspace	23,711	9,608	9,618	(10)	72
Economy, Enterprise & Property	2,544	1,346	1,302	44	163
Planning & Transportation	9,256	2,139	1,958	181	364
Environment & Regeneration Directorate	35,511	13,093	12,878	215	599
Corporate & Democracy	-3,654	677	533	144	518
Public Health Directorate	1,901	-893	-911	18	47
Total Operational Net Spend	183,052	74,625	77,283	(2,658)	(4,672)

Adult Social Care

APPENDIX 2

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	18,788	9,394	8,727	667	983
Agency- Covering Vacancies			906	(906)	(1,454)
Premises	498	290	251	39	78
Supplies & Services	698	465	568	(103)	(176)
Aids & Adaptations	37	18	21	(3)	6
Transport	341	170	166	4	9
Food & Drink Provisions	228	133	74	59	96
Supported Accommodation and Services	1,408	704	554	150	293
Emergency Duty Team	157	34	33	1	(7)
Transfer To Reserves	295	13	13	0	0
Contracts & SLAs	1,044	451	458	(7)	(2)
<u>Housing Solutions Grant Funded Schemes</u>					
Homelessness Prevention	548	250	224	26	0
Rough Sleepers Initiative	167	84	82	2	0
Trailblazer	75	38	38	0	0
Total Expenditure	24,284	12,044	12,115	(71)	(174)
Income					
Fees & Charges	-1,044	-435	-317	(118)	(253)
Sales & Rents Income	-538	-291	-286	(5)	(12)
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-2,182	-1,000	-852	(148)	(301)
Capital Salaries	-117	-58	-58	0	0
Housing Schemes Income	-783	-727	-727	0	0
Total Income	-4,664	-2,511	-2,240	(271)	(566)
Net Operational Expenditure	19,620	9,533	9,875	(342)	(740)
Recharges					
Premises Support	789	395	395	0	0
Transport	792	396	401	(5)	(11)
Central Support	4,039	2,020	2,020	0	0
Asset Rental Support	13	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-112	-56	-56	0	0
Net Total Recharges	5,521	2,755	2,760	-5	-11
Net Departmental Expenditure	25,141	12,288	12,635	(347)	(751)

Care Homes

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
<u>Madeline Mckenna</u>					
Employees	790	395	344	51	123
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	43	(43)	(90)
Other Premises	90	42	36	6	5
Supplies & Services	26	10	11	(1)	2
Food Provision	51	21	28	(7)	(4)
Private Client and Out Of Borough Income	-127	-42	-42	0	6
Reimbursements & other Grant Income	-34	-17	-17	0	0
Total Madeline Mckenna Expenditure	796	409	403	6	42
<u>Millbrow</u>					
Employees	2,245	1,123	626	497	937
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	534	(534)	(1,200)
Other Premises	117	53	71	(18)	(34)
Supplies & Services	72	32	29	3	16
Food Provision	81	34	41	(7)	(2)
Private Client and Out Of Borough Income	-13	-4	0	(4)	(9)
Reimbursements & other Grant Income	-685	-316	-320	4	(23)
Total Millbrow Expenditure	1,817	922	981	(59)	(315)
<u>St Luke's</u>					
Employees	4,093	2,046	1,203	843	1,958
Agency - covering vacancies	62	31	890	(859)	(2,100)
Other Premises	156	70	93	(23)	(54)
Supplies & Services	67	29	34	(5)	(8)
Food Provision	128	64	84	(20)	(34)
Private Client and Out Of Borough Income	-152	-58	-31	(27)	(9)
Reimbursements & other Grant Income	-1,546	-644	-657	13	79
Total St Luke's Expenditure	2,808	1,538	1,616	(78)	(168)
<u>St Patrick's</u>					
Employees	2,081	1,016	536	480	993
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	583	(583)	(1,166)
Other Premises	144	54	66	(12)	0
Supplies & Services	67	30	35	(5)	8
Food Provision	127	64	57	7	12
Private Client and Out Of Borough Income	-99	-49	-5	(44)	(93)
Reimbursements & other Grant Income	-716	-330	-298	(32)	(39)
Total St Patrick's Expenditure	1,604	785	974	(189)	(285)
<u>Care Homes Divison Management</u>					
Employees	326	163	93	70	123
Care Home Divison Management	326	163	93	70	123
Net Operational Expenditure	7,351	3,817	4,067	(250)	(603)
<u>Recharges</u>					
Premises Support	65	32	32	0	0
Transport Support	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	663	332	332	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0	0	0
Net Total Recharges	728	364	364	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	8,079	4,181	4,431	(250)	(603)

Community Care

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Residential & Nursing	21,630	8,499	9,070	(571)	(824)
Domiciliary Care & Supported living	16,703	7,237	7,780	(543)	(1,288)
Direct Payments	15,513	8,166	8,300	(134)	(292)
Day Care	712	318	294	24	52
Total Expenditure	54,558	24,220	25,444	(1,224)	(2,352)
Income					
Residential & Nursing Income	-13,081	-5,657	-5,669	12	14
Community Care Income	-3,115	-1,198	-1,133	(65)	(140)
Direct Payments Income	-1,034	-398	-456	58	163
Income from other CCGs	-471	-165	-165	0	0
Market sustainability & Improvement Grant	-2,796	-1,398	-1,398	0	0
Adult Social Care Support Grant	-6,102	-3,051	-3,051	0	0
War Pension Disregard Grant	-54	0	0	0	0
Total Income	-26,653	-11,867	-11,872	5	37
Net Operational Expenditure	27,905	12,353	13,572	(1,219)	(2,315)

Complex Care Pool

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Intermediate Care Services	6,318	2,755	2,605	150	289
Oakmeadow	2,040	971	968	3	6
Community Home Care First	1,941	490	198	292	617
Joint Equipment Store	880	220	220	0	0
Contracts & SLA's	3,262	-28	-28	0	0
Inglenook	134	67	53	14	27
HICafs	3,729	660	705	(45)	(124)
Carers Breaks	445	176	174	2	0
Carers centre	365	-15	-15	0	0
Residential Care	7,236	3,318	3,318	0	0
Domiciliary Care & Supported Living	4,336	2,168	2,168	0	0
Pathway 3/Discharge Access	426	183	183	0	0
HBC Contracts	72	43	43	0	0
Healthy at Home	28	-28	-28	0	0
Capacity	30	20	13	7	12
Total Expenditure	31,242	11,000	10,577	423	827
Income					
BCF	-15,032	-7,516	-7,516	0	0
CCG Contribution to Pool	-2,959	-1,480	-1,480	0	0
Oakmeadow Income	-2	0	0	0	0
Total Income	-17,993	-8,996	-8,996	0	0
ICB Contribution Share of Surplus	0	0	0	0	(414)
Net Operational Expenditure	13,249	2,004	1,581	423	413

Finance Department

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	7,460	3,690	3,577	113	226
Insurances	1,048	694	576	118	234
Supplies & Services	1,129	380	433	(53)	(108)
Rent Allowances	31,500	13,021	13,021	0	0
Concessionary Travel	1,902	783	751	32	65
LCR Levy	1,902	0	0	0	0
Bad Debt Provision	223	0	0	0	(65)
Non HRA Rent Rebates	70	41	13	28	57
Discretionary Social Fund	106	50	1	49	99
Discretionary Housing Payments	279	107	109	(2)	(3)
Household Support Fund Expenditure	1,106	1,106	1,106	0	0
Total Expenditure	46,725	19,872	19,587	285	505
Income					
Fees & Charges	-351	-220	-237	17	33
Burdens Grant	-58	-51	-58	7	14
Dedicated schools Grant	-150	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Liability Order	-670	-530	-574	44	87
Recovery of Legal Costs	-10	-5	0	(5)	(10)
Business Rates Admin Grant	-157	0	0	0	1
Schools SLAs	-319	-309	-308	(1)	(1)
LCR Reimbursement	-1,902	0	0	0	0
HB Overpayment Debt Recovery	-300	-122	-57	(65)	(129)
Rent Allowances	-30,700	-12,215	-11,959	(256)	(512)
Non HRA Rent Rebate	-70	-49	-34	(15)	(31)
Discretionary Housing Payment Grant	-279	-94	-93	(1)	(2)
Housing Benefits Admin Grant	-453	-227	-227	0	0
Housing Benefits Award Accuracy	0	0	-22	22	22
Universal Credits	-5	-3	0	(3)	(5)
Household Support Fund Grant	-1,106	-2	-2	0	(1)
VEP Grant	0	0	0	0	3
CCG McMillan Reimbursement	-89	-22	-22	0	0
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-187	-147	-277	130	260
Transfer from Reserves	-27	-13	-13	0	0
Total Income	-36,833	-14,009	-13,883	(126)	(271)
Net Operational Expenditure	9,892	5,863	5,704	159	234
Recharges					
Premises Support	493	247	247	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	2,092	1,046	1,046	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-6,814	-3,407	-3,407	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-4,229	-2,114	-2,114	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	5,663	3,749	3,590	159	234

Legal Services

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	2,314	1,094	855	239	477
Agency Related Expenditure	63	63	165	(102)	(203)
Supplies & Services	181	112	95	17	35
Civic Catering & Functions	21	3	1	2	5
Legal Expenses	418	98	170	(72)	(146)
Transport Related Expenditure	8	3	3	0	0
Other Expenditure	1	1	1	0	(1)
Total Expenditure	3,006	1,374	1,290	84	167
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-75	-27	-10	(17)	(34)
School SLA's	-100	-88	-77	(11)	(23)
Licence Income	-370	-127	-112	(15)	(30)
Total Income	-545	-242	-199	(43)	(87)
Net Operational Expenditure	2,461	1,132	1,091	41	80
Recharges					
Premises Support	62	31	31	0	0
Transport Recharges	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support Recharges	275	138	138	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Support Recharge Income	-2,475	-1,237	-1,237	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,138	-1,068	-1,068	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	323	64	23	41	80

ICT & Support Services Department

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,899	2,894	2,803	91	183
Supplies & Services	1,063	682	608	74	147
Capital Finance	496	159	150	9	17
Computer Repairs & Software	1,724	1,962	1,974	(12)	(25)
Communication Costs	138	53	86	(33)	(66)
Premises	139	74	71	3	5
Transport	3	1	1	0	1
Other	4	1	4	(3)	(5)
Total Expenditure	9,466	5,826	5,697	129	257
Income					
Fees & Charges	-849	-239	-257	18	37
Schools SLA Income	-659	-512	-364	(148)	(295)
Transfer from Reserves	0	0	-3	3	3
Total Income	-1,508	-751	-624	(127)	(255)
Net Operational Expenditure	7,958	5,075	5,073	2	2
Recharges					
Premises Support	373	187	187	0	0
Transport	22	11	11	0	0
Central Support	1,391	696	696	0	0
Asset Rental Support	1,494	0	0	0	2
HBC Support Costs Income	-10,969	-5,484	-5,484	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-7,689	-4,590	-4,590	0	2
Net Departmental Expenditure	269	485	483	2	4

Chief Executives Delivery Unit

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	3,569	1,757	1,737	20	41
Employees Training	99	59	43	16	33
Apprenticeship Levy	330	123	149	(26)	(52)
Supplies & Services	412	246	257	(11)	(23)
Agency	3	3	3	0	0
Total Expenditure	4,413	2,188	2,189	-1	-1
Income					
Fees & Charges	-241	-168	-179	11	20
Schools SLA Income	-580	-536	-495	(41)	(81)
Total Income	-821	-704	-674	(30)	(61)
Net Operational Expenditure	3,592	1,484	1,515	(31)	(62)
Recharges					
Premises Support	157	79	79	0	0
Transport Support	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	1,008	504	504	0	0
Asset Rental Support	53	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-3,653	-1,826	-1,826	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,435	-1,243	-1,243	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	1,157	241	272	(31)	(62)

Children & Families

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	20,757	9,506	9,786	(280)	(726)
Other Premises	395	181	183	(2)	(4)
Supplies & Services	1,714	828	1,120	(292)	(584)
Transport	367	163	108	55	103
Direct Payments	1,220	590	541	49	86
Commissioned services to Vol Orgs	224	81	81	0	0
Residential Care	27,526	11,138	11,665	(527)	(58)
Out of Borough Adoption	97	49	5	44	92
Out of Borough Fostering	5,469	1,648	2,384	(736)	(1,263)
In House Adoption	557	164	142	22	24
Special Guardianship Order	2,604	1,137	1,073	64	129
In House Foster Carer Placements	2,766	1,169	932	237	476
Lavender House Contract Costs	279	117	115	2	4
Home Support & Respite	494	287	228	59	122
Care Leavers	434	181	178	3	7
Family Support	81	27	13	14	28
Contracted services	3	2	2	(0)	(1)
Emergency Duty	184	33	33	0	0
Youth Offending Services	461	-8	0	(8)	(17)
Total Expenditure	65,632	27,293	28,589	(1,296)	(1,582)
Income					
Fees & Charges	-33	-12	-7	(5)	(14)
Rents	-82	-31	-31	0	0
Reimbursement & other Grant Income	-502	-277	-209	(68)	(212)
Transfer from reserve	-15	0	-1	1	(2)
Dedicated Schools Grant	-50	0	0	0	0
Government Grants	-13,477	-7,386	-7,386	0	0
Total Income	-14,159	-7,706	-7,634	(72)	(228)
Net Operational Expenditure	51,473	19,587	20,955	(1,368)	(1,810)
Recharges					
Premises Support	736	368	368	0	0
Transport	10	5	5	0	0
Central Support Recharges	3,331	1,666	1,666	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-176	-108	-108	0	0
Net Total Recharges	3,901	1,931	1,931	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	55,374	21,518	22,886	(1,368)	(1,810)

Education, Inclusion & Provision

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	8,818	4,068	3,929	139	279
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	101	(101)	(204)
Agency - in addition to establishment	66	72	72	0	6
Premises	15	7	1	6	2
Supplies & Services	3,059	1,416	1,438	(22)	(44)
Independent School Fees	10,155	5,915	5,915	0	0
Schools Contingency	400	126	126	0	0
Transport	43	11	23	(12)	(20)
Schools Transport	2,774	747	1,115	(368)	(737)
Early Years Payments including Pupil Prem	15,615	7,085	7,085	0	0
Commissioned Services	2,193	851	847	4	9
Inter Authority Special Needs	1,402	954	954	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	115	0	17	(17)	(67)
Capital Finance	4,604	2,135	2,135	0	1
Total Expenditure	49,259	23,387	23,758	(371)	(775)
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-296	-184	-228	44	30
Government Grant Income	-6,545	-3,502	-3,534	32	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	-30,153	-15,077	-15,077	0	0
Inter Authority Income	-446	-165	-59	(106)	(211)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-1,764	-836	-836	0	(5)
Schools SLA Income	-565	-281	-237	(44)	(60)
Transfer From Reserves	-498	-142	-142	0	0
Total Income	-40,267	-20,187	-20,113	(74)	(246)
Net Operational Expenditure	8,992	3,200	3,645	(445)	(1,021)
Recharges					
Premises Support	405	203	203	0	0
Transport Support	773	489	489	0	(5)
Central Support	1,947	973	973	0	0
Asset Rental Support	17	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0	0	0
Net Total Recharges	3,142	1,665	1,665	0	(5)
Net Departmental Expenditure	12,134	4,865	5,310	(445)	(1,026)

Community & Greenspaces

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	15,451	7,788	7,486	302	603
Agency - Covering vacancies	20	12	12	0	0
Agency - In addition to establishment	16	16	199	(183)	(274)
Premises	3,304	1,562	1,609	(47)	(93)
Supplies & Services	3,659	1,514	1,639	(125)	(249)
Transport	117	66	83	(17)	(33)
Extended Producer Responsibility	500	0	0	0	0
Other Agency Costs	454	209	228	(19)	(39)
Other Expenditure	187	13	13	0	0
Waste Disposal Contracts	7,121	1,125	1,133	(8)	(16)
Transfers to Reserves	1,091	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	31,920	12,305	12,402	(97)	(101)
Income					
Sales Income	-1,359	-687	-691	4	8
Fees & Charges Income	-6,300	-3,622	-3,709	87	174
Rental Income	-1,118	-465	-428	(37)	(73)
Government Grant Income	-5,210	-1,319	-1,319	0	0
Reimbursement & Other Grant Income	-871	-371	-371	0	0
SLA Income	-23	0	0	0	0
Internal Fees Income	-216	-39	-129	90	179
Capital Salaries	-236	-15	0	(15)	(31)
Transfers From Reserves	-619	-4	-4	0	0
Total Income	-15,952	-6,522	-6,651	129	257
Net Operational Expenditure	15,968	5,783	5,751	32	156
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,657	829	829	0	0
Transport Support	2,433	1,270	1,312	(42)	(84)
Central Support	4,297	2,148	2,148	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-843	-422	-422	0	0
Net Total Recharges	7,743	3,825	3,867	(42)	(84)
Net Departmental Expenditure	23,711	9,608	9,618	(10)	72

Economy, Enterprise & Property

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	3,864	2,456	2,331	125	251
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	172	(172)	(259)
Repairs & Mainenance	1,687	877	877	0	0
Premises	174	136	137	(1)	(1)
Energy & Water Costs	1,043	393	346	47	93
NNDR	647	647	635	12	12
Rents	157	80	79	1	1
Economic Regeneration Activities	43	8	8	0	0
Security	508	82	84	(2)	(4)
Supplies & Services	516	261	261	0	0
Supplies & Services - Grant	772	272	272	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	72	29	29	0	0
Total Expenditure	9,483	5,241	5,231	10	93
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-407	-203	-239	36	72
Rent - Commercial Properties	-906	-352	-351	(1)	(1)
Rent - Investment Properties	-38	-19	-18	(1)	(1)
Government Grant	-854	-705	-705	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-149	-149	-149	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-55	-48	-48	0	0
Recharges to Capital	-260	-47	-47	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-574	-522	-522	0	0
Total Income	-3,243	-2,045	-2,079	34	70
Net Operational Expenditure	6,240	3,196	3,152	44	163
Recharges					
Premises Support	2,738	1,369	1,369	0	0
Transport	26	13	13	0	0
Central Support	2,878	1,439	1,439	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-9,342	-4,671	-4,671	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,696	-1,850	-1,850	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,544	1,346	1,302	44	163

Planning & Transportation Department

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	6,070	2,865	2,669	196	392
Efficiency Savings	-100	-50	0	(50)	(100)
Premises	188	95	78	17	33
Hired & Contracted Services	415	79	76	3	7
Supplies & Services	135	82	229	(147)	(295)
Street Lighting	1,643	42	180	(138)	(275)
Highways Maintenance - Routine & Reactive	1,803	397	603	(206)	(412)
Highways Maintenance - Programmed Work	812	316	0	316	633
Fleet Transport	1,467	700	700	0	(1)
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	14	2	4	(2)	(3)
Bus Support	506	366	366	0	0
Agency Related Expenditure	8	0	0	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	31	31	31	0	0
NRA Levy	75	74	74	0	0
LCR Levy	1,553	776	776	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	359	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	14,979	5,775	5,786	(11)	(21)
Income					
Sales & Rents Income	-97	-49	-29	(20)	(40)
Planning Fees	-798	-557	-554	(3)	(5)
Building Control Fees	-251	-125	-105	(20)	(40)
Other Fees & Charges	-971	-626	-754	128	257
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-174	-75	-75	0	0
Government Grant Income	-50	-50	-50	0	0
Halton Hopper Income	-15	-8	-5	(3)	(6)
Recharge to Capital	-305	0	0	0	0
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-1,553	-776	-776	0	0
Contribution from Reserves	-132	-134	-134	0	0
Total Income	-4,346	-2,400	-2,482	82	166
Net Operational Expenditure	10,633	3,375	3,304	71	145
Recharges					
Premises Recharges	739	370	370	0	0
Transport Recharges	808	388	379	9	18
Central Recharges	2,505	1,255	1,255	0	0
Asset Charges	918	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-6,347	-3,249	-3,350	101	201
Net Total Recharges	-1,377	-1,236	-1,346	110	219
Net Departmental Expenditure	9,256	2,139	1,958	181	364

Corporate & Democracy

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	412	206	239	(33)	(40)
Contracted Services	12	6	0	6	0
Supplies & Services	102	51	-3	54	42
Premises Expenditure	24	15	14	1	0
Transport Costs	1	0	0	0	0
Members Allowances	994	497	527	(30)	0
Contingency	1,060	538	0	538	1,060
Contribution to Reserves	300	300	263	37	0
Debt Management Expenses	20	10	33	(23)	(12)
Precepts & Levies	244	244	244	0	0
Interest Payable - Treasury Management	2,308	1,154	974	180	360
Interest Payable - Other	215	107	107	0	0
Capital Financing (Minimum Revenue Provision)	3,004	3,004	2,966	38	38
Cost of Exceptional Financial Support					
Interest Payable	1,225	613	548	65	129
Capital Financing (Minimum Revenue Provision)	500	500	500	0	0
Cost of Dedicated School Grant Deficit					
Interest Payable	725	363	446	(83)	(166)
Efficiency Savings:					
Purchase of Additional Leave	-100	0	0	0	127
Voluntary Severance Scheme	-200	-100	0	(100)	(200)
Apprenticeship First Model	-200	-100	0	(100)	(180)
Agency Staff Reduction	-1,700	-850	0	(850)	(1,700)
Accelerate the Lease or Sale of Surplus Land	-100	-50	0	(50)	(50)
Review of Debt Management	-100	-50	0	(50)	(50)
Review Existing Contracts	-200	-100	0	(100)	(100)
Total Expenditure	8,546	6,358	6,858	(500)	(742)
Income					
Interest Receivable - Treasury Management	-3,045	-1,522	-2,169	647	1,295
Interest Receivable - Other	-19	-10	-10	0	0
Other Fees & Charges	-146	-73	-70	(3)	(35)
Grants & Reimbursements	-334	-167	-167	0	0
Government Grant Income	-6,272	-3,136	-3,136	0	0
Total Income	-9,816	-4,908	-5,552	644	1,260
Net Operational Expenditure	-1,270	1,450	1,306	144	518
Recharges					
Premises Support	22	11	11	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	898	474	474	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-3,304	-1,258	-1,258	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,384	-773	-773	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	-3,654	677	533	144	518

Public Health

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,692	2,654	2,471	183	365
Other Premises	6	3	0	3	6
Supplies & Services	375	89	198	(109)	(219)
Contracts	6,917	2,833	2,920	(87)	0
SLA's	488	60	45	15	21
Transport	4	2	1	1	0
Transfer to Reserves	550	0	0	0	(150)
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	20	0	0	0	0
Other Agency	24	24	24	0	0
Total Expenditure	14,076	5,665	5,659	6	23
Income					
Fees & Charges	-122	-75	-68	(7)	(14)
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-203	-229	-243	14	27
Transfer from Reserves	-428	-357	-357	0	13
Government Grant Income	-12,923	-6,666	-6,672	6	0
Total Income	-13,676	-7,327	-7,340	13	26
Net Operational Expenditure	400	-1,662	-1,681	19	49
Recharges					
Premises Support	209	104	104	0	0
Transport Support	24	12	13	(1)	(2)
Central Support	1,937	988	988	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-669	-335	-335	0	0
Net Total Recharges	1,501	769	770	(1)	(2)
Net Departmental Expenditure	1,901	-893	-911	18	47

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 support	0	280		Unlikely to be achieved – currently forecast overspend position

		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
Total ASC Directorate			225	1,655		

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		Look to increase costs in 2026/27 but this is pending a Government consultation on council tax of which summons charges are being reviewed.
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.

Total Finance Department	90	100		
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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.
Total Legal and Democratic Services			0	6		

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 priorities 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	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

		placements or find alternatives, in order to reduce the current overspend and ongoing costs.				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 our 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,	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

		thereby reducing the timescales involved and cost of court proceedings, in order to reduce the current overspend and ongoing costs.				C2 applications to court. 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
Total Children & Families Department			22	1,900		

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		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.
Total EIP Department			0	300		

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.
Area Forums		Area Forums – cease the funding for Area Forums.	0	170		Area forum budgets have been removed in 25-26

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		
Total Community & Greenspace Dept			12	270		

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	U	It is not expected this saving will materialise in the current year.
Total EEP Dept			0	100		

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.
Total PPT Dept			0	100		

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
Total Public Health Directorate			0	45		

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 has been agreed and implemented. Prudent forecast of saving against the scheme is estimated to be in the region of £0.265m
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. Unlikely to be in place for this financial year.
Chief Executives Delivery Unit		Apprenticeships - implement an “Apprentice First” policy, with all appropriate vacant posts assessed initially to determine whether they might be suitable as an apprenticeship. This will	0	200		Scheme being developed, uncertainty to take up of the scheme.

		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	U	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. Uncertainty with regard to reductions across Adult Social Care. Highly unlikely the £1.7m saving will be achieved in the current financial year.
Council Wide		Review all existing contracts across the Council to re-consider their requirements and performance on the basis of outputs achieved.	0	200	U	Currently part of workstream being undertaken by the Transformation Programme.
Total Corporate & Democracy			0	2,400		

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Objective</u>
	Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.
	Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.
	Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain</u> that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.

2025/26 Capital Programme as at 30 September 2025

APPENDIX 4

Scheme Detail	205/26 Original Allocation £000	2025/26 Revised Allocation £000	Cumulative Spend to 30 Sept 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 30 Nov 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026 £000	Allocation remaining £000	2026/27 Forecast Allocation £000
Childrens Directorate								
Capital Repairs	882.1	882.1	700	700	700	754.0	128.1	0.0
Asbestos Management	10.0	10.0	0.5	0.5	6	10.0	0.0	0.0
Schools Access Initiative	37.7	37.7	13	13	30	41.0	-3.3	0.0
Basic Need Projects	600.8	600.8	0	0	0	100.0	500.8	0.0
Small Capital Works	173.0	173.0	90	90	105	170.0	3.0	0.0
SEND capital allocation	1,871.2	1,871.2	148	148	675	1,275.0	596.2	45.0
SEND capital unallocated	1,775.5	1,775.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,775.5	0.0
SCA unallocated	129.3	129.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	129.3	0.0
Family Hubs & Start for Life	63.0	63.0	4.5	35.0	48.0	63	0.0	0.0
Childcare Expansion	314.8	314.8	18	18	18	314.8	0.0	0.0
AMP Data	25.0	25.0	23	23	24	25.0	0.0	0.0
Childrens Directorate Total	5,882.4	5,882.4	997.0	1,027.5	1,606.0	2,752.8	3,129.6	45.0

2025/26 Capital Programme as at 30 September 2025 continued

Scheme Detail	205/26 Original Allocation £000	2025/26 Revised Allocation £000	Cumulative Spend to 30 Sept 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 30 Nov 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026 £000	Allocation remaining £000	2026/27 Forecast Allocation £000
Adults Directorate								
Grants - Disabled Facilities	2,200.0	2,000.0	318.0	1,300.0	1,600.0	2,000.0	0.0	700.0
Stair Lifts	400.0	650.0	268.0	400.0	500.0	650.0	0.0	700.0
Joint Funding RSL Adaptations	300.0	250.0	120.0	160.0	200.0	250.0	0.0	300.0
Madeline McKenna Residential Home	300.0	200.0	35.0	130.0	160.0	200.0	0.0	0.0
Millbrow Care Home	200.0	200.0	29.0	130.0	160.0	200.0	0.0	0.0
St Lukes	50.0	200.0	104.0	130.0	160.0	200.0	0.0	0.0
St Patricks	200.0	200.0	29.0	130.0	160.0	200.0	0.0	0.0
Care Home Refurbishment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Telehealthcare Digital Switchover	135.0	135.0	0.0	0.0	135.0	135.0	0.0	0.0
Oakmeadow and Peelhouse Network Improvements	40.0	40.0	0.0	25.0	35.0	40.0	0.0	0.0
Crow Wood Lane Specialist Housing	250.0	250.0	0.0	160.0	200.0	250.0	0.0	0.0
Adults Directorate Total	4,075.0	4,125.0	903.0	2,565.0	3,310.0	4,125.0	0.0	1,700.0
Public Health & Public Protection Directorate								
New database for Public Protection Regulatory Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	200.0
Public Health & Public Protection Directorate Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	200.0

2025/26 Capital Programme as at 30 September 2025 continued

Scheme Detail	205/26 Original Allocation	2025/26 Revised Allocation	Cumulative Spend to 30 Sept 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 30 Nov 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026	Allocation remaining	2026/27 Forecast Allocation
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Environment & Regeneration Directorate								
Stadium Minor Works	22.1	22.1	24.6	24.6	24.6	24.6	-2.5	30.0
Halton Leisure Centre	99.7	99.7	89.3	92.3	93.0	95.0	4.7	0.0
Children's Playground Equipment	67.8	67.8	50.5	60.5	60.5	65.0	2.8	65.0
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Upton Improvements	13.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	0.0	0.0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	0.0	0.0
Open Spaces Schemes	600.0	770.0	564.5	600.0	650.0	770.0	0.0	600.0
Runcorn Town Park	450.6	450.6	0.0	0.0	60.0	125.0	325.6	280.0
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,841.6	250.0	152.5	170.0	180.0	250.0	0.0	1,591.6
Pickerings Pasture Cafe	469.2	450.0	110.3	175.0	300.0	450.0	-0.1	19.2
Cemetery Infrastructure work	469.1	469.1	0.0	89.0	207.0	410.0	59.1	683.0
Stadium Public Address System	810.0	346.0	34.9	176.0	286.0	346.0	0.0	379.0
Litter Bins	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	20.0
Replacement Cremator	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Stadium Steelwork Repairs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	600.0
Brindley Lighting	0.0	200.0	0.0	100.0	150.0	200.0	0.0	0.0
Grangeway Court Refurbishment	0.0	52.0	8.0	10.0	16.0	52.0	0.0	948.0
CCTV Infrastructure Works	0.0	105.0	1.2	5.0	50.0	105.0	0.0	395.0
Equality Act Improvement Works	303.5	303.5	0.0	150.0	236.0	303.5	0.0	300.0
Foundary Lane Residential Area	3,520.9	3,520.9	878.0	1,020.9	1,200.0	3,520.9	0.0	0.0
Property Improvements	231.1	231.1	111.2	133.2	153.6	231.1	0.0	200.0
Town Deal	21,823.1	13,210.2	4,986.3	8,663.1	11,300.7	13,210.2	0.0	8,612.9
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	101.2	101.2	0.0	20.0	55.0	101.2	0.0	0.0
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	82.0	82.0	4.2	33.3	56.4	82.0	0.0	0.0

2025/26 Capital Programme as at 30 September 2025 continued

Scheme Detail	2025/26 Original Allocation £000	2025/26 Revised Allocation £000	Cumulative Spend to 30 Sept 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 30 Nov 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026 £000	Allocation remaining £000	2026/27 Forecast Allocation £000
Changing Places	17.0	17.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.0	0.0	0.0
Kingsway Centre Demolition	708.0	708.0	293.0	438.0	488.0	538.0	170.0	0.0
Port of Weston	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet	2,200.0	2,200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,200.0	0.0	0.0
Astmoor Masterplan	81.6	81.6	0.0	0.0	30.0	81.6	0.0	0.0
Sci-tech Daresbury - CPO	3,000.0	3,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,000.0	0.0	0.0
Warm Homes Plan	0.0	587.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	587.6	0.0	587.6
Bridge and Highway Maintenance	839.2	839.2	167.0	419.6	629.4	839.2	0.0	0.0
Runcorn Busway	90.0	90.0	75.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	0.0	0.0
ATF3 Murdishaw to Whitehouse	757.0	757.0	465.0	757.0	757.0	757.0	0.0	0.0
ATF4 - Widnes Town Centre Accessibility	114.5	114.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	114.5	0.0
A56 Reconstruction	943.7	943.7	95.0	314.5	629.0	943.7	0.0	0.0
LCWIP phase 2 Daresbury	3,862	100	30.0	84.5	84.5	84.5	15.5	0.0
Pot Hole Funding	968	968	162.0	502.0	735.0	968.0	0.4	0.0
CRSTS	4,405	4,405	712.0	2,378.0	3,391.5	4,405.0	0.0	0.0
Street Lighting - Structural Maintenance	1,025.1	1,025.1	0.0	100.0	150.0	200.0	825.1	1,025.1
Street Lighting - Upgrades	728.4	728.4	0.0	50.0	75.0	100.0	628.4	528.4
East Runcorn Connectivity	5,851.7	5,851.7	5,327.0	5,851.8	5,851.8	5,851.8	-0.1	5,851.7
Risk Management	712.9	120.0	23.0	53.0	83.0	103.0	17.0	120.0
Widnes Loops	0.0	0.0	65.0	65.0	65.0	65.0	-65.0	0.0
Fleet Replacements	4,482.0	2,500.0	1,048.0	1,357.0	1,928.5	2,500.0	0.0	4,482.0
Early Land Acquisition Mersey Gateway	210.0	80.0	47.4	68.0	73.0	80.0	0.0	80.0
Mersey Gateway Crossings Board	60.0	-234.8	-234.8	-234.8	-234.8	-234.8	0.0	60.0
Environment & Regeneration Directorate Total	62,333.3	45,658.5	15,290.3	23,816.5	29,904.7	43,563.1	2,095.4	27,478.4

2025/26 Capital Programme as at 30 September 2025 continued

Scheme Detail	205/26 Original Allocation £000	2025/26 Revised Allocation £000	Cumulative Spend to 30 Sept 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 30 Nov 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026 £000	Allocation remaining £000	2026/27 Forecast Allocation £000
Chief Executives Directorate								
IT Rolling Programme	805.6	1,305.6	828.9	937.5	1,100.5	1,305.6	0.0	1,200.0
Halton Smart Microgrid	10,870.0	1,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,000.0	0.0	9,870.0
Transformation Programme	1,538.0	2,465.7	1,212.2	1,631.8	1,920.1	2,169.7	296.0	0.0
Accelerated Growth	0.0	650.7	328.2	445.5	553.0	650.7	0.0	0.0
Chief Executives Directorate Total	13,213.6	5,422.0	2,369.3	3,014.8	3,573.7	5,126.0	296.0	11,070.0
Grand Total	85,504.4	61,088.0	19,559.6	30,423.8	38,394.4	55,566.9	5,521.0	40,493.4

2025/26 Budget Risk Register as at 30 September 2025

Appendix 5

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	Pay costs - Pay award - Staff Turnover Saving Target - Agency, casuals and overtime - National Living Wage - Pension Costs	4	4	16	- Budget based upon individual staff members/vacancies - Budget monitoring - Contingency - Balances - Medium Term Forecast - Engage with Cheshire Pension Scheme and pension actuary - Market supplement paid in multiple service areas - Employer of Choice Initiative - Connect to Halton – Review of Scheme	3	3	9	ED/SB/Directors	Monthly	2025/26 budget includes pay growth at forecast 2% pay award. Pay offer agreed at 3.2%, backdated pay actioned in August 2025. Actual cost of the pay award highly higher at £1.214m that then £1m figure previously estimated. Agency costs and usage remain high although clear evidence of reduction in numbers within Children Social	30/09/25

											Care and Legal Services. Market Supplements being paid to increasing number of service users. Connect to Halton scheme went live September 2024, agency and casual appointments to be covered by the scheme.	
2	Redundancy and Early Retirements	3	3	9	• Benefits Tracking Process • Future savings to take into account cost of redundancy and early retirements. • Seek Government approval to use capital receipts to fund transformation costs. • Develop policy for voluntary severance scheme	2	3	6	ED/SB	Quarterly	Tracker created to monitor redundancy costs in current year. Look to capitalise redundancy costs where possible where evidence exists it creates a longer term saving. £0.200m saving included in 25/26 budget for savings from	30/09/25

											voluntary severance scheme. Scheme unlikely to go live in current financial year.	
3	Savings not achieved	4	3	12	- Budget monitoring - Contingency - Rigorous process in approving savings. - Review of savings at departmental and directorate level - Monthly budget monitoring - Medium Term Financial Forecast - RAG monitoring of savings included in bi-monthly monitoring reports. - Transformation saving targets reported monthly through Transformation Programme Board.	4	2	8	RR/ED/SB/Directors	Monthly	Savings for 2025/26 have been written into Directorate budgets. Budget savings monitored closely and if necessary offsetting savings sought. Transformation Programme Board planned to meet on monthly basis to discuss progress against programme.	30/09/25

4	Price inflation	3	3	9	• Prudent budget provision • Latest forecast information used eg. utilities • Budget monitoring • Contingency • Balances • CPI/RPI monitoring • MTFS	3	3	9	ED/SB	Monthly	CPI for September 2025 is 3.8% and RPI is 4.6%. Both running higher than inflation included in 2025.26 budget. Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast inflation is to remain above 3% for the remainder of 2025 and drop to 2.1% in 2026 and then hit the Government target of 2% in 2027.	30/09/25
5	Review of LG Finance • Business rates retention – 100% Pilot and Review • Fair Funding Review	4	4	16	• MPs • SIGOMA / LG Futures	3	3	9	ED/SB/NS/M W/MG	Weekly/ Monthly	Business rate retention pilot continues through to March 2026. Government are committed to	30/09/25

	- National Public Spending Plans - Social Care Green Paper				- Liverpool City Region & Merseyside Treasurers Group - Medium Term Financial Strategy - Member of business rate retention pilot region - Dialogue with DCLG - Responding to reviews and consultations						providing more certainty on LG Finances through multi year settlements. Government issued the Fair Funding consultation on 20 June 2025. Closing date of 15 August. Halton submitted a response together with that of LCR and Sigoma. Resetting the Business Rates Retention consultation was issued by Government in April 2025 with Halton submitting a response prior to the 02 June deadline.	
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6	Treasury Management - Borrowing - Investment	2	3	6	- Treasury Management Strategy - Link Asset Services advice - Treasury Management planning and monitoring - Attendance at Networking and Benchmarking Groups - Officer and Member Training	1	3	3	ED/SB/MG	Daily / Quarterly	BoE base rate maintained at 4.0%. Impact of Exceptional Financial Support request to be assessed with regards to timing of future borrowing.	30/09/25
7	Demand led budgets - Children in Care - Out of borough fostering - Community Care - High Needs	4	4	16	- Budget monitoring - Contingency - Balances - Review service demand - Directorate recovery groups - Monthly budget monitoring - Children Improvement Plan Investment Funding	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	30/09/25

											inspection to be monitored with regard to control and reduction of future costs.	
8	Mersey Gateway Costs - Costs - Toll Income - Funding - Accounting treatment	4	2	8	- Regular monitoring with Crossing Board - Capital reserve - Government Grant - Liquidity Fund	2	1	2	ED/SB/MG	Quarterly	Arrangements in place to monitor spend and availability of liquidity fund.	30/09/25
9	Council Tax Collection	3	3	9	- Council tax monitoring on monthly basis - Review of Collection Rate - Collection Fund Balance - Provision for bad debts - Review recovery procedures - Benchmarking	3	2	6	ED/PG/SB/PD/BH/MG	Monthly	Council tax collection rate through to the end of September 2025 is 53.71%, 0.11% lower than the collection rate at the same point last year. Debt of. £1.634m has so far been collected this year in relation to previous years' debt.	30/09/25

10	Business Rates Retention Scheme	3	3	9	- Review and monitoring of latest business rates income to baseline and estimate for year. - Prudent allowance for losses in collection - Prudent provision set aside for losses from valuation appeals - Regular monitoring of annual yield and baseline / budget position - Benchmarking Groups - Review recovery procedures	3	1	3	ED/SB/LB/MG	Monthly	Business rate collection through to the end of September 2025 is 58.60% which is 0.16% lower than the collection rate at the same point last year. £0.736m has so far been collected this year in relation to previous years' debt.	30/09/25
11	Income recovery Uncertainty to economy following cost of living and high inflation	3	3	9	- Corporate charging policy - Budget monitoring - Contingency - Balances - Income benchmarking	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	30/09/25

											improving the overall collection of social care debt.	
12	Capital Programme - Costs - Funding - Key Major Projects - Clawback of Grant - Availability and timing of capital receipts - Cashflow - Contractors	4	3	12	- Project Management - Regular monitoring - Detailed financial analysis of new schemes to ensure they are affordable - Targets monitored to minimise clawback of grant. - Contractor due diligence - Dialogue with Government departments.	3	2	6	Project Managers/ED /SB/LH	Quarterly	Capital receipts have been fully committed therefore new capital schemes need to bring own funding.	30/09/25
13	Academy Schools - Impact of transfer upon Council budget - Loss of income to Council Services	2	4	8	- Early identification of school decisions - DfE Regulations - Prudent consideration of financial transactions to facilitate transfer	1	3	3	ED/SB/NS	Monthly	Consideration given in MTFS for loss of funding.	30/09/25

					- Services continue to be offered to academies - Transfer Protocol							
14	Reserves Diminishing reserves, used to balance budget, fund overspend positions.	3	4	12	- Monitored on a bi-monthly basis, reported to Management Team and Exec Board - Benchmarking - Financial Forecast - Programme to replenish reserves.	3	3	9	ED/SB	Quarterly	Monitored and reported on a regular basis. Council reserves at historic low levels. Reserves will need to be replenished within future budgets	30/09/25
15	Budget Balancing - Council has struggled to achieve a balanced budget position for a number of years. - Forecast for current year is an overspend position of £19m. - Reserves insufficient to balance current year budget. - Council has been given approval in-principle for	4	4	16	- Current year budgets monitored on a regular basis. - Forward forecasting through to March 2029 reported on a prudent basis. - Regular conversations with DHLUC re Council's financial position. - LGA to undertake a financial assurance review.	4	4	16	ED/SB	Ongoing	Council has received in-principle agreement to fund day to day costs through Exceptional Financial Support. EFS covers a total of £52.8m over two years, split: 24/25 - £20.8m 25/26 - £32.0m Council utilised £10m of EFS in	30/09/25

	Exceptional Financial Support (day to day costs funded through capital borrowings) for 2024/25 and 2025/26.				• Transformation programme in place. • Financial Recovery Plan required to better inform how the Council will achieve future sustainable budgets.						24/25, below the approved amount. Financial recovery plan to be put in place to limit Council exposure to EFS and repayment of borrowings to date.	

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 13 November 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Director – Finance

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

TITLE: Treasury Management 2025-26 Half Year Update

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update regarding activities undertaken on the money market during the first half of the financial year to 30 September 2025, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Economic Outlook

- 3.1 The following analysis of the economic situation has been provided by MUFG Asset Services, the Council's treasury management advisors.
- 3.2 During the six months ended 30 September 2025
- A 0.3% pick up in GDP for the period April to June 2025. More recently, the economy flatlined in July, with higher taxes for businesses restraining growth
 - CPI inflation has ebbed and flowed but finished September at 3.8%, whilst core inflation eased to 3.6%.
 - The Bank of England cut interest rates from 4.50% to 4.25% in May, and then to 4% in August.
 - The 10-year gilt yield fluctuated between 4.4% and 4.8%, ending the half year at 4.70%.
- 3.3 From a GDP perspective, the financial year got off to a bumpy start with the 0.3% m/m fall in real GDP in April as front-running of US tariffs in Q1 (when GDP grew 0.7% on the quarter) weighed on activity. This was still the first fall since October 2024 and the largest fall since October 2023. However, the economy surprised to the upside in May and June so that quarterly growth ended up 0.3% q/q. Nonetheless, the 0.0% m/m change in real GDP in July will have caused some concern, with the hikes in taxes for businesses that took place in April this year undoubtedly playing a part in restraining growth. Looking ahead, ongoing speculation about further tax rises in the Autumn Budget on 26 November will remain a drag on GDP growth for a while yet. GDP growth for 2025 is forecast by Capital Economics to be 1.3%.

- 3.4 With the November Budget edging nearer, the public finances position looks weak. Public net sector borrowing of £18.0bn in August means that after five months of the financial year, borrowing is already £11.4bn higher than the OBR forecast at the Spring Statement in March. The overshoot in the Chancellor's chosen fiscal mandate of the current budget is even greater with a cumulative deficit of £15.3bn. All this was due to both current receipts in August being lower than the OBR forecast (by £1.8bn) and current expenditure being higher (by £1.0bn). As a general guide, Capital Economics forecasts a deficit of about £18bn, meaning the Chancellor will have to raise £28bn, mostly through higher taxes, if she wants to keep her buffer against her rule of £10bn.
- 3.5 CPI inflation fell slightly from 3.5% in April to 3.4% in May, and services inflation dropped from 5.4% to 4.7%, whilst core inflation also softened from 3.8% to 3.5%. More recently, though, inflation pressures have resurfaced, although the recent upward march in CPI inflation did pause for breath in August, with CPI inflation staying at 3.8%. Core inflation eased once more too, from 3.8% to 3.6%, and services inflation dipped from 5.0% to 4.7%. So, we finish the half year in a similar position to where we started, although with food inflation rising to an 18-month high of 5.1% and households' expectations for inflation standing at a six year high, a further loosening in the labour market and weaker wage growth may be a requisite to UK inflation coming in below 2.0% by 2027.
- 3.6 The FTSE 100 fell sharply following the "Liberation Day" tariff announcement, dropping by more than 10% in the first week of April - from 8,634 on 1 April to 7,702 on 7 April. However, the de-escalation of the trade war coupled with strong corporate earnings led to a rapid rebound starting in late April. As a result, the FTSE 100 closed Q2 at 8,761, around 2% higher than its value at the end of Q1 and more than 7% above its level at the start of 2025. Since then, the FTSE 100 has enjoyed a further 4% rise in July, its strongest monthly gain since January and outperforming the S&P 500.

Interest Rate Forecast

- 3.7 The following forecast has been provided by MUFG Asset Services.

MUFG Corporate Markets Interest Rate View 11.08.25													
	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28
BANK RATE	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
3 month ave earnings	4.00	4.00	3.80	3.80	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
6 month ave earnings	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.40	3.40	3.40
12 month ave earnings	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.60
5 yr PWLB	4.80	4.70	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10
10 yr PWLB	5.30	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.80	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.60
25 yr PWLB	6.10	5.90	5.70	5.70	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20
50 yr PWLB	5.80	5.60	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.20	5.10	5.10	5.00	5.00

Short Term Borrowing Rates

- 3.8 The bank base rate has dropped 4.25% on 8th May 2025, then again to 4% on 7th August 2025

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base Rate	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.00	4.00
Call Money (Market)	4.35	4.40	4.15	4.20	4.15	3.90	3.95
1 Month (Market)	4.45	4.30	4.20	4.25	4.10	4.00	3.95
3 Month (Market)	4.40	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.05	4.05	4.05

Longer Term Borrowing Rates

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1 Year (PWLB)	4.82	4.53	4.68	4.50	4.44	4.51	4.58
10 Year (PWLB)	5.42	5.21	5.45	5.27	5.38	5.52	5.53
25 Year (PWLB)	5.98	5.90	6.12	5.97	6.11	6.29	6.23

- 3.9 Market rates are based on suggested rates provided by MUFG Asset Services. The PWLB rate shown is the Fixed Term Certainty Rate for a new loan with the principal repayable on maturity.

Borrowing and Investments

Turnover during the period

	No of deals	Turnover £m
Short Term Borrowing	8	50
Short Term Investments	10	72

Position at month-end

	Mar £m	Apr £m	May £m	Jun £m	Jul £m	Aug £m	Sep £m
Total Borrowing	232	242	232	232	222	232	252
Total Investments	(52)	(52)	(82)	(77)	(70)	(75)	(90)
Call Account Balance	(11)	(11)	(16)	(21)	(16)	(13)	(19)
Net Borrowing Position	169	179	134	134	136	144	143

Investment benchmarking

Benchmark	Benchmark Return %	Performance Apr - Sep %	Investment Interest Earned £000
7 day	4.18	3.97	362
1 month	4.18	4.25	34
3 months	4.19	4.58	241
6 months	4.22	5.08	175
9 months	4.21	4.92	654
12 months	4.21	-	-
Over 12 months	-	4.53	339
Property Fund	-	3.96	198
Total			2,004

- 3.10 The above table shows the Council has over-achieved on most benchmarks over the first six months of the year. This is mainly due to the figures above showing the interest earned over the last six months, whereas the benchmarks are based on new investments. As we are moving into a falling rate environment, this will cause a lag in the drop in interest rates received, especially for longer duration investments. The Council was also able to take advantage of the inflated rates payable by other Local Authorities during the end of the 2024/25 financial year due to limited funds being available in this market.

Note there are no benchmarks available for the Council's investment in the CCLA property fund, or for investments held over 12 months.

Budget Monitoring

Net Interest at 30th September 2025			
	Budget to Date £000	Actual to Date £000	Variance (o/spend) £000
Investments	(1,253)	(2,004)	751
Borrowings	2,129	1,770	359
Net Total	876	(234)	1,110

- 3.11 Due to having larger than expected investment balances over the first six months of the year, the Council has generated an additional £0.751m in interest over the budgeted figure of £2.0m. The borrowings costs are also £0.359m under budget due to less funds being needed due to increased cash balances generated in year.

New Long-Term Borrowing

- 3.12 The Council borrowed £30m from other local authorities during August and September 2025, each with a duration of 12 months at an average rate of 4.225%. PWLB 1 year rates were between 4.48% and 4.58% when the borrowing was taken, so this was the most cost effective way of borrowing the funds needed.

Policy Guidelines

- 3.13 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2025/26, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by Council on 5 March 2025. It sets out the Council's investment priorities as being:
- Security of capital
 - Liquidity
 - Yield
- 3.14 The Council will therefore aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. In the current economic climate and the heightened credit concerns it is considered appropriate to keep the majority of investments short term and to ensure all investments are in line with Sector's credit rating methodology.

Treasury Management Indicators

- 3.15 It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limits. The Council's approved Treasury and Prudential Indicators were set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and are reviewed in Appendix 1.
- 3.16 It should be noted that during the first six months of 2025/26 the Operational Boundary was breached. As can be seen on Appendix 1, at 30 September 2025 the Council's External Debt was £636.0m, and the Operational Boundary, set in February 2025 as part of the Treasury Management Strategy, was £613.1m.
- 3.17 The Operational Boundary is based on the expectations of the maximum debt level the Council will reach according to probable events and acts as a self-imposed limit to warn officers that borrowing levels are higher than expected. The boundary has been exceeded by £22.9m due to a technical accounting issue as detailed below. It should be noted that other than the technical adjustment below, actual borrowing levels have actually been less than originally forecast and agreed in the Treasury Management Strategy.

International Financial Reporting Standard 16 (IFRS16)

- 3.18 As part of the implementation of the accountancy standard IFRS16, the financial liability relating to PFI schemes was restated in 2024/25 and subsequent years. The new valuation of the liability is calculated using the indexed unitary charge payments made, whereas previously the liability was calculated using the unitary charge payments made when the PFI schemes were adopted. The main

change relates to the Mersey Gateway Bridge PFI scheme, whose liability increased by £46.0m as part of the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts.

Debt Rescheduling

3.19 No debt rescheduling was undertaken during the quarter.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The financial implications are as set out in the report.

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.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The main risks with Treasury Management are security of investment and volatility of return. To combat this, the Council operates within a clearly defined Treasury Management Policy and annual borrowing and investment strategy, which sets out the control framework

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

Appendix 1

Treasury and Prudential Indicators – 2025/26 – Quarter 2

	2024/25	2025/26	
Prudential Indicators	Full Year Actual £000	Original Estimate £000	Quarter 2 Estimate £000
Capital Expenditure	26,761	69,614	90,473
Net Financing Need for the Year <i>(Borrowing Requirement)</i>	7,311	48,717	39,108
Increase / (Decrease) in CFR <i>(Capital Financing Requirement)</i>	(2,412)	32,972	22,388
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream <i>(Proportion of cost of borrowing to Council's net revenue)</i>	4.0%	7.8%	6.4%
External Debt <i>(Borrowing plus PFI and lease liabilities)</i>	620,700	593,099	635,975
Operational Boundary <i>(Limit of which external debit is not expected to exceed)</i>	588,274	613,099	613,099
Authorised Limit <i>(Limit beyond which external debit is prohibited)</i>	660,070	693,042	693,042

	Investment	2024/25	2025/26
Maximum Principal invested > 365 days	Limit £000	Actual £000	Actual £000
Principal Sums Invested over 365 days	40,000	25,000	25,000

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	13 th November 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director of Children's Services
PORTFOLIO:	Children, Young People and Families
SUBJECT:	Home to School and Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy 2026-2027 recommendations.
WARD(S)	Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Local Authorities are required to publish a Home to School Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) each year to support assistance with transport eligibility decision making. In addition, they must also prepare and publish an annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement, that outlines the arrangements the authority considers necessary to facilitate access to education or training for students of sixth form age. Key within this responsibility, is that both are governed by compliance with statutory responsibilities, and consideration of other related DfE guidance.
- 1.2 On 25 February 2025, Executive Board granted permission to consult on proposals to support delivery of a revised policy for home to school transport for children and young people with SEND. The consultation ran from 2 April to 6 May 2025. The purpose of this report is to provide an update following the consultation and make recommendations for the Home to School & Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2026-2027. All aspects of this policy will be implemented from 1st September 2026 for all new applicants for travel support.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

- 1. note the content of the report; and**
- 2. agree the 2026-2027 Home to School & Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People**

with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Home to School & Post 16 Travel and Transport for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) expenditure has increased significantly in recent years. Net departmental expenditure is £0.359m over budget at the end of July, based on available information. The forecast outturn for 2025/26 is currently an overspend against budget of £1.184m.
- 3.2 The position in Halton reflects a national trend of rising pressure. Key drivers include growth in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) since 2014; increasing complexity of need (resulting in more solo transport); provider price inflation; and insufficient local specialist places resulting in longer journeys. Halton Borough Council also currently provides some discretionary transport above statutory requirements.

3.3 Consultation

Following the Executive Board report agreed on 25th February a two-part consultation was launched comprising:

- Part A: Flexible travel arrangements and increasing independence
- Part B: Reviewing discretionary transport

The consultation took place between 2nd April, and 6th May

It was supported by a wide-ranging communications campaign to capture the views of families, parents, carers, schools and other stakeholders on proposals for the future Home to School & Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Information around the consultation and the link were promoted through a variety of channels encouraging young people, parents, carers and residents of Halton to take part¹.

¹ **Social Media:** Analytics highlight that the posts reached 20,945 people through the social media campaign, 12,000 people interacted with the post with 100 people interacting, with 29 comments and 43 shares.

Local Offer: Push notifications were sent to 252 people who had registered their interest in SEND related matters on Family Hub online and the local offer. During the time of the consultation, the local offer received 2,669 visitors.

Inclusion matters newsletter (April and May issues) The newsletter is reached 564 professionals working across the SEND partnership including Council staff, schools, partners and stakeholders. At the time of writing the newsletter had been read by 207 people (37.5% of the recipients).

Director of Children's Services' Newsletter (multiple mentions): 309 colleagues across Children's Services

Halton Borough Schools and Early Years Settings : the consultation and link was sent multiple times to all primary, secondary, special, and Early Years settings through distribution channels capturing all

Consultation Engagement

Parent Carer and Young Person Responses

The consultation generated 137 responses from parent/carers and young people.

- 96% were completed by parents
- 4% by young people
- 61% are currently receiving transport
- 17% not currently in receipt of any transport
- 12% reported they/their children were post 16 students
- 3% reported their children were under 5 years of age
- 7% responded they have or are currently receiving a personal budget
- 3% reporting they have engaged in Independent Travel Training (ITT) in the last 2 years

Other Stakeholders Responses

This consultation generated 76 responses from other stakeholders.

- 59% identified as Halton residents
- 29% reported they worked in education settings
- 7% reported they were transportation providers
- 5% recorded as “other”

Consultation Responses- Part A: Flexible travel arrangements and increasing independence

3.4 Personal Travel Budgets (PTB)

Under our existing travel and transport policies, the Council can provide funding directly to parents and carers to make their own travel arrangements for their eligible child or young person. Personal travel budgets provide financial assistance to parents or carers to enable them to take responsibility for transporting their child to school. At present a local authority can put in place a personal transport budget, for those of statutory school age, with the agreement of the parent. In Halton, we currently refer to this as “Parental Mileage” and this is currently offered at 45p per round trip from home to school (to those who qualify).

Consultation proposal: - To increase the take up of personal budgets

Consultation Themes

- Awareness gap

education settings across Halton. It was also promoted through the Head teachers briefing (April & May).

Face to face sessions: Parents were invited to face to face sessions on 24th April (Halton Parent Carer Forum), 29th April (Ashley High School) and 30th April (Brookvale Children’s Centre, hosted by Cavendish High School).

- Many respondents were unaware of personal travel budgets (PTBs) or how they work.
- Interest increased when flexibility is explained (e.g., ability to use funds for wraparound childcare).
- Positive perception of flexibility
 - Some respondents appreciated the ability to tailor solutions, especially when it supports family logistics (e.g., siblings' care).
- Barriers to uptake
 - Practical constraints: Work commitments, multiple drop-offs, and disruption to established routines.
 - Preference for current system: Some simply stated a preference for existing transport arrangements.
- Financial Concerns acting as a disincentive
 - Current rate (45p per mile) perceived as insufficient to cover:
 - Fuel
 - Vehicle wear and tear
 - Insurance
 - Occasional taxi use

Recommendation:

A: Promote personal travel budgets

Personal travel budgets are the fastest-growing form of SEND transport assistance; some local authorities now offer them as the first option². Locally our current uptake is 6.79%. The consultation findings suggest that 13% of parents would consider PTBs which is in line with national benchmarking³. Through the consultation it was reported that some would value flexibility, especially when linked to wraparound care. PTB's could therefore empower families to manage transport in ways that suit their circumstances which indicates there is strong potential for growth with improved awareness and communication.

B: Increase the rate of reimbursement

Following both local and national benchmarking it is also recommended that the reimbursement rate be increased from 45p to 60p per mile to:

- Reflect real costs (fuel, wear and tear, insurance).
- Align with other LA's
- Further incentivise uptake of PTB's

Even at the proposed increased rate of 60p, PTBs remain less costly than council-arranged transport. For calculations, we have identified a cohort of children based on the following criteria:

- From reception to year 11.

² Bryant, B., Parish, N., & Bunyan, A. (2025). The future of Home to School Transport

³ Bryant, B., Parish, N., & Bunyan, A. (2025). The future of Home to School Transport

- Children receiving transport but not an escort.

Based on the above criteria, the transport for current school year is forecast to cost £1.6 million. During the consultation 13% of parent, carers and young people indicated that they would consider taking a personal budget in the future. We have used this measure as a median line to evaluate potential impact. Due to the high number of complex variables, it is difficult to identify actual savings, however the table below outlines potential reduction on spend based on future uptake of personal budgets ranging from 5% to 25%.

Potential PTB Saving - £	% of Cohort Take Up
£302, 315.71	25%
£241,852.57	20%
£181, 389.43	15%
£157, 204.17	13%
£120, 926.29	10%
£60.463.14	5%

It is difficult to fully quantify any comparisons, given the individual nature of each transport package. Please note this calculation is based on known cohort of children and does not calculate mitigated costs of new application moving directly onto personal budgets from September 2026. While data is not available to forecast any cost avoidance for the next academic year, there will be monitoring of new in-year demand from September 2026.

3.5

Escalation of Independent Travel Training

Independent travel training (ITT) is a program designed to teach individuals, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), how to travel safely and independently on public transport. Independent travel training offers several benefits:

- Supports the SEND transport model by promoting independence and social inclusion.
- Aligns with the Preparation for Adulthood agenda.
- Cost-effective compared to traditional transport.
- Builds life skills and confidence for young people.

The current Home to School & Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) references the expectation of travel training to be considered for children and young people of year 8 onwards, who are assessed through Education, Health and Care Annual Reviews, however anecdotal evidence suggests that uptake was not strong and Halton was missing opportunities to

identify and complete independent travel training with some children.

Consultation Proposal Independent Travel Training be a formal part of the annual review conversation with children and families as a commitment to promoting and supporting independence.

Consultation themes

- **Safety Concerns:** Parents and young people highlighted risks linked to age, developmental delays, and complex SEND needs. Fears included vulnerability, anxiety, and risk of harm if children travel alone.
- **Practical Barriers:** Distance to school and poor transport links limit feasibility for some families.
- **Conditional Support:** ITT was seen as valuable for promoting independence and social inclusion, but it must be delivered transparently, with parental involvement and individual needs at the forefront.
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Professionals agreed ITT supports the Preparation for Adulthood agenda but stress a person-centred approach. Positive evidence of this is already happening via annual reviews.

Recommendation

It is proposed that Independent Travel Training should continue to progress to be an embedded formal part of the annual Education Health and Care Plan review conversation with children and families. ITT would remain a targeted intervention based on a robust assessment of needs, not a blanket expectation. This will require clear communication, robust safeguarding, and collaboration with families.

In 2024 there were 18 referrals for ITT from schools for children accessing home to school transport. The actual uptake of ITT was low⁴. If all 18 had engaged and were deemed suitable, a potential saving of £143,136 could have been achieved. To date in 2025 there have been 9 ITT referrals for those access H2ST; if all 9 were suitable and took up ITT, this would indicate a potential reduction in current spend of £71,568.

Centralised Pick ups

In Halton, all transport is arranged from home addresses. A centralised pick-up point would be a nominated identified safe area where pupils would meet to access arranged transport, either with or without parental support. Special consideration would need to be given to those with the most complex needs and the use of centralised pick-up points would be based on robust risk

⁴ 2024- 54 referrals-18 for children receiving transport. 2024 calculations highlight the rate of move from transport to independent travel based on these referrals was approximately 30-35%.

assessments and be used for pupils only where it is deemed safe. This is permitted by the Department for Education statutory guidance for capable pupils. For young people of secondary age with SEND, independent travel training could be provided to facilitate independent travel to a centralised pick-up point

Consultation proposal - Centralised pick-up points to be offered to capable pupils.

Consultation Themes

- Strong concerns: Majority of parents and carers reported some concerns, citing:
 - Safety concerns: Risk of bullying, abuse, and lack of supervision.
 - Practical issues: Disruption to routines, employment, and siblings' schedules.
 - Emotional impact: Potential stress and anxiety for children with complex needs.
 - Environmental factors: Bad weather and chaotic gatherings of children with diverse needs.
- Definition Concerns: Questions raised about how “capable pupils” would be assessed.
- Conditional Support. Some acknowledged benefits for capable students:
 - Promotes independence, responsibility, and social interaction.
 - Strong emphasis on individual needs, parental involvement, and robust safeguarding.

Recommendation

Local authorities across the UK have increasingly explored the use of centralised pick-up points as part of their SEND transport strategies⁵. This has largely been driven by rising demand for SEND transport and increased budgetary pressures; driver shortages and route efficiencies; environmental benefits and promoting independence, responsibility and social interaction. Nevertheless, given the feedback gained through the consultation, it is recommended that centralised pick-ups are introduced but not as a blanket policy and would be subject to individual risk assessments and clear safeguarding protocols.

Adopting this recommendation will require further work to identify suitable pick-up points, engagement with parents and geographical mapping to identify suitable options. It is therefore difficult at this juncture to quantify savings, however as an illustrative example an internal review identified 15 pupils from two neighbouring areas who might use a single minibus from a centralised point (subject to assessment). The current cost for this

⁵ Bryant, B., Parish, N., & Bunyan, A. (2025). The future of Home to School Transport

transport is collectively c. £486.65/day (£92,340/year multiple vehicles). Moving to a centralised pick up would allow all 15 pupils to be transported in one vehicle in a timely manner. An annual minibus contract is estimated at c. £34,200/year, indicating a c. £58,000 reduction in spend by using this approach.

3.6 **Part B: Reviewing discretionary transport**

Statutory framework for home to school transport and travel

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school, including arranging travel in most cases. Local authorities must provide free transport for eligible children of compulsory school age (5–16) who:

- Attend their nearest suitable school, and:
 - Live beyond statutory walking distance:
 - Under 8 years: more than 2 miles.
 - 8 years and over: more than 3 miles.
 - Cannot reasonably walk because of SEND, disability, or mobility issues, even if accompanied.
 - Cannot walk in reasonable safety, even if accompanied.
- There are extended rights for low-income families:
- For Pre-5 and Post 16 (non-statutory children):
 - No automatic entitlement.
 - Local authorities decide what is reasonable and suitable, considering individual needs.

3.7

Distance Criteria after 8 years of age

Currently in Halton, there is no review of travel assistance once a child reaches 8 years of age. In some cases, children continue to receive transport that they may no longer be eligible for under the statutory guidance.

Consultation Proposal - Reaching 8 years of age will trigger a review of travel assistance.

Consultation themes

- Age Threshold: Strong opposition to the current legislation that changes statutory walking distance at age 8. Parents felt this age is arbitrary and does not reflect the needs of children with SEND.
- Safety Risks: Concerns about 8-year-olds with SEND walking or using public transport alone, citing lack of road safety awareness, communication difficulties, and vulnerability.
- Family Impact: Sudden withdrawal of transport support at age 8 creates logistical challenges for families, especially those with complex home circumstances.

- Support for Regular Reviews. Respondents supported regular reviews of transport assistance, advocating for:
 - Person-centred approach prioritising safety, well-being, and access to education.
 - Reviews through annual review processes or triggered by significant changes (e.g., educational setting, family circumstances, child's needs).

Recommendation

It is recommended that Halton Borough Council's Home to School & Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reflect statutory duties, which would mean a review of eligibility when a child turns 8. This would reflect statutory duties without any presumption of ineligibility and would apply the full suite of statutory considerations (safe routes; individual SEND needs).

3.8 Records indicate that there are 37 primary school children over the age of 8 that currently live under the three-mile distance criteria. This equates to total spend of £189,889. Actual saving will be dependent on a holistic review, as some children may remain eligible due to SEND needs. It is anticipated that a significant number may continue to be eligible upon review, however a modest reduction of 10% would realise a £18,988.98 reduction in current spend. The 10% figure equates to 10% of current spend; actual pupil-level reductions may not map 1:1 due to variable individual costs (e.g., escorts, specialist vehicles).

Provision of transport for pupils under the age of 5 years

There is no statutory requirement to provide transport for pupils under the age of 5. However, Halton Borough Council does currently provide home to school transport for pupils under the age of 5 and there is currently no charge to parents and carers for providing this service.

Consultation Proposals:

- No change to the current offer
- Pupils under the age of 5 will continue to receive home to school transport.
- Keep the current offer with restrictions. This means that pupils will be expected to travel by the most cost-effective means available: travel pass, Personal Travel Budgets, a seat on a contract vehicle (coach, minibus or taxi). The use of a contracted vehicle would only be agreed where it is the least expensive option.
- Keep the current offer with the introduction of an annual contribution.

- Charge towards costs. This cost is proposed to be £750 per child, per academic year (£500 for qualifying low income).
- Withdraw the current offer. This would mean that no home to school transport would be provided for pupils under the age of 5.

Consultation themes

- Strong Opposition: Majority of respondents opposed restricting transport for SEND children under 5.
- Early Intervention: Removing transport could undermine access to specialist provision, negatively impacting development and equity of opportunity.
- Vulnerability: Under-5s are among the most vulnerable; limiting transport may increase isolation, especially in deprived areas.
- Financial Hardship: It was cited that younger children can lack DLA mobility component, reducing mitigation options and increasing risk of hardship.
- Acknowledged Pressures: Some respondents recognised the Council's financial challenges and supported limiting transport for families already receiving mobility benefits, most felt withdrawal or charging would be counterintuitive to early intervention priorities.

Recommendation

Our calculations estimate that non-statutory cost for under 5's is less than £14,000 this year⁶. Given the limited financial benefits but the high risk to children with SEND missing crucial early education, it is proposed that Halton keep the current offer for children under the age of 5 and they would continue to be considered eligible children under the revised Home to School & Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

3.9

Post 16 Transport

Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport, or otherwise that the authority considers necessary, to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training. The legislation therefore gives local authorities the discretion to determine what transport and financial support are necessary to facilitate young people's attendance. The local authority must exercise its power to provide transport or financial support reasonably, taking into account all relevant matters.

⁶ 2024/25- nine applications; six children were under-5 at the beginning of the school terms with an annual cost of c. £43,000—around one-third relates to the under-5 period (non-statutory cost estimated to be <£14,200)

Halton Borough Council currently provides home to school transport for pupils between the age of 16-19. There is a charge for this service, currently this is £370 per academic year per child (£250 for low-income families).

Consultation proposals

- No change to the current offer
- Pupils' over-16 continue to receive home to school transport.
- Keep the current offer with restrictions. This means that pupils would be expected to travel by the most cost-effective means available: travel pass, Personal Travel Budgets, a seat on a contract vehicle (coach, minibus or taxi). The use of a contracted vehicle would only be agreed where it is the least expensive option.
- Keep the current offer with an increase contribution of £750 per child, per academic year (£375 for low income) to the costs- charge
- Withdraw the home to school transport offer: This would mean that no home to school transport would be provided for pupils over the age of 16.

Consultation themes

- Strong Opposition: Majority of respondents opposed any reduction in availability or increase in cost for post-16 SEND transport.
- Impact on Access: Parents stressed that withdrawal or charging could make it extremely difficult for young people to attend sixth form or further education.
- Well-being Risks: Anticipated negative effects on mental health, confidence, and future opportunities.
- Family Impact: Increased burden on parents could affect employment and lead to financial hardship.
- Equity & Inclusion: Concerns that changes could exacerbate isolation and disadvantage.
- Acknowledged Factors
 - Some recognition of LA financial pressures and potential for increased independence in certain cases.
- Environmental considerations raised by stakeholders through increased traffic

Recommendation

Post-16 transport costs are estimated to be £643,123.40 this academic year. This represents a significant proportion of overall SEND transport expenditure. Unlike compulsory school age (5–16), councils are not legally required to provide free transport for post-16 learners, and this is one of the few areas where savings

can be made to manage the severe budget constraints that the Council is currently experiencing. It is recognised that the Council cannot continue to provide travel assistance in its current form and there needs to be consideration of other options to support post-16 children, young people and families to access different solutions.

It is recommended that if a student aged 16-18 is assessed as being eligible for travel support, there would be an automatic expectation that the offer would be the most effective means available by applying a graduated least-cost suitable option hierarchy (public transport pass → Personal Travel Budget → contract vehicle seat). It would therefore be anticipated that bus passes and PTB's would be the likely offer to Post 16 students in Halton.

Dedicated personal contracted transport would only be considered on a discretionary basis, in extreme circumstances, acknowledging the recent ruling that local authorities *“should not have a blanket policy of never providing discretionary travel and must properly consider and engage with the reasons given by a parent as to why they consider that their child’s particular circumstances are exceptional and justify an award of travel support to school”*⁷. In circumstances where transport is agreed or has previously been agreed, it is recommended that a contribution charge for this service remains in place and that this is increased to the proposed annual contribution charge towards post-16 transport (£750 per pupil, reduced to £375 for low income families). This aligns with comparator authorities and is a small proportion of actual cost of providing transport (average c. £8,352 per pupil; range £1,723–£46,854).

Current records indicate that there will be 49 pupils receiving transport in year 11 in academic year 26/27. The estimated cost for providing transport for this cohort is £309,221. Looking at the previous three years our analysis highlights that approximately 45% of previous year 11 children continued to receive transport post-16. If this trend continued, this would equate to approximately 24 children applying for post-16 transport in the 2026-2027 academic year at an estimated cost of £139,149.

The table below shows the potential cost mitigation based from 100% to 0% of applying personal transport budgets⁸ as the most cost effective travel offer to this cohort.

⁷ (TYC, R (On the Application Of) v Birmingham City Council | [2025] EWHC 623 (Admin) | England and Wales High Court (Administrative Court) | Judgment | Law | CaseMine)

⁸ While the recommendation is the offer of the most cost effective travel means, it could be that the offer of a bus pass is not suitable for any of the identified children. Where a bus pass is unsuitable, a PTB is estimated at c. £2,000 per year per young person. This includes an anticipated increase in mileage for increased travel distance to further education settings.

Cost Mitigation - £	% Mitigation
£95,049.54	100%
£76,039.63	80%
£57,029.72	60%
£38,019.82	40%
£19,009.91	20%
£0	0%

3.10

Any increase in uptake in Independent Travel Training, would increase cost mitigation through a higher take up of bus pass offers. There are several mitigations to support Post-16 young people and families including recent recruitment into our in-house Independent Travel Training team, enabling them to support more young people who are eligible. In addition, eligible students would have access to 16-19 bursary (direct from education providers) worth up to £1200 which can be used to support travel to education.

Motability Vehicles

Department for Education guidance states that Motability cars cannot be considered when assessing a young person's transport eligibility. However, where a young person has a mobility car assigned for their purpose, in law, on the young person's 18th birthday, the vehicle officially becomes theirs and can be taken into consideration when assessing the need for transport. Halton Borough Council currently offers transport to those aged 18 and above who have a Motability vehicle.

Consultation Proposals: - Withdraw the current offer to over 18's with a Motability vehicle. This would mean that no home to school transport would be provided for pupils over the age of 18 with a Motability vehicle.

Consultation themes

- **Tension Identified:** Stakeholders acknowledged the need to manage public funds but stressed the importance of ensuring continued access to education for vulnerable young adults with SEND.
- **Motability Concerns:** Respondents highlighted that having a Motability vehicle does not guarantee the ability to operate it. Many young people cannot drive or travel independently, meaning the car alone does not resolve transport needs.
- **Fears that withdrawing transport for those with Motability** could lead families to give up their vehicle to access school transport, negatively impacting quality of life.

- Equity Risks: Proposal may disproportionately affect families in receipt of Motability, creating unintended hardship and reducing access to education.

Recommendation

Over 18's would be considered under the proposed revised Post-16 recommendations. As with Post-16's the most cost-effective option (including the use of a PTB) for over 18's with a mobility car will be explored.

3.11

Other findings from consultation

The comments from the consultation painted a picture of a valued transport service, with praise for the support they are providing for children across the borough. Any comments around suggested improvements to the current service have been passed to the relevant department.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All the recommendations above will require an amendment to the current Home to School and Post-16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Any changes to the policy subsequently approved following consultation, would be phased in so that the new criteria would apply to new and existing users from September 2026. Any changes to those who currently receive transport would be reviewed and come into full effect over several years as cohorts are reviewed as they move through the education system as part of their annual review process.

Following the Executive Board decision around recommendations in this report, a finalised Home to School and Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) will be drafted and published in line with Council duties.

It is worth noting that there is a current national call for a reform of the SEND system, including home to school transport. While the Council will continue to implement and provide recommendations about it, it will also consider both regional and national changes.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Potential financial implications for each area have been identified throughout the report. Estimating potential savings from each of these elements is complex; it is impossible to precisely predict, for example, how many parents might be willing to subscribe to a personal travel budget and the specific routes or contracts that

could be reduced or cease as a result. The report, therefore, is an indication of what might be realised.

5.2 All aspects of this policy will be implemented from 1st September 2026 for all new applicants for travel support. Over time all children would be brought in line with the revised policy, maximizing the opportunities for both savings and cost mitigations. Cost mitigation will therefore be realised for new cohorts making an application for the 2026/2027 academic year. Further savings and cost avoidance could be realised over several terms/academic years as individual cases are reviewed.

5.3 It is also noted that in line with previous years, it is anticipated that demand for home to school transport will remain high, in line with national trends. As a result of this, increasing demand for service may offset any savings from the overall budget.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES** ([click here for list of priorities](#))

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

Changes in this policy will encourage an increase in promoting wellbeing though encouraging a reduction in overreliance on transport and promote the use of walking and cycling to school, where applicable. Where children can use active travel options including public transport, walking and cycling key health benefits are achieved.

In addition, a key feature of the policy change will be to encourage greater independence both in childhood and into adulthood by increasing focus on independent travel training.

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

No direct impact.

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

Provision of assisted home to school transport enables children and young people with SEND to travel to appropriate schools where they have been placed and where their specialist needs are catered for.

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

Halton's current charging structure for post-16 contributions offers a reduction for those on a low income. A universal

increase in charges would disproportionately impact on lower income families. Other mitigations against increased charges also exist such as 16-19 bursary which is accessible to students on a low income.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Where children can use active travel options including walking and cycling key environmental benefits are achieved. Public transport and active travel modes provide alternative sustainable options to private forms of transport which is conducive to lowering harmful emissions.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

No direct impact.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Failure to implement the proposed recommendations will have a negative impact on the Council's budget for provision of home to school transport for children with SEND. Ongoing budgetary pressures in this area will affect the Council's ability to agree a balanced budget overall.

Proposing changes to assistance for Post-16 learners may result in them not engaging in further education, increasing Halton's NEET cohort. If changes were made, this risk is mitigated to some extent by the 16 to 19 Bursary, (available through education providers) which provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. In addition, there will be a continued offer of assistance through the local authority's Independent Travel Training (ITT) offer.

Failure to engage fully with parents and stakeholders and work with them through any period of change may result in legal challenges, reputational damage and loss of trust.

Changes to the Home to School & Post-16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may result in an increase in appealed decisions. It is essential that any proposed changes include a robust appeals process that can respond in an efficient and timely manner to prevent any delays to children and young people receiving travel support.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Given the nature of the proposed changes, there is an impact to those defined by both age and disability.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Council is committed to creating sustainable environments for current and future generations. Any recommendations made following consultation with consider environmental impacts and sustainable methods of travel will be considered as a priority.

KEY DECISIONS ON THE FORWARD PLAN

10.0 **REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

To agree changes to the Home to School and Post-16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy 2026-2027.

11.0 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

To continue with the current policy

Given the current financial position of the Council and the significant pressure on this current Home to School Transport budget, to do nothing would impact the local authority's ability to set a balanced and sustainable budget.

12.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

All aspects of this policy will be implemented from 1st September 2026 for all new applicants for travel support.

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

Permission to Consult- Home to School Transport for Pupils with Special Educational Needs Disabilities- 25.02.2025.

Education Act 1996

DfE Travel to school for children of compulsory age statutory guidance January 2024

DfE Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training statutory guidance January 2019.

Home to School & Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2026-2027



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hdl@halton.gov.uk**

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اگر آپ کی پہلی زبان انگریزی نہیں ہے اور آپ ہماری خدمات کے بارے میں معلومات کسی دوسری زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم ہمیں 0303 333 4300 پر فون یا hdl@halton.gov.uk پر ای میل کریں

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1.0 Context

Halton Borough Council has a duty under the Education Act 1996 (as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) and associated regulations and guidance, to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. This applies to home to school travel arrangements, and vice versa, and does not relate to travel between educational establishments during the school day.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly.

The duty on local authorities is to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at schools for eligible children. Schedule 35B of the Act defines eligible children as those categories of children of compulsory school age (5-16) in an authority's area.

Local Authorities are required by law to provide some bus services that are socially necessary. These services also help children and young people to get to/access schools and other places for learning.

Local authorities are also required to publish their Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy by 31st August each year, and, as recommended within Department for Education Guidance, this document integrates that strategy within this policy document. These wider policies are detailed within the Halton Local Transport Plan (LTP3) found at www.halton.gov.uk/ltp3.

This Policy will be reviewed annually and published in the Education and Families section of the Council website at www.halton.gov.uk. Hard copies can be requested by calling 0303 333 4300, or emailing hdl@halton.gov.uk.

2.0 Principles

In line with current legislation¹, this policy uses the term '*travel assistance*' to reflect the wide range of support options available. This assistance does not necessarily involve the Council providing transport directly. Each application for travel assistance will be considered individually. The Council will assess:

- Its legal responsibilities,
- The specific needs of the applicant,
- How to use public resources efficiently,
- And any other relevant factors related to the request.

This policy supports the priorities detailed within the Council's overarching policies and plans, and aligns the principles set out via government guidance², alongside principles of inclusion, equality, sustainability, and the effective use of public resources.

Halton Borough Council strongly supports measures which encourage local communities to use environmentally sustainable forms of travel, detailed within the Halton Local Transport

¹ The Education Act 1996

² DfE Travel to school for children of compulsory age statutory guidance January 2024

DfE Post-16 transport and travel assistance to education and training statutory guidance January 2019.

Plan (LTP) found at www.halton.gov.uk/ltp3. This contains a wide range of measures to improve access to personal development, education, training and work-based learning opportunities for:

- Statutory school age children (up to 16 years of age);
- Young people post-16 and accessing continuing education, training and work based learning opportunities

This policy reflects current national legislation. This policy could change before a child and young person completes their time at school. School admission preferences should not be made on the assumption that the same set of eligibility criteria will apply throughout a child and young person's education.

3.0 Travel Assistance to Access Education at School/College

This policy outlines the travel assistance that may be available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility difficulties who are resident within the Borough of Halton and children and young people in the care of Halton Borough Council.

This policy is set out in three parts as follows:

Part A –

Pre-School children (age 3-4) attending nursery, or a mainstream or special school

Children of compulsory school age (5-16) attending a mainstream school, a resource base within a mainstream school or a special school

Part B –

Young people aged 16 to 25 years with special educational needs and disabilities attending post 16 education

Part C – Application, Review, and Appeals processes

4.0 PART A: Travel Assistance to Access Education for Children and Young People from Pre School Age to Age 16

This section of the policy applies to children and young people of pre-school age, up to the age of 16, who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility difficulties. It aims to support eligible children and young people in accessing their educational setting by providing appropriate travel assistance at the start and end of the school day, each weekday during term time.

4.1 Legislation and Responsibilities: Parent/Carer Responsibilities

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their compulsory school aged children are registered at a school and attend regularly, or to make suitable arrangements for home education or education other than at school.

The aim of this policy is to work with children, young people and families to access education in a safe and sustainable way. The majority of children and young people in Halton with special educational needs or a disability including those with an Education Health and Care plan (EHC plan) do not receive or require specialised travel assistance from the Council in order to access education. Wherever possible, it is expected that parent/carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility difficulties, make arrangements for their child to attend school in the same way as parents/carers of children and young people who do not have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility difficulties.

4.2 Council Responsibilities

Local authorities must make free-of-charge travel arrangements to facilitate the attendance at school of eligible children resident in their area, subject to certain conditions:

Distance

A child is eligible if they attend their nearest suitable school³ and any of the following apply:

- the school is more than 2 miles away and the child is under 8
- the school is more than 3 miles away and the child is 8 or over

Low Income Family

Children from a low family income where the child or young person is entitled to free school meals or where one or both parents are in receipt of the maximum level of working tax credit⁴ will qualify for free school transport if,

- aged 8 to 11, they go to their nearest school and that school is more than 2 miles from their home
- aged 11 to 16 if they are attending a school more than 2 miles, but not more than 6 miles from the home address, and it is one of the three nearest suitable qualifying schools. This distance is extended from 6 to 15 miles if the school selected is the nearest qualifying school based on their religion or belief and there is no suitable qualifying school nearer to home.

Measuring Distance

When determining eligibility for a travel pass, the child's permanent home address is used. Distance will be measured by the shortest walking route from the main entrance of the child's permanent home address (including flats and apartments) to the main entrance of the school using the Council's measuring systems considering safe walking routes.

Safe Walking Route

A child is eligible for free travel assistance if the only available walking route to their nearest

³ Whilst parents/carers have the right to express a preference for which school they wish their child to attend, a child and young person who attends a school which is further away than the nearest suitable qualifying school with places available, will not be eligible for travel assistance even if the distance from home to the school they attend is more than the statutory walking distance.

⁴ Proof of entitlement is required at the time of application, annual confirmation to confirm low-income status will be required.

suitable school is deemed unsafe, even if the distance is within the statutory walking limit. Local authorities must assess the safety of the route, taking into account factors such as traffic volume, speed, road crossings, lighting, and the age and capability of the child. The assessment should consider whether a child could reasonably be expected to walk the route safely, either alone or accompanied.

Special Educational Needs or Disability

Travel assistance is not automatically provided for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility difficulties. Those who do not qualify under statutory criteria - such as distance, low income, or unsafe walking routes - may still apply if they are attending the nearest suitable school for their needs and are unable to walk there, even with adult accompaniment, due to their SEND, disability, or mobility challenges.

Each application will be assessed individually. In determining whether a child can reasonably be expected to walk to school, the local authority will consider:

- Whether the child could walk if accompanied,
- And whether it is reasonable to expect the parent or carer to provide that accompaniment.

The general expectation is that a parent or carer will accompany their child where necessary, unless there is a valid reason why this would not be reasonable.

Work commitments alone will not be considered a sufficient reason to provide free home-to-school transport. While many parents face challenges balancing work and school schedules, this is not regarded as an exceptional circumstance.

The local authority will ensure equality of opportunity for disabled parents. Where a parent's disability prevents them from accompanying their child along a walking route that would otherwise require adult supervision, the authority may consider reasonable adjustments - such as providing free home-to-school transport for the child⁵.

4.3 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for Children

Parents or carers of children under 16 who receive the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) may be asked whether they are willing and able to use their Motability vehicle to transport their child to and from school. This request applies only where it is reasonable and safe to do so.

Where a parent or carer chooses to use their own vehicle in these circumstances, they may be eligible to apply for a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) to help cover travel costs.

It is important to note that receiving benefits such as DLA, PIP, a Motability vehicle, or a Foster Care Allowance does not affect a child's eligibility for free home-to-school travel assistance.

⁵ Where applications for assistance are received on the grounds of a child or young person's SEND, disability or mobility challenges, or a parent/carer is referencing their own disability, the appropriate documentary evidence to support those issues or challenges will be requested as part of the assessment process.

4.4 Exceptional Circumstances

In addition to those outlined above, there are some additional, exceptional circumstances in which travel assistance to access education may be given.

Specific consideration will be given to:

- A child/young person who has a temporary disability or illness;
- A child/young person whose parents/carers who have their own medical needs or learning difficulties impacts on their ability to transport the child/young person where necessary⁶.

4.5 Travel Assistance

If Halton Borough Council agrees to provide travel assistance to support access to education, it will be arranged in a cost-effective manner, tailored to the child or young person's individual needs.

An initial eligibility assessment will be carried out by a designated Council officer. It is essential that parents and carers actively participate in this process to ensure that all relevant information is considered.

Each case is assessed individually, and the Council may request medical or professional evidence to support the application.

Non-Use and Attendance Monitoring

If travel assistance is provided but not used, or if a child or young person's school attendance falls to 90% or below, the Council may withdraw the service. In some cases, charges may apply for unused transport. Travel assistance will remain suspended until attendance improves to an acceptable level.

If a child or young person with SEND or mobility difficulties is unwell, parents/carers must notify the Transport Co-ordination Department the day before travel is required, if it is known that the child will be off school the next day or as early as possible on the day of travel if the illness has only been made known on the day.

Following an absence, parents/carers must notify the Transport Co-ordination Department the day before the child is due to return to school in order for transport to be reinstated.

Transport will be temporarily withdrawn during periods of illness and reinstated once the child is well enough to return to education.

4.6 Types of Travel Assistances Provided

The nature and mode of travel assistance will be determined by the Council and will be one that is consistent with the Council's duty to secure Value for Money and the needs of the child.

⁶ Where applications for assistance are received on the grounds of a child or young person's SEND, disability or mobility challenges, or a parent/carer is referencing their own disability, the appropriate documentary evidence to support those issues or challenges will be requested as part of the assessment process

A) Travel Pass: A Travel Pass provides free access to public transport for eligible children and young people to travel between home and school during the academic year.

- Valid for school-related journeys on public transport.
- May be extended to a parent or travel buddy if accompaniment is necessary.
- Includes access to Independent Travel Training where applicable, to support safe and confident travel.

B) Independent Travel Training: Independent Travel Training empowers children and young people to travel safely and confidently on public transport. It focuses on developing personal, social, and life skills, enhancing road safety awareness, and promoting independence.

Key Benefits

- Builds confidence and independence.
- Develops personal safety and road safety skills.
- Enhances life skills such as:
 - Using money
 - Buying tickets
 - Planning journeys
 - Navigating buses and trains

Independent travel training may be considered for secondary school age children and young people. Independent Travel Training will be a part of planning for all children from Year 8 onwards as part of the child or young person's Education Health and Care Plan Annual Review.

Independent Travel Training is suitable for a wide range of children and young people including (but not exhaustive):

- Transferring from mainstream to special schools
- Attending mainstream schools or resource bases
- Attending pupil referral units
- In post-16 education
- Referred by parents or educational settings

An initial review of travel assistance applications will be undertaken to determine suitability. If appropriate, a qualified Travel Trainer conducts will conduct detailed assessment in collaboration with:

- The young person
- Parents/carers
- School staff
- Other professionals

Training Programme

- Tailored, one-to-one support using the Travel Training Toolkit.
- Criteria for successful completion are based on a comprehensive training plan.

- Final assessment shared with parents/carers.
- Completion is signed off by the Council and parents/carer.

Contact Information

For referrals, the Travel Training Toolkit, or more details: 0151 511 7444
Email: transportco-ordination@halton.gov.uk

C) Bicycle: A one off payment may be made when a child or young person, who is eligible for support under the Council's policy, would like to use or uses a bicycle to travel to school. This solution can also include a programme of independent travel training to ensure the young person is able to safely cycle to and from school if required.

D) Walking Bus: The Council is keen to reduce the number of vehicle journeys in and around the Borough, especially at peak times, and to reduce traffic movements in close proximity to schools. A child/young person may be allocated a space on a walking bus scheme. These involve several children/young people walking to and from school under the guidance and support of a Passenger Assistant.

E) Personal Travel Budget (PTB): The Council may provide parents/carers with an amount of money to enable them to provide personalised travel arrangements through a Personal Travel Budget (PTB). A Personal Travel Budget (PTB) is a financial allowance provided by the Council to parents/carers to arrange personalised travel assistances for their child or young person to attend school or college. Personal Travel Budgets offer families flexibility to choose how they facilitate travel to school, as long as the child is attending school regularly, and in a timely manner. Parents/carers assume full responsibility for safe and reliable travel arrangements.

PTB can be used in various ways to suit individual family needs, including (but not exhaustive):

- Fuel costs for driving the child/young person to school
- Walking or cycling with the child
- Leasing a vehicle if one is not available
- Paying a trusted person (e.g. friend, relative, childminder) to accompany the child
- Shared travel arrangements with other families (e.g. car shares, joint taxi bookings)
- Purchasing travel passes for siblings to free up parental availability
- Paying for before/after school clubs for the child or siblings to support travel logistics
- Supporting travel on reduced timetables or flexible attendance plans

The Council aims to offer PTBs as a primary method of travel assistance where appropriate, as it often best meets the needs of families and promotes independence.

F) Provision of Vehicles: Provision of vehicle for transport will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, and only after all other suitable options have been explored and deemed unsuitable.

Where a vehicle is provided, vehicles and drivers are provided by a suitably qualified, registered, transport provider working to contractual standards set by the Council. All drivers will have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate and operate in

accordance with the Council's contractual standards.

Wherever possible, children and young people who are awarded assistance in this way, will travel together in adapted minibuses designed to meet their specific needs. Routes will be planned to:

- Align with school start and finish times,
- Follow the shortest practical route for all passengers,
- Minimise travel time and disruption.

Under very exceptional circumstances the Council may transport pupils in separate taxis or private hire vehicles based on the assessed needs of the child or young person. Arrangements of this kind will be kept under regular review and, where possible, the opportunity will be taken to move to an alternative suitable form of travel assistance.

Communal pick up/drop off points will be considered for school children within a reasonable distance from their home address. This may or may not be accompanied. Where this option is considered for secondary school children, independent travel training may be required to support the child/young person travelling safely to the meeting point. A home pick up and drop off will only be made where it is deemed essential due to an individual's needs.

In exceptional circumstances, where there are surplus places on a multi pick-up vehicle, it may be possible for parent/carers to purchase a seat for a child/young person with SEND who has not met the eligibility criteria. This would be subject to availability and/or change, as needs for eligible passengers take priority. A notice period, where possible, would be given, if the surplus place is no longer available.

5.0 PART B: Travel Assistance to Access Education/Training for Young People Post 16

5.1 Introduction

Part B applies to young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility difficulties who are resident within Halton who are above statutory school age and aged over 16 but under 25.

The responsibility for facilitating access for 16-19 year olds (who have started a course before their 19th birthday) rests with local authorities. Local authorities are not required to provide free or subsidised travel assistance for young people aged 16–19. However, under Section 509AA and 509AB of the Education Act 1996, they must prepare and publish an annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. This statement outlines the arrangements the authority considers necessary to facilitate access to education or training for students of sixth form age.

5.2 Legislation and Responsibilities

In accordance with the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) agenda, all young people born on or after 1 September 1997 must remain in education or training until their 18th birthday. The September Guarantee ensures that every young person aged 16 or 17 is

offered a suitable place in education or training.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, Halton Borough Council may continue to maintain an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan for young people over the age of 19 where additional time is required to complete education or training, compared to peers without SEND. Special educational provision may continue until the end of the academic year in which the young person turns 25. The Council also has a duty under the Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage, enable, and assist the participation of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in education and training up to the age of 25.

In line with the Preparation for Adulthood agenda and the SEND reforms of 2014, Halton Borough Council is committed to supporting young people and their families to work towards greater independence from the earliest opportunity. While most young people attending college are expected to travel independently, those who are unable to do so should be supported to develop these skills wherever possible.

5.3 Eligibility Criteria

Travel assistance may be provided for young people over 16 years with special educational needs who are attending a full-time course at the nearest provision to their home. Where a young person is not attending the provision nearest to their home address, travel assistance will not be provided.

Travel Assistance may be provided for young people Post-16 if they:

- Attend a designated/qualifying school or college outlined by the Council as the appropriate establishment that meets the needs of the young person, and
- A young person attends a school or college more than 3 miles from their home address

Travel assistance is not available for trips, work experience or any other activity associated with the school or college course.

Where the distance to be travelled is less than 3 miles, travel assistance will be considered, taking into account the individual circumstances and the travel needs of the young person with SEND that prevents them from accessing education or training independently.

5.4 Travel assistance

This section outlines the travel assistances which may be provided for young people who are 16 and over who have been assessed as requiring assistance with transport.

Where Halton Borough Council agrees to provide a travel assistance, pupils will be expected to travel by the most cost-effective means available: these being a travel pass or a Personal Travel Budget. The use of a contracted vehicle may be offered as a solution only where it is considered the most cost effective option as deemed by the Council.

Young people and/or their parents/carers must participate in the initial eligibility assessment, which considers individual and family circumstances. Supporting evidence may be required. The travel assistance will be person-centred, aiming to promote independence and confidence.

Applicants are expected to have explored all available travel concessions, bursaries, and benefits, including the use of Motability vehicles where applicable. If a Motability car is available, the council may consider the availability of such a vehicle when assessing whether travel assistance is necessary. Families may apply for a PTB to support this.

5.5 Types of Travel Assistance Provided

A) Travel Pass: A Travel Pass provides free access to public transport for eligible children and young people to travel between home and school during the academic year.

- Valid for school-related journeys on public transport.
- May be extended to a parent or travel buddy if accompaniment is necessary.
- Includes access to Independent Travel Training where applicable, to support safe and confident travel.

B) Independent Travel Training: Independent Travel Training empowers young people to travel safely and confidently on public transport. It focuses on developing personal, social, and life skills, enhancing road safety awareness, and promoting independence.

Key Benefits

- Builds confidence and independence.
- Develops personal safety and road safety skills.
- Enhances life skills such as:
 - Using money
 - Buying tickets
 - Planning journeys
 - Navigating buses and trains

Independent travel training may be considered for secondary school age children and young people. Independent Travel Training will be a part of planning for all children from Year 8 onwards as part of the child or young person's Education Health and Care Plan Annual Review.

An initial review of travel assistance applications will be undertaken to determine suitability. If appropriate, a qualified Travel Trainer conducts will conduct detailed assessment in collaboration with:

- The young person
- Parents/carers
- School staff
- Other professionals

Training Programme

- Tailored, one-to-one support using the Travel Training Toolkit.
- Criteria for successful completion are based on a comprehensive training plan.

- Final assessment shared with parents/carers.
- Completion is signed off by the Council and parents/carer.

Contact Information

For referrals, the Travel Training Toolkit, or more details: 0151 511 7444
Email: transportco-ordination@halton.gov.uk

C) Bicycle: A one off payment may be made when a young person, who is eligible for support under the Council's policy, would like to use or uses a bicycle to travel to school or college. This solution can also include a programme of independent travel training to ensure the young person is able to safely cycle to and from school or college if required.

E) Personal Travel Budget (PTB): The Council may provide parents/carers with an amount of money to enable them to provide personalised travel arrangements through a Personal Travel Budget (PTB). A Personal Travel Budget (PTB) is a financial allowance provided by the Council to parents/carers to arrange personalised travel assistances for their child or young person to attend school or college. Personal Travel Budgets offer families flexibility to choose how they facilitate travel to school or college, as long as the young person is attending school regularly and in a timely manner. Parents/carers assume full responsibility for safe and reliable travel arrangements.

PTB can be used in various ways to suit individual family needs, including:

- Fuel costs for driving the child/young person to school or college
- Walking or cycling with the child
- Leasing a vehicle if one is not available
- Paying a trusted person (e.g. friend, relative, childminder) to accompany the child
- Shared travel arrangements with other families (e.g. car shares, joint taxi bookings)
- Purchasing travel passes for siblings to free up parental availability
- Paying for before/after school clubs for the child or siblings to support travel logistics
- Supporting travel on reduced timetables or flexible attendance plans

Halton Borough Council aims to offer Personal Travel Budgets (PTBs) as the preferred method of travel assistance, where appropriate. PTBs often best meet the needs of families, promotes independence and supports flexible travel arrangements tailored to individual circumstances.

In exceptional circumstances, where there are surplus places on a multi pick-up vehicle, it may be possible for parent/carers to purchase a seat for a child/young person with SEND who has not met the eligibility criteria. This would be subject to availability and/or change, as needs for eligible passengers take priority. A notice period, where possible, would be given, if the surplus place is no longer available.

5.6 Other Transport Options Available

In addition, travel assistance can be obtained from the Concessionary Fares Scheme operated by Halton Borough Council.

Concessionary Travel is offered to disabled people, whatever their age. Depending on individual circumstances this can be free or discounted travel on buses, and trains. More

information can be obtained from Transport Co-ordination on 0151 511 7444.

6.0 PART C: Application, Review and Appeals Processes

6.1 Formal Application for Assistance

The parent/carer or young person **must** make a formal application for travel assistance to access education before any assistance is considered. The Council may request the provision of written evidence from education specialists and/or medical experts.

It remains the legal responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their compulsory school aged child attends school regularly. In most cases, for those who qualify for assistance, travel assistance to access education will be co-ordinated by the Council's Transport Co-ordination Department.

6.2 Application Process

The application is dealt with in 4 stages, as set out below:

Stage 1 – Complete the Application (process currently under review)

Parent/carer/young person completes an Application Form. This application form and information form can be obtained on the Council website School Travel assistance page: <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/EducationandFamilies/Schools/SchoolTravel.aspx>

The Council's Transport Co-ordination Department 0151 511 7444

The completed form should be returned by email to SENAT@halton.gov.uk or hard copy to:

*Halton Borough Council
SEN Assessment Team
Rutland House
Runcorn
WA7 2GW*

Stage 2 – Receipt of the Application

On receipt of the application an assessment of eligibility will be undertaken. At this stage the application will either progress to Stage 3 or be declined. The parent/carer/young person will receive a letter notifying them of the decision and the letter will outline the reasons for the decision.

Stage 3 – Risk Assessment of Child/Young Person's Travel Requirements

Once the application has been approved a Council Officer may contact the parent/carer/young person to undertake an appropriate risk assessment. The Officer may also ask, where appropriate, the parent/carer and/or the child/young person to sign a Code of Conduct. The Transport Co-ordination Department reserves the right to withdraw the travel assistance if the child/young person or parent/carer refuses to sign the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct will be issued to parents/carers/students at the time of application.

6.3 Review Process

The travel assistance will be reviewed on an annual basis, through the Education Health and Care Plan Annual Review process in order to ensure the support offered continues to meet the needs of the child/young person. This will include a review of the child/young person's needs and the travel assistance.

At this stage alternative travel assistances may be discussed, including transition to Independent Travel Training from year 8 onwards. A Council Officer may also contact the parent/carer/young person to review the risk assessment and child/young person's information, if appropriate.

Where a review changes or removes eligibility of travel assistance, this will take effect from the beginning of the following term or time period determined at the Council's discretion.

6.4 Changes in Circumstances

It is the parent/carers/young person's responsibility to inform the Council of any changes in their circumstances. A change in circumstances in year can result in a change in eligibility.

Changes in circumstances include:

- A change in home address;
- Change to the statutory walking distance;
- A move from one school to another;
- A change in financial circumstances that means parents no longer qualify under low income;
- Change in the safety of the route;
- Transition from primary to secondary school and transition from secondary school to college;
- A change in medical and physical conditions;
- A move into Local Authority care.

Where the change in circumstances removes eligibility, the removal of travel assistance will take effect from the beginning of the following academic year.

6.5 Health and Safety

While every effort is made find a travel assistance that meet the needs of a child/young person, there will be circumstances when the travel assistance will need to be reviewed as it is not working. Whilst acknowledging the impact of their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility difficulties on the behaviour of some children and young people, where a child/young person's conduct compromises the safety of anyone travelling with them, the Council reserves the right to suspend or withdraw the travel assistance.

There is an expectation that the parent/carer and/or the child/young person will sign a Code of Conduct. The Transport Co-ordination Department reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a travel assistance if the child/young person or parent/carer refuses to sign the

Code of Conduct. A travel assistance may be withdrawn if for example, but not limited to:

- It is felt that the child or young person has the capacity to learn from a sanction and a 'cooling off' period would be beneficial;
- The child or young person's continued presence in a vehicle (where this is the travel assistance) presents a risk to the health or safety of themselves or others.

Analysis of the risk will be made of any given incident and the following procedures will be put in place:

- On issue of the first suspension the case will be reviewed on an individual basis;
- A second issue of suspension may be given, if once travel assistance resumes, improvements are not maintained;
- At the issue of a third suspension and upon consideration of all circumstances, the existing travel assistance will be reviewed and may be removed. A new solution will be offered following discussion with Council officers and the child/young person's family.

If an incident is serious enough to pose a risk to the safety of the child, other passengers, or staff, the Council may immediately withdraw the travel assistance to maintain its duty of care. Parents or carers will remain responsible for ensuring the child continues to attend school during this period.

7.0 Curriculum Travel During the School Day

There is no duty on the Local Authority to provide transport for curriculum activities or for travel between different educational establishments during the course of the school day. It is the responsibility of the individual schools, institutions and education providers to organise and provide pupils' transport for curriculum activities during the school day. In all cases it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child's safe and secure travel to and from school. Parents/carers are responsible for their children until they are received on school premises and the parent/carer has left the school.

8.0 Change of Address

If a pupil changes home address their entitlement to assisted school transport will be reassessed on the basis of the eligibility criteria. When pupils leave the Borough any travel passes issued by the Council must be returned. The Council will make a charge for a replacement travel pass in the event of the pupil/young person misplacing or losing their pass.

9.0 Temporary Relocation

In exceptional circumstances, travel assistance will be offered to and from school for pupils who have been temporarily relocated which causes them to become eligible in accordance with the criteria detailed above. For example, if relocated due to being part of witness protection scheme, place of safety from domestic violence, family home uninhabitable due to natural disaster (e.g. flooding).

10.0 Shared Care Arrangements

Where there is a formal shared care arrangement in place and both parents have care of the child(ren) for part of the week, then home to school transport will only be provided from the address(es) where the child would meet the criteria of being an “eligible child”.

11.0 Safeguarding

In the unlikely event that a child in receipt of assistance with transport is taken home at the agreed time and no-one is at home to receive the child, a formal agreement is in place between the SEN Assessment Team and Family Hubs in the event of a parent/carer not being available when the driver initially returns the child home. The child(ren) will be taken to a Family Hub as determined by the Council, and the parent/carer will be expected to collect their child from the relevant Hub. This arrangement may incur a charge to cover the cost of staff time for remaining with the child. Obviously this matter will then be treated as a safeguarding issue and the relevant agencies advised, and may lead to a review of transport provision.

12.0 Appeals Process

Initial Decision

An initial decision on eligibility for travel assistance will be made by Officer A. The decision may include:

- Refusal of travel assistance; or
- An offer of travel arrangements that the parent/carer considers unsuitable.

Stage 1 Appeal – Review by Senior Officer

Parents/carers may challenge Officer A's decision within 20 working days of notification.

Grounds for challenge may include:

- Eligibility criteria (e.g., distance, route safety, disability or mobility difficulties).

A Senior Officer (Officer B) will review the case and provide a written response within 20 working days, including:

- Detailed reasoning for the decision; and
- Information on how to escalate to Stage 2.

Stage 2 Appeal – Independent Appeal Panel

If dissatisfied, parents/carers may request a Stage 2 appeal within 20 working days of the Stage 1 outcome by writing to Democratic Services (contact details provided in Stage 1 response).

Democratic Services will arrange an Independent Appeal Panel within 40 working days.

The panel will:

- Be independent of previous decisions, but need not be independent of the local authority
- Consider written and verbal representations from the parent/carer.
- Use their discretionary power to decide whether to award:
 - Full assistance;
 - Part-paid assistance (with parental contribution); or
 - No assistance.

A written decision will be sent within 5 working days, including details on how to escalate to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO).

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

If parents/carers remain dissatisfied, they may complain to the **LGO** where there is evidence of:

- Failure to follow procedural rules; or Maladministration of the policy.

Contact details for doing this are included in Stage 2 response.

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	13 th November 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment Learning and Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Culture
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the culture work programme and 'borough of culture' approach for 2026 and beyond.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

- 1) note the report;**
- 2) approves the 2026 year of culture work programme;**
- 3) supports a forward culture approach; and**
- 4) considers a proposal to explore a music festival for Halton in 2027**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Executive Board endorsed Halton's Cultural Strategy 'The Crucible of Culture' in April 2023, EXB110. The strategy sets out four pillars; leadership, communication, diversity, and dynamism which provides a framework for delivery:

3.2 Leadership

Providing a conduit between the Council and the borough's Cultural sector to maximise opportunities and establish culture as a cross-cutting priority that forms a golden thread through the Council's different agendas.

3.3 Communication

To increase awareness of cultural opportunities and activities in the borough; both with residents and visitor. Celebrating vibrancy and impact, building increased awareness through communication to enhance.

- 3.4 **Diversity**
To ensure programming speaks to the widest possible audience, providing a voice and a creative space for everyone whilst raising aspiration, providing talent and skills development for all ages.
- 3.5 **Dynamism**
To enable aspiration, ambition and creative excellence to flourish through supporting bold and energetic programming showcasing creative confidence.
- 3.6 Mechanisms for delivery will include literature, music, theatre, performance, dance, visual arts and digital media.
- 3.7 Endorsed by Portfolio Members the approach has been to enable and facilitate a community led approach to Culture led through Halton's local collective 'Cultivate' which has continued to grow from strength to strength with membership from a wide range of artists, organisations and cultural businesses in the borough.
- 3.8 Members will be aware of the Liverpool City Region approach to 'Borough of Culture'. Halton last delivered borough of culture in 2021 which showcased and celebrated Halton's vibrancy and cultural assets with Norton Priory Museum & Gardens, The Brindley, Catalyst Museum and Science & Discovery Centre, along with parks, open spaces and waterways.
- 3.9 Marketfest has been a sustainable initiative emerging from this with a culture focus further built upon in the delivery of Halton 50 programme of events and celebrations during 2024.
- 3.10 Halton is scheduled to deliver borough of culture again in 2026, this will provide £200k of investment into the borough. The delivery plan builds further on the cultural strategy and strong partnership approach in the borough. Key elements are:
- 3.11 **Cultivate Partnership** – leading on training opportunities and Widnes Market activity. The programme will also fund a total of £70k in grants; providing access to grants up to £500 from a £10k allocation and £60k to fund £10k grants to establish new cultural initiatives, expand the local cultural offer, creating accessible and inclusive cultural events.
- 3.12 **Widnes Market Stall - legacy** from Culture HQ in Shopping City 2021 which evidenced the positive impact of grass roots accessibility to culture and arts. Pop up events and exhibits, flash mobs, music, art activities, remembering and sharing past cultural projects and publications and performances. Commencing a cultural archive for Halton.

- 3.13 **Visibility** - developing merchandise working with Vivid on a strong brand with local iconic imagery, song lyrics and humour. Exploring the Lowry Canal and Factories painting (has been explored previously; the plan is to license the image for 2026 and raise awareness of the inspiration being Widnes and Runcorn with an ambition to exhibit the original on loan in 2027 if possible.

- 3.14 **Awards** - add three culture awards to Halton's annual awards season in 2026: Chamber of Commerce Business Awards, Halton & St Helen's Voluntary Community Action Volunteer Awards and Fortuna Female Society.

- 3.15 **Annual Calendar** - Intergenerational community events and activities either directly funded, associated events or partner venues. Bringing existing or planned activities and cultural developments together in one calendar, mindful of access and diverse community needs. This will commence with the launch of the Culture market stall in November at the Christmas lights on including an exhibit on the borough of culture branding. To be further fleshed out and confirmed, outline 2026 programme includes:
 - 3.16 **January** – launch event, music trail launch, phantoms of the priory, celebrate local jewellery makers for international day of the jeweller.
 - 3.17 **February** – second exhibit at the market; international day of women in science and world radio day.
 - 3.18 **March** – world day of the writer, world book day, international women's day with focus on connection to the local murals project and world storytelling day. A book fest programme of events across the month.
 - 3.19 **April** – world art day featuring Halton link to Lowry artwork, world heritage day, libraries world book night.
 - 3.20 **May** – bandstand season, culture coach tours, focus on music events exploring Mersey Paradise.
 - 3.21 **June** – world music day, world Beatles day, national writing day, hot air balloon day. Haltonfest at Runcorn Hill Park, great get togethers', Hale carnival and awards season. Pride event.
 - 3.22 **July** – soft launch of the Brindley, Town Hall takeover art exhibition and at Kingsway Learning Centre, access to paintings and civic collections, film fest, focus on schools.
 - 3.23 **August** – world photo day, world video game day, world summer reading challenge, books in the bandstand, summer family events, replenish market exhibit, Creamfields festival.

- 3.24 **September** – world letter writing day, ecofest, opening of Camden building, heritage open days, DJ battle, cultivate performance
- 3.25 **October** – international music day, national poetry day, international artists day, giggle fest, workshop and comedy gigs.
- 3.26 **November** – Diwali, fireworks.
- 3.27 **December** – world television day, tv project, pantomime.
- 3.28 Other initiatives are in progress to deliver a light festival, a focus on Lewis Carroll, celebrate the towns musical heritage linked to train stations and local authorities across the LCR swapping public art to share access across the region. This work involves significant funding applications to Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund and local funding pots too; further details will be shared as the programme is confirmed.
- 3.29 New arrangements for the future programme of Borough of Culture recognising the current approach has been in place since 2018 are currently being explored.
- 3.30 A report was received by the LCR Chief Executives earlier in the year and LCR Neighbourhoods and Communities Directors group in March 2025 detailing LCR had launched an accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership, now named Liverpool City Region Destination Partnership, which provided the opportunity to evaluate and reimagine the Borough of Culture Programme as part of a wider strategic approach. An experienced consultant was procured to engage with key delivery stakeholders across the LCR and provide recommendations for the future of the programme: -
- Transition to a new arrangement where instead of each local authority having their own year, the programme would focus on yearly themes with all local authorities supported to have events linked to that theme.
 - Have a sabbatical year in 2025 and start the new approach in 2026.
 - Develop unique cultural narratives with each local authority.
 - Leverage partnerships with cultural institutions.
 - Enhance artistic leadership ensuring high quality programming and offers.
 - Align the new approach with regeneration goals.
 - Enhance funding and resources through additional grants, sponsorships and partnerships.
- 3.31 The initial inception was referred to as ‘Power of Six’ however, this may not be the product or approach. The intention was to consider a celebration across all six districts of the region based on themes rather than a piece meal yearly rotation of culture focus.
- 3.32 It would work towards establishing a Place Partnership for the region

in support of developing a sustainable new approach to culture programming. A successful Place Partnership bid could secure up to an additional c.£1m over 3 years to match with the LCR Mayor's contribution and borough resources to provide additional capacity and budget for commissioning and collaborative working. An expression of interest was submitted to the Arts Council and feedback provided.

- 3.33 Halton has engaged with the Destination partnership and team and explored discussions around future themes for delivery; this is being progressed with Visit Halton.
- 3.34 There has been some exploration of the potential to deliver high profile music events in Halton as other than the Brindley residents have to mostly travel out of borough to access live music.
- 3.35 The Culture Officer is also exploring a range of opportunities for music events of varying sizes during 2026 borough of culture year to add to the programme.
- 3.36 Halton has a number of assets and activities which could be explored for sponsorship and present opportunities to seek longer term brand partnering arrangements. Halton has an example of sponsorship at the Stadium; this could be further explored for other venues and consideration for flagship venues to offer partner branding. Shakespeare North in Knowsley are currently progressing this following in the steps of Aviva Studios in Manchester which has set out a pivotal new approach to brand relationships and funding with the arts which we see as common place in sport; and highly likely to be the future approach for art and cultural venues too.
- 3.37 Halton's Culture Officer and Programme Office Manager attended a DCMS Officers event in Liverpool on 9th October providing a showcasing presentation of Halton.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The work programme delivers on the Council's culture strategy, the Crucible of Culture 2023.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 £200k funding to support Halton's Borough of Culture year will be received from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, £100k in 2025 and a further £100k in 2026.
- 5.2 Further funding would need to be secured to provide a sustainable culture offer and enable the delivery of proposed music festival in 2027.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Culture and cultural activity have a role in promoting individual and community wellbeing thus improving health and wellbeing outcomes.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Culture, heritage and arts have a significant contribution to the local economy through visitor destinations and attractive public open spaces. It promotes the assets and pride in place and is appealing to business investment and growth.

The Reconnecting Runcorn programme has delivered Hazelhurst Studios, a collective space for artists from a mixture of forms enabling entrepreneurs to become established and activities to be accessible at grass roots.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Culture is universal however, targeted approaches to ensure access to all are a key element of the 2026 work programme. Community led grass roots will promote involvement of children, young people and families and seek to support emerging interests and talents and educate and celebrate Halton's heritage.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

It is imperative access to culture is open to all; Culture HQ and the current temporary library has proven accessible footfall locations enable diverse access to amenities and activities. The borough of culture focusses on grass roots delivery and accessibility.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Sustainable approaches will underpin the programme of activity where possible.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The cultural programme delivers positive activities and engagement investing in the borough, its residents and celebrating cultural contributions.

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 Halton has significant cultural heritage and a vibrant sector to contribute to the city region and be celebrated. Halton needs to ensure it is well placed to optimise on funding and initiatives that cement the borough as a visitor destination attracting visitors whilst facilitating accessible art, culture and heritage to local residents to be proud of, champion and build civic pride.

7.2 A lack of resources in Halton will hinder the boroughs opportunity to

build on the positive work programme and ensure a share of resources are utilised in the Borough.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Halton's cultural offer is accessible to all.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None to report.

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

Executive Board April 2023 – Cultural Strategic Vision

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 13th November 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Housing and Environmental Sustainability

SUBJECT: Approval of the Borough wide Housing Strategy

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval from Executive Board to make a recommendation to Full Council for the approval of a Borough wide Housing Strategy. A verbal summary of the public consultation exercise will be provided at the Executive Board Meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board:

- 1) Note the progress on the production and consultation of the draft Housing Strategy for Halton 2026 – 2031 (Appendix A) and supporting evidence document (Appendix B);**
- 2) Provides delegated approval to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Sustainability to agree any final revisions to draft Housing Strategy; and**
- 3) Make a recommendation to Council to approve the revised Housing Strategy.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the meeting on the 18th April 2024, Executive Board endorsed the commissioning and production of a new Borough wide Housing Strategy and supporting evidence base.
- 3.2 Production commenced in September 2024 and was anticipated to take around 12 months. Throughout this process the Council have been supported by Arc4 a housing research and policy specialist. Production has broadly been split into two stages:
- Stage 1 – The identification, gathering and analysis of supporting evidence base. This is called the “Housing Needs Assessment” (HNA) and is contained in Appendix B.

- Stage 2 – Strategy Production. Based on the findings and analysis of the HNA, a draft Housing Strategy has been prepared (contained in Appendix A).

3.3 **Housing Needs Assessment**

3.4 The main purpose of the HNA is to provide the Council with an up-to date evidence on the housing needs across all sections of the local community. This includes getting a better understanding of current and future housing requirements of existing and newly forming households in Halton. It also covers matters such as the need for adaptations, level access and supported housing; and assessing the affordability of purchasing and renting a home in Halton.

3.5 The HNA achieved this by:

- Undertaking a household survey of residents in Halton. An invitation to complete the survey was sent to 16,530 households (about 1 in 4 households) between November and December 2024, with 1,620 useable responses received. This provided a 9.8% response rate and is considered as a robust data source.
- Analysis of existing (secondary) data including 2021 census and demographic analysis.
- A survey of a range of stakeholders including housing associations, developers, supported housing and care providers, charities and third sector groups. A total of 12 responses were received which are summarised in Appendix E of the HNA.
- Engagement with seven estate and letting agents who operate in all or part of the Borough. The results of this are summarised in Appendix F of the HNA.

3.6 A summary of the findings and policy recommendations are set out on pages 9 to 11 in the HNA. These cover the period 2024 to 2042. The evidence from the HNA has been used to underpin the strategic approach and specific policies within the draft Housing Strategy and inform its implementation.

3.7 **Draft Housing Strategy for Halton 2026 – 2031**

3.8 The aim of the draft Housing Strategy is for “Homes that Drive Growth, Opportunity, and Fairness for all” in Halton. The Strategy seeks to achieve this through a Vision and four Priorities:

- Driving Economic Growth through housing-led investment.
- Creating inclusive housing markets to promote fairness.
- Supporting Independent Living, Empowering People, and Strengthening Communities.
- Promoting Healthy Homes, Thriving Communities and Resilient Neighbourhoods.

3.9 Appendix C provides a summary of the main policies and actions within each Priority. The final published version of the Housing

Strategy will include a visual “Housing Strategy on a Page” executive summary to help make the document more accessible.

- 3.10 The draft housing strategy has been shaped by a continuous process of consultation and engagement. In addition to that undertaken as part of HHA (over last 6 months), this has included:
- Holding a seminar for all Elected Members.
 - A series of dedicated sessions with the Borough’s largest and most active Housing Associations via the Halton Housing Partnership.
 - Presentations to a number of the Council’s Policy and Performance Boards.
 - Stakeholder consultation on an early draft strategy.
- 3.11 On Friday 3rd October, a six-week public consultation exercise commenced on the draft strategy. With the draft strategy available online and printed copies made available at the Council’s libraries and Direct Links. Consultation activity includes:
- An online survey and freephone number to gather comments.
 - Social Media and articles in the local press.
 - Online presentation, available via YouTube, summarising the Housing Strategy.
 - Two virtual online sessions for interested parties to attend and ask questions.
- 3.12 Public consultation exercise closes on 16th November 2025. A summary of the responses (received to date) will be provided at the Executive Board meeting. Following close of the public consultation exercise, comments will be reviewed, and any final changes will be made to the Strategy. To expedite this process, and given the prior engagement outlined in para 3.10, it is recommended that Executive Board provides delegated approval to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Sustainability to agree any final revisions to draft Housing Strategy.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The draft housing strategy is aligned to achieve priority six of the Corporate Plan: “Valuing and appreciating Halton and Our Communities – Supporting Halton’s residents to live in decent and affordable homes, surrounded by safe and thriving communities”.
- 4.2 The 18th April 2024 Executive Board Report acknowledged that the previous Borough wide Housing Strategy was adopted in 2013 and covered a period up to 2018. A lot has changed, both at a national and regional level in terms of policy and funding; as well as local priorities and challenges. The draft strategy seeks to recalibrate and coordinate local housing policy and actions by the Council (and influence our partners) to realise these new opportunities and meet

new priorities.

- 4.3 As summarised in Appendix C, the draft strategy seeks a broad range of new policies and actions across the four priorities to be implemented over the next 5 years. Given the level of change required the draft strategy will be accompanied by a detailed implementation plan. Four policies are likely to be a short term (first year) focus for delivery:
1. Establishing an Affordable and Specialist Housing Fund, through commuted sum to invest in meeting local housing need.
 2. Implementation of selective licensing in parts of the Borough to raise standards in the private rented sector for the benefit of private tenants and their neighbours.
 3. Creation of a Local Connections Policy for intermediate housing (such as shared ownership) delivered through planning obligation (s106) to improve access for local people to affordable routes to home ownership.
 4. Publication of a Specialist Housing Prospectus, to improve the local housing offer for people most at need, such as survivors of domestic violence and abuse, young people leaving care and those experiencing homelessness.

- 4.4 Implementation of the detailed policies within the Housing Strategy will, where required, be subject to separate corporate governance and approval processes. Oversight of the Housing Strategy will be provided by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Sustainability; and, via an annual progress report to the Housing and Safer Policy and Performance Board.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Overall, the draft Housing Strategy has been prepared to make a positive impact on the Council's financial position. There is an awareness of the challenging financial situation within the guiding principles for delivery set out in the implementation and monitoring chapter of the draft Strategy:

- As a civic leader, The Council will set clear direction, drive innovation, and use its assets effectively to deliver housing that meets local priorities.
- Delivery will be achieved in partnership, building on trusted relationships to co-design and deliver the ambitions of this Housing Strategy.
- We will prioritise early intervention and smart investment, preventing problems, improving outcomes, and ensuring value for money.

- 5.2 Examples of what this means in practice, can be seen in the first year priorities outlined in 4.3 above:

1. The Affordable and Specialist Housing Fund will be financed through s106 contribution by private developers in lieu of (all or

part of) on-site provision of affordable housing. It can be prepared using existing in-house resources. It will create a new capital pot for housing delivery.

2. Implementation of selective licensing will be brought forward on a cost recovery basis. Resources for administration of licencing, including inspection and enforcement will be funded from a licence fee paid by the landlord. Some initial forward funding of revenue may be required to provide specialist support to prepare and consult and establish selective licencing.
3. Local Connection Policy can be prepared and consulted upon using existing in-house resources.
4. The Specialist Housing Prospectus will provide a means for the Council to secure provision of supported housing within Halton and reduce the need for more costly out-of-borough or temporary accommodation. Where this involves use of Council owned land any revenue saving may need to be considered against a reduction in Capital Land Receipt.

- 5.3 A priority of the draft Strategy is driving economic growth through housing-led investment. Through creating a one-stop-shop within the Council for residential developers. This builds on the work of the Accelerated Growth Programme to increase the Council Tax base within Halton.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Priority four of the draft Housing Strategy "Promoting Healthy Homes, Thriving Communities and Resilient Neighbourhoods" seeks to better integrate Housing and Health.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Priority one of the draft Housing Strategy "Driving Economic Growth Through Housing-led investment" seek to accelerate delivery of housing in the Borough, particularly on brownfield site and to support regeneration of Halton's town centre.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Priority four of the draft Housing Strategy "Promoting Healthy Homes, Thriving Communities and Resilient Neighbourhoods" seek to ensure homes that are safe, healthy and efficient; and neighbourhoods that enable people to flourish.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Priority three of the draft Housing Strategy "Supporting Independent Living, Empowering People, and Strengthening Communities" seek to improve the supported housing offer and choice in the Borough, including to support an aging population.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The draft Housing Strategy includes continued support to promote grants to improve the energy efficiency of homes in Halton.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The draft housing strategy has been prepared to align and reach this priority by supporting Halton's residents to live in decent and affordable homes, surrounded by safe and thriving communities"

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 There are no significant risks associated with the approval of a new Housing Strategy. Risk analysis of individual policies will be undertaken as they are brought forward for implementation.

7.2 Some aspect of the draft strategy will require external funding for implementation.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The draft Strategy aims to improve the supported housing offer and choice in the Borough for older people and people with a disability.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Heating and energy use in homes accounts for approximately 15% of carbon emissions within the UK. The draft Housing Strategy seeks to support delivery of the housing matters set out within the Climate Change Action Plan. This will include securing funding to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes in Halton. The draft Strategy also supports a housing offer which gives residents choice to live more environmentally friendly and sustainable lives. For example, through opportunities to improve the choice and quality of housing offer within the borough's town centres.

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

10.1 Approval of a new five-year borough wide Housing Strategy for Halton to allow implementation

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 Not applicable.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

12.1 Five Year Strategy 2026 – 2031.

13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

13.1 'None under the meaning of the Act.'

A Housing Strategy for Halton 2026-2031

Homes That Drive Growth, Opportunity, and Fairness for all



A Housing Strategy for Halton 2026-2031



Foreword

As the Council lead for housing strategy it is a privilege to introduce the first draft housing strategy for Runcorn and Widnes in over a decade.

This draft housing strategy is underpinned by evidence from a housing needs assessment that included many organisations with an interest in housing locally and wider afield and a survey sent to around 1 in 4 households across Runcorn and Widnes.

This strategy will move to delivery as swiftly as possible. First however, we need to hear your feedback. So please try and find the time over the next 6 weeks to let the Council have your views.

Some of the proposals in this strategy include in no order;

- Raising standards in the private rented sector, for the benefit of both private tenants and their neighbours.
- Providing choice and dignity for people to live independently as they age, including increased older person's housing provision.
- Improving the local housing offer for people most at need, such as survivors of domestic abuse, young people leaving care and those experiencing homelessness.
- Continuing to champion housing developments on brownfield sites.
- Helping local people to have more priority for affordable housing.
- Working with Housing and Skills partners to ensure any workforce gaps are addressed to help the young into jobs and retraining for others, so we can deliver the housing our towns need.

This is an ambitious strategy for a 5-year period but it is intended to lay the foundations for the longer term. Following this consultation period, a final strategy will be accompanied by an Implementation Plan to move from strategy to action.



Cllr Phil Harris

Portfolio Holder for Housing Strategy.

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Listening to people who live in Halton

Our Housing Strategy has been shaped by what residents told us matters most. Through engagement and consultation, local people shared their views, concerns, and priorities for the future of housing in Halton. We've listened – and this strategy responds directly.

You will find these comments distributed throughout this document with how we are responding

Introduction

Our Housing Strategy is more than a plan to build homes — it is a blueprint for stronger, healthier, and more inclusive communities across Runcorn, Widnes, and the surrounding villages.

Shaped by the borough's industrial legacy, strong local identity, and strategic location within the Liverpool City Region, Halton faces a distinctive mix of housing challenges and opportunities. We are confronting affordability pressures, rising demand for supported housing, persistent inequalities between and within communities, the need to regenerate town centres, and the challenge of ensuring our housing offer can adapt to the needs of a changing population.

At the same time, Halton is well positioned to realise significant opportunities. As an active partner of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, we work through the Strategic Place Partnership to coordinate residential-led development and housing renewal, and the city region support our ambitions in this strategy.

We are already well underway in transforming our town centres, with ambitious regeneration projects backed by inward investment, and have established



robust master planning frameworks — shaped with input from local communities — to guide future growth. Halton also benefits from a good supply of affordable housing, which, alongside improvements to infrastructure and access to

employment, provides a strong foundation for delivering this strategy. Our place-based approach supports the creation of vibrant, inclusive, and climate-resilient

neighbourhoods, particularly in key areas such as West Runcorn and the Mersey Gateway growth corridor.

Our Housing Strategy goes well beyond increasing the number of homes in the borough — though we are clear about the proactive role the council must play in working with developers, housing associations, and communities to support this. For us, it's about ensuring new homes are genuinely affordable for Halton residents and offer meaningful choice and flexibility as people move through different life stages. From young adults struggling to access their first home, to families in need of more space, and older people seeking to right size or access suitable supported housing, our strategy supports people to find the right home at the right time.

Having your own front door is essential for independence, dignity, and stability — especially in Halton, where community ties are strong and supporting independent living is vital to improving health and wellbeing.

We recognise that housing is a critical foundation for ageing well, reducing pressure on health and care services, and enabling people to remain active members of their communities. But we also know housing alone isn't enough — Halton's residents deserve safe, attractive, and well-designed neighbourhoods, supported by good local services, green spaces, and transport connections. Whether it's improving links to employment areas like Daresbury Park and Sci-Tech Daresbury or revitalising town



centres like Halton Lea through mixed-use development, our approach integrates housing with wider priorities for economic growth, climate action, and social inclusion.

We have thought very carefully about how we deliver the priorities in our strategy. Times have changed, and the council cannot deliver everything alone, especially in the face of ongoing budget pressures and rising costs. More must be done with less, which means adopting new ways of working and prioritising approaches that are critical to meeting housing needs efficiently and effectively.

Preparing this Housing Strategy has been a co-productive process, shaped through collaboration with residents, housing associations, council officers, and a wide range of partners from across the public, private, voluntary, and community sectors.

It is built on a robust evidence base and a borough-wide household survey that has provided a clear picture of our current housing market, including data on housing need, affordability, supply, and demographic trends.

This foundation has helped us understand the pressures and gaps across different tenures and communities. Building on

this, we have engaged with stakeholders to explore where the housing market needs to be in the future and what improvements are required. These conversations have allowed us to identify shared priorities, uncover lived

experiences behind the data, and shape a strategy that is both evidence-led and people-focused. As a result, we're confident this strategy lays a strong foundation for

guiding our housing market in the direction it needs to go.

This Housing Strategy is fully aligned with the council's corporate objectives, supporting priorities such as improving health and wellbeing, building a strong and sustainable local economy, and providing targeted support for children, young people, and families. It is committed to tackling inequality, valuing community pride, and promoting environmental sustainability. By addressing these key areas, the strategy will contribute to delivering the council's broader vision for a healthier, fairer, and greener Halton.

A guiding principle of the Housing Strategy is improving the council's financial position by reducing revenue costs — such as those linked to homelessness and specialist placements — and increasing income through accelerated housing delivery.

This may involve 'invest to save' approaches and using council-owned land strategically, balancing capital receipts with long-term savings. Whilst the strategy focuses on the next five years, it is also a statement of ambition that lays the foundations for a longer-term horizon, setting the direction for housing in Halton well into the future.

Our three guiding principles

As a civic leader, the council will set clear direction, drive innovation, and use its assets effectively to deliver housing that meets local priorities.

Delivery is with our partners, building on trusted relationships to co-design and deliver the ambitions of this Housing Strategy.

We will prioritise early intervention and smart investment, preventing problems, improving outcomes, and ensuring value for money.



Successful delivery will require better coordination between 'People' and 'Place' functions, with any capacity or resourcing needs addressed in the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan.

The council is ready and focused on delivery, and we are committed to working with our partners to translate this strategy into meaningful action that makes a real difference in people's lives.

The strategy includes a clear approach to implementation and monitoring, while a separate implementation plan provides further detail on how we will deliver these ambitions and ensure progress is made at pace.

What is Affordable Housing?

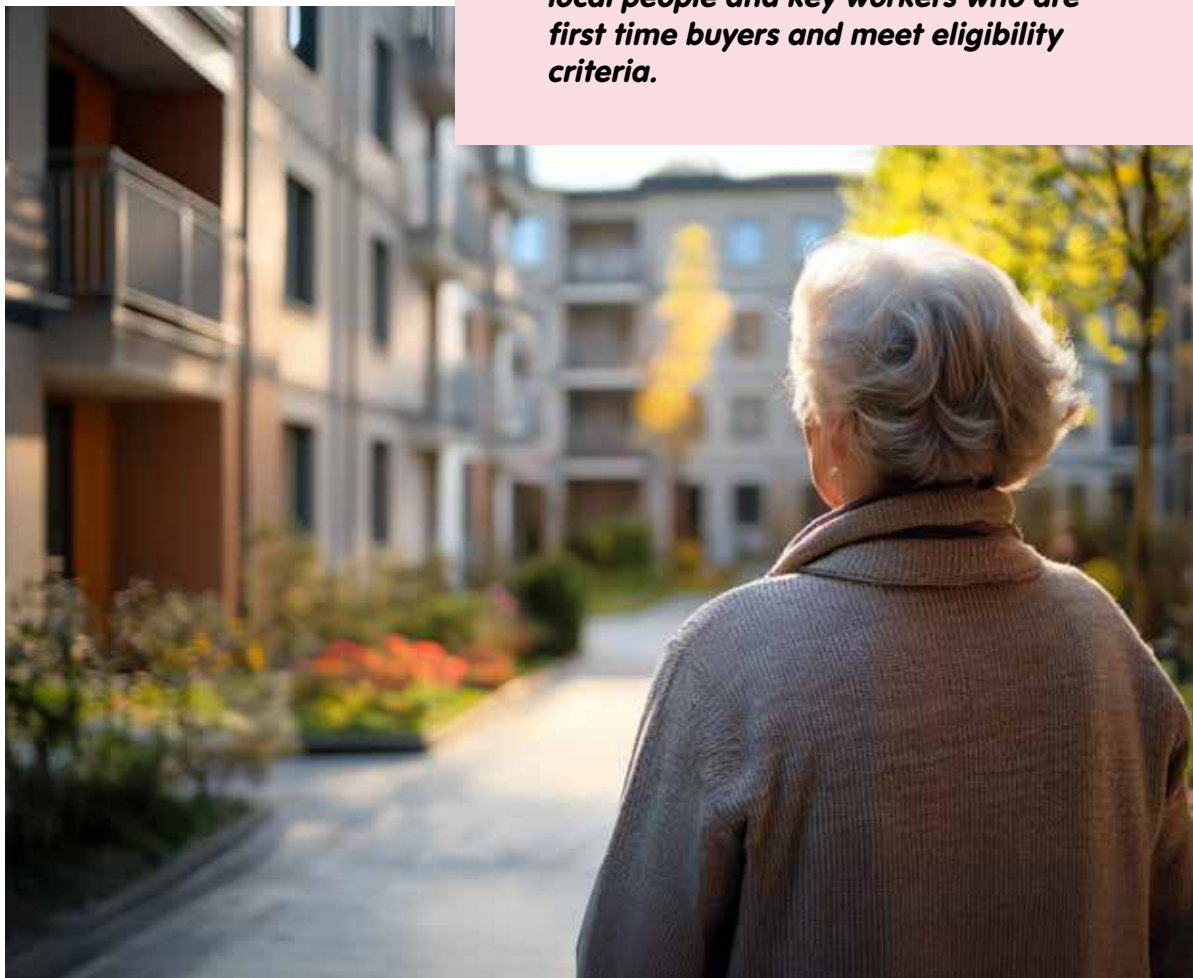
Affordable housing is defined in National Planning Policy as being homes for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing is generally managed by a housing association sometimes called a 'Registered Provider'.

This includes housing for rent:

- ***Social Rent is around 50% of the local market (private) rent level.***
- ***Affordable Rent is set at up to 80% of the local market (private) rent level.***

It also includes affordable routes to homeownership:

- ***Rent to Buy is a scheme where people rent a home at a discounted rent for a fixed period to allow them to save a deposit to buy the property.***
- ***Shared Ownership allows people to buy a share (usually between 25% and 75%) of a home and pay a subsidised rent on the remaining share. Over time, the buyer can "staircase" to buy larger shares.***
- ***Discounted First Homes are dwellings sold at a discount of market rates to local people and key workers who are first time buyers and meet eligibility criteria.***



Our vision for housing in Halton

Priority Six of Halton Borough Council's Corporate Plan is "Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Communities – Supporting Halton's residents to live in decent and affordable homes, surrounded by safe and thriving communities."

Although Halton Borough Council no longer directly builds or owns housing, it continues to play a vital role in shaping the housing landscape through a wide range of statutory and non-statutory functions.

The Housing Strategy will provide a clear and coordinated framework for aligning these functions and activities to meet local needs, deliver on corporate priorities, and support thriving, inclusive communities. It will articulate the council's leadership role in housing delivery and set out how we will work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders across all sectors.

Informed by the council's Corporate Values Framework, the strategy will guide our approach, priorities, and actions. This is a five-year strategy, covering the period 2026 to 2031

Where housing sits in policy framework



You can find copies of the latest versions of these housing policy documents on the Council's website.
www.halton.gov.uk

A detailed action plan underpins the strategy and sets out what we will do, how we will do it, who will be responsible, and when it will happen. This level of clarity is essential to turning ambition into action. It ensures the strategy is not just a set of high-level intentions, but a practical and measurable programme of work that delivers real results for Halton's residents.

Our Vision

Our Housing Strategy will deliver access to quality, affordable, and sustainable homes. It will underpin a foundation for thriving, inclusive communities, stronger local economies, and greater opportunity and fairness for all.

Our Housing Strategy is centred on four priorities that embody our commitment to delivering far more than just homes—they drive economic growth, promote fairness, enhance quality of life, and foster healthier, more sustainable communities.

Driving Economic Growth Through Housing-led investment

We will use housing investment as a tool to support local economic priorities by aligning new development with key employment areas, attracting private investment, regenerating town centres, and creating vibrant mixed-use communities. We'll support local jobs and skills through housing projects, including apprenticeships and training.

Our Pledge... We will champion housing developments that revitalise our town centres and transform underutilised brownfield sites into vibrant, mixed-use neighbourhoods where people want to live, work, and spend time. We will work with housing and skills partners to close workforce gaps, supporting young people into employment and providing retraining opportunities for others, so we can deliver the homes our towns need.

Creating Inclusive Housing Markets to Promote Fairness

We aim to expand affordable housing options, from rented homes to accessible homeownership pathways. We will reform the Private Rented Sector, reduce homelessness, and make smarter use of developer contributions to deliver housing where it's most needed.

Our Pledge... We will improve the local housing offer for those most in need—including survivors of domestic abuse, young people leaving care, and people experiencing homelessness—while raising standards in the private rented sector to benefit tenants and their communities. We will also prioritise local people in access to affordable housing.

Supporting Independent Living, Empowering People, and Strengthening Communities

We'll introduce new housing models that enable people to live independently for longer and meet the needs of specific groups such as care leavers, survivors of domestic abuse, individuals with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, and those with mental health support needs. A new Specialist Housing Prospectus will guide the market to respond more effectively to these diverse local needs.

Our Pledge... Provide choice and dignity for people to live independently as they age, including increased older person's housing provision.

Promoting Healthy Homes, Thriving Communities and Resilient Neighbourhoods

Good housing is central to good health. We'll improve housing conditions—especially in the Private Rented Sector—drive energy retrofits, and develop healthy neighbourhoods through stronger partnerships between health, housing, and the council to build thriving communities.

Our Pledge... We will ensure homes are safe, healthy, and efficient, while fostering resilient neighbourhoods that provide a foundation for people to flourish.

Our Housing Market — At a glance

4.3% POPULATION GROWTH		Total population grows modestly by 4.3% (5,653 people) from 131,417 in 2024 to 137,071 in 2042.	
2.4% EMPTY	Halton has 58,863 dwellings, 2.4% are empty, below the England average of 2.8%.	79% ARE HOUSES	Nearly 79% of homes are houses, 12% are flats, and 9% are bungalows.
68.7% ARE BAND A OR B	68.7% of dwellings in Halton are council tax band A or B.	60.5% OWN THEIR HOME	60.5% of households own their home.
14.4% PRIVATE RENT	14.4% rent privately.	25.1% IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING	25.1% live in affordable housing.
£160K	Lower Quartile house price in Halton is £112,500 and Median house price is £160,000, also well below the England Median of £280,000.	£676	Lower Quartile private rent is £676 per month, compared to England's £997
66% SATISFIED	66.6% are satisfied with home conditions, but dissatisfaction is highest among affordable housing tenants (39.5%) and private renters (36.2%).	14.7% HOME NON-DECENT	Approximately 14.7% of homes are non-decent, in line with the national average of 17%.
8.3% FAIL TO REACH STANDARD	About 8.3% of dwellings fail to reach the minimum Decent Homes Standard, slightly better than the 9.9% national figure.	141 AFFORDABLE HOMES NEEDED	Annual need for 141 affordable homes, with a recommended tenure split of 50% social rent, 27% affordable rent, and 23% affordable home ownership.
81.7% INCREASE IN PEOPLE 85+	People aged 85+ will increase by 81.7% by 2042.	62.8% INCREASE IN DEMENTIA CASES	Dementia cases among 65+ expected to rise by 62.8%.
22.1% HAVE A DISABILITY	22.1% of residents have a disability, higher than national average.	INCREASE TO 32,282 BY 2042	Estimated 28,749 people with disabilities in 2024, increasing to 32,282 by 2042.
NEED 2,690 OLDER PERSON UNITS	Need for 2,690 specialist older person units (sheltered/retirement) by 2042.	INCLUDING 643 EXTRA CARE UNITS	Of the required 2,690 older person units there is a need for 643 Extra Care units for rent and purchase, and 464 residential care units.

Driving economic growth through housing-led investment

Sewell Street, Runcorn



Building new homes

We are serious about accelerating housing growth. Halton Borough Council is committed to taking all necessary and timely actions to accelerate the delivery of new homes. Whether this requires short-term interventions to jumpstart development, targeted investment of resources, or using our statutory powers to assemble land and overcome barriers, Halton will act decisively and proactively. We have the strength, determination, and tools to ensure housing growth meets the needs of our community.

Delivering new homes is a key driver of economic growth by creating construction jobs, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, and increasing local spending. It boosts council revenues through council tax, supports business growth by expanding the consumer base, and enables investment

in essential infrastructure and community services.

Well-planned housing development enhances property values and attracts further investment, fostering a sustainable and diversified

local economy. At the same time, it is vital that housing delivery generates wider social value — ensuring developments bring lasting benefits to local communities, such as skills, training, employment opportunities, and improved wellbeing.

The Accelerating Growth Project in Halton is a strategic initiative aimed at expediting the development and delivery of economic development, enhancing infrastructure, and improving service delivery within the borough.

By unlocking development sites, improving infrastructure, and aligning with the Local Plan, it helps make housing delivery more viable through investment, planning reform, and regional partnerships like the Liverpool City Region's Strategic Place Partnership.

We have a very positive track record of new homes being delivered in Halton. Over the past 10 years, over 4,000 additional homes have been delivered in Halton. This represents 120% of our target of 350 per year.

However, challenges remain — including infrastructure constraints, viability issues on some sites, and the need for continued investment and collaboration to bring forward development at the required pace. This strategy provides the framework for how we will deliver new homes.

The government has now set a target of 474 new homes to be delivered every year. With a clear Local Plan, strong partnerships across the Liverpool City Region, and strategic projects like the Accelerating Growth Project, the borough is well-placed to support sustainable housing growth.

The current Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP), adopted in March 2022, outlines development policies through to 2037. In line with national policy requirements for regular reviews, the council has scheduled a partial review of the DALP to commence in 2027/28.

This proactive approach will ensure that Halton's planning framework remains current and responsive to evolving local needs and national policy changes.

planning policy, delivery routes, funding opportunities, land availability, and key contacts within the council. Our message to developers is simple: speak to us early, ask what we can do to support delivery, and work with us to shape development proposals that meet local needs.

To drive housing delivery, the council will take a more strategic and creative approach to land use.

This includes assembling land and repurposing underused or surplus assets, particularly in areas like Halton Lea, West Runcorn, and the Widnes Waterfront, where residential-led regeneration can support broader transformation goals. We will work with public sector partners to identify sites—such as former school land or NHS estates—with potential for redevelopment, and may use Compulsory Purchase Orders where ownership constraints block delivery.

These sites will be brought together into a Housing Opportunity Prospectus, showcasing their planning status and infrastructure investment plans to give support confidence to invest. Initial investment will be fronted by the council to prepare sites, with value captured through returns or disposals and potentially recycled through funding mechanisms like the Liverpool City Region Housing Investment Fund

Open for business

During the life of this Housing Strategy, the council will establish a one-stop-shop to support developers, landowners, social and private rental sector landlords, and investors. The Housing Delivery Hub will bring together critical information such as the local evidence base for housing need,



Sewell Street, Runcorn

The council's role in delivery

The council's new Housing Delivery Function will drive Halton's growth and support the Accelerated Growth Programme. Led by Regeneration and Asset Management services, it focuses on three key areas to unlock new housing development and investment:

1. **Delivering new homes on under-utilised council-owned and public estate land through proactive land release and disposal.**
2. **Managing an active pipeline of housing sites eligible for grant funding, with an emphasis on brownfield land and stalled projects.**
3. **Strengthening partnerships with strategic bodies, including Homes England, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, housing developers, and Housing Associations to secure growth and investment in Halton.**

In addition to these core activities, the Housing Delivery Function will also support wider Housing Strategy priorities, such as collaborating with other departments to address specialist housing needs and promoting innovation in housing design and construction, including Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), energy-efficient developments, and Build to Rent schemes.

Bringing more sites forward on brownfield land

You can find evidence on brownfield site use by viewing the latest Housing Land Supply Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) [here](#)

Prioritising brownfield sites helps protect green spaces, supports sustainable growth, and revitalises underused land. It makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and creates vibrant, connected communities.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages the re-use of previously developed land for new homes. The DALP (Policy CS(R)3) states that an average of 30% of new residential development is to be built on previously developed land over the plan period.

Meeting brownfield development targets in Halton is challenging, with many sites facing contamination and viability issues. Despite this, the council is fully committed to bringing these sites forward—developments like Foundry Lane and the Kingsway site clearly demonstrate this ambition.

While some greenfield development is unavoidable, the council is determined to minimise its impact and ensure that any new homes are supported by the necessary infrastructure.

The council is exercising strong leadership and using all

available legal powers, tools, and investment to prioritise the delivery of brownfield sites. Where greenfield sites must be brought forward, the council will ensure any value generated is captured and reinvested to support the regeneration, development, and investment in brownfield land.

Since 2014, over 55% of all new homes have been built on brownfield land.

Transforming brownfield sites into desirable living spaces exemplifies Halton's proactive approach to urban regeneration & the desire to minimise the use of greenfield sites when it can.





Foundry Lane, Widnes



Three Sails Point, Widnes

The Kingsway Quarter in Widnes is a major regeneration project aimed at revitalising a 5.9-acre brownfield site at the southern edge of Widnes town centre.

The site encompasses the former Kingsway Leisure Centre, the old police station and magistrates' court, and Broseley House. With the relocation of the leisure centre to Moor Lane, the Kingsway site has become available for redevelopment.

The Vision for the site is for residential-led development, with the opportunity to deliver new homes catering to families and older residents, with a focus on creating an intergenerational community.

The Liverpool City Region's Brownfield Land Fund offers Halton a vital opportunity to unlock challenging, sites for new housing and regeneration. By supporting site remediation and infrastructure, the fund helps make these areas viable for development.

The Kingsway Quarter development in Widnes has benefited from brownfield funding.

You said: "New homes should be built on brownfield land, not green spaces – and they should be well designed with good character."

We will act: We're committed to prioritising brownfield development and protecting valued green spaces. Our strategy supports high-quality design, creating attractive, well-planned communities that respect the borough's character.

Halton Borough Council secured a £517,500 grant from the government's Brownfield Land Release Fund to support the demolition of the Kingsway Leisure Centre and associated site preparation.

Additionally, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has provided joint funding for pre-development work at Kingsway Quarter. As a council, we will continue to work with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to maximise Brownfield Land Fund.

Expanding Build to Rent and affordable private rent in Halton

Build to Rent (BtR) is a type of housing specifically designed for long-term private rent (at open market rates), typically delivered and managed by institutional investors or specialist operators.

Unlike traditional for-sale homes, BtR developments are built with the intention of being rented out as a professionally managed, long-term investment.

These schemes characteristically include high-quality homes with consistent tenancy terms, on-site management, and shared amenities.

Affordable private rent in Build to Rent developments refers to homes offered at a rent typically set at least 20% below local market rates. These homes are designed to be more accessible to people who cannot afford full market rents but don't qualify for

We have already seen Build to Rent (BtR) being delivered in Halton and we believe more schemes can be built in the borough

To promote this model, we will develop an evidence base to shape policy — defining affordable private rent in the local context, setting expectations around unit types, residential space standards, rent levels, management standards, tenancy terms, and rent increases.

We have identified several locations with strong potential for Build to Rent (BtR) development, based on key factors such as connectivity, regeneration opportunity, and proximity to major employment centres — all of which align with the Liverpool City Region BtR Study's evidence base, with potential support from the Brownfield Land Fund.

Runcorn Mainline Station offers excellent rail links to Liverpool, Chester, and London, making it ideal for young professionals and commuters seeking well-located, flexible rental housing.

Widnes Town Centre presents a strong opportunity for high-density, professionally managed Build to Rent homes that can boost footfall, support local businesses, and drive regeneration.

Sci-Tech Daresbury, a nationally significant innovation campus, creates ongoing demand for high-quality, tenure-flexible housing close to work.



social housing, helping to meet local housing needs while still being part of professionally managed, good-quality rental schemes.

Promoting housing-led growth through Housing Delivery Plans

Housing is a key driver of the council's regeneration and growth ambitions.

In the Borough's Regeneration Strategy – Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan, new homes plays a central role in unlocking economic growth and shaping the future social and economic vitality of Halton. The plan identifies three priority locations for housing-led regeneration:

Halebank, West Bank, and Southern Widnes. The Local Plan allocates sites which can support aspirational housing including East Runcorn and North Widnes. Each of these areas presents unique

opportunities to support industrial growth, enhance employment hubs, and create thriving, sustainable communities.

As people's incomes and aspirations improve, it is vital that Halton offers a housing market that meets the full range of their needs.

Our local evidence base — including Housing Needs Assessments, population forecasts, and dwelling preferences — helps us understand both how different household types live now and the types of homes they aspire to in the future. This evidence informs tailored housing offers in each priority area.

To guide delivery, the council will develop area-specific Housing Delivery Plans. These will work alongside existing Local Planning mechanisms (such as S106 agreements and the Council's Infrastructure Plan) to set out the types of homes required, the quantity to be built, and the necessary infrastructure such as GP practices, schools and local services to

support vibrant communities. For example, Halebank will focus on family and affordable housing close to employment centres, while West Bank and Southern Widnes will deliver homes that align with industrial growth and wider regeneration objectives.

While affordable housing remains important, Halton's current housing market shows a clear imbalance.

Approximately 43% of dwellings fall into council tax bands A or B, reflecting a high proportion of affordable and lower-value

market-rented homes. Although this provides crucial options for lower-income households, it limits choices for those seeking higher-value homes. The shortage of such properties restricts opportunities for residents to

progress up the housing ladder and often forces people to look beyond Halton for better-quality homes.

A lack of housing diversity impacts the borough's ability to cater to a broad spectrum of incomes and lifestyles, and can deter higher-income professionals and investment — both essential to local economic growth. Additionally, the predominance of lower-band homes affects local revenue streams, which are critical for funding public services and infrastructure.

To address these challenges, the council will encourage mixed-use and mixed-tenure developments that provide a balanced housing offer.

This approach ensures a healthy mix of affordable, mid-market, and higher-value homes within regeneration areas, supporting a diverse community and sustainable economic development.

You said: "Transport, schools, health services, and community spaces need to be part of new developments."

We will act: Our strategy and the next Local (Spatial) Plan will integrate housing with wider infrastructure needs — ensuring that homes are supported by essential services, including transport, health, and education.

Increasing residential delivery in our town centres

Halton's town centres, like many across the UK, are under pressure from changing retail habits, economic uncertainty, and the rise of online shopping.

Introducing residential development into centres such as Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea, and Widnes is key to revitalising these areas.

Runcorn Old Town regeneration is backed by a combined £43.6 million investment—including £23.6 million from the government's Town Deal and an additional £20 million secured through the Plan for Neighbourhoods.

A growing town centre population supports local shops, cafés, and services by increasing footfall throughout the day and evening, helping businesses stay viable and attracting further investment.

Runcorn Old Town

Housing delivery is a central pillar of the regeneration of Runcorn Old Town, playing a vital role in the wider ambition to revitalise the area through the Reconnecting Runcorn initiative.

This regeneration investment is driving transformative change across the town. Alongside new cultural, educational, and economic infrastructure, delivering high-quality homes is key to creating a vibrant, inclusive town centre. The Mercia Place development, for example, will provide 66 affordable homes for over-55s on a prominent brownfield site, breathing new life into the high street and enhancing the area's visual appeal and the proposals for new waterfront homes and green space to reconnect Runcorn Town Centre with its Mersey Waterfront will create attractive, accessible public spaces, enhance the local

environment, and support a vibrant, well-connected community.

The council is actively working to bring forward other town centre sites, such as Rutland Street, aligning housing growth with wider improvements to public spaces, connectivity, and community facilities. By enabling a mix

of tenures and encouraging private sector investment, Halton aims to attract new residents, support local businesses, and build a resilient town centre economy.



Top left:
Local Centre
Masterplan

Repurposing vacant or underused buildings for housing also reduces dereliction, improves safety, and enhances the look and feel of our centres. By enabling more people to live near services and public transport, this approach promotes more sustainable, low-carbon lifestyles and supports the long-term vibrancy and resilience of Halton's communities.

Halton Lea

Regenerating Halton Lea is complex and requires sustained public and private sector commitment. The area faces significant obstacles, including complex land assembly, a high proportion of affordable housing, and an outdated 1960s design that no longer meets modern standards. Current new housing developments have yet to reach the quality Halton aspires to, and the area remains low in value.

We believe that new housing is central to unlocking Halton Lea’s potential and driving its transformation into a thriving, inclusive community.

Designated as a Strategic Residential Location in the Local Plan, the regeneration will deliver a diverse mix of homes – to help improve the local housing offer with private and mixed tenure – designed to support wellbeing, independence, and meet a range of community needs.

A flagship element is the planned upgraded Neighbourhood Centre, which integrates retail and community amenities with housing, health and social care services to enhance residents’ quality of life. The project will bring forward £109 million of capital investment in Palacefields, including the redevelopment of the Local Centre and The Uplands, to provide 134 high-quality affordable homes, with provision for social rent.



Tricorn Park to Extra Care



Palacefields Local Centre

Widnes Town Centre

Widnes Town Centre is poised for a major transformation driven by the recently adopted Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework, which places increasing the number of residents at its core to animate and revitalise the heart of the town.

The Regeneration Framework identifies three housing development opportunities to support Town Centre Living - The Kingsway Quarter, Albert Square and The

You said: “Town centres need investment – too many shops are closing.”

We will act: We’re aligning new housing with town centre regeneration, supporting economic growth and revitalising our communities. New mixed-use developments will help bring vibrancy back to local centres.

Northern Gateway. These sites exemplifies our ambition that regeneration is housing focused, offering landmark opportunities

to deliver a high-quality, residential-led development on prominent gateway sites. These developments will introduce contemporary homes designed to support sustainable urban living while addressing local demand for both older-persons and younger family housing.

These developments, alongside improved public transport, cycling, and pedestrian links, will collectively drive a 20-year regeneration programme that transforms Widnes into a thriving, accessible, and attractive place to live, work, and invest. Housing delivery is thus a cornerstone of Widnes' regeneration, underpinning efforts to stimulate economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability while breathing new life into the town centre.

Community-led development to accelerate housing supply

Halton is committed to supporting a more diverse and inclusive housing market by enabling self-build, custom-build, and community-led housing.

These models offer greater choice, empower

The regeneration vision recognises that vibrant, sustainable housing is central to creating a dynamic and resilient urban environment.

residents to shape their own homes and communities, and can help deliver more affordable and

innovative housing solutions.

Halton will work to embed these approaches within wider housing delivery plans, where they align with planning policy and meet identified local needs.

With 115 households currently on Halton's self-build register and no plots presently available, the council will use its planning powers and partnerships to increase land supply for this sector.

This will include engaging with developers and landowners to encourage provision, supporting neighbourhood planning groups to develop relevant policies, and facilitating community-led housing models such as co-operatives and community land trusts. Self and custom build housing offers high design quality, supports SME builders, and delivers homes that are affordable relative to local incomes.

We will explore opportunities on publicly owned land working with Homes England — such as the Wharford Farm sites, identified as Allocations R67 and R38 in Halton's Local

You said: "Town centres need investment – too many shops are closing."

We will act: We're aligning new housing with town centre regeneration, supporting economic growth and revitalising our communities. New mixed-use developments will help bring vibrancy back to local centres.

Halton leisure Centre



Plan. These sites are designated for future residential development and together, they have the potential to deliver approximately 600 new homes. We are exploring opportunities to bring forward serviced plots as part of wider housing deliver on these publicly owned sites to support diverse housing models such as self-build, custom-build, and community-led housing.

Gypsy and Traveller households

The Local Plan confirms the provision will be made for 10 additional pitches in Halton over the GTAA period 2017-2032.

This will meet the required need for 4 additional pitches and provision for up to 6

additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that may not meet the planning definition 52.2. There is no identified need for plots for Travelling Showpeople.

There are currently no planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites. The site (H1767) at Warrington Road, Runcorn was completed in 2015/16 for 24 total pitches.

Unlocking local employment and training opportunities through housing investment

We are committed to maximising the social value of housing investment by embedding local employment, skills development, and apprenticeship opportunities into the delivery of new homes.

A great example of integrated development and education is the Kingsway Quarter redevelopment.

The council has identified opportunities for collaboration with Riverside College. The project aims to provide hands-on learning opportunities in construction, site management, and related trades. This integration of education and development will support pathways into sustainable careers for local young people and adults.

We are developing a Social Value Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will set out clear expectations for developers to contribute to local employment outcomes, including apprenticeships and on-site training placements.

By integrating social value into planning obligations, the council seeks to

ensure that development projects deliver tangible benefits to the community, such as

job creation, skills development, and support for local businesses.

This initiative builds upon Halton's existing Social Value Policy Statement and Procurement Framework, which emphasise the importance of delivering measurable social benefits through targeted employment and training opportunities.

The SPD will provide detailed guidance on how these principles should be applied within the planning context, ensuring that social value considerations are systematically incorporated into development proposals.



Sci-Tech Daresbury

Creating Inclusive Housing Markets to Promote Fairness

An inclusive housing market ensures that people from all walks of life — whether on low incomes, in insecure employment work, facing health challenges, or simply starting out — can access a safe, secure, and suitable home.

Housing is more than just somewhere to live; it underpins access to education, employment, healthcare, and community life. When people are well housed, they are more likely to thrive socially and economically, and less likely to experience poor health, unemployment, or social isolation.

By offering a mix of tenures — such as social rent, affordable private rent, shared ownership, and outright sale — and by ensuring homes are of good quality and in the right locations, we reduce the barriers that often exclude people from opportunity. This in turn supports more inclusive economic growth, helps children achieve better outcomes in education, enables older residents to live independently for longer, and creates more resilient, diverse communities. Without inclusive housing markets, inequality deepens — making it harder for people to improve their circumstances and for places to prosper.

So when Halton commits to inclusive housing, it is not just about building homes — it's about creating the foundation for healthier lives, stronger communities, and a more equal borough.

Delivering more social rented homes for local people who cannot afford to buy or rent a home

Halton has a strong affordable housing market, with affordable homes making up 25.1% of all housing.

Nearly 40% of homes support lower-income households through social or market rent, rising to almost 60% in Central Runcorn. Additionally, Halton's Median house price is 4.6 times local earnings — more affordable than neighbouring areas — reinforcing its position as a relatively affordable housing market.

64.6% of residents in our 2024 household survey told us that delivering more social rented homes for local people who cannot afford to buy or rent a home should be an important priority in our Housing Strategy.

Despite this, many households still struggle to find suitable and affordable homes.

When access to affordable housing is limited, people often have no choice but to turn to the Private Rented Sector — where costs may be higher and quality can be inconsistent. As our population grows, there remains a clear need to increase the supply of affordable housing, while also improving standards in the Private Rented Sector, to ensure everyone has access to safe, secure, and appropriate accommodation.

Our evidence base tells us there is a need for 141 affordable dwellings each year.

And so we have a robust affordable housing policy in place to help deliver against this strategic need. Under the Local Plan, sites of

Where affordable housing is provided, our overall recommended affordable housing tenure split for those homes is — 50% social rent, 27% affordable rent, and 23% affordable home ownership — this is rooted in robust local evidence and reflects the needs of Halton's communities now and in the future.

Halton already benefits from a relatively strong supply of social housing compared to many areas, but we know the demand for genuinely affordable homes remains high. That is why we are committed to delivering more social housing for local people, alongside other affordable options, to create balanced, sustainable communities.

Our approach ensures we make best use of our existing stock while meeting the full range of housing needs identified through our evidence base.

10 or more homes — except brownfield sites — must include a mix of property types that address local needs, with affordable housing requirements set at 20% for Strategic Housing Sites and 25% for greenfield developments.

Delivering affordable homes

Housing associations are not just delivery agents — they are key partners in achieving our shared vision of a fair, inclusive, and resilient housing system for Halton.

We greatly value the vital role housing associations play in Halton — not only as providers of affordable homes, but as trusted, long-term partners

committed to improving lives and supporting the council in tackling some of the borough's most pressing challenges. With over 20 active housing associations operating in Halton, many of which have deep local roots, their contribution goes well beyond building homes. These organisations are embedded



Queens Court, Widnes

You said: "We need more affordable housing and help for young people to get onto the property ladder."

We will act: We're expanding affordable housing options and creating more accessible homeownership pathways. Our strategy aims to make the housing market work better for local people, including young households and first-time buyers.



Cottage Hospital, Runcorn

in our communities and work closely with us to deliver high-quality housing, regenerate neighbourhoods, and promote social inclusion.

Housing associations are essential to ensuring that vulnerable residents have access to safe, secure, and appropriate housing. Many provide supported accommodation for older people, people with disabilities, and those facing or recovering from homelessness. They play a key role in helping residents live independently,

delivering tailored support services that improve wellbeing and reduce pressure on health and social care. Their commitment to long-term stewardship also ensures that neighbourhoods remain well-managed and sustainable over time.

Through the Halton Housing Partnership, we maintain a strong, collaborative relationship with our housing association partners. This forum allows us to share intelligence, align investment plans, and respond collectively to emerging housing needs. It also provides a platform for strategic discussion as we navigate future changes in funding and delivery models.

Housing associations in Halton have made strong use of the Social and Affordable Housing Programme, securing investment to deliver much-needed new housing.

The 2025 Spending Review announced a

major expansion of the Social and Affordable Housing Programme, with £39 billion allocated over 10 years (2026-2036), up from £12.3 billion in the current programme. This includes an additional £10 billion to boost affordable housing delivery in this Parliament. This increased investment presents a significant opportunity for Halton.

We will work with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and housing associations to unlock funding, support viable schemes, and ensure delivery aligns with local needs and priorities.

However, during the lifetime of this strategy, the way affordable housing is funded may change, with the devolution of housing funding to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. This may bring a shift toward more regionally planned investment aligned with city region priorities. We are working closely with housing associations to understand and respond to these changes, ensuring that Halton continues to benefit from new affordable homes and that local needs remain a priority.

In the recent Spending Review, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced a significant increase in funding for the Social and Affordable Housing Programme to accelerate the delivery of affordable homes across the country. Halton welcomes this challenge and is ready to step up—working with our partners to secure funding, unlock sites, and deliver the high-quality, affordable homes our residents need.

We are committed to delivering affordable housing through multiple routes, including planning obligations on new developments and the Social and Affordable Housing Programme led by housing associations:

Planning obligations are secured through Section 106 (S106) agreements, which are legal agreements between developers and the council. These require developers to provide affordable housing directly or contribute funding toward it as part of new housing projects.

The Social and Affordable Housing Programme is a government funding programme that enables housing associations to build new affordable homes. It helps bridge the gap between development costs and what residents can afford, supporting a range of tenures from affordable rent to shared ownership. Without this funding, many schemes simply wouldn't be viable.



Finding new ways to fund affordable housing

Delivering more affordable housing in Halton means using a variety of funding sources, from traditional grants and loans

As part of this Housing Strategy, we will actively explore and engage with alternative funding partners to unlock investment, support innovation, and ensure a pipeline of affordable homes that meet local need.

to newer options like investment from institutions and social impact finance. While loans have been the main way to fund affordable homes, new methods such as green bonds and sustainability-linked

loans are becoming more common. These involve investors funding affordable homes in exchange for steady rental income, often supported by housing benefits. Rents are usually linked to inflation, providing reliable returns. This approach attracts investors who want both financial returns and to make a positive social impact, especially those focused on environmental and social responsibility.

Creating more affordable homeownership pathways for local people

While Halton has a substantial affordable rented housing sector, expanding homeownership opportunities remains an important focus across the borough.

You said: "Support families, young people, older people, and those facing homelessness or domestic abuse."

We will act: We're introducing housing models tailored to vulnerable groups, helping people live independently and with dignity. A new Specialist Housing Prospectus will help providers meet the needs of groups like older people, care leavers, and survivors of domestic abuse.

In Central Runcorn for example, affordable housing accounts for over 40% of the market, and when combined with private

rented homes, nearly six out of every ten properties are rented. Some areas still require more affordable housing options — both for rent and ownership — while others face a lack of diversity in their housing market. Expanding homeownership opportunities will help create a more balanced and inclusive housing landscape across the borough.

Increasing access to affordable home ownership is essential—not only to help first-time buyers onto the housing ladder, but also to support key workers and stimulate wider economic growth.

Enabling more residents to buy a home of their own can improve financial security, strengthen community stability, and help retain essential workers such as teachers, health professionals, and care staff. In our 2024 household survey, 62.3% of respondents felt that it was important to help local first-time buyers to get onto the housing ladder and 55.9% felt that delivering more low-cost home ownership solutions such as shared ownership or rent to buy for local residents was a way to do that.

We are actively collaborating with our partners to expand the supply of shared ownership and other affordable home ownership options secured through Section 106 agreements.

To ensure that local people benefit most from affordable homeownership opportunities (shared ownership, rent to buy and discounted first/starter homes), we will be consulting on the development of a Local Connection Policy. This policy will apply to homes delivered via S106 and we have already started to implement it with

Our evidence base confirms that a home should cost no more than £117,117 to be affordable to households on Lower Quartile incomes and £156,156 to households on Median incomes.

The average price of a home in Halton in 2024 was £191,373.

discounted first homes. We recognise this policy will help prioritise access for residents with strong ties to Halton, supporting community stability and ensuring that new homes serve those who live and work in the borough.

We will also improve access to information and support for those looking into opportunities for affordable routes to homeownership. Those who may benefit include young people and families looking to remain close to support networks, key workers who provide essential local services, and veterans seeking to settle in the community after service.

Maximising the use of affordable housing contributions

We have a strong track record in securing affordable housing on site, achieving 34% delivery across all sites in 2023/24 — well above the typical policy targets of 20% or 25%.

With an already significant affordable housing sector in place, we now have an opportunity to adopt a more flexible and strategic approach.

While delivering affordable housing on site will remain our preferred and default

approach, the council recognises that in certain circumstances — such as where site constraints, location, or housing mix considerations make on-site provision less effective — it may

be more appropriate to accept commuted sums instead. This commuted sum could be for all or part of affordable housing requirement for a development. This will be

determined on a site-by-site basis and early engagement with the council is encouraged.

In these cases, the council will secure financial contributions, equivalent to the costs of delivering affordable housing on site and direct them into a dedicated Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Fund. This fund will be used strategically to deliver affordable housing and increase housing choice in locations where it can have the greatest impact.

This approach will allow the council to work closely with housing associations and other partners to direct investment where it is most needed and the fund will be structured to recycle investment, ensuring that the benefits are sustained over the long term.

Inspired by successful models used by other local authorities, we will develop a clear framework to manage the fund, drawing on best practice in governance, transparency, and value for money.

Some of the options on how we may spend our Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Fund:

Supporting specialist affordable housing.

Bringing empty homes back into use for affordable housing.

Regeneration projects delivering affordable housing.

Purchasing land to enable the development of affordable housing.

Purchasing an equity stake in open market properties to support affordable home ownership.

Creating adaptations or extensions to properties for disabled people to stay in their own homes.

Supporting rightsizing in social housing.

Providing a support service for children coming out of care to sustain a tenancy.

Home extensions or loft conversions to create larger homes for families that foster.



Okell St, Runcorn

Making the best use of existing affordable housing

While Halton continues to build more affordable homes, we are equally committed to making the best use of our existing affordable housing stock—ensuring it effectively meets the needs of local people now and in the future, across all stages of life.

Through the Halton Housing Partnership (HHP), we can work closely with housing association partners to make the most of Halton's existing affordable housing stock.

We will look to strengthen the role of this partnership and encourage more housing associations with homes in Halton to participate. By using funding from commuted sums and other sources, we can unlock more value and better meet local needs through measures such as:

- Exploring the potential for home extensions or loft conversions to create larger family homes where needed;
- Working more closely and positively with our private sector and social housing landlords developing a rightsizing offer to support older residents who wish to move from larger homes into more manageable properties.
- Supporting tenants with pathways to home ownership, including options to move into alternative properties more suited to their circumstances, and freeing up their home for another family.

Raising standards in the Private Rented Sector — A fairer deal for private renters

At an average rent of £676pcm in 2024, Halton's Private Rented Sector is relatively affordable compared to £693pcm across the Liverpool City Region and £776pcm in the North West. Because of these lower rents, many people who cannot access affordable or social housing are likely relying on the Private Rented Sector, making it a vital part of the local housing system.

However, unlike social housing, the Private Rented Sector is not subject to the same level of regulation.

While many landlords offer well-managed homes, others do not, and poor management can have a serious impact on tenants' health, stability, and wellbeing.

Too many tenants face insecure tenancies, unaffordable rents, or poorly maintained homes — with the burden falling most heavily on those already facing disadvantage.

We want to work positively and constructively with private landlords. A better-regulated, more professional Private Rented Sector will reduce health inequalities, support educational attainment, and offer people the dignity and security of a decent home. By raising standards and expectations, we can help ensure the sector plays a positive role in delivering safe, inclusive, and sustainable communities.



Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will develop a deeper understanding of the Private Rented Sector to better target investment and resources.

In 2001 the Private Rented Sector was 6.5%, in 2021, it is home to 14.4% of all households although this figure increases to over 20.6% in Central and Southern Widnes.

Improving the quality, stability, and affordability of private renting is essential to creating a fairer housing system.

This evidence will examine how the sector is evolving, who lives there, the challenges they face, what influences landlords' decisions, and how poor housing management can affect wider council services — for example, how might it be contributing to increased pressure on

housing and support services? This insight will shape future interventions and ensure our approach is focused, effective, and responsive to local needs.

Delivering the Renters' Rights Bill locally

The Renters' Rights Bill is legislation aimed at strengthening protections for tenants, including clearer rights around repairs, eviction processes, and security of tenure. It seeks to create a fairer rental market by improving transparency and ensuring landlords uphold minimum standards for safe and secure homes.

As this strategy was being developed, the Renters' Reform Bill was introduced — representing the most significant transformation of the Private Rented Sector in a generation.

This landmark legislation is designed to enhance tenant rights, raise housing standards, and promote a more secure and balanced rental market.

We welcome these reforms and are committed to supporting both tenants and landlords to ensure the changes deliver meaningful improvements locally.

We will closely monitor the Bill's implementation in Halton, assess its impact, and develop an action plan to maximise the benefits while addressing any emerging challenges or unintended consequences.

To ensure that tenants fully understand their rights as well as their responsibilities and to forge better relationships with their landlords.

We are developing dedicated tenant-facing web pages focused on safer renting within the Private Rented Sector.

This new online resource will provide clear, practical advice and important information to help tenants understand their rights and responsibilities. Additionally, the pages will offer guidance and support to assist individuals in finding a suitable home, making the renting process more transparent, accessible, and secure for everyone involved.

We will take a robust and uncompromising approach to enforcement against landlords and agents who fail to comply with legal standards or who put tenants at risk.



Introducing Landlord Accreditation

A small Landlord Accreditation Scheme exists in Halton, but we are keen to expand this. It will have a dedicated post which will also establish additional support mechanisms for tenants.

We offer a Bond Guarantee Scheme that helps with tenancy deposits for people entering private renting. This scheme provides financial assistance to cover the deposit, effectively acting as a guarantee to landlords, particularly useful for those who might struggle to afford a full deposit upfront.

Landlord Accreditation is a voluntary programme run by local authorities to encourage and recognise good standards in the Private Rented Sector.

Halton will establish a Landlord Accreditation Scheme that promotes and recognises good standards in the Private Rented Sector. The scheme will set clear expectations around property condition and management and offer training and support to participating landlords.

We will work alongside accredited landlords to create tailored pathways for groups facing barriers, such as people with disabilities, refugees, care leavers, or survivors of domestic abuse to better equip them to offer their homes to these client groups who are often in housing need.

We will explore a range of incentives and rewards — such as public recognition, access to council support, access a range of grant-funded energy efficiency schemes to residents including ECO4, LAD3, and the Warm Homes Local Grant — to encourage landlords to join. This will help raise standards, improve landlord-tenant relationships, and build a more professional and trusted rental market in Halton.

Working more closely with our housing associations

There is significant potential to forge stronger, more purposeful partnerships between local housing associations and the Private Rented Sector in Halton.

Many homes in the Private Rented Sector are located in the same neighbourhoods as social housing, meaning issues such as poor property conditions, tenant turnover, or anti-social behaviour can affect the broader community — including housing association tenants. Despite this proximity, coordination between housing associations and the Private Rented Sector has historically been limited.

To unlock this opportunity, we will actively explore how the Private Rented Sector impacts the operations and communities of housing associations, and the appetite, capacity, and specific roles housing associations could play in supporting Private Rented Sector improvement, particularly on tenant engagement.

This may include shared neighbourhood management, joint interventions, tenancy sustainment initiatives, or even direct involvement in acquiring or managing Private Rented Sector stock to raise standards. We will use the Affordable and Specialist Housing Fund to unlock opportunities and develop a neighbourhood pilot project.

You said: “Tackle inequality, create apprenticeships, and support local skills.”

We will act: We'll use housing investment to support local jobs, training, and economic opportunity — working with developers to provide apprenticeships and build prosperity across Halton.

Tackling homelessness and housing insecurity

Addressing homelessness and improving housing security are fundamental to creating a more inclusive and equitable housing market.

When people have stable, safe, and affordable homes, they are better able to participate fully in their communities, access employment, and improve their overall well-being. Tackling these challenges not only helps to reduce inequality but also fosters social cohesion and economic resilience. By prioritising support for those most vulnerable, we can build a housing system that works for everyone — offering opportunity, dignity, and security to all residents.



Reducing homelessness successfully involves far more than simply providing someone with a home. Homelessness is often the result of complex and interrelated factors — such as poor mental or physical health, experiences of trauma, domestic abuse, substance misuse, financial hardship, or a lack of support networks. Addressing homelessness effectively therefore requires a holistic, person-centred approach that includes early intervention and prevention, timely advice and advocacy, access to health and wellbeing services, employment and skills

support, and coordinated case management. Sustainable solutions are built on partnerships across housing, health, social care, criminal justice, and the voluntary sector to ensure people receive the tailored support they need not just to exit homelessness, but to avoid returning to it.

Our Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is currently under review and will be published following this Housing Strategy. The review is focused on making Halton a borough where:

- People are provided with early, targeted advice and intervention to prevent the loss of their accommodation.
- Effective action is taken in a timely manner to relieve homelessness where it has not been preventable. People are supported with the issues that can lead to homelessness, to prevent repeat homelessness.
- Stakeholders work together to protect and increase local housing options.

The Housing Strategy is fully aligned to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and will set out in more detail in respect of

accommodation needs, including different age groups. This will prioritise improving access to safe, stable accommodation and will be updated to reflect the emerging national homelessness strategy, expected to be published by the government in autumn 2025, which is anticipated to set out new priorities and guidance for tackling homelessness and improving prevention efforts. Any new accommodation requirements will feed into the Specialist Housing Prospectus.

Increasing access to temporary accommodation (TA)

We will explore a mix of traditional and innovative options to expand the supply of temporary accommodation. This includes leasing properties from private landlords, purchasing and developing dedicated temporary accommodation units, and working with housing associations. Modern methods of construction (MMC) and institutional investment in modular housing are also being considered to provide flexible, cost-effective housing on underused land.

You said: "Housing and health are linked — make sure homes support wellbeing."

We will act: Our strategy puts healthy homes at the heart of thriving neighbourhoods. We'll target improvements in housing conditions, support energy retrofits, and strengthen partnerships between housing and health services.

homeowners who have spare rooms. These temporary arrangements create mutually beneficial opportunities: the person in need gains safe, affordable accommodation, while the homeowner may receive financial support, practical help around the home, or companionship. Homeshare schemes

can help reduce social isolation, make better use of existing housing stock, and expand housing options for both younger and older residents.

Using the Private Rented Sector

40.9% of respondents in our 2024 household survey felt that using the Private Rented Sector to support households that are homeless should be an important priority in our Housing Strategy.

The Private Rented Sector is used to support people who are homeless. We want to extend this option to help us

to meet urgent housing needs. We will consider various schemes such as rent deposit guarantees, direct leasing, and incentive payments to encourage landlords to provide homes to those facing homelessness.

Renting out rooms

We will explore innovative room-renting models, such as homeshare schemes, where people seeking affordable housing are paired with



Independent living, empowering people, and strengthening communities

Having the right accommodation — safe, accessible, and suited to individual needs — enables people to live independently behind their own front door for as long as possible.

58.9% of respondents in our 2024 household survey felt that building more specialist housing for people with specific needs such as a physical disability or learning disability should be an important priority in our Housing Strategy.

This not only reflects what most people want — to remain in familiar surroundings, with dignity and autonomy — but also delivers better health and wellbeing outcomes, and reduces reliance on costly care services for the council by preventing or delaying

the need for more intensive support.

Our evidence base highlights significant and growing challenges in Halton linked to disability, dementia, and mental health. A substantial proportion of residents live with long-term health conditions, many of whom face mobility impairments, mental health issues, or age-related illnesses. The rising numbers of older people, particularly those with dementia and learning disabilities, underline the urgent need for more accessible, adaptable, and inclusive housing options.

These residents often require specialist support and environments that promote independence, safety, and wellbeing. Addressing these challenges through inclusive housing design, tailored services, and embedding accessibility standards into planning and delivery is essential — not just for improving lives, but also for creating a more sustainable and cost-effective care system, and enabling vulnerable residents to remain active members of the community.

We want to be much clearer about our accommodation requirements

We have a clear understanding of the types of accommodation our communities need, but we recognise the importance of communicating this more effectively to the market — not just what is needed, but also where and when it is needed. To address this, we will develop a Specialist Housing Prospectus that sets out detailed, evidence-based requirements for specific types of housing.

This Prospectus will provide clarity for developers, investors, and housing associations, aligning with the Local Plan Review to ensure that Section 106 contributions are better targeted prioritising

clearly identified needs over general provision. As part of this work, we will also implement the Housing Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism – Cheshire and Merseyside, including a refresh of the Market Position Statement in 2026. Together, these actions will ensure a more coordinated, transparent, and evidence-led approach to delivering the right homes in the right places for those who need them most.

One Halton is a local partnership that brings together the council, NHS, GPs, third sector, health providers, and hospitals to deliver more collaborative and joined-up health and care services. The partners are committed to improving the whole system by sharing resources and tackling Halton's biggest health challenges together. The One Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027 outlines their joint approach to reducing health inequalities across the borough.



Our priorities are:

- An increase in 'own front door' housing for adults (18-64) with learning disabilities and autism, focusing on self-contained units within safe, supported environments;
- More core and cluster schemes to meet rising demand from

individuals with complex needs moving from shared to individual tenancies;

Our evidence base recommends that 5% of newbuild homes need to meet the M4(3)(b) wheelchair accessible standard.



- Housing with assistive living and technology-based support for adults (18-64) with physical disabilities, supporting their strong preference for independent living and low demand for residential care;
- Expanded supported living options to enable the relocation of adults (18-64) with mental health needs from out-of-area placements;
- Enhanced 'Home First' services to help older people (65+) live independently with care, increasing capacity for dementia care across residential and nursing settings;
- A need for 12-15 units of own front door accommodation for younger adults with neurodiversity diagnosis;
- Solutions for children with disabilities where housing is not suitable and families are in danger of being split up;
- Transitional accommodation option for young people leaving care; and
- Futureproofing the accommodation offer to enable use of technology.



There are significant gaps in our current accommodation offer. Much of the current

Our priorities for people drive how we approach solutions:

- ***Providing the right support, for the right person, at the right time, and reduce the use of residential care and inappropriate admissions to hospital.***
- ***Supporting people to remain living in Halton or return to Halton.***
- ***Enabling people to live in their own home, if possible or for as long as possible.***
- ***Ensuring that people live independently in their home and interdependently within their neighbourhoods.***
- ***Creating choices about where people want to live, how they live and whether they rent or own their property.***

supply of specialist accommodation is shared and outdated. This is not compatible with what clients want, which is their own front door, better accessibility, and their own space.

The current model is dispersed, and 'core and cluster' models are the preferred options where self-contained homes (the cluster) are grouped around a central building (the core) that provides shared facilities and on-site support services. This approach allows residents to live independently while still having access to communal spaces and staff support when needed.

We will undertake a thorough accommodation needs assessment and apply an 'Invest to Save' approach — reviewing existing provision to identify opportunities for remodelling, decommissioning, or developing new services that better meet changing needs, while also considering the cost implications for the council and its partners.

We will consolidate our existing evidence on accommodation needs into a clear, accessible Specialist Housing prospectus outlining the requirements for each client group. This will enable delivery partners to fully understand local demand and priorities to enable early conversations for inclusion

/ commissioning specialist accommodation within new developments.

Delivering what we need

By working collaboratively with partners, we will create diverse housing options that empower individuals to choose where and how they live — whether renting or owning — and ensure services are aligned to deliver improved outcomes for people with specific needs.

We believe that there are three strategic partners that can help us to deliver our housing offer:

Housing associations

Through the Halton Housing Partnership, we will develop a long-term delivery strategy with housing association partners.

Grounded in an Invest to Save ethos, this strategy recognises that getting housing right can reduce care needs and associated costs. We will use the Affordable and Specialist Housing Fund to provide upfront investment in appropriate accommodation, with the intention of repaying it over time through the savings generated in care and support services.

Key elements include:

- Ongoing market engagement between commissioning services and housing associations to align affordable housing delivery with the needs of specialist client groups;
- Pre-allocation of new homes at the planning stage to ensure they meet individual household needs such as adaptations built into new homes bespoke to individual household needs and specifically focused on children and supporting families;
- Leveraging contributions for affordable housing tailored to people with disabilities or health needs;

- Work in partnership to jointly develop specific delivery arrangements for schemes to reduce risk for associations;
- Offering financial incentives such as grants or low-interest loans to encourage specialist housing development from the Affordable and Specialist Housing Fund; and
- Collaborating to address wider housing demands, including optimising the use of existing stock where appropriate.

Private supported housing

Halton's supported housing sector includes many private providers — some delivering excellent services, while others fall short of expected standards. Despite this variation, all providers often access higher rates of

housing benefit, which underscores the need for ensuring value and quality of care and support for residents and the community.

Using the powers granted by the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 as a foundation, the council intends to take a proactive approach: retaining and supporting the

high-quality providers, encouraging their growth, and attracting more reputable providers to the borough. At the same time, we will rigorously address poor-performing providers, ensuring they improve or exit the market to protect residents' wellbeing and community stability.

To achieve this, we will:

- Conduct a comprehensive audit of all exempt accommodation in Halton, reviewing service quality, client outcomes,

and value for money.

- Implement a robust quality assurance framework with regular inspections and self-assessments.
- Develop a provider charter setting clear expectations and standards for supported housing.
- Create a list of 'approved' or 'trusted' providers, with council endorsement and promote good providers in council literature and websites to build their reputation with potential funders and landlords.

PossAbilities is a social enterprise that supports vulnerable people so they can live the life they choose. It supports people with learning disabilities, young people leaving care, and people with dementia.

There is a current option to develop a 20-unit apartment in Halton for vulnerable adults with their own front door.

There is potential for additional developments to be delivered if land can be identified.

Where high-quality providers operate, we will support their expansion to meet demonstrated demand for additional accommodation. This may include access to capital funding from our Affordable and Specialist Housing Fund, offer planning support service or named contact within the planning team to help trusted providers navigate planning applications for new schemes or conversions.

Private landlords through the Private Rented sector

We believe landlords will be supportive to collaborate with the council in providing homes for households with specialist needs. As we develop our landlord accreditation scheme, we will identify and engage with potential landlords for closer partnership. Our approach will focus on:

- Education and awareness to inform landlords about the benefits of renting to households with specialist needs, including stable tenancies, potential rental income guarantees through programmes or subsidies, and the rewarding experience of supporting vulnerable individuals;
- Support and guidance to offer practical advice and assistance on accommodating specific needs, including necessary property adaptations, modifications and support packages;
- Financial incentives such as housing benefit guarantees, rent deposit schemes, and grants to support property modifications for landlords renting to these households;
- Increasing the opportunities for landlords to connect with support organisations and local authorities, fostering a community that shares best practices and offers mutual support;
- Celebrating and showcase landlords who have successfully rented to specialist households, encouraging others to follow their lead; and
- Maintaining regular communication to address landlord concerns, resolving challenges, and providing ongoing support throughout tenancies.

To safeguard quality and suitability, we will implement a rigorous landlord accreditation and vetting process to ensure only experienced and committed landlords, who understand the specialist needs of tenants,

participate in the scheme. This will prevent speculative landlords without relevant expertise from exploiting incentives and ensure that housing genuinely meets the needs of vulnerable households.

Making homes work for every age



Like many places, Halton is experiencing an ageing population — a trend to celebrate, as people are living longer than ever before.

Our priority is to help people remain in their own homes for as long as possible, enjoying the many benefits this brings — independence, familiarity, and connection to their community — and because this is what most people tell us they want. We will look at how to bring together information, advice, and support to help people live well at home for longer, and make sure this is easy to find and widely available across Halton.

However, we also recognise that as people age, some will need specialist housing or care, and our strategy must plan for this too.

The 2024 household survey shows that 67% of older residents in Halton want to stay in their current home with support when needed

While others are interested in options such as sheltered accommodation, co-housing, and Extra Care housing. Among those planning

to move, nearly half (47%) would prefer a smaller home, though some want the same size or even larger properties.

Around 10% of all households need care and support to remain at home, rising sharply to 40.5% among those aged 85 and over.

Common home improvement needs focus on better heating, insulation, and accessibility adaptations, especially for those aged 65 and over. Practical help with repairs, gardening, cleaning, and companionship also becomes more important with age.

Currently, Halton has around 1,578 specialist older persons' accommodation units, but projections indicate a net need for nearly 2,690 additional units by 2042 – including, 643 Extra Care units, and 464 residential care bedspaces. There is particular demand for leasehold sheltered, enhanced sheltered, and Extra Care housing for rent and sale, alongside a strong supply of dementia-friendly accommodation. Notably, 381 households expressed interest in co-housing.

The Local Plan supports new specialist housing in accessible locations and encourages adaptable home designs to help older people live independently for longer, while managing the supply of residential care and specialist housing to meet local needs.

Promoting the use of technology

Technology plays an increasingly vital role in enabling people to live independently, particularly for those with disabilities, long-term health conditions, or age-related support needs. For many people, especially younger disabled adults, assistive technologies offer more dignity, choice, and control in their daily lives.

To fully unlock the potential of these solutions, there is a growing need to develop “tech-ready” homes as standard. These properties should be equipped with the infrastructure—such as robust digital connectivity, smart energy systems, and adaptable internal layouts—to support a range of digital and assistive technologies. This will ensure that new homes are future-proofed, enabling individuals to access emerging innovations without the need for costly retrofitting later.

From smart home devices that automate daily tasks to remote monitoring systems that provide reassurance to families and carers, technology can promote autonomy, improve safety, and reduce reliance on traditional care services.

The council has a critical role to play in driving this agenda. By working with developers and housing associations to embed a technology specification into new-build requirements, we can ensure that all new affordable and supported homes intended for end users who need this technology are ready for digital living. This should include minimum digital infrastructure standards, guidance on sensor and device compatibility, and opportunities for personalisation to meet specific needs.

There is also a growing role for artificial intelligence in supporting independent living. AI-enabled tools can learn routines, detect early warning signs of deteriorating health, or help manage chronic conditions through personalised insights. The council will explore how AI could complement human support—for example, by automating routine check-ins or enhancing predictive care planning—to improve outcomes and reduce strain on services. By positioning itself as an innovator in this space, we can ensure we are maximising the opportunities technology offers to improve lives and support a more efficient, person-centred system of care.

Increasing the number of accessible homes



Improve the health of our people and communities

New minor adaptation products could include hospital discharge grant (funding for urgent adaptations, repairs, or modifications that will allow someone to be discharged from hospital sooner) and dementia grants (small grants to fund modifications that would allow someone with a diagnosis of dementia to remain living safely in their home for longer.)

Our evidence base confirms that there is a clear link between age and disability. There is a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable homes and wheelchair user homes as well as providing specific provision of older persons housing.

We offer a comprehensive adaptations service to futureproof existing homes with low-cost changes like small ramps, grab rails, steps, or relocated power sockets.

We are committed to encouraging owners, landlords, and private

tenants to use these adaptations and to introducing products that help people live well at home longer, such as small dementia grants that use colour-coding to assist those with dementia. These relatively low-cost adaptations can make a big difference, helping people stay independent for longer—what they want—while also being more cost-effective than other care options.

To maximise the impact of funding for home adaptations, this strategy proposes exploring the development of a discretionary fund alongside the existing mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). This fund, potentially jointly financed through health and social care partners, would focus on funding adaptations that aren't covered by the DFG, providing greater flexibility to meet a wider range of needs and enabling more timely,

tailored support for residents. This approach would strengthen the integration of housing, health, and social care services, laying a foundation for more effective prevention and improved wellbeing outcomes.

Supporting young people leaving care

Addressing the number of looked after children needing housing and support services is a priority for the council. We want to co-produce transition support creating housing pathways for children long before they turn 18.

Young people transitioning out of care often struggle to access and sustain appropriate housing. Many are not tenancy-ready, lack

support networks, and face stigma from private landlords, leading to high rates of tenancy breakdown. The council intends to identify housing solutions earlier for young people with plans made far earlier.

58.2% of respondents in our 2024 household survey felt that supporting looked after children leaving care with permanent accommodation and support should be an important priority in our Housing Strategy.



Young people often need one bedroom, self-contained homes because shared housing like Houses in Multiple Occupation are often unsuitable. We currently have 2 trainer flats

— transitional, self-contained homes with on site or floating support that help young people learn the skills needed to manage a tenancy successfully. There is a clear need for more trainer flats, and we will explore using several unused properties across the borough for this purpose in partnership with housing associations.

Young people starting out on their own in a tenancy may still need some support to sustain their housing. To address this, the council plans to front-fund dedicated support roles for care leavers living in housing association or private rented homes through the Affordable and Specialist Housing Fund, with the funding recycled from savings achieved by providing more suitable, cost-effective accommodation for young people in care.

Safe homes and support for survivors of domestic abuse

Our approach to Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-24 takes a Whole Housing Approach.

Supporting survivors of domestic abuse with support and accommodation was the second highest priority for the Housing Strategy according to respondents of our 2024 Household Survey, with 68.3% confirming it as a priority. Given this feedback, we want to ensure our response reflects this clear message. These priorities apply to both men and women, and we will put in place a clear plan of action to address their needs.



- Ensure survivors receive appropriate housing priority through the Housing Options Team.
- A thorough review of domestic abuse housing needs to ensure the council has an understanding of the true scale and impact of domestic abuse locally.
- Develop a new 3-4 bed refuge provision for emergency placements, including those with complex needs.
- Provide appropriate accommodation options for older people (60+) fleeing abuse.
- Standardise and strengthen the Sanctuary Scheme offer across housing associations.
- Allow more survivors to remain safely in their homes.
- Expand 'perpetrator behaviour changes' support, backed by appropriate resources.
- Recognise that many survivors need short-term help, not long-term support, and prioritise access to safe, stable temporary housing.
- Work proactively with local landlords to co-develop a supportive housing scheme for survivors, including options in the Private Rented Sector.
- Consider future commissioning options for emergency accommodation, in line with review process.
- Work with our local partner organisations to seek, where appropriate, White Ribbon and/or Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditations.

The Whole Housing Approach, developed in 2018 by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and partners, aims to identify and intervene earlier in domestic abuse cases, reduce homelessness caused by abuse, support survivors to stay safely in their homes if they choose, and enable joint tenancies to be changed so the perpetrator is removed, and the tenancy remains in the survivor's name.

Supporting veterans

The council will support veterans and members of the Armed Forces community with their housing needs.

We recognise the unique challenges that veterans may face in accessing suitable housing, particularly during the transition from service to civilian life.

Through tailored housing advice, clear information on available options, and prioritised access where appropriate, we will ensure that veterans are able to secure a stable home. This support will be embedded

within our housing services and partnerships, reflecting both the Armed Forces Covenant and Halton's recognition of the contribution of those who have served.



Promoting healthy homes, thriving communities and resilient neighbourhoods

Through our Corporate Plan, our One Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy and this Housing Strategy, we will support everyone in Halton to live a long, healthy, and fulfilling life.

- We are committed to improving health by ensuring all households have access to safe, warm, good-quality homes within healthier and more supportive neighbourhoods.
- A secure and suitable home has a

Better health outcomes is an outcome we are prepared to invest in, and we recognise that good housing is a vital foundation for achieving this.

profound impact on physical and mental wellbeing: it helps individuals remain independent, supports faster recovery from illness, and can prevent hospital admissions or reduce the time people spend in hospital. Conversely, poor-quality housing is a significant contributor to ill health and widening health inequalities —

affecting older people, children, individuals with disabilities, and those who are socially or economically isolated most severely.

- Our approach aligns with the NHS Long Term Plan's emphasis on prevention, recognising that early intervention and addressing the wider determinants of health — like housing — are key to reducing health inequalities and avoiding preventable illness.
- While all the actions set out in this Housing Strategy aim to improve homes and neighbourhoods — and, in doing so, contribute to better health outcomes — there are certain specific areas of focus that are fundamental to achieving good health. This section highlights those key priorities, recognising that targeted efforts in these areas are essential to creating safer, healthier living environments and supporting the wellbeing of our residents across Halton.

Tackling fuel poverty

Improving the quality of both existing and new housing to ensure safe, warm, and healthy homes is a key priority in Halton. A central part of this effort is working with local partners to enhance energy efficiency by promoting and delivering retrofit measures across the borough.

65.4% of respondents in our 2024 household survey felt that focusing on fuel poverty and the costs of living crisis should be an important priority in our Housing Strategy.

The challenge is significant: of the 57,731 homes in Halton, 36,576 (63%) have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or below. Improving these

homes to at least an EPC rating of C is a long-term task, likely to take years or even decades. Within this, priority will be given to the 7,748 homes rated E to G — the most inefficient and hardest to heat — and to households most at risk of fuel poverty.

Targeting support to those who need it most is crucial

Research estimates that about 38% of homes in Halton are occupied by low-income households, with the highest concentrations in south-east Runcorn, particularly in wards such as Central & West Bank, Halton Lea, Halton Castle, Norton North, and Hough Green. EPC data also shows particular concentrations of low-rated homes in wards including Daresbury, Moore, Sandymoor, Ditton, Hale Village, Halebank, Beechwood, Heath, Bankfield, Mersey, and Weston.

To better understand the challenge and guide action, a desktop study analysed EPC data across Halton. This evidence helps prioritise funding and resources to the homes and households that will benefit most from improvements. Further research will focus on specific neighbourhoods, streets, and even individual properties.

Halton has a strong track record of working with partners to deliver energy efficiency improvements. Over the past 5–10 years, the council has played a strategic leadership and partnership-brokering role — rather than directly managing schemes — working closely with housing associations that have the capacity to deliver at neighbourhood scale.

Notable projects include:

- Castlefields: £2.8 million invested in improving 330 mixed-tenure homes, including external wall insulation, delivered with Onward Housing and Plus Dane.
- Halton Brook: £3.8 million invested to upgrade 580 mixed-tenure homes, led by Riverside Housing with council support.

More recently, collaboration with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has enabled Halton to access government funding efficiently and to take a strategic lead alongside local partners. Initiatives such as the Green Homes Grant and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund have supported thousands of home improvements in mixed-tenure areas, particularly through partnerships with housing associations.

The council also supports national energy efficiency schemes such as ECO4 and the Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS), which help eligible low-income and vulnerable residents reduce energy bills and improve health. However, progress with ECO4 in Halton has been limited by fragmented delivery, highlighting the need for more coordinated approaches. Public Health and local organisations already play an important role in advising and assisting residents in accessing these schemes.

We will continue working regionally to secure investment for fabric-first and deep retrofit projects that reduce carbon emissions and promote long-term wellbeing for residents.

To strengthen support for vulnerable and low-income homeowners, we will explore updating the council's Homes Assistance Policy to provide ways to fund energy efficiency and home improvement measures through loans secured as a land charge — repayable when the property is sold. The

66.8% of respondents in our 2024 household survey felt improving housing standards for new homes so that they use less energy and take account of changing weather patterns should be an important priority in our Housing Strategy.

council is also exploring the feasibility of introducing a broader loan-based scheme for homeowners who might otherwise struggle to afford essential energy efficiency improvements.

Such an approach would not only help

residents improve the comfort, safety, and sustainability of their homes but also create a sustainable, recyclable source of funding to continue improving Halton's housing stock.

By prioritising the most inefficient homes, supporting low-income households, and building on strong partnerships, Halton aims to make steady progress toward ensuring safe, warm, and healthy homes for all its residents.

Improving the quality of homes in the Private Rented Sector

We are committed to working positively and constructively with private landlords to help them meet their legal responsibilities and provide safe, good-quality homes for their tenants. However, where landlords fail to act, the council will use its enforcement powers to protect residents.

As part of implementing the Renters' Reform Bill, the council will allocate capital funding to support Works in Default — enabling it to step in and carry out essential repairs and improvements when landlords do not fulfil

their duties. This ensures tenants are not left living in unsafe or unfit homes. The costs of these works will be recovered from landlords, reinforcing the council's commitment to upholding housing standards while ensuring that public funds do not subsidise poor practice.

The BRE 2021 stock condition report confirms that there are 1,454 dwellings in the Private Rented Sector with a Category 1 hazards. A Category 1 hazard is a serious problem in a home that poses an immediate risk to a person's health or safety.

Selective licensing

Over the past few years, we have undertaken research to better understand the Private Rented Sector and identify opportunities to target resources more effectively. Based on this, we are now considering the potential benefits and impact that selective licensing could have in wards where housing quality, anti-social behaviour, and deprivation continue to affect tenants, the wider neighbourhood and community. If the council believes selective licensing could be an effective tool to raise standards, we will consult on introducing it — ensuring landlords in designated areas meet clear property and management conditions.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

There are 129 licenced Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) in Halton (5 or more tenants) The council is aware an additional 73 unlicensed HMO's (less than 5 tenants) However the actual number of smaller unlicensed HMO's is not known because these properties do not currently require a license or planning permission and so there is no requirement for the landlord to notify the council.

Halton Borough Council recognises the significant impact that concentrations of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

can have on local communities, including pressures on residential amenity, changes to neighbourhood character, and potential imbalances in housing mix.

In response, the council has taken a proactive approach by introducing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that sets out clear restrictions on the siting and clustering of HMOs. The SPD aims to prevent over-

concentration by applying three specific controls: a concentration threshold, a ban on 'sandwiching' of properties between HMOs, and a restriction on allowing three adjacent HMOs.

These planning tools are designed to retain the character of residential

areas, support balanced communities, and reduce issues such as noise, parking pressure, and anti-social behaviour. The SPD also includes detailed amenity and management standards to guide the quality of accommodation provided. Should it be required, and were supported by evidence, the council will look to use other planning tools (such as an Article 4 Direction) to further control the concentration and proliferation of HMOs.

The forthcoming Renters (Reform) Bill presents a further opportunity to strengthen HMO regulation. A key feature of the Bill is the introduction of a new national Property Portal, which will act as a central database of landlords and rented properties.

This will be a legal requirement and will support local authorities in identifying unlicensed HMOs that fall under mandatory licensing requirements. For Halton, this will provide a valuable enforcement tool,

enabling the council to cross-reference local intelligence with national data to ensure that all HMOs requiring a licence are appropriately registered and meet minimum legal and safety standards. Combined with the existing SPD, the Property Portal could help close enforcement gaps and ensure that both tenants and communities are better protected from the risks posed by poorly managed or unregulated HMOs.

Bringing long-term empty homes back into use

Our evidence base confirms that the number of long-term empty homes in Halton is relatively low. However, addressing empty homes remains a top priority for local residents, suggesting that perceptions about the issue may be stronger than the reality. Despite their low numbers, empty homes can have a significant negative impact on neighbourhoods. When left unoccupied, these properties often become unsightly, attracting vandalism and neglect, which can contribute to a decline in community wellbeing and property values. Recognising residents' concerns, we will continue focusing efforts on bringing empty homes back into use to maintain vibrant, safe, and attractive neighbourhoods across Halton.

We introduced a council tax premium on empty homes in April 2025 to encourage property owners to bring vacant properties back into use, and we will monitor its impact while exploring different models to enable long-term empty homes to provide affordable housing options, including considering whether the Affordable and Specialist Housing Fund could provide repayable investment funding through rent. The council will use all available powers, such as Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs), to bring empty homes back into use and maximise the local housing stock, in addition to exploring schemes that offer guaranteed rent and property management to owners of vacant homes.

36.2% of respondents living in the Private Rented Sector in our 2024 household survey were dissatisfied with the quality of accommodation. 48% of respondents in our 2024 household survey confirmed that increasing the quality and management of the Private Rented Sector should be an important priority in our Housing Strategy.

The Safer Halton Partnership

The Safer Halton Partnership plays a vital role in supporting good health and well-being across the borough by addressing the wider social factors that influence people's physical and mental health.

By tackling issues such as anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, substance misuse, and serious violence, the partnership helps to create safer, more stable environments that are essential for individuals and communities to thrive.

Reducing anti-social behaviour and hate crime, for example, helps alleviate the chronic stress, anxiety, and fear that such incidents can cause. Similarly, efforts to prevent domestic abuse and support survivors have a direct impact on both physical safety and mental health, helping individuals regain control and rebuild their lives. The partnership's work to tackle serious and organised crime and improve road safety also reduces the risk of harm, injury, and trauma, which in turn lowers the demand on health and emergency services.

By supporting offender rehabilitation, tackling substance misuse, and engaging with those at risk of radicalisation or exploitation, the Safer Halton Partnership addresses root causes of harm and exclusion.

These preventative measures contribute to long-term improvements in individual and community resilience, mental well-being, and social cohesion.

Maximising our impact in delivering a healthy Halton

We recognise that housing is a social determinant of health.

Poor housing conditions such as cold homes and damp and mould can cause or make

worse a number of chronic health conditions including respiratory and cardiovascular disease. Living in poor housing also affects residents' mental health and sense of wellbeing which in turn limits their opportunities to live a productive and fulfilling life.

We are committed to working with our delivery partners including NHS, social landlords, private landlords and developers to review

current actions, investments and services to assess whether current activity and ways of working are achieving the best possible health outcomes and to identify any gaps or overlaps in service delivery that may be limiting effectiveness.

To improve health outcomes across Halton, we must first understand where our efforts can make the greatest difference. By identifying the communities, housing conditions, and services most closely linked to poor health, we can target interventions more effectively. This evidence-led approach will allow us to focus resources where they will have the biggest impact—tackling the root causes of ill health and creating healthier, more resilient communities.



We will undertake a review to examine how housing quality, affordability, accessibility, and neighbourhood conditions intersect with physical and mental health. Our goal is to shift from a reactive model to a proactive, preventative approach — improving health outcomes for residents while generating



The Building Research Establishment (BRE) estimate that poor quality housing in England is costing the NHS £1.4bn a year in treatments. BRE also identified the cost of poor quality housing to wider society – to mental health, educational achievement, and long term care for example – calculating it at £18.5bn

long-term savings for public services. This will demonstrate the value of integrated, sustained investment in housing-related health interventions.

Overseen by the Council's Housing Partnership, which currently includes the council and

local social landlords, membership will be expanded to include Public Health and NHS delivery partners, including One Halton, to strengthen collaboration across sectors.

The Housing Partnership will ensure all stakeholders work together to deliver safe, affordable, and supportive homes. The focus will be on identifying shared challenges, exchanging data, and developing coordinated responses that address the social determinants of health within the borough's housing stock.

Through open communication and shared responsibility, the partnership aims to deliver timely interventions, reduce hospital admissions related to poor housing conditions, and support residents to live independently for longer.

A preventative approach will be championed — emphasising early intervention and recognising that coordinated action between

housing and health sectors can significantly enhance quality of life and alleviate pressure on health and care services.

To support effective delivery, the partnership's current governance arrangements will be reviewed, and new shared goals and outcomes will be established.

Making the most of every chance to help

Collaboration is a guiding principle of this strategy and its implementation.

This strategy seeks to improve multi-agency working to

support better health outcomes - between local health providers, the council and housing associations to enable them pool

By making every contact count, day-to-day visits become valuable opportunities for early intervention, helping residents get the support they need before problems escalate.



resources and making the most of day-to-day contact with residents of Halton.

25% of households within Halton live within Affordable Housing. Through the Halton Housing Partnership there is an opportunity for greater operational collaboration between partners to improve health outcomes for these households, and support a shift from reactive interventions to a proactive and

preventative approach to housing and health.

We will also explore opportunities for better working with blue light partners. A good example of existing working is Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service who undertook nearly 5,000 'Safe and Well' visits to homes in Halton in 2024/25. These surveys include onwards referrals to other services.

Our ambition is to create clear referral pathways that ensure every contact counts, whether that contact is in a clinical setting or a resident's home.

Housing conditions that are impacting on a residents mental or physical health are assessed and followed up by referral to an organisation that can help.

We aim to work closely with front line health services to ensure adequate housing is a central consideration in a patient's care. This could include GP services or hospital consultants making a referral for patients with respiratory conditions to the council or social landlord for property health checks to investigate any conditions in the home that may affect indoor air quality.

Or if a Health Visitor during a routine health check identifies damp and mould, and hears a parent express concern about the costs of heating a home and falling behind on rent, then they could raise a housing repair concern or refer the household for debt or energy advice.

For patients with conditions most at risk from poor housing we will work alongside health services on proactive identification and early intervention. For example, we are running a winter cold home pilot to improve the home conditions of 120 patients with COPD with high risk of hospital admission due to fuel poverty. This preventative project has been made possible by successfully establishing a process to screen patient data to formulate at risk cohorts to support.

Permitted Development

We will not support poor quality and poorly considered homes delivered through permitted development. Halton Council is supportive of lobbying by the Local Government Association for amendments to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

Specifically, this is for amendments that ensure that conversions of existing buildings (such as office blocks) into residential units result in homes that are sustainable and are of good quality (well designed and energy efficient) and contribute towards meeting affordable housing and infrastructure needs in an area.

Implementation and monitoring

This section signals the transition from strategy to action and sets out how the ambitions and priorities of the strategy will be delivered, tracked, and adapted over time.

Although this may be Halton's first Housing Strategy in some time, excellent and impactful work has been ongoing across the borough, with housing functions spread across several council departments. Through developing this strategy, it has become clear that there is an opportunity to strengthen how we organise and coordinate these functions — potentially bringing teams closer together or adjusting roles to improve alignment and collaboration.

The council is committed to reviewing its staffing structure not to reduce staff, but to enhance efficiency, foster stronger teamwork, and ensure we have the right focus and skills in place to deliver the best possible outcomes for our communities.

The council has a strong track record of working collaboratively with partners to address housing priorities. Examples include cross-boundary work on the One Halton All-age Autism Strategy, ensuring housing forms an integral part of the Runcorn Town Deal Board, and ongoing engagement through the Halton Housing Partnership. The council has also worked closely with both strategic and local partners on major regeneration projects, such as the Castlefields Regeneration Partnership

Our strategy will be implemented through three guiding principles that maximise the skills, knowledge, and resources of all involved, aligning them to achieve the best outcomes for Halton. These principles ensure that our efforts are coordinated, evidence-based, and focused on long-term benefits — enabling us to deliver a Housing Strategy that meets local needs, supports independence, and

contributes to a thriving, sustainable borough.

The Council will be a Civic Leader

The council will take a clear leadership role on housing policy in Halton, setting the vision and strategy for how housing supports the borough's economic, social, and environmental goals.

As a civic leader, the council will set clear policy direction that reflects local evidence and priorities, and it will champion innovation by exploring new approaches, technologies, and partnerships to deliver better housing outcomes.

The council will maximise the use of council-owned land and assets, unlocking sites for development that meet identified needs, and act as a steward of the place, ensuring that all housing activity aligns with wider regeneration, health, and sustainability objectives. Progress will be regularly monitored and reviewed, with the approach adapted as needed to stay on track and respond to emerging challenges.

Delivery will be achieved in partnership

While the council sets the direction and provides stewardship, delivery will depend on strong partnerships. We will work collaboratively with housing associations, developers, health services, community organisations, and residents to co-design solutions and pilot projects to test concepts that work locally. Our approach will leverage the expertise, capacity, and investment of partners, recognising that many housing outcomes require shared effort. Partnerships will be formalised and strengthened through agreements and joint

delivery plans where appropriate.

Collaboration is not just a buzzword in Halton — it is our way of working, rooted in trust and a proven track record of joint success. We will build on existing relationships to co-fund, co-design, and co-deliver projects, ensuring that solutions are sustainable and reflect diverse perspectives. Partners will be engaged early and meaningfully in the planning and delivery process, and we will continue to foster a culture of openness and mutual support that enables us to overcome challenges together and make the most of opportunities.

Early Intervention and Cost-Effective Investment

A key driver for the strategy is enabling the council to work more effectively across its housing services to improve its financial position by:

- a) Reducing revenue expenditure, such as costs of homelessness and specialist accommodation; and
- b) Increasing revenue income by accelerating housing delivery and diversifying the housing offer.

Given these drivers, some aspects of the Housing Strategy are likely to require an 'invest to save' approach.

The strategy will also influence how the council uses its land and buildings, which may affect Capital Land Receipts. For example, disposing of land to meet supported housing needs might lower capital values but reduce revenue expenditure by cutting reliance on out-of-borough or unsuitable placements. The council is already exploring this at sites like Kingsway Quarter, Widnes (independent living for older people) and Crow Wood Lane, Widnes (supported housing for adults with complex needs). Each disposal is approved through the council's governance processes and aligned with

strategies such as the Children and Young People Sufficiency Strategy.

Successful implementation will depend on strong coordination across the council and with our partners.

Current capacity gaps include strengthening the connection between 'People' aspects, such as specialist housing needs, and 'Place' aspects, including engagement with developers and social housing providers. Recommendations on resourcing and organisational changes to address these gaps will be set out in the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, with additional work on capacity development continuing as needed. Building on our existing evidence base and monitoring progress over time to evaluate the impact of our actions, we will deliver a Housing Strategy that meets local needs, supports independence, and contributes to a thriving, sustainable borough.

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Halton

Housing Need Assessment 2024/25

Halton Borough Council

Final Report
August 2025

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Please note that in this report some of the tables include rounded figures. This can result in some column or row totals not adding up to 100 or to the anticipated row or column 'total' due to the use of rounded decimal figures. We include this description here as it covers all tables and associated textual commentary included. If tables or figures are to be used in-house, then we recommend the addition of a similarly worded statement being included as a note to each table used.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Halton Housing Need Assessment (HNA) 2024/5 provides the council with up-to-date evidence on housing need across all sections of the community over the period 2024 to 2042. The evidence will inform the update of the preparation of the Local Plan, other strategies, policies, and decisions of the council and its partners.

The HNA has been prepared in accordance with the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Data have been produced at sub-area level where possible.

Dwelling stock and households

There are 58,863 dwellings (2023 MHCLG estimates) and 55,945 households (2021 Census) across Halton. The vacancy rate is 2.4% which is a lower rate for England (2.8%). 78.8% of all dwellings are houses, 12.2% are flats, and 9% are bungalows. 60.5% of households are owner-occupiers, 14.4% privately rent, and 25.1% live in affordable housing.

House prices and rents

In 2024, lower quartile prices were £112,500 (Liverpool City Region £120,000, North West £135,000, and England £182,500) and median prices were £160,000 (Liverpool City Region £175,000, North West £196,000, and England £280,000).

In 2024, lower quartile private rents were £676 each month (Liverpool City Region £693, North West £776, and England £997) and median rents were £793 (Liverpool City Region £871, North West £997, and England £1,573).

Future dwelling mix and development priorities

The HNA has carefully considered the future population and household projections over the period 2024 to 2042, the range of dwellings lived in by different households and their dwelling aspirations (likes) and expectations. This helps to determine an appropriate mix of dwellings to inform future development priorities to better reflect the housing needs of communities across Halton.

The current Local Plan housing target for new homes is 350 each year and the government's revised standard method figure is a minimum of 474 each year.

There is a need for 141 affordable dwellings each year. The council needs to have a robust affordable housing policy in place to help deliver against this strategic need, but planning guidance says that you do not need to meet this need in full.

The recommended affordable housing tenure split is 50% social rent, 27% affordable rent, and 23% affordable home ownership. The Local Plan affordable housing policy will continue to support the ongoing delivery of affordable housing and diversify the affordable products available to local residents to reflect identified needs. The overall dwelling mix recommendations by tenure are set out in Table ES1.

Table ES1 Overall dwelling type/size mix recommendations by tenure

Dwelling type/size	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
Overall % split>>	75%	19%	6%	100%
1/2-bedroom house	5-10%	20-25%	15-20%	10-15%
3-bedroom house	25-30%	10-15%	25-30%	25-30%
4+ bedroom house	25-30%	10-15%	20-25%	20-25%
1-bedroom flat	0-2%	10-15%	0-2%	2-5%
2+ bedroom flat	2-5%	5-10%	5-10%	2-5%
1/2-bedroom bungalow/level access	10-15%	25-30%	5-10%	15-20%
3+ bedroom bungalow/level access	10-15%	10-15%	15-20%	10-15%
Dwelling type	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
House	65-70%	40-45%	65-70%	60-65%
Flat	5-10%	15-20%	5-10%	5-10%
Bungalow/level-access	25-30%	35-40%	25-30%	25-30%
Number of bedrooms	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
1	2-5%	20-25%	2-5%	5-10%
2	25-30%	40-45%	25-30%	25-30%
3	40-45%	20-25%	40-45%	35-40%
4+	25-30%	10-15%	20-25%	20-25%

The needs of other groups

Particular needs which have been identified in the HNA are:

- Increasing and diversifying the supply of specialist housing for older people. There is a need for 2,790 units of C3 dwellings, which include sheltered/retirement housing, 543 of Extra Care housing to rent and buy, and 455 additional units of residential care accommodation to 2042.
- Based on an assessment of additional needs and longer-term demographics, 5% of new dwellings (24 each year) should be built to M4(3) wheelchair accessible standard, and all other new dwellings should be built to M4(2) accessible and adaptable standard, which would include bungalows/level access accommodation.
- Self and custom build: 25 households on the council register.

The main report provides further details of the additional groups referenced in the NPPF and PPG.

Note that there is overlap between affordable, specialist older person, and M4(3) need, so for instance the development of an older person's level access, wheelchair accessible affordable dwelling would help address three aspects of housing need.

Summary of policy recommendations

Theme	Data	Action
Overall housing need	474 each year under the revised standard method calculation.	Housing need figure to be noted.
Affordable housing need	Annual imbalance of 141 which justifies need for robust affordable housing policy and delivery.	Affordable housing policy to maximise delivery on market sites subject to viability and consider new ways of delivering affordable, particularly social rented housing.
	Broad mix of affordable dwelling sizes is required. Renting: 24% 1-bedroom, 42% 2-bedroom, 24% 3-bedroom, and 10% 4+ bedroom. Affordable home ownership: 2% 1-bedroom, 28% 2-bedroom, 45% 3-bedroom, and 25% 4+ bedroom.	Range of dwelling sizes to be delivered.
	Affordable tenure mix of 77% rented (50% social and 27% affordable) and 23% affordable homes.	Development to consider a focus on social/affordable rented with some affordable home ownership.
Needs of different groups	5% of new dwellings (24 each year) to be M4(3) wheelchair accessible. All new affordable and market dwellings to be built to M4(2) where possible.	Update relevant policies.
	2,790 additional units of C3 dwellings including: sheltered/retirement housing, 543 units of Extra care, 455 residential care units to 2042.	Diversify range of older persons accommodation including sheltered/retirement and Extra Care leasehold and cohousing. Continue to review need for residential care. Strengthen policies to enable people to live in their own homes for longer with appropriate support and adaptation.
	Other needs groups.	Ongoing review of need for specialist housing and build upon the needs evidence in this study.

1. Introduction and Policy Context

Background

- 1.1 The Halton Housing Need Assessment (HNA) 2024/5 provides the council with up-to-date evidence on housing need across all sections of the community over the period 2024 to 2042. The evidence will inform the update of the preparation of the Local Plan, other strategies, policies, and decisions of the council and its partners.
- 1.2 The HNA supports the requirements of the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is also prepared in compliance with the government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.3 The evidence base needs to take account of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The latest version was published in December 2024 and is supported by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPF 2024 sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that plans and decisions should apply a '*presumption in favour of sustainable development*'. As part of this, in relation to plan-making, it sets out that this means that '*strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing...*'.
- 1.4 Paragraph 60 provides an important context to the policy for housing delivery, as follows:

'To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay'
- 1.5 Paragraphs 61 to 64 relate to the evidence base requirements which underpin this study:

Paragraph 61: **'To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.'**

Paragraph 63: **'Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities;**

service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes’.

Paragraph 64: **‘where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required’.**

- 1.6 Paragraph 67 requires that: **‘strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations.’**
- 1.7 The Localism Act 2010 introduced the ‘Duty to Co-operate’ as a replacement for Regional Spatial Strategy and this requirement is also established in National Planning Policy (NPPF 2023, Paragraphs 24-27). Section 110 of the Act requires local authorities and other bodies, including Local Enterprise Partnerships to co-operate in maximising the effectiveness of strategic matters within development plan documents. The provision of housing development is a strategic priority, and the council will have to ensure that it is legally compliant with the Localism Act at Local Plan examination.
- 1.8 The NPPF 2023 Annex 2 sets out affordable housing definitions which are presented in Technical Appendix B.

General housing and planning policy context

- 1.9 Labour’s manifesto sets out the intention to:
- Update the NPPF, restore mandatory housing targets, and introduce effective new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning. Combined authorities will be given new planning powers, freedoms and flexibilities to make better use of grant funding.
 - Take action to ensure that planning authorities have up-to-date Local Plans and reform and strengthen the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
 - Further reform compulsory compensation rules to improve land assembly, speed up site delivery and deliver housing, infrastructure, amenity, and transport benefits in the public interest.
 - Ensure local communities continue to shape housebuilding in their area but use intervention powers to build the houses needed.
 - Prioritise brownfield development and fast-track approval of urban brownfield sites. Take a strategic approach to greenbelt land designation and release to build more homes in the right places including the release of ‘grey belt’ land and introduce ‘golden rules’ to ensure development benefits communities and nature.
 - Develop large-scale new communities through new towns, urban extensions, and regeneration projects.

- Deliver the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation, with priority given to social rented housing and protecting existing stock with increased protections from Right to Buy.
 - Strengthen planning obligations to ensure new developments provide more affordable homes and support councils and housing associations to build their capacity and make a greater contribution to affordable housing supply.
 - Building more high-quality, well-designed, and sustainable homes and creating places that increase climate resilience and promote nature recovery.
 - Working with councils to give first-time buyers the first chance to buy homes through mortgage guarantee schemes to support those who struggle to save for a large deposit, with lower mortgage costs.
- 1.10 The government has published changes to the **NPPF** in December 2024 which includes a revised approach to establishing a minimum local housing need figure for each local authority.
- 1.11 The **Planning and Infrastructure Bill** (<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3946>) was introduced to parliament in March 2025 and will see significant measures introduced to speed up planning decisions to boost housebuilding and remove unnecessary blockers and challenges to the delivery of vital developments like roads, railway lines, and windfarms. This will boost economic growth, connectivity, and energy security whilst also delivering for the environment.
- 1.12 Key provisions of the bill for housing delivery include:
- The bill aims to halve the time required for major housing projects to receive planning approval (reducing it from four years to under two).
 - More decision-making power will shift from local councillors to planning officials to reduce delays.
 - Changes to compulsory purchase rules will make it easier for local authorities and developers to acquire land at lower costs, speeding up housing projects.
 - This may also limit landowner compensation, ensuring land values do not inflate project costs.
 - A new "first ready, first connected" approach for grid connections will speed up energy access for new housing developments.
 - By improving grid capacity, the bill supports the construction of homes in areas previously restricted by power supply issues.
 - The bill supports the government's target to deliver 1.5 million new homes during the current parliamentary term.
- 1.13 Labour's revisions have also reversed some of the controversial alterations made under the previous government in 2023, particularly around the Housing Delivery Test, where Labour aims to ensure that local authorities are held accountable for improving housing delivery, particularly in regions with acute housing shortages and the five-year housing land supply, where Labour's commitment seems to focus on ensuring that Local Plans are not only current

but also effective in meeting the housing needs of their communities. These changes are designed to streamline planning processes, ensuring that areas failing to meet housing delivery targets can more easily unlock new sites for development.

- 1.14 A notable reform is the introduction of "grey belt" land, which allows certain types of development on land that makes only a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes. This is part of Labour's effort to balance housing growth with environmental considerations. Moreover, the scrapping of the proposed Infrastructure Levy, which was widely criticized, signals a shift back to using Section 106 agreements to secure affordable housing.
- 1.15 The **Affordable Homes Programme 2021-2026** is a significant housing policy initiative aimed at boosting affordable housing supply. The government committed £11.5 billion over five years to support the construction of up to 180,000 affordable homes by 2026. The funding is targeted at a mix of affordable rent, shared ownership, and social rent homes, with a particular focus on rural areas.
- 1.16 The government announced a £350 million boost to affordable housing funding on February 12, 2025. This allocation includes £300 million for the Affordable Homes Programme, expected to deliver up to 2,800 additional homes, with half designated for social rent. An additional £50 million is earmarked for the Local Authority Housing Fund to improve temporary accommodation.
- 1.17 This funding supplements the £500 million top-up announced in the autumn Budget, bringing the total investment in housing supply for 2025/2026 to over £5 billion.
- 1.18 The government aims to build 1.5 million homes over the current parliament to address the housing crisis and reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.

Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan

- 1.19 The Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan 2024-2029 outlines the key priorities and ambitions of Halton Borough Council to enhance the lives of residents, communities, and businesses in the area. This strategic document is structured around six core priorities, focusing on key themes:
 - **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing, and Supporting Greater Independence:** This priority aims to provide accessible health care and promote healthy lifestyles, especially for vulnerable populations such as the elderly.
 - **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy:** The plan emphasises supporting local businesses, creating job opportunities, and encouraging residents to shop locally to enhance town centre vitality.
 - **Supporting Children, Young People, and Families:** This involves investing in early years and education services, ensuring that children and families receive the necessary support to thrive.

- Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Most in Need: The plan addresses social disparities by enhancing access to services and information, particularly for underprivileged groups.
 - Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community: This new priority reflects the feedback from community consultations, emphasising community pride and engagement.
 - Working Towards a Greener Future: This focuses on environmental sustainability and improving the local environment for future generations.
- 1.20 The Halton Corporate Plan (2024-2029) outlines several strategic priorities, with a notable focus on housing. Here are the key points regarding housing from the plan:
- The council aims to ensure that residents have access to safe, decent, and affordable homes. This commitment aligns with broader community goals, emphasising the importance of stable housing for families and individuals, particularly for children and young people.
 - The Corporate Plan highlights the importance of integrating housing policy with health and well-being initiatives. This approach acknowledges that housing conditions significantly impact health outcomes and overall community resilience.
 - There is also an emphasis on sustainability, with plans to address climate change through housing policies. This includes improving the energy efficiency of homes and utilising brownfield sites for new housing developments.

Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan

- 1.21 The Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) was adopted in March 2022. The plan sets out the long-term spatial vision, strategic priorities, and policies for future development in the borough to 2037, including the quantity and location of new homes, employment provision, shops, facilities and other services, transport and other infrastructure provision, climate change mitigation and adaption, and the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment.
- 1.22 The plan was developed through extensive public consultation and scrutiny by planning inspectors, ensuring that community input shaped its content.
- 1.23 The overarching vision is taken from the Halton Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026: “Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.”
- 1.24 It commits to:
- A minimum of 8,050 net additional homes to be provided between 2014 and 2037 at an average rate of 350 dwellings per annum. Delivery has been positive in the borough.

- To achieve at least 30% of new housing on previously developed land (PDL) over the plan period (including conversions).
 - The plan emphasises the need for affordable housing, with a portion of new developments designated for this purpose.
 - To ensure efficient use of land, a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare will be sought. In more accessible locations, densities of 40 dwellings per hectare or greater should be achieved.
 - To maintain a 5-year supply of deliverable housing land across the borough.
 - Specific sites have been identified for residential development, including greenfield areas that were previously designated as Green Belt.
 - On sites of 10 or more dwellings, with the exception of brownfield sites, the mix of new property types delivered should contribute to addressing identified needs with an affordable housing requirement of 20% on Strategic Housing Sites and 25% on Greenfield Development (Policy CS(R)13).
 - The DALP also includes provisions for related infrastructure improvements and reserves land for 180 hectares of employment opportunities to support local economic growth.
- 1.25 There are a number of regeneration projects in place in Halton. Widnes Waterfront is the redevelopment of former industrial land along the River Mersey in Widnes. The focus is on transforming the area into a vibrant hub for business, housing, and leisure, improving the local economy and environment. It aims to attract new businesses, create jobs, and provide housing, with significant environmental improvements like green spaces and better public access to the river.
- 1.26 The Mersey Gateway Project is a major infrastructure initiative that centres on the construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge, which links Runcorn and Widnes. This bridge improves transport connectivity and opens up development opportunities, including regeneration around key sites like Widnes Waterfront. The improved infrastructure from the bridge has been a catalyst for growth and investment in areas like Widnes Waterfront, making it more attractive for businesses and housing.
- 1.27 The Runcorn Old Town regeneration focuses specifically on transforming the old town into a vibrant, mixed-use area with improved public spaces, new residential and commercial developments, and enhanced infrastructure to support local businesses. The goal is to make the old town a more attractive and connected place for residents, visitors, and businesses, with a focus on urban regeneration.
- 1.28 Reconnecting Runcorn is a part of the larger Towns Fund initiative, aiming to reconnect Runcorn's different parts and improve accessibility. It emphasises better transport links, including enhancing walking and cycling routes, reconnecting the town centre to key areas like the waterfront and Runcorn Station, and upgrading infrastructure. The plan also seeks to attract investment by making the town a better-connected, more accessible place for people and businesses.

Halton's Homelessness Strategy

- 1.29 Halton's Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024 has a vision to make Halton a borough where:
- People are provided with early, targeted advice and intervention to prevent the loss of their accommodation.
 - Effective action is taken in a timely manner to relieve homelessness where it has not been preventable.
 - People are supported with the issues that can lead to homelessness, to prevent repeat homelessness.
 - Stakeholders work together to protect and increase local housing options.

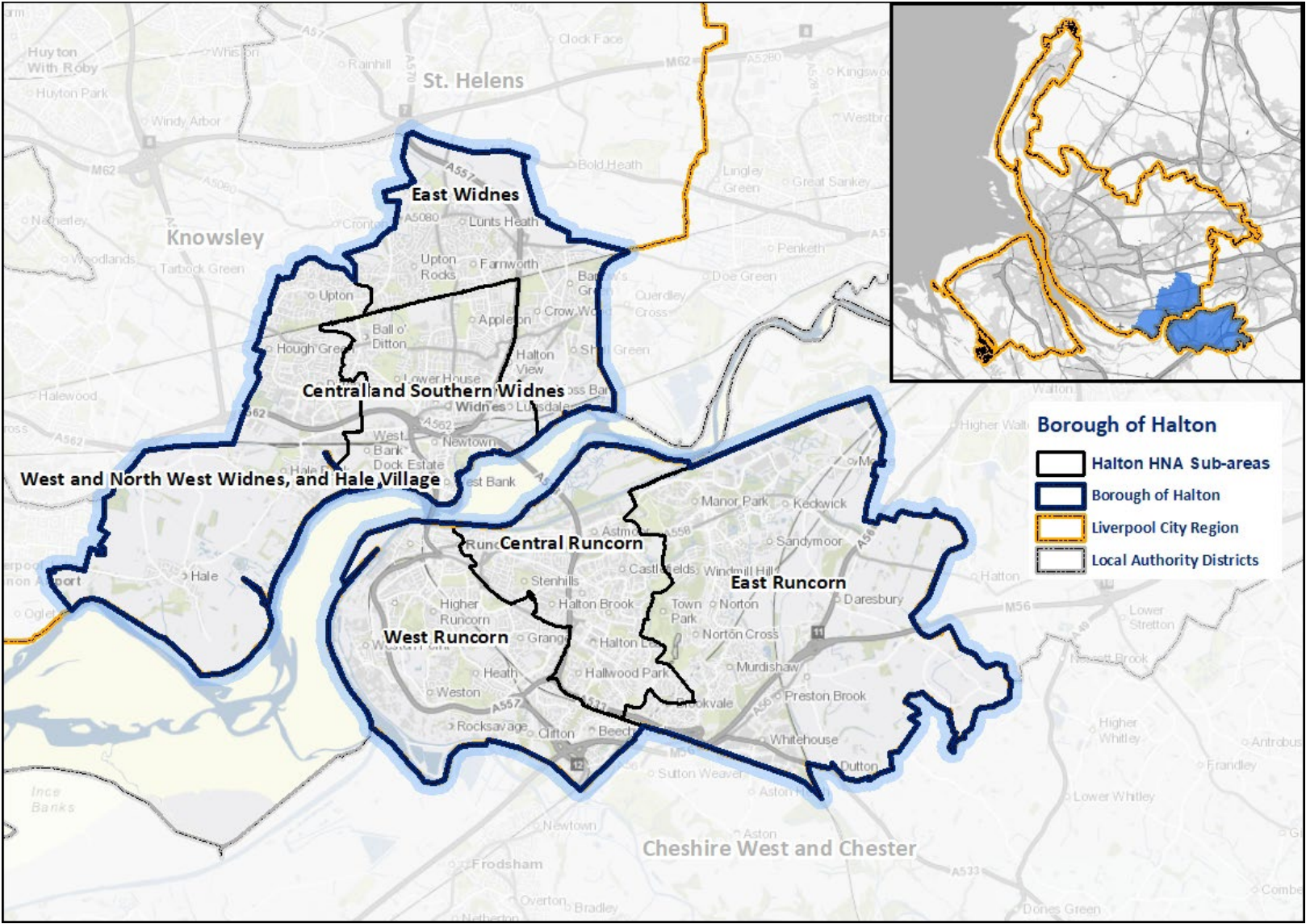
One Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy

- 1.30 One Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027 outlines the intention to transform and improve the delivery of health care for the people of Halton.
- 1.31 Within the strategy are four underlying themes:
- Tackling the Wider Determinants of Health
 - Support community in Starting Well
 - Support community in Living Well
 - Support community in Ageing Well

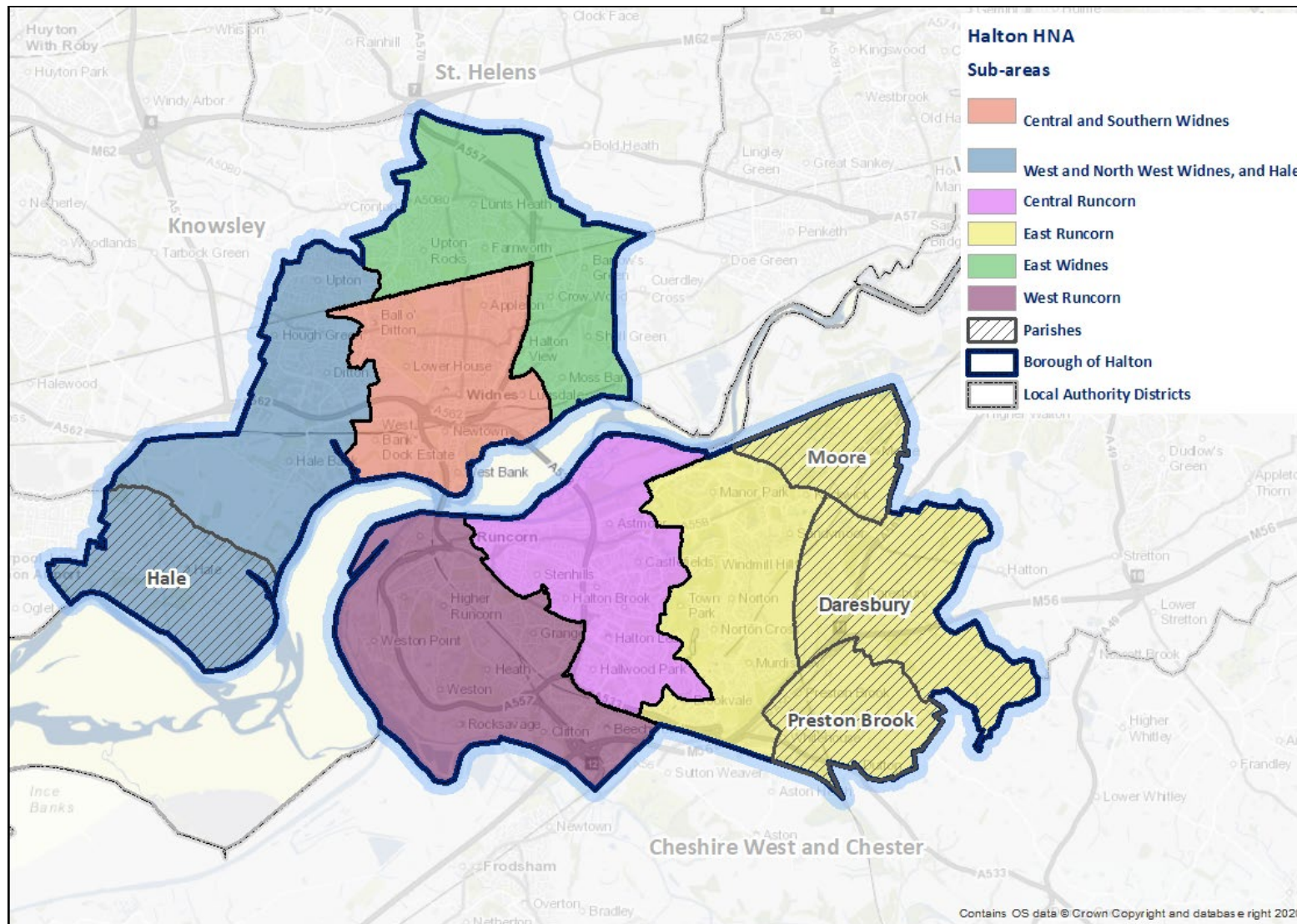
Geography

- 1.32 Map 1.1 illustrates the geographical context of Halton and the neighbouring local authorities.
- 1.33 Halton is a unitary authority area with borough status in Cheshire, North West England, encompassing the towns of Runcorn and Widnes. Halton has been a member of the Liverpool City Region since 2014. Neighbouring districts are Liverpool, Knowsley, and St Helens. The 2021 Census reported a population of 128,466.
- 1.34 The HNA divides Halton into six sub-areas to provide more granular evidence: Central and Southern Widnes, Central Runcorn, East Runcorn, East Widnes, West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village (Map 1.2).
- 1.35 In terms of access, Halton is in close proximity to the M56. The Halton Curve railway line links the Chester – Warrington line to the Weaver Junction – Liverpool, facilitating direct rail services between North Wales, Cheshire, and Liverpool.

Map 1.1 Halton in its geographical context



Map 1.2 Sub-areas within Halton Borough



Research methodology

- 1.36 To deliver the HNA 2024/25, a multi-method approach has been adopted, which comprises:
- A random sample survey of households across the borough area was undertaken, with 16,530 households in the borough contacted during December and invited to complete a questionnaire. 1,620 questionnaires were returned and used in data analysis. This represents a 9.8% response rate overall and a sample error of $\pm 2.4\%$ at the borough level and between $\pm 5.0\%$ and $\pm 7.3\%$ at sub-area level.
 - A review of secondary data provided by the council including housing register and information on groups with additional needs.
 - Interviews with estate and letting agents operating within the borough.
 - A review of relevant secondary data including the 2021 Census, house price trends, CORE lettings data, and CLG Statistics.
- 1.37 Further information on the research methodology is presented in Appendix A.

Presentation of data

- 1.38 Household survey data is available at sub-area level.
- 1.39 Data presented in this report is based on the 2024 Household Survey carried out as part of the HNA, unless otherwise stated. Where possible, data are 'triangulated' which means several sources are drawn upon to establish robust outputs.
- 1.40 It is important to note that survey responses have been weighted to correct for response bias and then grossed up to reflect the total number of households, and this process is explained in Appendix A. All survey information presented in this report is for weighted and grossed responses which are rounded up where appropriate.
- 1.41 Some information is reported for HRPs which stands for Household Reference Person. This is usually the oldest person in the household and is now used as an alternative to 'Head of Household'.

Report structure

- 1.42 The Halton HNA 2024/5 report is structured as follows:
- **Chapter 1** reviews the national and regional policy context within which the research needs to be positioned;
 - **Chapter 2** considers the main features of the housing market dynamics including house price and rental trends, migration, and travel to work patterns;
 - **Chapter 3** reviews current rents, prices, and affordability;
 - **Chapter 4** considers household groups with particular housing needs including those with a disability and additional needs;

- **Chapter 5** sets out an assessment of dwelling type and mix for future housing development within the borough; and
 - **Chapter 6** concludes the report with a summary of findings and a consideration of strategic issues.
- 1.43 The report includes a technical appendix, which provides detailed material that underpins the core outputs of the HNA. The technical appendix material includes:
- Research methodology (Appendix A)
 - Affordable housing definitions (Appendix B)
 - Housing need calculations (Appendix C)
 - Dwelling mix calculations (Appendix D)
 - Stakeholder consultation responses (Appendix E)
 - Agent review (Appendix F)
- 1.44 Both the stakeholder responses and agent review provide a wealth of qualitative data which further informs the HNA.

2. Housing Market and Key Drivers

Introduction

- 2.1 This chapter provides a detailed background to dwelling stock and tenure and the underlying economic, demographic, and household drivers across Halton.

Dwelling stock, vacant stock, and household estimates

- 2.2 Current estimates of dwelling stock, vacant stock, and households from multiple sources are presented in Table 2.1. For the purposes of the 2024/25 HNA, the total dwelling stock base is assumed to be **58,863** and the number of households as **55,945**. Around 2.4% of dwellings are vacant compared with the national rate of 2.8% based on MHCLG data (2023 latest). Table 2.2 shows the number of dwellings and household estimates for smaller geographies.

Table 2.1 Dwelling stock and household estimates

Dwelling stock	Dwellings	Source
2024 Valuation Office Agency (all dwellings)	59,010	VOA Table CTSOP3.0
2024 Valuation Office Agency (excluding annex and unknown)	57,420	VOA Table CTSOP3.0
2023 MHCLG Dwelling Stock Estimates	58,863	MHCLG Live Tables
2024 council tax data	59,131	Council tax
Vacant stock	Dwellings	Source
2023 MHCLG Vacancy estimate (all dwellings)	1,392 (2.4%)	MHCLG Table LT_615
2023 MHCLG Long-term vacancy estimate (all dwellings)	546	MHCLG Table LT_615
Households	Households	Source
2014-based ONS Household Projections 2023 figure	57,028	ONS
2018-based ONS Household Projections 2023 figure	57,591	ONS
2021 Census	55,945	ONS

- 2.3 The 55,945 household figure is taken as the total number of households for the purposes of the Household Survey analysis. This may be updated once the 2022 ONS household projections are published. Table 2.2 summarises the total number of dwellings and households by sub-area across the borough.

Table 2.2 Dwelling stock, vacant units, student households, second homes, and household estimate by sub-area

Sub-area	Dwellings (2024 Council)	Households (2021 Census)	Occupied households (2024 Council)	Student households (2024 Council)	Second homes (2024 Council)	Vacant properties (2024 Council)
Central and Southern Widnes	9,437	7,789	9,112	26	56	185
Central Runcorn	10,307	9,754	9,993	18	16	209
East Runcorn	8,718	7,635	8,561	13	10	75
East Widnes	10,088	10,475	9,855	11	20	132
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	9,480	9,419	9,271	16	10	114
West Runcorn	11,101	10,873	10,759	21	14	220
Borough of Halton	59,131	55,945	57,551	105	126	935

Source: Council data 2024 and 2021 Census

Dwelling type and size

- 2.4 The 2024 Valuation Office Agency data provide details on overall dwelling stock by type, number of bedrooms, and council tax band. Table 2.3 presents the overall dwelling stock profile of the borough compared with Merseyside, the North West, and England. Table 2.4 summarises dwelling type and size data for Halton.
- 2.5 In summary, Tables 2.3 to 2.4 show:
- 68.7% of dwellings in Halton are council tax band A or B properties, 28.8% are band C to E and 2.4% are band F or above;
 - 78.8% of dwellings are houses (36.7% terraced, 27.0% semi-detached, and 15.1% detached), 12.2% are flats, and 9.0% are bungalows; and
 - 7.3% of dwellings have one bedroom, 23.1% two bedrooms, 57.3% three bedrooms, and 12.3% four or more bedrooms.
- 2.6 Map 2.1 illustrates the predominant dwelling type and size by LSOA based on 2024 Valuation Office Agency data.

Table 2.3 Dwelling type, number of bedrooms, and council tax band for Halton and comparator areas

Dwelling type and number of bedrooms	Council tax band				Dwelling stock totals			
	A	B	C-E	F+	Halton	Liverpool City Region	North West	England total
Bungalow 1 bedroom	1.5%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.5%	1.0%	1.1%
Bungalow 2 bedrooms	0.8%	1.1%	1.7%	0.0%	3.6%	1.5%	4.0%	4.5%
Bungalow 3 bedrooms	1.1%	0.6%	2.0%	0.0%	3.7%	0.9%	2.7%	2.9%
Bungalow 4 or more bedrooms	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	2.7%	0.6%	0.6%
Flat 1 bedroom	5.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	5.4%	5.3%	8.7%	11.2%
Flat 2 bedrooms	3.7%	2.0%	0.5%	0.0%	6.3%	5.1%	8.2%	10.8%
Flat 3 bedrooms	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.6%	0.8%	1.8%
Flat 4 or more bedrooms	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.7%	0.4%	0.5%
Terraced house 1 bedroom	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.5%
Terraced house 2 bedrooms	8.3%	0.7%	0.1%	0.0%	9.1%	4.4%	12.7%	8.7%
Terraced house 3 bedrooms	20.3%	4.0%	1.1%	0.0%	25.5%	12.0%	16.1%	14.6%
Terraced house 4 or more bedrooms	1.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.0%	1.8%	16.6%	2.2%	2.4%
Semi-detached house 1 bedroom	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Semi-detached house 2 bedroom	1.5%	2.2%	0.2%	0.0%	3.9%	1.6%	4.0%	3.8%
Semi-detached house 3 bedroom	2.6%	9.8%	9.3%	0.0%	21.7%	13.8%	21.6%	17.4%
Semi-detached house 4 or more bedrooms	0.1%	0.2%	1.0%	0.0%	1.4%	16.6%	3.0%	2.7%
Detached house 1 bedroom	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Detached house 2 bedrooms	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.7%
Detached house 3 bedroom	0.0%	0.3%	5.5%	0.2%	6.0%	2.1%	5.0%	5.9%
Detached house 4 or more bedroom	0.0%	0.0%	6.8%	2.2%	8.9%	5.3%	8.2%	9.6%
Halton	46.9%	21.8%	28.9%	2.4%	100.0%			
Liverpool City Region	49.3%	21.1%	27.5%	2.1%		100.0%		
North West	39.8%	20.5%	34.6%	5.0%			100.0%	
England total	23.3%	19.7%	47.7%	9.3%				100.0%

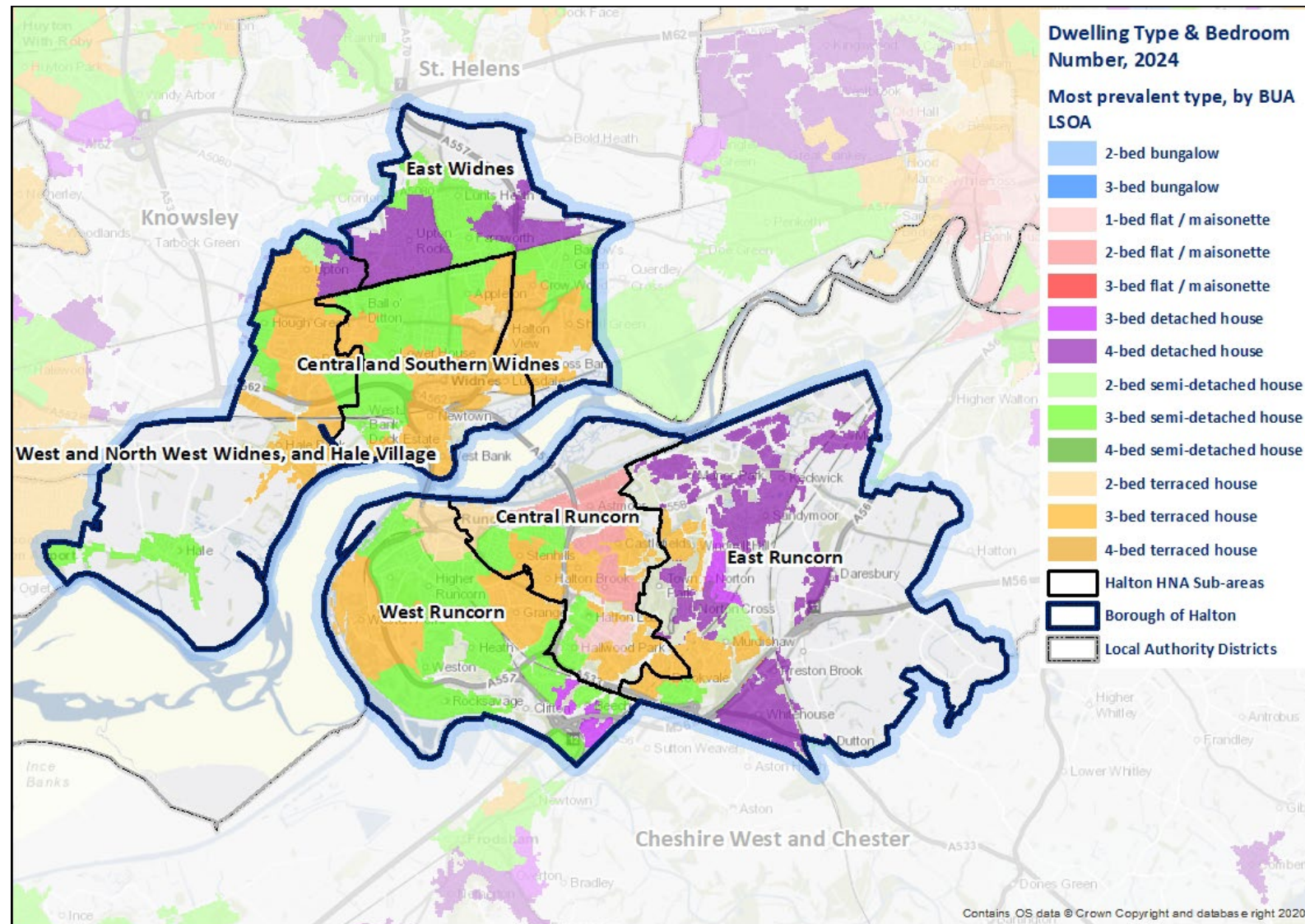
Base: Halton 57,420; Liverpool City Region 1,318,520; North West 3,369,910; England 25,049,180 (excludes annex, other, and missing)

Source: VOA 2024

Table 2.4 Dwelling type, number of bedrooms, and council tax band summary

Dwelling type	Council Tax Band A	Council Tax Band B	Council Tax Band C-E	Council Tax Band F+	Halton total
Bungalow	3.5%	1.7%	3.8%	0.0%	9.0%
Flat	9.4%	2.2%	0.6%	0.0%	12.2%
Terraced	29.9%	5.2%	1.6%	0.0%	36.7%
Semi-detached	4.1%	12.3%	10.6%	0.0%	27.0%
Detached	0.0%	0.5%	12.3%	2.3%	15.1%
Total	46.9%	21.8%	28.9%	2.4%	100.0%
Number of bedrooms	Council Tax Band A	Council Tax Band B	Council Tax Band C-E	Council Tax Band F+	Halton total
1 bedroom	7.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	7.3%
2 bedrooms	14.4%	6.1%	2.6%	0.0%	23.1%
3 bedrooms	24.4%	14.8%	17.9%	0.2%	57.3%
4 bedrooms	1.0%	0.8%	8.3%	2.2%	12.3%
Total	46.9%	21.8%	28.9%	2.4%	100.0%

Source: VOA 2024

Map 2.1 Predominant dwelling type and size by LSOAs: Halton

Source: VOA 2024

- 2.7 There are an estimated 188 licenced houses in multiple occupation (HMO) based on Halton Council data.

Table 2.5 HMO distribution across Halton

Sub-area	Number of licensed HMOs	Number of non-licensed HMOs	All HMOs
Central and Southern Widnes	44	24	68
Central Runcorn	34	8	42
East Runcorn	18	9	27
East Widnes	2	3	5
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	6	6	12
West Runcorn	13	21	34
Borough of Halton	117	71	188

Source: Council

Property age and condition

The age and condition of Halton housing

- 2.8 The age profile of the dwelling stock in Halton is summarised in Table 2.6. 23.1% of dwellings were built before 1945, 46.7% between 1945 and 1982, and 30.2% since 1983.

Table 2.6 Age of dwelling

Age of dwellings	Number	%
pre-1919	6,050	10.3%
1919-44	7,570	12.8%
1945-64	9,050	15.3%
1965-82	18,530	31.4%
1983-99	8,130	13.8%
post 1999	9,650	16.4%
Total	58,980	100.0%

Source: VOA 2024

- 2.9 The English Housing Survey (EHS) produces national data on dwelling condition. Applying national trends to the stock profile of Halton (Table 2.7) would suggest that around 14.7% of dwelling stock is non-decent, which is in line with the national average of 17.0%. The number of dwellings likely to fail the minimum standard of decent homes criteria is estimated to be 8.3% (compared with 9.9% nationally).
- 2.10 A full definition of what constitutes a decent home is available from MHCLG (source: [MHCLG decent homes definition](#)) but in summary a decent home meets the following four criteria:

- a. it meets the current statutory minimum for housing;
- b. it is in a reasonable state of repair;
- c. it has reasonably modern facilities and services; and
- d. it provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Table 2.7 Dwelling stock condition in England and Halton estimates

England		Fails decent homes criteria (%)					All dwellings	% dwellings
Dwelling age (ehs)		Non-decent	Minimum standard	Repair	Modern facilities and services	Thermal Comfort	in group (000s)	
pre-1919		32.0%	21.7%	7.3%	4.6%	7.8%	4,906	20.1%
1919-44		19.3%	11.0%	4.5%	3.4%	6.2%	3,738	15.3%
1945-64		16.1%	8.9%	4.7%	1.5%	4.2%	4,369	17.9%
1965-80		15.1%	8.1%	1.1%	1.1%	6.9%	4,872	20.0%
1981-90		16.5%	3.8%	1.0%	2.1%	12.1%	1,959	8.0%
post 1990		2.0%	1.8%	u	0.2%	0.0%	4,570	18.7%
Total		17.0%	9.9%	3.3%	2.1%	5.6%	24,414	100.0%
Borough of Stockport		Fails decent homes criteria (estimate of number)					All dwellings	% dwellings
Dwelling age (ehs)	Dwelling age (voa)	Non-decent	Minimum standard	Repair	Modern facilities and services	Thermal Comfort	in group (number)	
pre-1919	pre-1919	1,936	1,313	442	278	472	6,050	10.3%
1919-44	1919-44	1,461	833	341	257	469	7,570	12.8%
1945-64	1945-64	1,457	805	425	136	380	9,050	15.3%
1965-80	1965-82	2,798	1,501	204	204	1,279	18,530	31.4%
1981-90	1983-1992	777	179	47	99	570	4,710	8.0%
post 1990	Post 1992	261	235	*	26	0	13,070	22.2%
Total		8,691	4,866	1,459	1,000	3,170	58,980	100.0%
% of all stock		14.7%	8.3%	2.5%	1.7%	5.4%		
National %		17.0%	9.9%	3.3%	2.1%	5.6%		

Source: English Housing Survey, Table DA3201 (2019)

Note ‘*’ indicates sample size too small for reliable estimate

House condition and repair problems

- 2.11 The 2024 Household Survey reviewed the extent to which households were satisfied with the state of repair of their home. Overall, 66.6% of respondents expressed satisfaction (32.3% were very satisfied and 34.3% were satisfied); 16.2% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; a total of 17.2% expressed degrees of dissatisfaction, of whom 12.9% were dissatisfied and 4.3% were very dissatisfied. Note that severe disrepair is a factor considered in assessing affordable housing need.
- 2.12 Table 2.8 explores how the level of dissatisfaction with state of repair varied by dwelling and household characteristics. Note that the data relates to perception and across the private and social rented sectors this may be more reflective of tenant expectations in landlord responses to repairs.
- 2.13 Households expressing the highest levels of dissatisfaction by characteristics were: households living in affordable housing (39.5%) and private renting (36.2%); living in maisonettes (50%), flats/apartments (27.0%), and terraced/town housing (25.5%); living in dwellings built between 1945 and 1964 (20.6%).

Table 2.8 Dissatisfaction with quality of accommodation by tenure, property type, and property age

Tenure	No. of households dissatisfied	% of households Dissatisfied	Base (households)
Owner occupier	2,712	7.4%	36,738
Private rented	1,391	36.2%	3,842
Affordable housing	5,086	39.5%	12,860
Total (all responses)	9,188	17.2%	53,440
Missing cases (where tenure was not stated)			2,505
Total (all households)			55,945
Property Type	No. of households dissatisfied	% of households Dissatisfied	Base (households)
Detached house	482	4.0%	12,164
Semi-detached house	2,665	16.0%	16,613
Terraced house/town house	3,998	25.5%	15,681
Bungalow	968	21.0%	4,620
Maisonette	34	50.0%	68
Flat/apartment	996	27.0%	3,693
Caravan/part home/other	44	9.2%	478
Total (all responses)	9,188	17.2%	53,317
Missing cases (where property type was not stated)			2,628
Total (all households)			55,945
Property Age	Number of households dissatisfied	% of households Dissatisfied	Base (households)
pre-1919	759	19.6%	3,879
1919 to 1944	916	12.9%	7,083
1945 to 1964	1,471	20.6%	7,149
1965 to 1984	2,041	15.0%	13,577
1985 to 2004	661	8.3%	7,965
2005 onwards	476	7.5%	6,347
Don't know	2,863	38.9%	7,361
Total (all responses)	9,188	17.2%	53,361
Missing cases (where property age was not stated)			2,584
Total (all households)			55,945

Note: Response rate variations result in slight differences between base levels.

Source: 2024 Household Survey

Household tenure

- 2.14 The 2021 Census indicates that across the borough, 60.5% of households are owner-occupiers, 14.4% rent privately, and 25.1% live in affordable tenures (Table 2.9). This compares with 65.1% owner-occupier, 28.3% living in affordable tenures, and 6.6% private renting in the 2001 Census. Therefore, since 2001, there has been a general shift in the proportion of households living in owner-occupation to private renting.

Table 2.9 Tenure profile by sub-area

Sub-area	Owner occupied %	Affordable %	Private Rented %	Total	Total households
Central and Southern Widnes	55.2%	24.2%	20.6%	100.0%	7,789
Central Runcorn	44.1%	43.1%	12.8%	100.0%	9,754
East Runcorn	66.5%	24.7%	8.8%	100.0%	7,635
East Widnes	74.9%	12.3%	12.8%	100.0%	10,475
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	59.4%	29.3%	11.3%	100.0%	9,419
West Runcorn	61.8%	18.6%	19.6%	100.0%	10,873
Borough of Halton	60.5%	25.1%	14.4%	100.0%	55,945

Source: 2021 Census TS054

Variations in dwelling types and households by tenure

- 2.15 The 2021 Census provides a useful insight into the characteristics of dwellings and households by tenure which are now presented.

Dwelling size – number of bedrooms

- 2.16 Table 2.10 summarises the number of bedrooms by tenure across occupied dwellings in the Borough of Halton. Across the owner-occupied sector, 81.4% of dwellings have 3 or more bedrooms; 52.3% of social rented dwellings and 53.4% of private rented dwellings have 1 or 2 bedrooms.

Table 2.10 Dwelling size by tenure

Number of bedrooms	All tenures %	Owned %	Rented: Social rented %	Rented: Private rented or lives rent free %
1 bedroom	8.3%	1.4%	23.4%	12.4%
2 bedrooms	23.5%	17.2%	28.9%	41.0%
3 bedrooms	51.6%	58.0%	42.3%	40.3%
4 or more bedrooms	16.6%	23.4%	5.4%	6.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 2021 Census table RM136

Age profile and household type

- 2.17 Table 2.11 sets out the age profile of residents living in different tenures. It uses a 'row %' figure which indicates the proportion of Household Reference People (HRP) by age group in different tenures: for instance, 74.1% of all people aged 65 and over live in owner-occupied properties, 21.3% live in social rented accommodation, and 4.6% live in private rented accommodation.

Table 2.11 Age profile by tenure

Age group	Owned (row %)	Rented: Social rented (row %)	Rented: Private rented or lives rent free (row %)	Total	Base
Aged 16 to 64 years	56.2%	25.4%	18.3%	100.0%	39910
Aged 65 years and over	74.1%	21.3%	4.6%	100.0%	15935
Total	61.3%	24.3%	14.4%	100.0%	55,845

Source: 2021 Census table RM201

- 2.18 Table 2.12 considers the general profile of household types by tenure. For instance, across the owner-occupied sector, 29.7% are couples with children and 26.1% are singles; 26.7% of social renter households are lone parent families; 18.0% of households in the private rented sector are couples with children.

Table 2.12 Household type by tenure (column %)

Household types	All tenures %	Owned %	Rented: Social rented %	Rented: Private rented or lives rent free %
Singles	18.9%	12.7%	25.2%	34.6%
Single 66+	12.7%	13.4%	15.5%	5.3%
Couples (no children)	16.1%	20.3%	6.9%	14.2%
Couples (with children)	25.0%	29.7%	17.2%	18.0%
Single family household (66 and over)	8.6%	12.1%	3.7%	1.9%
Lone parent family	14.0%	7.6%	26.7%	19.8%
Other	4.7%	4.2%	4.9%	6.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Base	55,866	34,214	13,608	8,044

Source: 2021 Census table RM135

- 2.19 Table 2.13 provides household type information in a different way. It considers how different household types are distributed across different tenures. For instance, 86.4% of all single-family households age 66 or over live in owner-

occupied dwellings and 66.9% of lone parents rent from a social or private landlord.

Table 2.13 Household type by tenure (row %)

Household types	Owned (row %)	Rented: Social rented (row %)	Rented: Private rented or lives rent free (row %)	Total	Base
Singles	41.1%	32.6%	26.4%	100.0%	10,542
Single 66+	64.4%	29.5%	6.0%	100.0%	7,120
Couples (no children)	77.0%	10.3%	12.7%	100.0%	9,021
Couples (with children)	72.9%	16.8%	10.4%	100.0%	13,950
Single family household (66 and over)	86.4%	10.4%	3.2%	100.0%	4,798
Lone parent family	33.2%	46.5%	20.4%	100.0%	7,831
Other	55.6%	25.5%	18.9%	100.0%	2,604
Total	61.2%	24.4%	14.4%	100.0%	55,866

Source: 2021 Census table RM135

Economic activity and tenure

- 2.20 Table 2.14 shows that most owner-occupier HRPs are either in employment or retired; 39.2% of social renter HRPS are in employment but 33.7% are economically inactive; for private renters, most are economically active.

Table 2.14 Economic activity by Household Reference Person (HRP) and tenure

Economic activity (by household reference person)	All tenures %	Owned %	Rented: Social rented %	Rented: Private rented or lives rent free %
Economically active (in employment)	58.9%	64.4%	39.2%	68.4%
Retired	25.5%	31.3%	21.6%	7.5%
Economically inactive (including looking after home/family and long-term sick/disabled)	12.8%	3.3%	33.7%	17.7%
Student	1.0%	0.3%	1.6%	2.7%
Unemployed	1.9%	0.7%	3.9%	3.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Base	55,914	34,242	13,588	8,084

Source: 2021 Census table RM133

- 2.21 Table 2.15 illustrates that of all economically active Household Reference People (HRP), 67.0% own and 16.8% rent privately. 84.2% of economically inactive HRPs and 78.2% of unemployed people rent. 40.0% of student HRPs

live in private rented accommodation. 75.2% of retired HRP's are owner-occupiers.

Table 2.15 Household type by tenure (row %)

Economic activity	Owned (row %)	Rented: Social rented (row %)	Rented: Private rented or lives rent free (row %)	Total	Base
Economically active (in employment)	67.0%	16.2%	16.8%	100.0%	32,923
Retired	75.2%	20.6%	4.3%	100.0%	14,262
Economically inactive (including looking after home/family and long-term sick/disabled)	15.8%	64.2%	20.0%	100.0%	7,130
Student	19.8%	40.2%	40.0%	100.0%	550
Unemployed	21.7%	50.0%	28.2%	100.0%	1,049
Total	61.2%	24.3%	14.5%	100.0%	55,914

Source: 2021 Census table RM133

Overcrowding and underoccupancy

- 2.22 Table 2.16 shows that 2.2% of all households are overcrowded and this was most pronounced in social rented accommodation. Underoccupancy was most apparent in owner-occupied households with 87.3% having at least one spare bedroom.

Table 2.16 Occupancy by tenure (column %)

Occupancy	All tenures %	Owned %	Rented: Social rented %	Rented: Private rented or lives rent free %
Overcrowded	2.2%	1.2%	4.0%	3.1%
Sufficient bedrooms	23.9%	11.5%	50.3%	32.1%
Under occ +1	35.6%	34.8%	31.0%	46.7%
Under occ +2 or more	38.3%	52.5%	14.7%	18.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Base	55,971	34,256	13,657	8,058

Source: 2021 Census table RM099

Note: Based on bedroom standard which applies assumptions regarding household structure and bedrooms needed.

- 2.23 Just under 21% of overcrowded households were in the private rented sector (Table 2.17), which also showed around 34.3% of overcrowded households were owner-occupiers and 45.1% social renters. 83.9% of under occupancy with at least 2 spare bedrooms was in the owner-occupied sector.

Table 2.17 Occupancy by tenure (row %)

Occupancy	Owned (row %)	Rented: Social rented (row %)	Rented: Private rented or lives rent free (row %)	Total	Base
Overcrowded	34.3%	45.1%	20.6%	100.0%	1,223
Sufficient	29.3%	51.3%	19.4%	100.0%	13,378
Under occ +1	59.9%	21.2%	18.9%	100.0%	19,927
Under occ +2 or more	83.9%	9.4%	6.8%	100.0%	21,443
Total	61.2%	24.4%	14.4%	100.0%	55,971

Source: 2021 Census table RM099

Note: Based on bedroom standard which applies assumptions regarding household structure and bedrooms needed

The owner-occupied sector

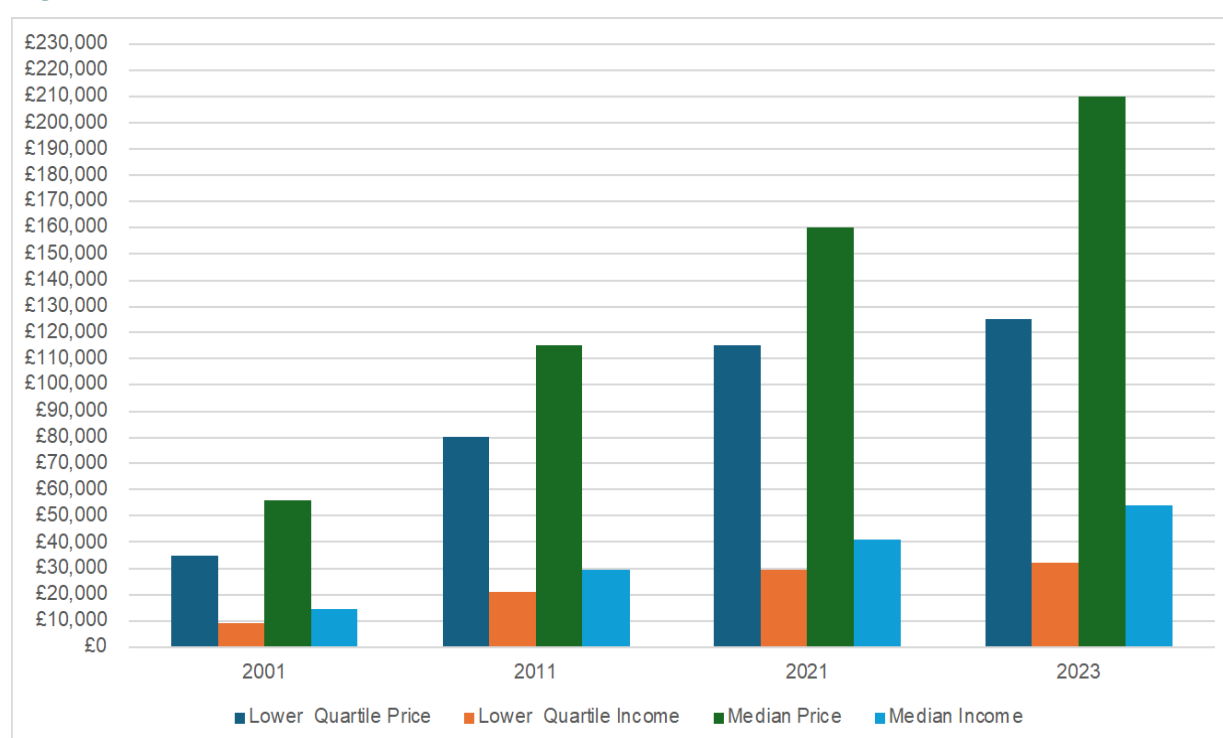
- 2.24 The 2021 Census identified that 60.5% (33,840) of households across the borough are owner-occupiers. 30.6% of all households (17,096) own outright and 29.9% of all households (16,744) have a mortgage.
- 2.25 The Household Survey provides the following information on owner-occupied housing:
- Most owner-occupied homes are houses (89.8%), with 31.1% detached, 33.5% semi-detached, and 25.3% terraced; a further 7.7% are bungalows, 2.0% flats/maisonettes, and 0.5% other property types.
 - 57.0% of owner-occupied homes have three bedrooms, 27.4% have four or more bedrooms, a further 15.1% have two bedrooms, and 0.5% have one bedroom.
 - 9.8% of owner-occupied homes were built pre-1919, 32.3% were built between 1919 and 1964, 26.4% were built between 1965 and 1984, and 31.4% have been built since 1985.
- 2.26 Over the period 2001 to 2023, Land Registry data reveals that lower quartile, median, and average house prices across the borough have increased dramatically. This is summarised in Table 2.18 and Figure 2.1.
- 2.27 It is interesting to note that in 2001, a household income of £9,000 was required for a lower quartile price to be affordable; by 2023, this had increased to £32,143. In comparison, an income of £14,387 was required for median priced housing to be affordable in 2001 compared with £54,000 in 2023.

Table 2.18 Lower quartile and median price and income required to be affordable 2001-2023

Year	House Price		Income to be affordable*	
	Lower Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile Price	Median Price
2001	£35,000	£55,950	£9,000	£14,387
2011	£80,500	£115,000	£20,700	£29,571
2021	£115,000	£160,000	£29,571	£41,143
2023	£125,000	£210,000	£32,143	£54,000

Source: HM Land Registry data © Crown copyright and database right 2023. This data is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0

*Assuming a 3.5x income multiple and a 10% deposit is available

Figure 2.1 Comparison of house prices and incomes required 2001 to 2023

2.28 A range of socio-economic and demographic information from respondents has been obtained from the 2024 Household Survey. Some further insights relating to owner-occupiers include:

- In terms of household type, 17.9% are couples with children under 18, 26.4% of owner-occupiers are older (65 or over) singles and couples, 23.3% are couples (under 65 with no children), 12.1% are couples with adult children (18+), 12.5% are singles (under 65), 2.5% are lone parents with adult children, 1.8% are lone parents with children under 18, and 3.6% are other household types.
- 61.2% of HRPs living in owner-occupied dwellings are in employment, 32.4% are wholly retired from work, and 6.4% are other economically inactive.

- 11.1% of owner-occupied households receive less than £18,200 gross per year, 10.5% receive between £18,200 and £26,000 per year, 19.7% receive between £26,000 and £39,000 per year, and 58.7% receive more than £39,000 per year.
- In terms of length of residency, 42.7% of owner-occupiers have lived in the same property for 20-years or more.

The Private Rented Sector (PRS)

- 2.29 The private rented sector has become an important tenure in both meeting people's housing needs and providing flexible housing options for those moving for employment or to respond to changing circumstances and provides a housing option for those on low incomes. Across Halton, the proportion of households renting increased from 6.6% in 2001 to 14.4% in 2021 (ONS Census data). During this period, there has been growth of the rental market for both 'active choice' renters and 'frustrated would-be' homeowners. Tenure reform and less accessible social rented housing are also likely to be an increasing factor to the growth in the private rented sector and the sector clearly now plays a vital role in meeting housing need and affordable need, as well as providing an alternative to homeownership.
- 2.30 Local authorities have an important enabling and regulatory role in ensuring that the private rented sector helps to meet housing need. Balancing good quality supply with demand will help to stabilise rents and encouraging good quality management will improve the reputation of the sector and encourage longer term lets and lower turnover. However, this is a challenging task where existing partners need to be encouraged to participate, and new partners and investors need to be identified.

Build to Rent

- 2.31 Build to Rent schemes can have a number of benefits. Schemes can quickly increase supply and provide improved quality and wider choice in housing markets; the accommodation and service offer provide better tenure options for households looking to rent longer term compared to what is available in the current PRS. Standards are expected to be more professional, tenancies longer, and by introducing an affordable offer (minimum 20% below market rents), these schemes can meet an identified and specific need as affordable rental accommodation.
- 2.32 Local authorities already have tools and powers at their disposal to support Build to Rent. For example, as part of their plan-making and decision taking processes, authorities can:
- Identify sites in their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments which might be well suited to particular types of development.
 - Include policies in their Local Plans on Build to Rent.
 - Choose whether or not to deploy the nationally described space standard, taking into account viability and need considerations.

- 2.33 Local authorities also have non-planning powers at their disposal through which they can support Build to Rent, such as using their own council land holdings.
- 2.34 The 2024 Household Survey found that 75.0% of private rented properties were houses, of which 41.6% are terraced, 30.6% are semi-detached, and 2.8% are detached; a further 20.9% were flats/maisonettes, and 4.1% were bungalows. 12.7% of privately rented properties have one bedroom/bedsit, 36.9% have two bedrooms, 42.0% have three bedrooms, and 8.5% have four or more bedrooms.
- 2.35 Around 10.7% of private rented stock was built before 1919, 29.7% between 1919 and 1964, 35.0% between 1965 and 1984, 24.7% has been built since 1985.
- 2.36 The characteristics of tenants are diverse and the 2024 Household Survey revealed that in particular, the private rented sector accommodates singles (under 65) (21.9%) couples with children under 18 (23.5%), couples (under 65 with no children) (16.2%), older singles and couples (9.0%), lone parents with children under 18 (13.1%), lone parents with adult children (2.4%), couples with adult children (6.4%), and other household types (7.4%).
- 2.37 Just over a third (39.1%) of private renting households have lived in their accommodation for less than three years.
- 2.38 In terms of income, the 2024 Household Survey found that 14.4% of households privately renting receive less than £18,200 gross per year, 33.4% receive between £18,200 and £26,000 per year, 30.5% receive between £26,000 and £39,000 per year, and 21.6% receive more than £39,000 per year.
- 2.39 70.8% of Household Reference People (heads of household) living in private rented accommodation are employed, 6.4% are permanently sick/disabled, 7.3% are wholly retired from work, 4.8% unemployed and 10.6% are other economically inactive.

The affordable housing sector

- 2.40 The latest Regulator of Social Housing Statistical Data Return (SDR) 2024 identified a total of 14,788 units of affordable housing across Halton. Of the 13,366 were general needs units, 521 were supported housing, and 468 were housing for older people. In addition, there were 433 units of low-cost home ownership.
- 2.41 The 2024 Household Survey used a base of 13,598 households living in an affordable (social rented or intermediate tenure) property across Halton based on the 2021 Census.
- 2.42 The 2024 Household Survey identified that flats/apartments and maisonettes account for 16.8% of occupied affordable accommodation (16.3% flats/apartments and 0.5% maisonettes), 66.5% are houses (of which 24.7% are semi-detached, 37.6% are terraced, and 4.2% are detached), 14.0% are bungalows, and 2.7% other types of housing. In terms of size, affordable dwellings in the borough typically have one bedroom/bedsit (20.2%), two bedrooms (25.7%), or three bedrooms (46.2%), with a further 7.8% having four or more bedrooms.

- 2.43 In terms of household composition, the 2024 Household Survey found that 15.6% are singles under 65, 23.4% are older singles and couples (one or both aged over 65 years), 10.8% are couples or lone parents with adult children living at home, 7.2% are couples under 65 with no children, 12.7% are lone parents with children under 18, 18.9% are couples with children under 18, and a further 11.4% are other household types.
- 2.44 Amongst the older households (36.0% of whom are singles over 65 and 47.9% are couples), 65.5% have lived in their current affordable property for over 20 years or more. 6.1% live in a flat/apartment, 18.0% live in a bungalow, around 21.6% live in a terraced house, and 33.5% live in a semi-detached home. Around 9.9% of those aged over 65 live in a 1-bedroom home and 17.1% live in a 2-bedroom home.
- 2.45 46.1% of Household Reference People living in affordable housing are in employment. A further 20.8% are wholly retired from work, 21.6% are permanently sick/disabled, 3.4% are unemployed, and 8.1% are other economically inactive.
- 2.46 Incomes are generally low, with 46.9% of households in affordable housing receiving an income of less than £18,200 gross per year, 25.1% receive between £18,200 and £26,000 per year, 10.4% receive between £26,000 and £39,000 per year, and 17.7% receive more than £39,000 per year.

Past trends in housing delivery

- 2.47 Over the past 10 years (2014/15 to 2023/2024) 4,209 net new dwellings have been built across Halton (Table 2.19), around 37% of which have been built in the five years 2019/20 to 2023/24. In the past 5 years, an annual average of 314 net completions has been achieved. A comparison of annual completions with the annual policy target is also presented in Figure 2.2.
- 2.48 Over the past 10 years, the overall delivery has exceeded targets although delivery was lower during the Covid years of 2020/21 and 2021/22. The distribution of newbuild activity since 2007 is shown in Map 2.2.

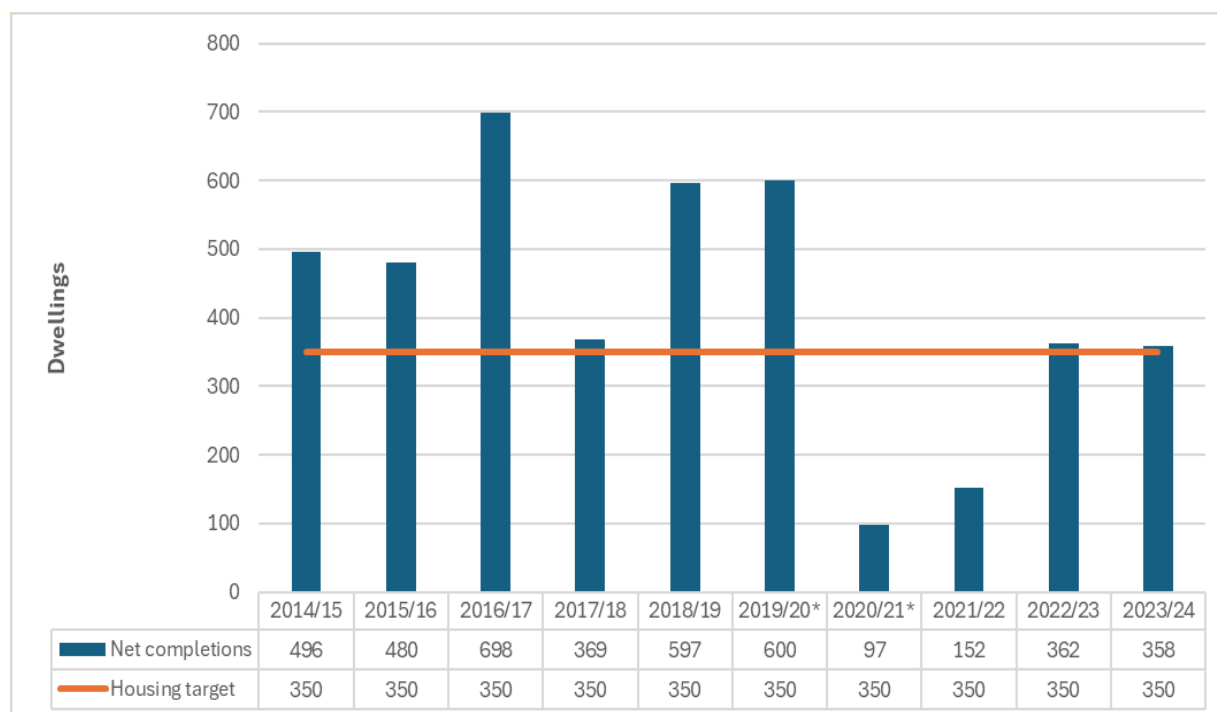
Table 2.19 Dwelling completions 2014/15 to 2023/24

Year	Net completions	Gross completions	Housing target	Housing target - net completions
2014/15	496	507	350	146
2015/16	480	484	350	130
2016/17	698	703	350	348
2017/18	369	380	350	19
2018/19	597	601	350	247
2019/20*	600	603	350	250
2020/21*	97	132	350	-253
2021/22	152	159	350	-198
2022/23	362	368	350	12
2023/24	358	366	350	8
2014-2024 (Total)	4,209	4,303	3,500	709
Total (past 5 years)	1,569	1,628	1,750	-181
Annual average (past 5 years)	314	326	350	-36

Source: Halton Borough Council Annual Monitoring Reports

* The 2019/20 figure covers a 16 month period (suggesting a 12 month figure of $(603/16)*12= 452$)

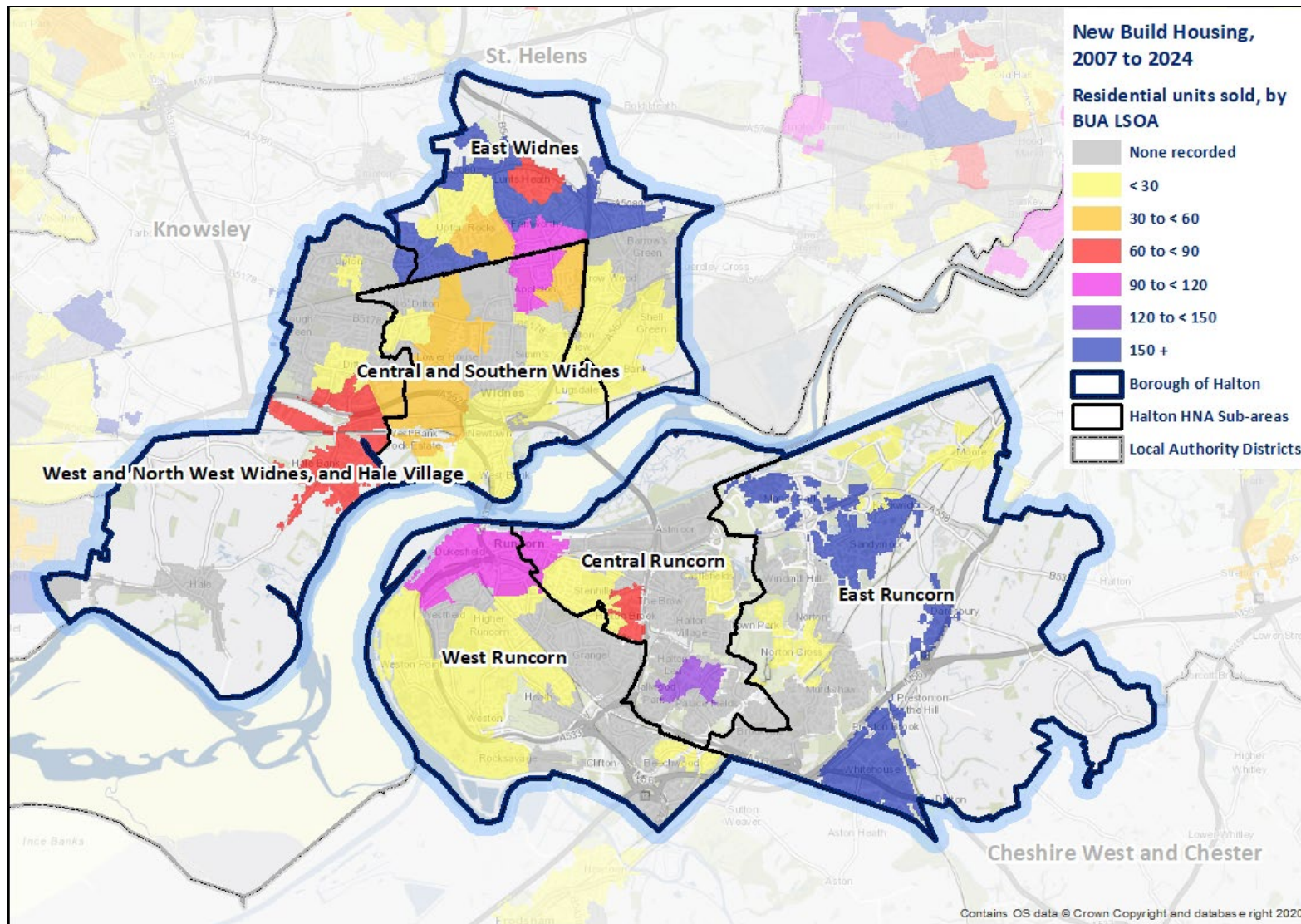
* The 2020/21 figure only covers an 8 month period (suggesting a 12 month figure of $(132/8)*12= 198$)

Figure 2.2 Summary of net completions 2014/15 to 2023/24 against policy targets

Source: Halton Borough Council Annual Monitoring Reports

* The 2019/20 figure covers a 16 month period (suggesting a 12 month figure of $(603/16)*12= 452$)

* The 2020/21 figure only covers an 8 month period (suggesting a 12 month figure of $(132/8)*12= 198$)

Map 2.2 New build dwellings by LSOA over period 2007-2024

Source: Land Registry © Crown copyright 2007 to 2024

Demographic drivers: population, migration, and households

Population projections

- 2.49 National population projections are produced by the ONS regularly and the latest ones are 2018-based projections (Table 2.20).

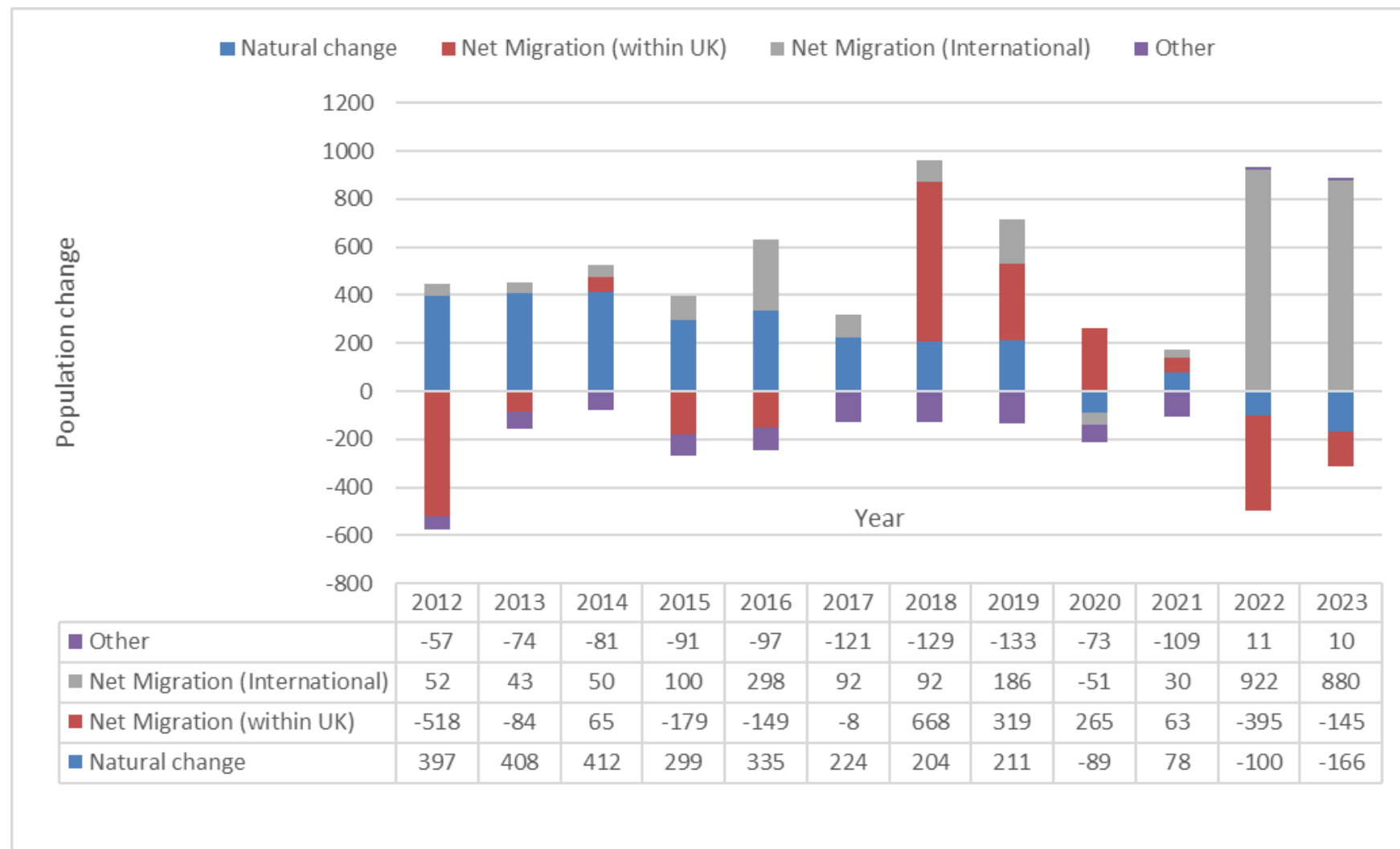
Table 2.20 Change in population 2024-2042 by age group (2018-based ONS population projections)

Age groups	2024	2042	Number change 2024-2042	% change 2024-2042
0-19	31,594	29,677	-1,917	-6.1%
20-39	30,710	31,174	464	1.5%
40-54	25,059	26,197	1,139	4.5%
55-64	17,721	17,107	-614	-3.5%
65-74	14,659	15,574	915	6.2%
75-84	9,010	12,501	3,491	38.7%
85+	2,665	4,841	2,176	81.7%
All Ages	131,417	137,071	5,653	4.3%

Source: ONS Principal Population Projections

Components of population change

- 2.50 The ONS publish mid-year population estimates at local authority level which includes an analysis of components of population change, that is natural change, national migration, and international migration. The component analysis also includes 'other' change which can include boundary adjustment and military population moves. The data for Halton 2012-2023 is shown in Figure 2.3. Over the period 2012 to 2023, natural change has been an important driver; migration between Halton and the rest of the UK has fluctuated; during 2022 and 2023 international migration has become the dominant influence on population change.
- 2.51 A detailed analysis of migration over the period 2014 to 2023 indicates that the overall average net gain through migration has been +275 people. There has been an annual net gain from within the UK of 84 and a further 191 has been a net gain through international migration. Halton has been gaining population from Knowsley, Liverpool, and Warrington, and population loss to Cheshire West and Chester and the rest of the North West.

Figure 2.3 Components of population change 2012 to 2023

Source: ONS Population estimates and components of population change

- 2.52 The 2024 household survey considered the extent to which households moved within Halton. Table 2.21 sets out the origin and destination of households who have moved in the past 5 years. This shows that the majority of people originating from the two main areas of Widnes and Runcorn tended to remain in the same area although there was some flow between the two. Of particular note, around 31% of moving households had moved into the borough, particularly households moving into properties in East Runcorn.

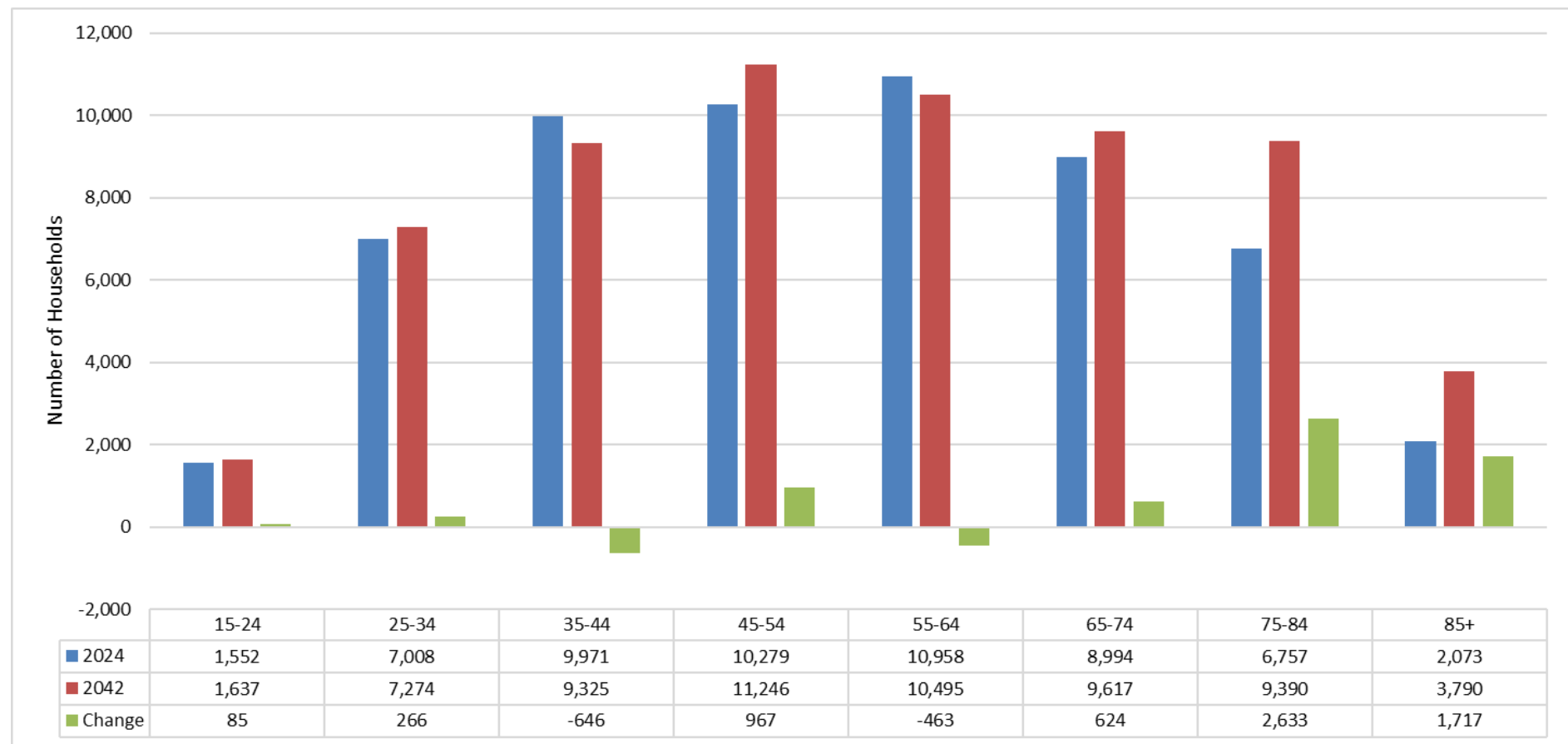
Table 2.21 Origin of moving households by current place of residence

Current area of residence	Origin				Base
	Widnes area	Runcorn area	Out of Borough	Total	
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	55.1%	9.9%	35.0%	100.0%	879
Central and Southern Widnes	59.0%	11.7%	29.2%	100.0%	1,912
East Widnes	73.6%	0.0%	26.4%	100.0%	1,128
West Runcorn	0.0%	73.0%	27.0%	100.0%	1,347
Central Runcorn	11.4%	62.0%	26.7%	100.0%	1,188
East Runcorn	5.0%	51.0%	44.0%	100.0%	1,262
Total	34.2%	34.7%	31.1%	100.0%	7,716
Widnes area	62.3%	7.9%	29.7%	100.0%	3,919
Runcorn area	5.2%	62.2%	32.6%	100.0%	3,797

Source: 2024 household survey

Household projections

- 2.53 The latest ONS 2018-based household projections provide estimates of the proportions of people who are likely to be Household Reference People by age, gender, and household type based on census data. Variant household projections are also produced.
- 2.54 According to the 2018-based projections, the total number of households is projected to increase 9% from 57,591 in 2024 to 62,774 by 2042.
- 2.55 Table 2.22 provides a detailed breakdown of household type by the age of Household Reference Person to 2042 using 2018-based household projections. Currently available data shows that the overall household type profile is not expected to change over the 2024 to 2042 period, with the dominant household types being 'one person' and 'other households with two or more adults', although the proportion of 'other households with two or more adults' is expected to increase. Additionally, as illustrated in Figure 2.4, there will be a marked increase in the number of households where the Household Reference Person is aged 65-74, 75-84, and 85 or over.

Figure 2.4 Profile of households by age of Household Reference Person in 2024 and 2042 under 2018-based projections

Source: 2018-based ONS household projections

Table 2.22 Household types and change 2024 to 2042 (by age of HRP)

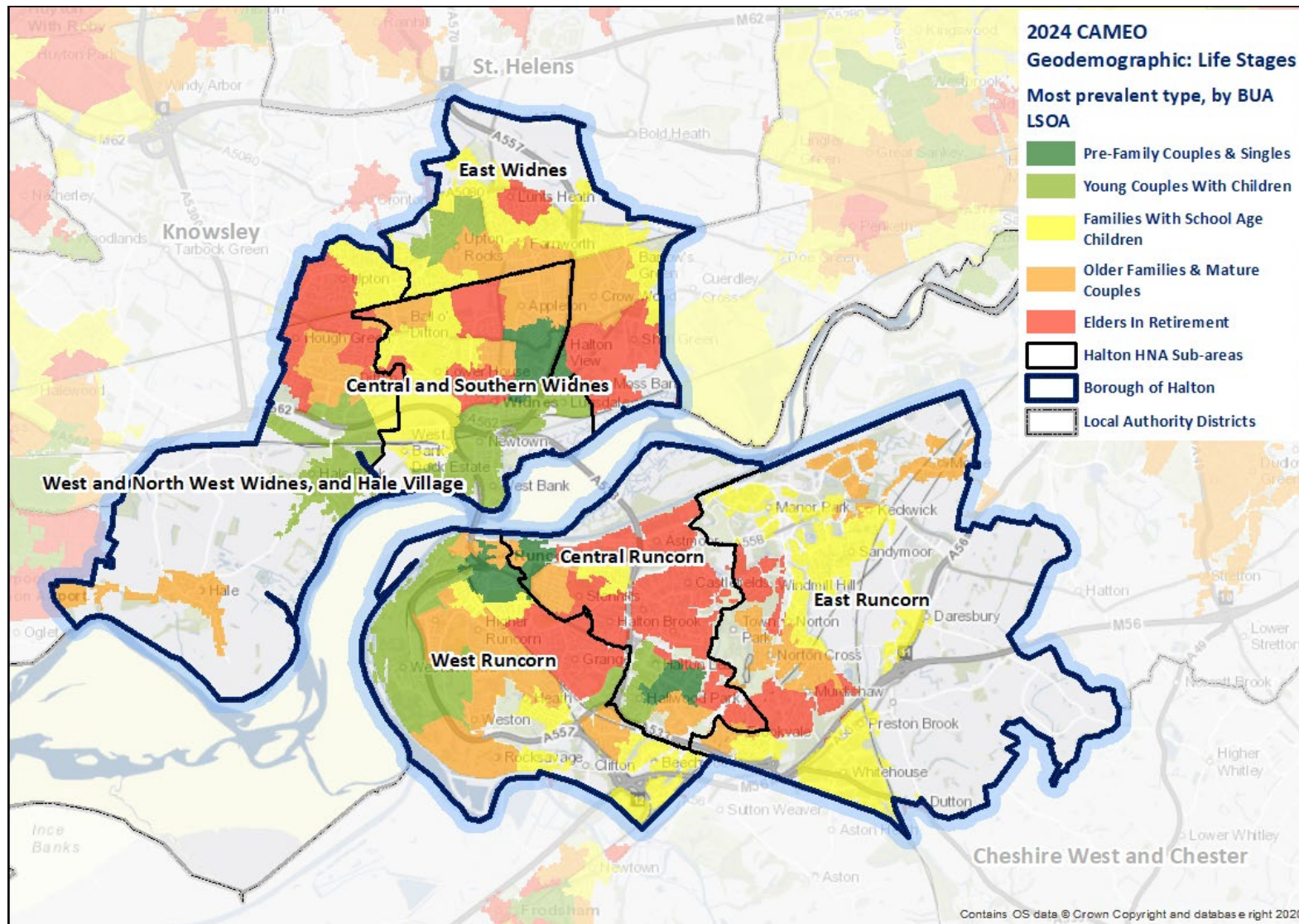
Year and household type	Age of household reference person (HRP)									
2024	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+	TOTAL	%
One person	385	1,692	2,449	2,708	3,501	3,487	3,194	1,484	18,901	32.8%
Household with 1 dependent child	586	1,796	2,434	2,053	835	227	67	5	8,003	13.9%
Household with 2 dependent children	181	1,399	2,401	1,305	260	33	16	5	5,600	9.7%
Household with 3 or more dependent children	93	749	1,036	335	60	1	0	0	2,275	3.9%
Other households with two or more adults	307	1,373	1,651	3,878	6,302	5,245	3,479	579	22,813	39.6%
Total	1,552	7,008	9,971	10,279	10,958	8,994	6,757	2,073	57,591	100.0%
2042	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+	TOTAL	%
One person	403	1,765	2,304	2,939	3,337	3,734	4,543	2,712	21,738	34.6%
Household with 1 dependent child	607	1,860	2,262	2,264	799	234	91	8	8,125	12.9%
Household with 2 dependent children	194	1,447	2,243	1,451	246	33	22	10	5,646	9.0%
Household with 3 or more dependent children	101	773	967	374	56	1	0	0	2,272	3.6%
Other households with two or more adults	333	1,429	1,550	4,217	6,057	5,615	4,734	1,059	24,994	39.8%
Total	1,637	7,274	9,325	11,246	10,495	9,617	9,390	3,790	62,774	100.0%
Change 2024-2042	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+	TOTAL	%
One person	18	73	-145	231	-164	246	1,350	1,228	2,837	54.7%
Household with 1 dependent child	21	64	-172	210	-36	7	23	3	121	2.3%
Household with 2 dependent children	13	48	-158	147	-14	0	5	5	46	0.9%
Household with 3 or more dependent children	8	24	-69	40	-4	0	0	0	-3	-0.1%
Other households with two or more adults	26	56	-101	340	-244	370	1,255	480	2,181	42.1%
Total	85	266	-646	967	-463	624	2,633	1,717	5,183	100.0%

Source: ONS 2018-based household projections (Principal projection)

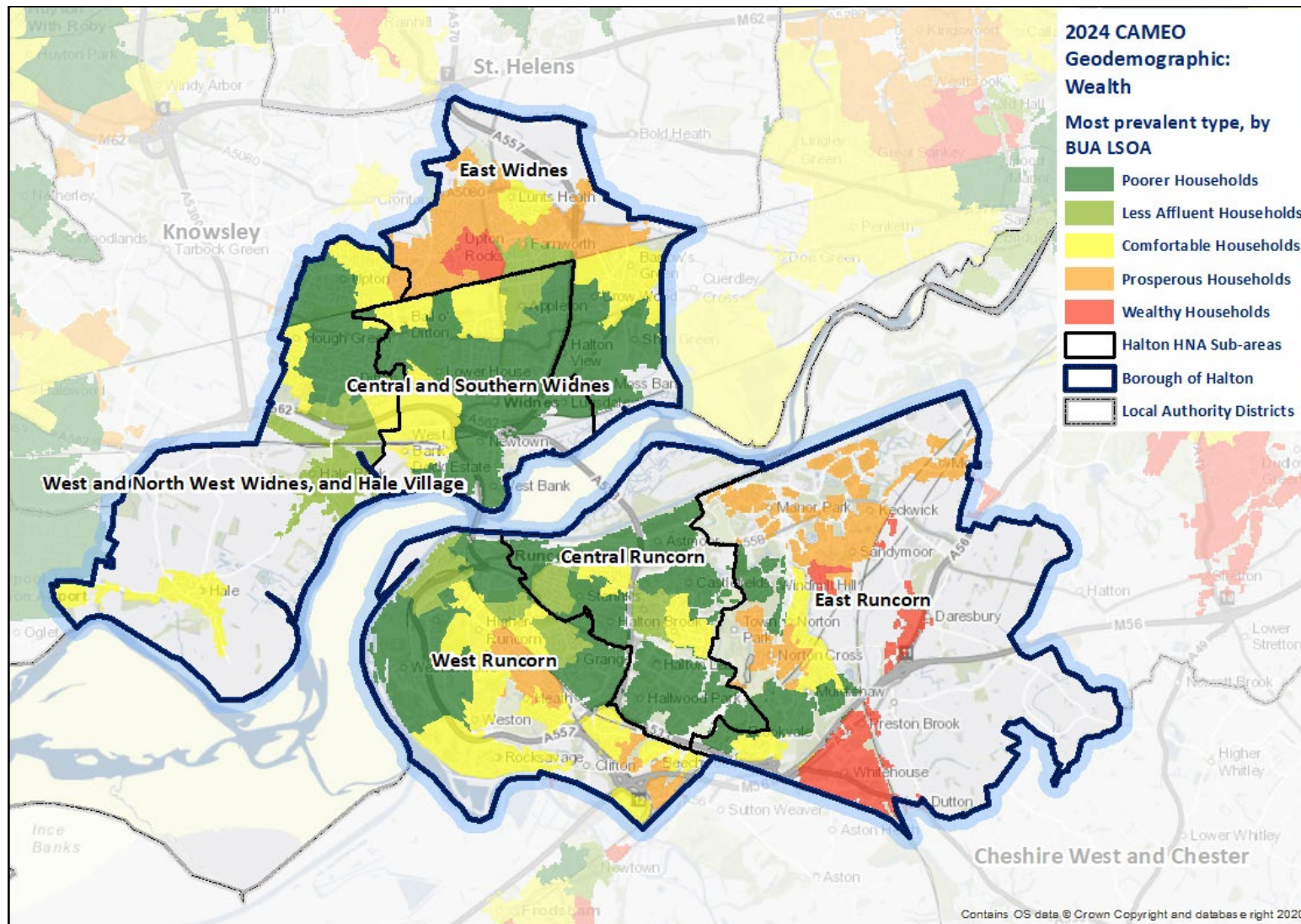
General household characteristics

- 2.56 The range of households living in Halton is illustrated in Maps 2.3 and 2.4. Map 2.3 illustrates the distribution of key household typologies and indicates clusters of pre family households in Central and Southern Widnes, West Runcorn, and Central Runcorn. Young couples with children extend from the pre family households with East Widnes as an additional sub-area with these households. Families with school age children are spread across the borough and similar to households with older families and mature couples. There are clusters of elders in retirement across all sub-areas. East Runcorn is the only sub-area with families with school age children, older families, and mature couples and elders in retirement.
- 2.57 Map 2.4 considers income groups, broadly illustrating that lower income households are the most dominant household across the borough with the exception of East Widnes. East Widnes and East Runcorn are the only two sub-areas with comfortable, prosperous, and wealthy households.

Map 2.3 Household characteristics: household type by LSOA, 2024



Source: CAMEO UK

Map 2.4 Household characteristics: income type by LSOA, 2024

Source: CAMEO UK

Income data

- 2.58 There are a range of income data sources available to inform this study which are now summarised. 2024 CAMEO income data provide range, quartile, and average data of gross household income by sub-area. ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings data provides gross earnings of economically active residents at the borough level. These two sources can provide a realistic estimate of earnings and household income across Halton (Table 2.23).
- 2.59 The 2024 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings resident-based data indicates lower quartile earnings are £27,162, median earnings are £36,077, and average earnings are £41,550 across Halton.

Table 2.23 Annual gross household income by sub-area

Sub-area	Annual gross household income											
	<£10k	£10k to <£20k	£20k to <£30k	£30k to <£40k	£40k to <£50k	£50k to <£75k	£75k or more	Unknown	Total	Lower Quartile	Median	Average
Central and Southern Widnes	9.0%	51.8%	24.2%	5.0%	2.6%	1.4%	0.2%	5.7%	100.0%	£15,000	£15,000	£19,402
Central Runcorn	14.6%	54.9%	19.1%	4.3%	1.5%	0.0%	0.3%	5.3%	100.0%	£15,000	£15,000	£17,055
East Runcorn	3.2%	20.3%	12.3%	14.0%	17.9%	20.8%	2.7%	8.8%	100.0%	£15,000	£35,000	£37,944
East Widnes	2.6%	18.1%	20.8%	17.3%	17.3%	21.0%	0.8%	2.0%	100.0%	£25,000	£35,000	£36,460
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	5.2%	44.8%	20.4%	16.4%	6.1%	2.0%	0.2%	4.9%	100.0%	£15,000	£15,000	£23,137
West Runcorn	7.4%	39.6%	25.8%	15.1%	7.0%	2.5%	0.0%	2.6%	100.0%	£15,000	£25,000	£23,351
Borough of Halton	6.8%	37.8%	20.8%	12.4%	8.9%	7.9%	0.7%	4.7%	100.0%	£15,000	£25,000	£26,310

Source: CAMEO

Summary

- 2.60 Across Halton, there are an estimated 58,863 dwellings and 55,945 households and 2.4% of dwellings are vacant.
- 2.61 In terms of occupied dwelling stock:
- 68.7% of occupied dwellings are owner-occupied, 7.0% are private rented, and 24.3% are affordable (including social/affordable renting and shared ownership);
 - 78.8% of dwellings are houses (36.7% terraced, 27.0% semi-detached, and 15.1% detached), 12.2% are flats, and 9.0% are bungalows; and
 - 7.3% of dwellings have one bedroom, 23.1% two bedrooms, 57.3% three bedrooms, and 12.3% four or more bedrooms.
- 2.62 Over the 10 years 2014/15 to 2022/2023, 3,851 net new dwellings have been built across Halton. In the past 5 years to 2022/2023, an annual net average of 362 dwellings have been built across the borough.
- 2.63 2018-based projections estimate a population in 2024 of 131,417 and this is projected to increase by 5,653 to 137,071 by 2042, with the largest increases in the 65-74, 75-84, and 85+ age categories. 2018-based ONS household projections suggest a total of 57,591 households (which is higher than the 2021 Census figure) and this is projected to increase by 5,183 (9.0%) to 62,774 by 2042. Largest increases will be one person and other households with two or more adults, and households with a Household Reference Person aged 65 and over.

3. Price, Rents, and Affordability

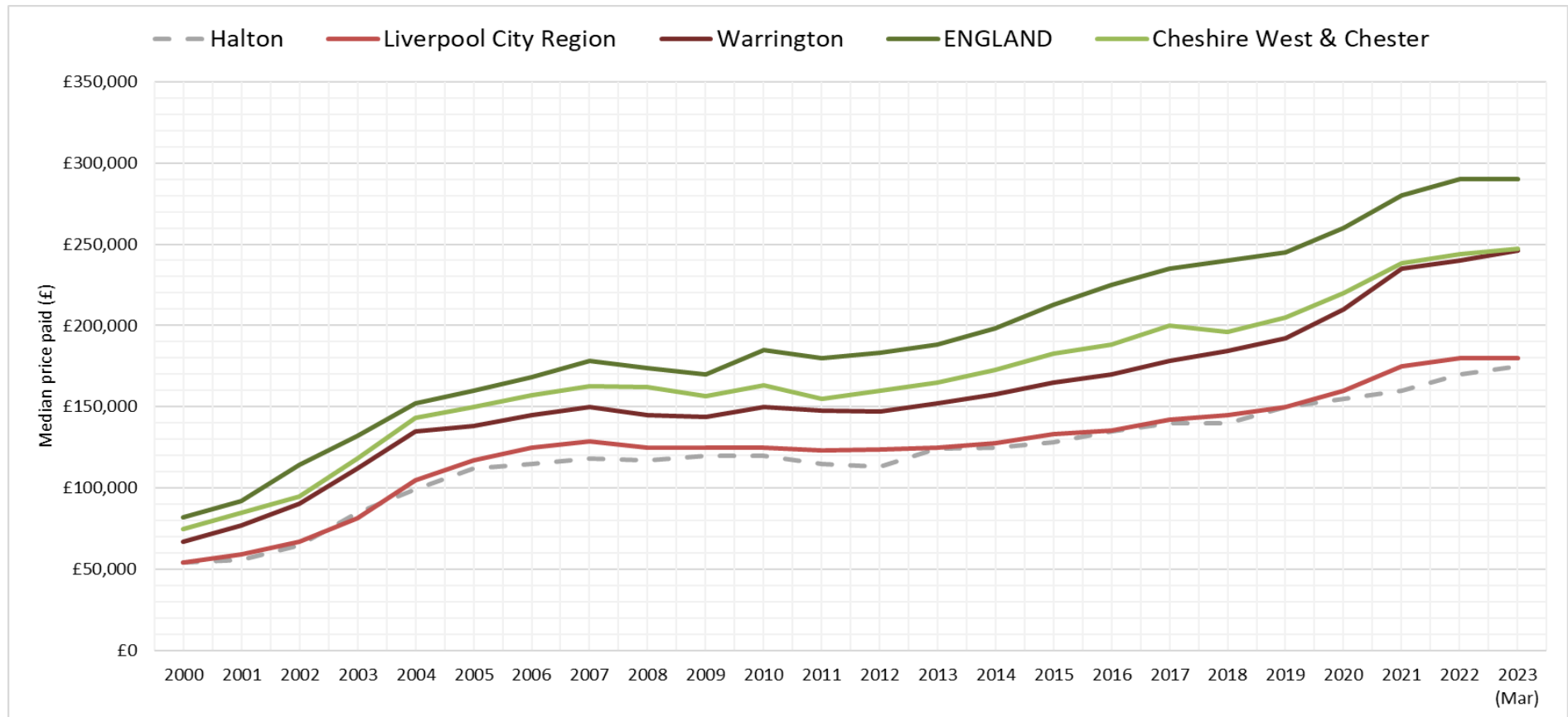
Introduction

- 3.1 This chapter sets out the cost of buying and renting properties across Halton. The affordability of tenure options is then considered with reference to local incomes along with the incomes of key workers and households on minimum/living wages.

House price trends

- 3.2 Figure 3.1 shows how house prices in the borough area have changed over the period 2000 to March 2023, based on full-year Land Registry price paid data. This is compared with Liverpool City Region, Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester, and England.
- 3.3 Median house prices in the borough have been broadly in line with Liverpool City Region but lower than those for Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester, and England.
- 3.4 Overall, median prices have increased from £54,000 in the year 2000 to £174,750 in March 2023, an increase of 223.6%. Table 3.1 sets out comparative house price change over this period, which indicates that this rate of growth is lower than that experienced across Liverpool City Region (233.6%), North West (+235.0%), and England as a whole (+253.7%). Lower quartile prices shown in Table 3.2 have increased from £35,000 in 2000 to £125,000 in March 2023, an increase of 257.1%.

Figure 3.1 Median house price trends 2000 to 2023 (March): Halton, Liverpool City Region, Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester, and England



Source: ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas (HPSSAs) LQ and Median comparator 1995 onwards

Table 3.1 Comparative median house price change 2000-2023 with neighbouring districts, Liverpool City Region, North West, and England

Location	Median price (£) 2000	Median price (£) 2023 (Mar)	% Change 2000-2023
ENGLAND	£82,000	£290,000	253.7%
North West	£49,995	£167,500	235.0%
Liverpool City Region	£53,950	£180,000	233.6%
Halton	£54,000	£174,750	223.6%
Cheshire West & Chester	£75,000	£247,250	229.7%
Knowsley	£52,000	£170,000	226.9%
Liverpool	£47,500	£161,000	238.9%
Sefton	£60,000	£210,000	250.0%
St. Helens	£49,995	£167,500	235.0%
Warrington	£66,950	£246,000	267.4%
Wirral	£56,000	£200,000	257.1%

Source: ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas (HPSSAs) LQ and Median comparator 1995 onwards

Table 3.2 Comparative lower quartile house price change 2000-2023 with neighbouring districts, Liverpool City Region, North West, and England

Location	LQ price (£) 2000	LQ price (£) 2023 (Mar)	% Change 2000-2023
ENGLAND	£54,000	£190,000	251.9%
North West	£37,000	£140,000	278.4%
Liverpool City Region	£36,000	£130,000	261.1%
Halton	£35,000	£125,000	257.1%
Cheshire West & Chester	£54,475	£170,000	212.1%
Knowsley	£39,725	£129,000	224.7%
Liverpool	£30,163	£120,000	297.8%
Sefton	£45,000	£145,000	222.2%
St. Helens	£35,000	£125,000	257.1%
Warrington	£45,000	£170,000	277.8%
Wirral	£37,700	£140,000	271.4%

Source: ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas (HPSSAs) LQ and Median comparator 1995 onwards

- 3.5 Table 3.3 sets out the change in house prices by sub-area over the period 2007 to 2024 (Note: Land Registry ward level analysis is only possible from 2007). During this period, median prices increased by +35.6% overall but varies considerably at sub-area level. The table also sets out the lower quartile data for the same period and shows an overall increase of +22.3% with considerable variation at borough level.

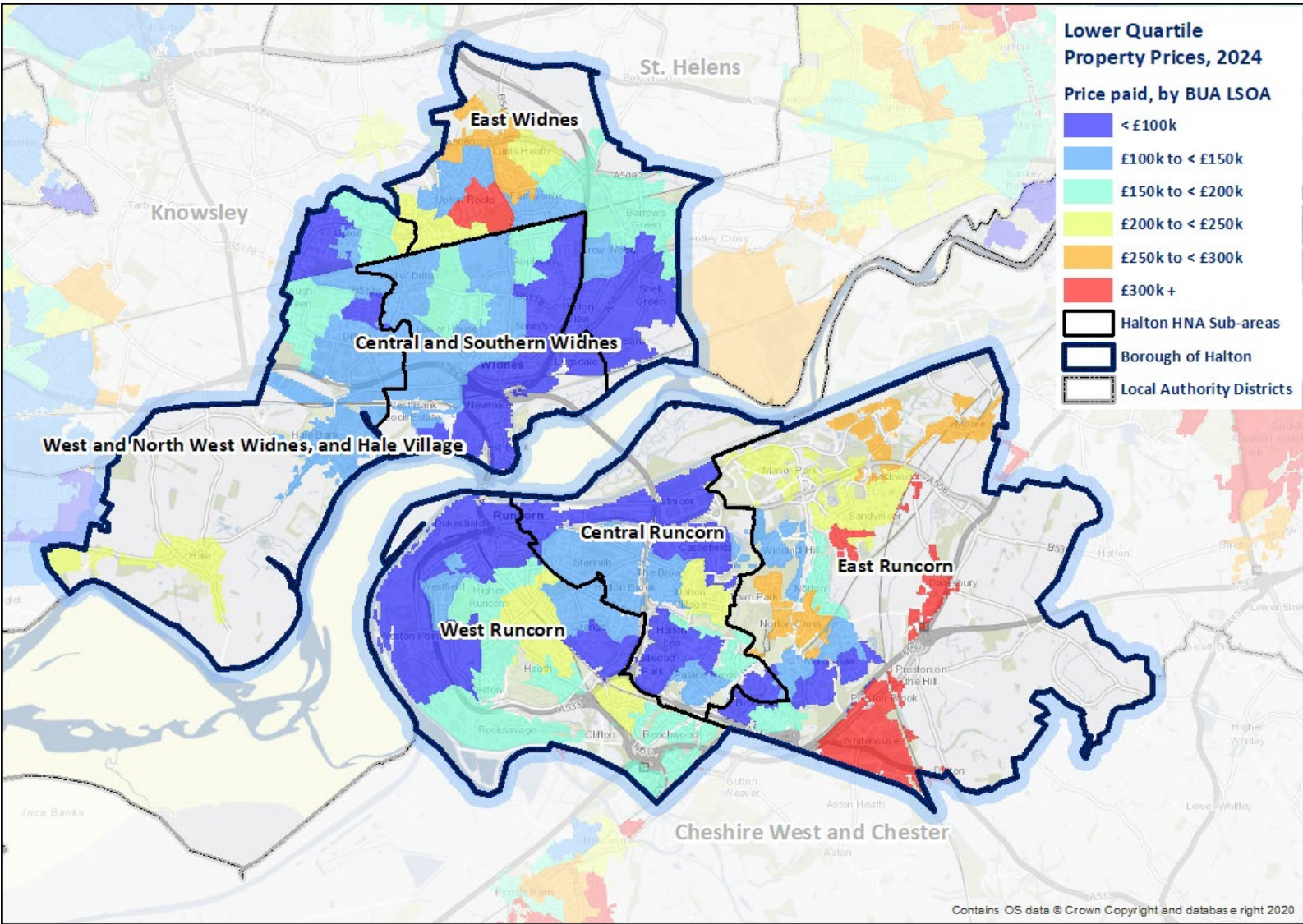
Table 3.3 Comparative lower quartile and median house price change 2007-2024 by sub-area

Sub-area	LQ house price			Median house price		
	2007	2024	% change	2007	2024	% change
Central and Southern Widnes	£84,500	£100,000	18.3%	£98,596	£126,500	28.3%
Central Runcorn	£83,000	£95,000	14.5%	£104,500	£131,250	25.6%
East Runcorn	£100,750	£135,000	34.0%	£150,250	£201,995	34.4%
East Widnes	£116,223	£160,000	37.7%	£146,748	£245,000	67.0%
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	£95,000	£120,000	26.3%	£118,000	£160,000	35.6%
West Runcorn	£86,500	£104,000	20.2%	£110,000	£151,000	37.3%
Borough of Halton	£92,000	£112,500	22.3%	£118,000	£160,000	35.6%

Source: 2024 Zoopla Limited

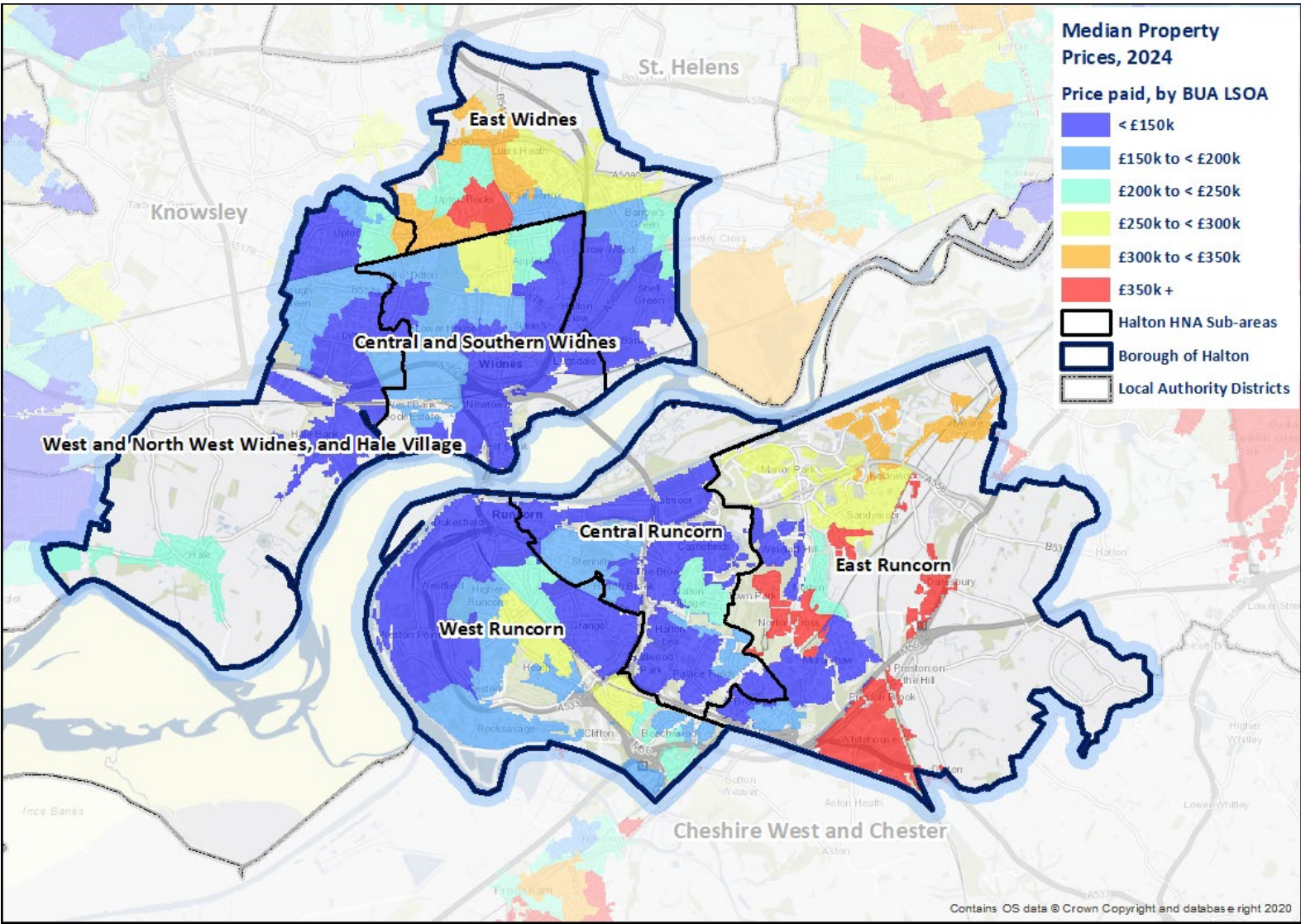
- 3.6 Maps 3.1 and 3.2 provide an illustration of lower quartile and median prices using Lower Super Output Area. The maps show a range of market prices with the lowest prices clustered across the centre of the borough. Property prices generally increase towards the outskirts of the borough with the highest prices in East Widnes and East Runcorn.

Map 3.1 Lower quartile house prices by built up areas with the LSOAs of Halton



Source: HM Land Registry data © Crown copyright and database right 2024. This data is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0

Map 3.2 Median house prices by built up areas with the LSOAs of Halton



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Private renting

- 3.7 Table 3.4 provides an overview of the cost of renting privately across the borough and compares prices with Liverpool City Region, the North West, and England. Over this time, lower quartile rents across Halton have increased by 51.6% and median rents have increased by 59.2%. These increases are below those experienced across the Liverpool City Region, the North West, and England. Table 3.5 summarises 2024 price data by sub-area (note this is a partial year's data and full analysis for regional and national data has not yet been prepared).

Table 3.4 Comparative lower quartile and median rental price 2010-2024

	Lower quartile price by year (£)		
Location	2010	2024	% change 2010-2024
Halton	£446	£676	51.6%
Liverpool City Region	£446	£693	55.4%
North West	£472	£776	64.4%
ENGLAND	£598	£997	66.7%

	Median price by year (£)		
Location	2010	2024	% change 2010-2024
Halton	£498	£793	59.2%
Liverpool City Region	£546	£871	59.5%
North West	£546	£997	82.6%
ENGLAND	£893	£1,573	76.1%

Source: © 2024 Zoopla Limited

Table 3.5 Lower quartile and median rents by sub-area 2024

Sub-area	Lower quartile (£ each month)	Median (£ each month)
Central and Southern Widnes	£594	£750
Central Runcorn	£576	£724
East Runcorn	£797	£849
East Widnes	£750	£897
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	£797	£849
West Runcorn	£676	£750
Borough of Halton	£676	£793

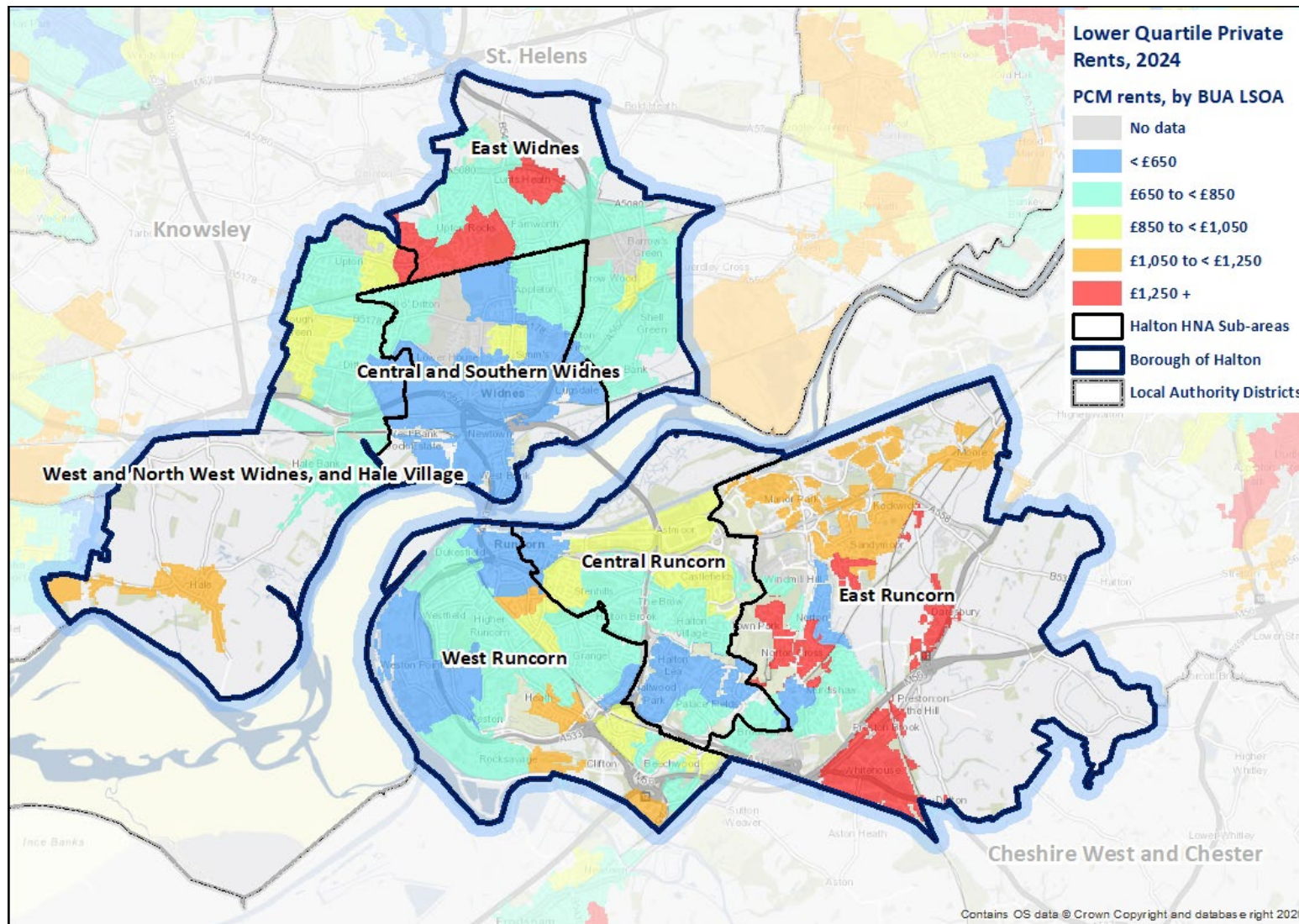
- 3.8 The amount that can be claimed for assistance with rental costs is capped to a local allowance that varies by area. The cap is estimated by the VOA and published in the form of a Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for a broad market area, (BRMA). Halton is located within the North Cheshire BRMA. Table 3.6 summarises the LHA for the borough BRMA and the variance between lower quartile rents and the LHA.

Table 3.6 Broad Rental Market Area Local Housing Allowance Rates (April 2024) – North Cheshire BRMA

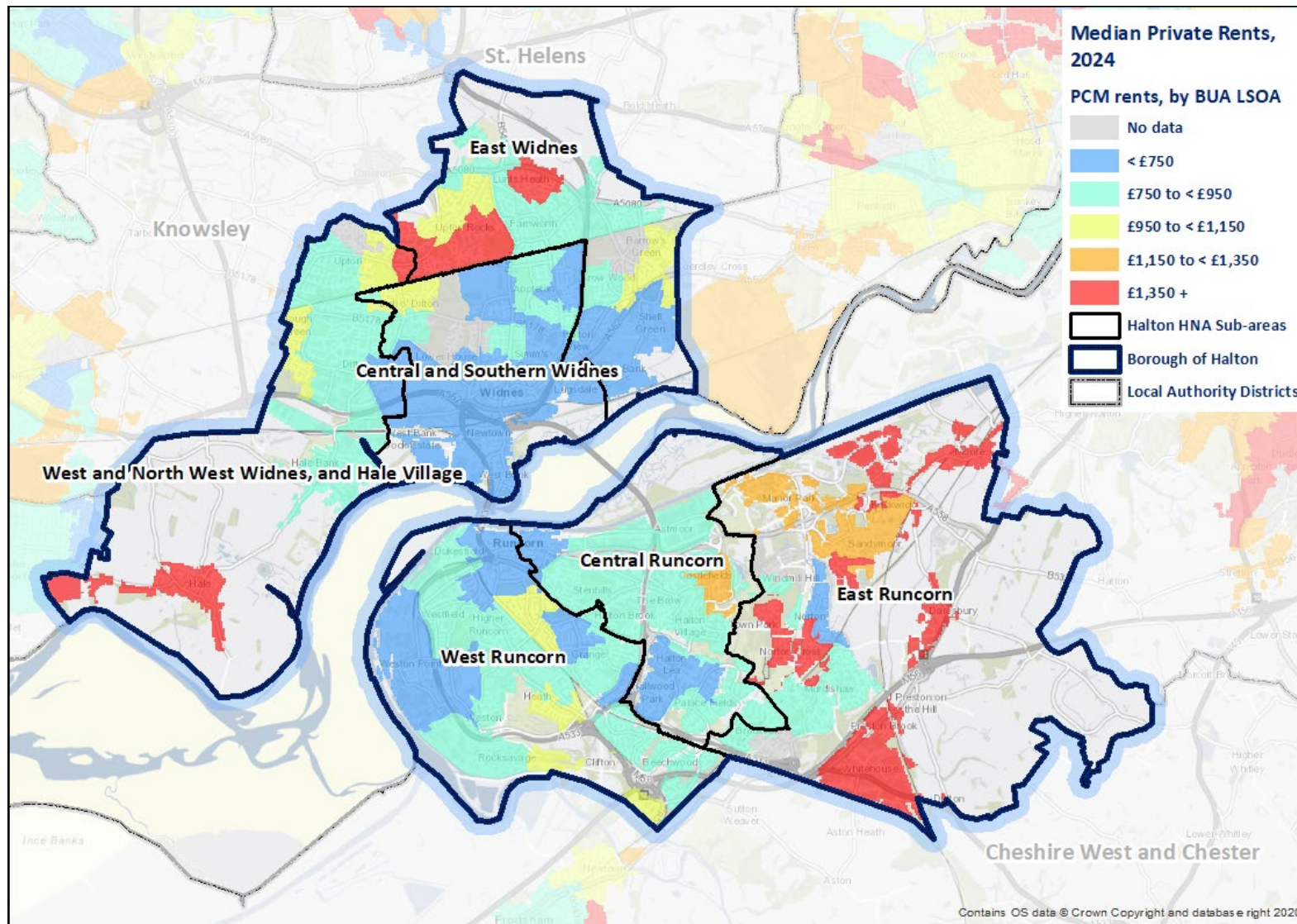
No. of bedrooms	Rate per week (£)	Monthly rate	2024 LQ rent	Variance between LQ rent and LHA
Shared accommodation	£66.50	£288	£425	-£137
1 bedroom	£97.81	£424	£451	-£27
2 bedroom	£115.07	£499	£650	-£151
3 bedroom	£136.93	£593	£750	-£157
4 bedroom	£201.37	£873	£956	-£83

Source: © 2024 Zoopla Limited

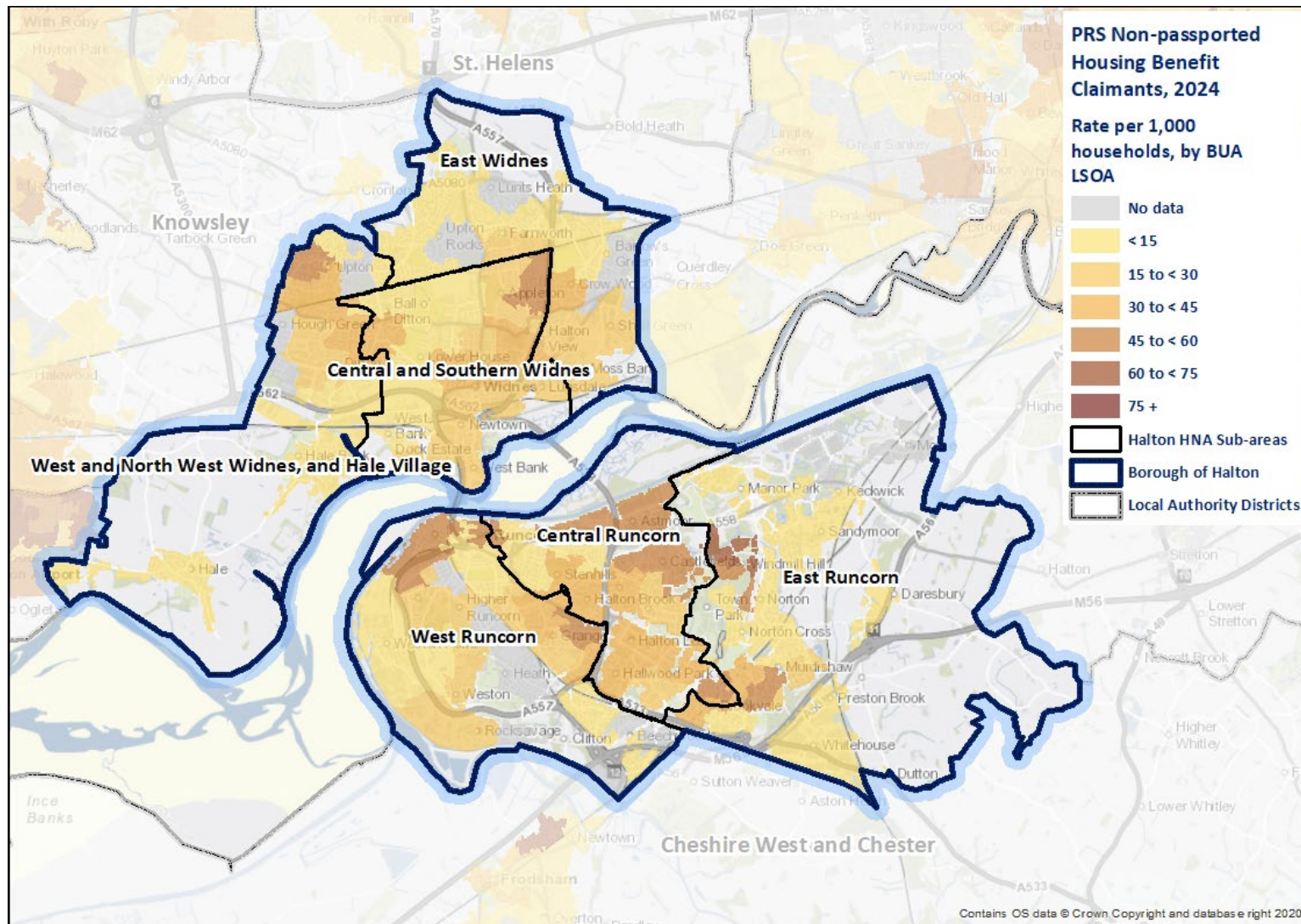
- 3.9 More detailed rental data within built-up areas at a small area level (Lower Super Output Areas) are presented in Map 3.3 (lower quartile) and Map 3.4 (median). This illustrates that rents are generally lower in Central and Southern Widnes, West Runcorn and Central Runcorn. There are small pockets of higher rents in East Widnes, East Runcorn, and West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village sub-areas.
- 3.10 The private rented sector accommodates a proportion of low-income households that are eligible for assistance with rental costs. Map 3.5 illustrates the proportion of households in receipt of housing benefit assistance across the borough. This shows a particularly high concentration in the south of the borough, particularly in West Runcorn and Central Runcorn sub-areas. The data relates to non-passported benefits which means that households are eligible for Housing Benefit irrespective of whether they receive other benefits. Passport benefits are benefits which people are entitled to because of their entitlement to other benefits.

Map 3.3 2024 lower quartile rents across Halton by built up areas within LSOAs

Source: Zoopla Lettings 2024

Map 3.4 2024 median rents across Halton by built up areas within LSOAs

Source: Zoopla Lettings 2024

Map 3.5 Private Rented Sector Non-Passported Housing Benefit 2024

Source: 2024 DWP Stat Xplore

Relative affordability

- 3.11 The relative affordability of open market dwellings in Halton is compared with neighbouring local authorities in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. These tables are produced by the MHCLG, based on a ratio of earnings to house prices using Land Registry Price Paid and ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings data.
- 3.12 In terms of relative affordability based on median workplace-based ratios, at 4.6x earnings, Halton has a lower ratio than Cheshire West and Chester and ranks lower than its neighbouring authorities (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 Relative affordability of median prices by local authority area, North West, and England (workplace-based and residence-based)

Locality	2023 Median Workplace-based	2023 Median Residence-based
Halton	4.6	5.0
Cheshire West & Chester	7.4	7.0
Knowsley	5.3	4.9
Liverpool	4.6	4.9
Sefton	6.4	6.2
St. Helens	5.6	5.2
Warrington	7.2	7.3
Wirral	6.7	5.8
North West	6.1	6.1
ENGLAND	8.3	8.3

Sources: ONS Ratio of house price to residence-based earnings

Relative affordability of housing tenure options and defining genuinely affordable housing

- 3.13 The relative cost of alternative housing options across the borough and sub-areas has been considered from two perspectives. Firstly, analysis considers prevailing prices at housing market sub-area level across a range of market and affordable tenures and the incomes required to afford these properties. Secondly, analysis considers what is genuinely affordable to households based on local incomes and assumptions around the proportion of income that should be spent on renting and the multiples of income for buying. The analysis of what is genuinely affordable also considers the incomes of selected key workers and those on minimum and living wages.
- 3.14 The starting point for assessing thresholds for what is affordable and not affordable are as follows:
- For renting, 25% of gross household income is used as the 'tipping point' for affordability, with properties not affordable if more than 25% of income is spent on rent. There is no official guidance on what proportion of income should be used. Former CLG SHMA Practice Guidance (2007) recommended 25% and Shelter suggest using 35% of net income; and

- For buying, affordability is based on a 3.5x gross household income multiple. Former CLG SHMA Practice Guidance (2007) recommended a 3.5x multiple for a household with a single earner and 2.9x for a dual earner.
- 3.15 The former 2007 SHMA guidance did note that local circumstances could justify higher figures being used for affordable renting and that allowances should be made for access to capital that could be used towards the cost of home ownership.
- 3.16 Mortgage lending practices would suggest that 4.75x a single or joint income could be considered. This is the maximum single or joint household income multiple offered by First Direct July 2020.
- 3.17 Based on this and to reflect the specific pressures experienced in Halton, the principal assumption considered by arc4 with reference to affordability is:
- For buying up to 3.5x gross household income; and
 - For renting up to 25% gross household income.
- 3.18 Table 3.8 sets out the range of market and affordable tenures considered in analysis and any assumptions relating to the cost of properties. The cost of alternative affordable and market tenure options by sub-area is set out in Table 3.9. Table 3.10 shows the gross household income needed to afford the tenure based on the 25% rental and 3.5x income multiples. Table 3.11 considers the impact of deposits on sale price.
- 3.19 This analysis indicates that for open market housing at borough-level, the minimum income required is £32,448 (for lower quartile or entry-level renting) or £28,929 (for lower quartile or entry-level house prices). These amounts do vary by sub-area, for example income requirements for entry-level renting range between £27,648 in Central Runcorn and £38,256 in East Runcorn and West and North West Widnes and Hale Village sub-areas. For entry-level home ownership, income requirements range between £24,429 in Central Runcorn and £41,143 in the East Widnes sub-area.
- 3.20 Figure 3.2 summarises in graphical form the relative affordability of alternative tenures at the borough level, setting out the income and deposit required for different options set against prevailing lower quartile and median earnings. It uses lower quartile and median earnings derived from the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings for 2024.
- 3.21 This indicates that only social rent and shared ownership are affordable for households with lower quartile earners. For households with median income earners, a broader range of tenure options are available, including affordable rent, open market renting, and discounted home ownership.

Table 3.8 Summary of tenure (including affordable options), price assumptions, and data sources

Tenure	Tenure price assumptions	Affordability assumptions	Data source
Social rent	2024 average prices	25% of income	Regulator of Social Housing Statistical Data Return 2024
Affordable rent	80% of median market rent	25% of income	GLA 2024
Market rent – lower quartile	2024 prices	25% of income	Zoopla 2024
Market rent – median	2024 prices	25% of income	Zoopla 2024
Market sale – lower quartile	2024 prices	90% LTV, 3.5x income	Land Registry Price Paid
Market sale – median	2024 prices	90% LTV, 3.5x income	Land Registry Price Paid
Market sale – average	2024 prices	90% LTV, 3.5x income	Land Registry Price Paid
Shared ownership (50%)	Total price based on median price and 50% ownership. Mortgage based on 40%. 10% deposit required; annual service charge £395, annual rent based on 2.75% of remaining equity.	90% LTV, 3.5x income for equity and 25% of income for rental element	Assumptions applied to Land Registry Price Paid data
Shared ownership (25%)	Total price based on median price and 25% ownership. Mortgage based on 20%, 5% deposit required, annual service charge £395. Annual rent based on 2.75% of remaining equity.	90% LTV, 3.5x income for equity and 25% of income for rental element	Assumptions applied to Land Registry Price Paid data
Help to Buy	Total price based on median price. Mortgage based on 75% equity. 20% loan and deposit of 5%. Loan fee of 1.75% in year 6 of outstanding equity loan increasing annually from yr7 at RPI+1%.	70% LTV, 3.5x income	Assumptions applied to Land Registry Price Paid data
Discounted home ownership 30%	70% of median price (note this is comparable to the proposed government <u>First Home</u> tenure option). Mortgage based on discounted price, minus 10% deposit on discounted price.	Discounted home ownership 30%	Assumptions applied to Land Registry Price Paid data
Discounted home ownership 25%	75% of median price mortgage based on discounted price, minus 10% deposit on discounted price.	Discounted home ownership 25%	Assumptions applied to Land Registry Price Paid data
Discounted home ownership 20%	80% of median price mortgage based on discounted price, minus 10% deposit on discounted price.	Discounted home ownership 20%	Assumptions applied to Land Registry Price Paid data

Table 3.9 Cost of alternative tenure options by sub-area and Halton

Tenure option	Price / equity requirement (2024)	Sub-area					
		Halton	Central and Southern Widnes	Central Runcorn	East Runcorn	East Widnes	West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village
Social rent (average)	£385	£385	£385	£385	£385	£385	£385
Affordable rent	£634	£600	£579	£679	£718	£679	£600
Market rent – lower quartile	£676	£594	£576	£797	£750	£797	£676
Market rent – median	£793	£750	£724	£849	£897	£849	£750
Market rent – average	£848	£733	£722	£1,017	£1,158	£1,025	£793
Market sale – lower quartile	£112,500	£100,000	£95,000	£135,000	£160,000	£120,000	£104,000
Market sale – median	£160,000	£126,500	£131,250	£201,995	£245,000	£160,000	£151,000
Market sale – average	£191,373	£150,370	£141,310	£241,770	£259,041	£173,857	£171,084
Shared ownership (50%)	£80,000	£63,250	£65,625	£100,998	£122,500	£80,000	£75,500
Shared ownership (25%)	£40,000	£31,625	£32,813	£50,499	£61,250	£40,000	£37,750
Help to Buy	£120,000	£94,875	£98,438	£151,496	£183,750	£120,000	£113,250
Discounted home ownership (30%)	£112,000	£88,550	£91,875	£141,397	£171,500	£112,000	£105,700
Discounted home ownership (25%)	£120,000	£94,875	£98,438	£151,496	£183,750	£120,000	£113,250
Discounted home ownership (20%)	£128,000	£101,200	£105,000	£161,596	£196,000	£128,000	£120,800

Source: Data produced by Land Registry © Crown copyright 2024, Zoopla 2024, CLG

Table 3.10 Household income required for tenure to be affordable (based on 25% of income for rents and 3.5x income for buying) by sub-area

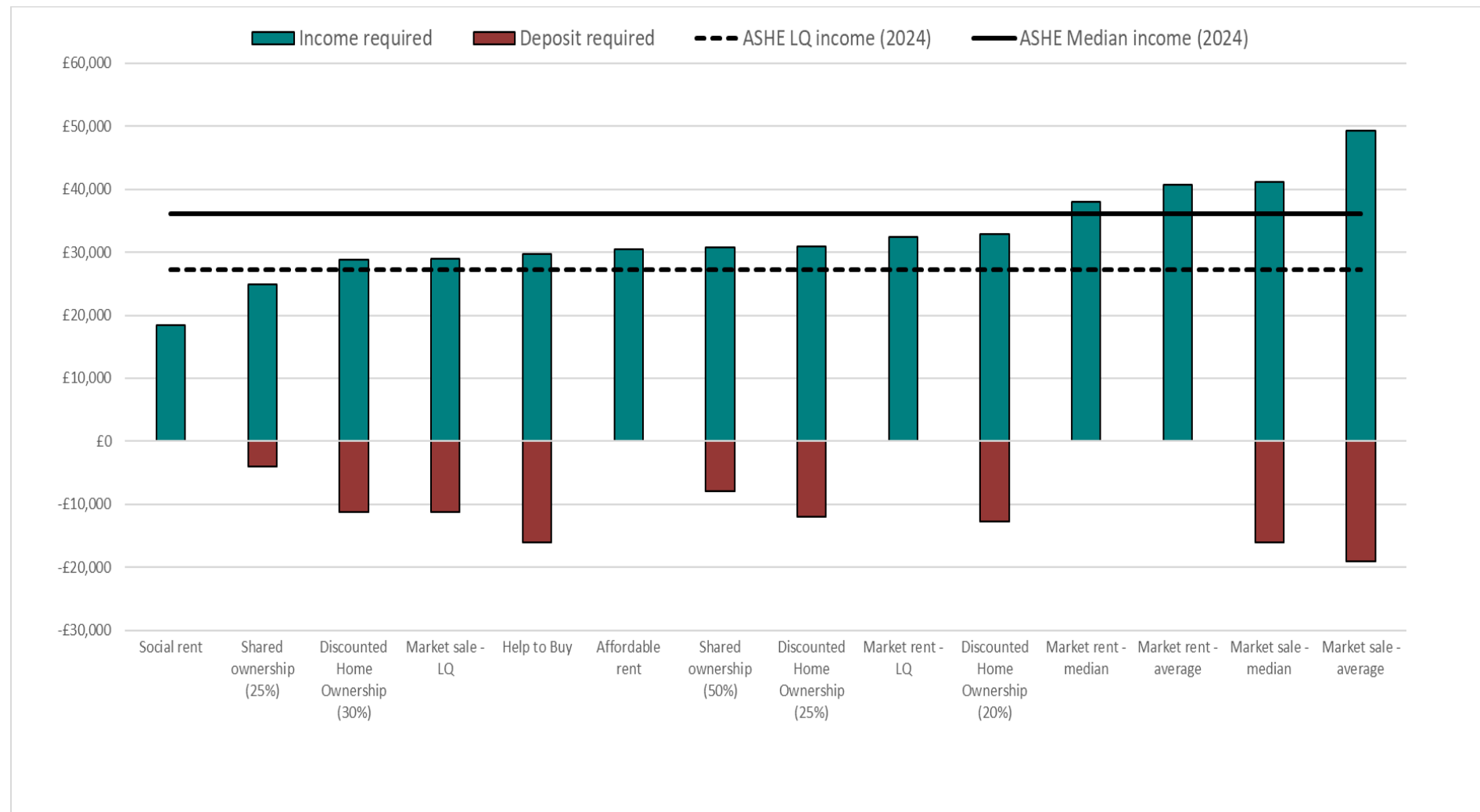
Tenure option	Income required (2024)	Sub-area					
	Halton	Central and Southern Widnes	Central Runcorn	East Runcorn	East Widnes	West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	West Runcorn
Social rent (average)	£18,466	£18,466	£18,466	£18,466	£18,466	£18,466	£18,466
Affordable rent	£30,451	£28,800	£27,802	£32,602	£34,445	£32,602	£28,800
Market rent – lower quartile	£32,448	£28,512	£27,648	£38,256	£36,000	£38,256	£32,448
Market rent – median	£38,064	£36,000	£34,752	£40,752	£43,056	£40,752	£36,000
Market rent – average	£40,704	£35,184	£34,639	£48,810	£55,605	£49,206	£38,052
Market sale – lower quartile	£28,929	£25,714	£24,429	£34,714	£41,143	£30,857	£26,743
Market sale – median	£41,143	£32,529	£33,750	£51,942	£63,000	£41,143	£38,829
Market sale – average	£49,210	£38,667	£36,337	£62,169	£66,611	£44,706	£43,993
Shared ownership (50%)	£30,811	£24,662	£25,534	£38,521	£46,415	£30,811	£29,159
Shared ownership (25%)	£24,926	£20,008	£20,706	£31,090	£37,403	£24,926	£23,605
Help to Buy	£29,714	£23,493	£24,375	£37,513	£45,500	£29,714	£28,043
Discounted home ownership (30%)	£28,800	£22,770	£23,625	£36,359	£44,100	£28,800	£27,180
Discounted home ownership (25%)	£30,857	£24,396	£25,313	£38,956	£47,250	£30,857	£29,121
Discounted home ownership (20%)	£32,914	£26,023	£27,000	£41,553	£50,400	£32,914	£31,063

Source: Data produced by Land Registry © Crown copyright 2024, Zoopla 2024, CLG

Table 3.11 Impact of alternative deposits on sale price and income required for open market properties

Market sale price	Deposit 10%	Deposit 20%	Deposit 30%	Deposit 40%	Borough average price
Market sale – lower quartile	£101,250	£90,000	£78,750	£67,500	£112,500
Market sale – median	£144,000	£128,000	£112,000	£96,000	£160,000
Market sale – average	£172,236	£153,098	£133,961	£114,824	£191,373
Household income required (3.5x multiple)	Deposit 10%	Deposit 20%	Deposit 30%	Deposit 40%	
Market sale – lower quartile	£28,929	£25,714	£22,500	£19,286	
Market sale – median	£41,143	£36,571	£32,000	£27,429	
Market sale – average	£49,210	£43,742	£38,275	£32,807	
Household income required (5x multiple)	Deposit 10%	Deposit 20%	Deposit 30%	Deposit 40%	
Market sale – lower quartile	£20,250	£18,000	£15,750	£13,500	
Market sale – median	£28,800	£25,600	£22,400	£19,200	
Market sale – average	£34,447	£30,620	£26,792	£22,965	

Source: Data derived from Land Registry © Crown copyright 2024

Figure 3.2 Borough of Halton household income and housing costs

Source: Data produced by Land Registry © Crown copyright 2024, Zoopla 2024, CLG, ASHE 2024

Note: The deposit requirements are shown on the table as a negative number

What is genuinely affordable housing in the Halton context?

- 3.22 Having considered what a household needs to earn to afford alternative tenures, consideration is now given to the actual incomes of households across the borough and how this relates to prevailing prices. This analysis helps to establish what is genuinely affordable based on reasonable income multipliers for renting and buying. The analysis considers:
- Lower quartile and median household incomes from the 2024 CAMEO data;
 - 2024 entry-level incomes from a range of key worker occupations;
 - Incomes associated with 2024 minimum and living wages (using single, dual income, and 1.5x income measures);
 - The proportion of income a household would need to spend on rent;
 - The extent to which affordable rental options are genuinely affordable to households; and
 - The extent to which households could afford home ownership based on multiples of household income, with up to 4x being affordable.

Genuinely affordable rents

- 3.23 Having considered what a household needs to earn to afford alternative tenures, consideration is now given to the actual incomes of households across the borough and how this relates to current market prices and rents. The analysis helps to establish the extent to which different tenures are affordable and what are genuinely affordable prices and rents based on local incomes.
- 3.24 Table 3.12 focuses on the affordability of market renting and shows the cost of renting a lower quartile and median priced property by sub-area, how this compares with incomes, and what would be genuinely affordable based on local incomes. For example, lower quartile rents are £676 across Halton where the lower quartile income is £2,789. This means that a household is spending 24.2% of income on rent. To be genuinely affordable, that is, costing no more than 25% of gross income, a lower quartile rent would be £697 each month and median rent would be £930 each month. There are affordability issues across East Runcorn, East Widnes, and West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village sub-areas where households on lower quartile incomes are having to spend over 25% of their income on lower quartile rents.

Affordable home ownership options

- 3.25 Table 3.13 focuses on the affordability of home ownership and shows the cost of buying a lower quartile and median-priced property. This shows that prices are not affordable in East Runcorn and East Widnes sub-areas, with property prices above the 3.5x recommended figure. Boroughwide, a property should cost no more than £117,117 to be affordable to households on lower quartile incomes and £156,156 to households on median incomes.

Table 3.12 Affordability of private rents by sub-area

Sub-area	LQ rent and income				Median rent and income			
	Actual LQ rent 2024	2024-25 gross monthly income (1.5 x living wage)	% income required to be spent on LQ rent	What would be an affordable rent based on 25% income	Actual median rent 2024	2024-25 gross monthly income (2 x living wage)	% income required to be spent on median rent	What would be an affordable rent based on 25% income
Central and Southern Widnes	£594	£2,789	21.3	£697	£750	£3,718	20.2	£930
Central Runcorn	£576	£2,789	20.7	£697	£724	£3,718	19.5	£930
East Runcorn	£797	£2,789	28.6	£697	£849	£3,718	22.8	£930
East Widnes	£750	£2,789	26.9	£697	£897	£3,718	24.1	£930
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	£797	£2,789	28.6	£697	£849	£3,718	22.8	£930
West Runcorn	£676	£2,789	24.2	£697	£750	£3,718	20.2	£930
Borough of Halton	£676	£2,789	24.2	£697	£793	£3,718	21.3	£930

Sources: CAMEO

Key

Up to and including 25% of income	24
Between 25% and 35% of income	32
35% or more of income	40

Table 3.13 Affordability of owner-occupation by sub-area

Sub-area	LQ price and income				Median price and income			
	Actual LQ price 2024	2024-25 gross annual income (1.5 x living wage)	Income multiple required (assumes 10% deposit)	What would be an affordable property based on a 3.5x income multiple	Actual median price 2024	2024-25 gross annual income (2 x living wage)	Income multiple required (assumes 10% deposit)	What would be an affordable property based on a 3.5x income multiple
Central and Southern Widnes	£100,000	£33,462	2.7	£117,117	£126,500	£44,616	2.6	£156,156
Central Runcorn	£95,000	£33,462	2.6	£117,117	£131,250	£44,616	2.6	£156,156
East Runcorn	£135,000	£33,462	3.6	£117,117	£201,995	£44,616	4.1	£156,156
East Widnes	£160,000	£33,462	4.3	£117,117	£245,000	£44,616	4.9	£156,156
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	£120,000	£33,462	3.2	£117,117	£160,000	£44,616	3.2	£156,156
West Runcorn	£104,000	£33,462	2.8	£117,117	£151,000	£44,616	3.0	£156,156
Borough of Halton	£112,500	£33,462	3.0	£117,117	£160,000	£44,616	3.2	£156,156

Sources: CAMEO

Key

Up to 3.5x of income	2.9
Between 3.5x and 5x of income	4.2
5x or more of income	6.2

Affordability of prices and rents to selected key workers and households on minimum/living wages

- 3.26 The extent to which boroughwide open market rents are affordable to selected key workers and households on minimum and living wages are explored in Table 3.14. Most key workers on entry-level grades are having to spend more than 25% of their income on rent.
- 3.27 Table 3.15 considers the income multiples needed to buy a property based on the incomes of selected key workers and households on minimum/living wages. Analysis assumed that a 10% deposit was available and indicates that multiples in excess of 3.5x were generally needed when buying a property.

Table 3.14 Incomes of key workers and households on minimum/living wage and rental affordability

Income/ Occupation/ Wage	Gross household income 2024 (Annual £)	Gross household income 2024 (Monthly £)	LQ Rent	Median Rent	LQ Rent	Median Rent
Police officer						
Pay Point 2	£31,164	£2,597	26.0	30.5	£676	£793
Pay Point 4	£33,690	£2,808	24.1	28.2	£676	£793
Nurse						
Band 1	£23,614	£1,968	34.4	40.3	£676	£793
Band 3	£24,071	£2,006	33.7	39.5	£676	£793
Band 5	£29,969	£2,497	27.1	31.8	£676	£793
Fire officer						
Trainee	£28,265	£2,355	28.7	33.7	£676	£793
Competent	£37,675	£3,140	21.5	25.3	£676	£793
Teacher						
Unqualified (min)	£21,731	£1,811	37.3	43.8	£676	£793
Main pay range (min)	£31,650	£2,638	25.6	30.1	£676	£793
Minimum/Living Wage						
Age 21 and over						
Single household	£22,308	£1,859	36.4	42.7	£676	£793
1xFull-time, 1xPart-time	£33,462	£2,789	24.2	28.4	£676	£793
Two working adults	£44,616	£3,718	18.2	21.3	£676	£793
Age between 18 and 20						
Single household	£16,770	£1,398	48.4	56.7	£676	£793
1xFull-time, 1xPart-time	£25,155	£2,096	32.2	37.8	£676	£793
Two working adults	£33,540	£2,795	24.2	28.4	£676	£793

Key

	More than 35% of income spent on rent
	Between 25% and 35% of income spent on rent
	Less than 25% of income spent on rent

Table 3.15 Incomes of key workers and households on minimum/living wage and rental affordability

			Property prices							
			LQ	Median	Shared ownership (50%)	Shared ownership (25%)	Help to Buy	Discounted home ownership (30%)	Discounted home ownership (25%)	Discounted home ownership (20%)
Price>>			£112,500	£160,000	£80,000	£40,000	£120,000	£112,000	£120,000	£128,000
Price after deposit/loan>>			£101,250	£144,000	£72,000	£36,000	£104,000	£100,800	£108,000	£115,200
Gross household income 2024 (Annual £)			Ratio of house price to income							
CAMEO UK Household Income	LQ income	£15,000	6.8	9.6	4.8	2.4	6.9	6.7	7.2	7.7
	Median income	£25,000	4.1	5.8	2.9	1.4	4.2	4.0	4.3	4.6
	Average income	£26,310	3.8	5.5	2.7	1.4	4.0	3.8	4.1	4.4
ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings	ASHE LQ	£27,162	3.7	5.3	2.7	1.3	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.2
	ASHE median	£36,077	2.8	4.0	2.0	1.0	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.2
	ASHE average	£41,550	2.4	3.5	1.7	0.9	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.8
Occupation		Wage	Ratio of house price to income							
Police officer										
Pay point 2		£31,164	3.2	4.6	2.3	1.2	3.3	3.2	3.5	3.7
Pay point 4		£33,690	3.0	4.3	2.1	1.1	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.4
Nurse										
Band 1		£23,614	4.3	6.1	3.0	1.5	4.4	4.3	4.6	4.9
Band 3		£24,071	4.2	6.0	3.0	1.5	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.8
Band 5		£29,969	3.4	4.8	2.4	1.2	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.8
Fire officer										
Trainee		£28,265	3.6	5.1	2.5	1.3	3.7	3.6	3.8	4.1
Competent		£37,675	2.7	3.8	1.9	1.0	2.8	2.7	2.9	3.1
Teacher										
Unqualified (min)		£21,731	4.7	6.6	3.3	1.7	4.8	4.6	5.0	5.3
Main pay range (min)		£31,650	3.2	4.5	2.3	1.1	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.6
Minimum/Living Wage										
Single household (21 and over)		£22,308	4.5	6.5	3.2	1.6	4.7	4.5	4.8	5.2
1xfull-time, 1xpart-time		£33,462	3.0	4.3	2.2	1.1	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.4
Two working adults		£44,616	2.3	3.2	1.6	0.8	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.6
Single household (18-20)		£16,770	6.0	8.6	4.3	2.1	6.2	6.0	6.4	6.9
1xfull-time, 1xpart-time		£25,155	4.0	5.7	2.9	1.4	4.1	4.0	4.3	4.6
Two working adults		£33,540	3.0	4.3	2.1	1.1	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.4
Key										
Up to 3.5x		2.9								
Between 3.5x and 5x		4.2								
5x or more		6.5								

- 3.28 The evidence of the relative affordability of intermediate products would suggest that affordable home ownership product would help support the housing needs key workers and provide accommodation that would be affordable to them.

Concluding comments

- 3.29 In 2024, lower quartile house prices were £112,500 and median prices were £160,000 across Halton. Prices across the borough were lower than Liverpool City Region, the North West, and England. Lower quartile private rents across Halton in 2024 were £676 and median rents were £793.
- 3.30 The relative affordability of dwellings to buy or rent was explored at borough level. Across Halton, the minimum income required for entry-level/lower quartile renting was around £32,448. For buying an entry-level/lower quartile property, the minimum income required was around £28,929. These calculations assumed that a rent is affordable if no more than 25% of household income is spent on rent and, if buying a property, should cost no more than 3.5x household income.
- 3.31 Analysis considered the affordability of rents and prices at borough level. Overall, households had to spend 24.2% of lower quartile income on a lower quartile rent and 21.3% of median income for median rents. Rents were relatively more affordable in Central and Southern Widnes, Central Runcorn, and West Runcorn sub-areas. Notable affordability pressures are identified in the East Runcorn, East Widnes, and West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village sub-areas, where the proportion of lower quartile income needed for lower quartile rents was generally above 26%.
- 3.32 For open market purchase analysis assumed that a 10% deposit was available. A comparison of lower quartile price to 1.5x living wage resulted in an income multiple of 3x which is within the threshold for affordability. The income multiple is 3.2x for households with two full-time living wage earners. The ratios exceeded 3.5x income in East Runcorn and East Widnes.
- 3.33 Specific analysis of the affordability of renting and buying for key worker incomes and those on minimum/living wages was carried out. Key workers at entry-level grades are generally having to spend more than 25% of their income on rent. The ability to afford lower quartile prices was variable amongst key workers and in general those at entry-level grades were unable to afford lower quartile prices.
- 3.34 Single earners on minimum/living wage have to spend in excess of 35% of their income on lower quartile rents.
- 3.35 Using the evidence presented in this chapter, it is possible to establish what would be a genuinely affordable rent and purchase price across Halton (Table 3.16). This is based on local incomes and assumes that no more than 25% of income is spent on rent and a household income multiple of 3.5x is applied to local household incomes when testing the affordability of buying. These figures should be considered when considering the extent to which new affordable housing is truly affordable.

Table 3.16 Genuinely affordable rents and purchase prices by sub-area

Sub-area	LQ rents (25% of income)	Median rents (25% of income)	LQ purchase (3.5x income multiple)	Median purchase (3.5x income multiple)
Central and Southern Widnes	£697	£930	£117,117	£156,156
Central Runcorn	£697	£930	£117,117	£156,156
East Runcorn	£697	£930	£117,117	£156,156
East Widnes	£697	£930	£117,117	£156,156
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	£697	£930	£117,117	£156,156
West Runcorn	£697	£930	£117,117	£156,156
Borough of Halton	£697	£930	£117,117	£156,156

4. The Needs of Different Groups

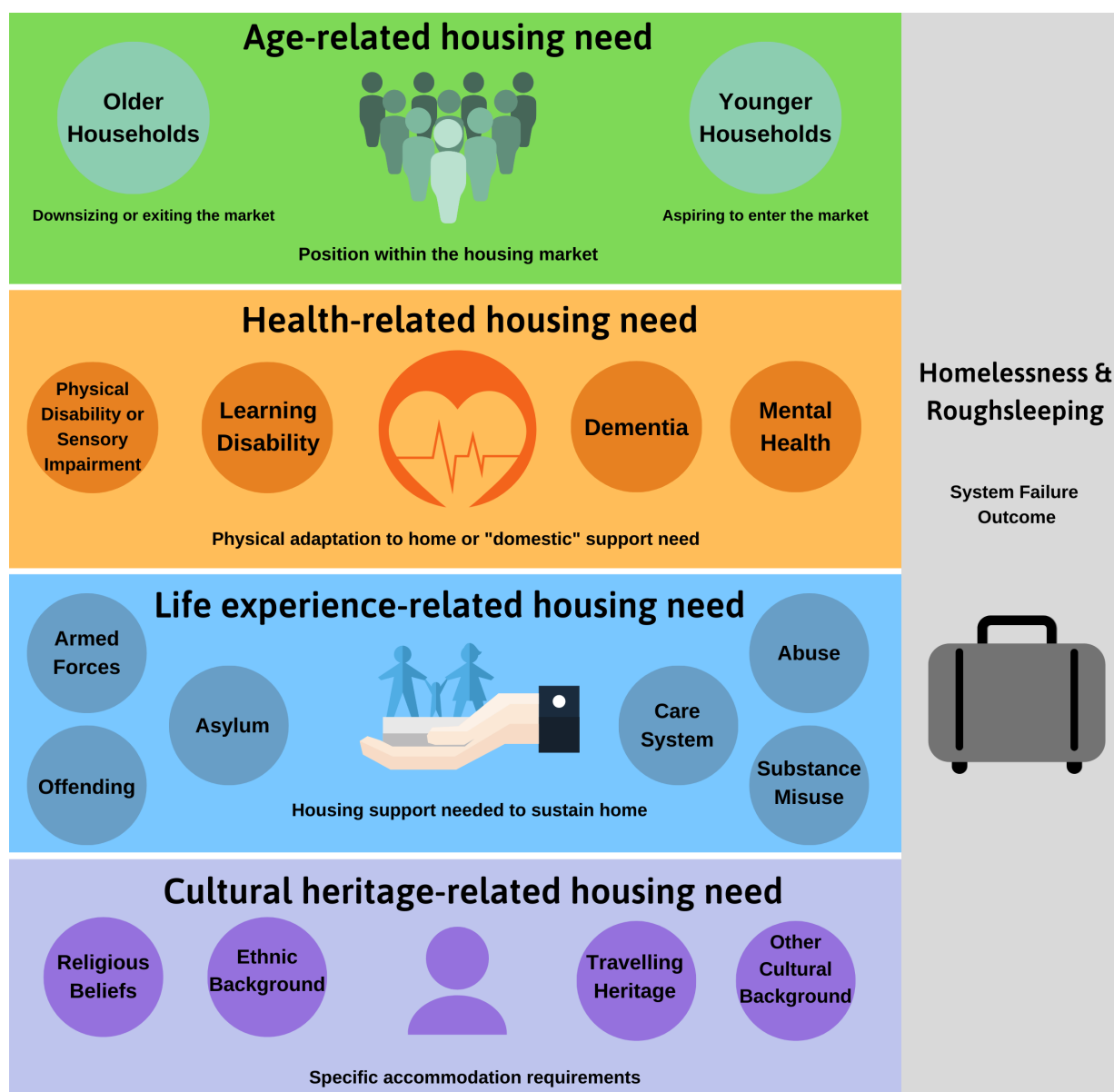
Introduction

- 4.1 Paragraph 63 of the NPPF refers to housing needs for different groups in the community and these fall into two broad groups: housing for people with additional needs and housing for specific household types.

Housing for people with additional needs

- 4.2 These groups include older people and accommodation for people with disabilities which are further sub-divided into those with health-related and life-experience related needs as summarised in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Establishing need associated with age, health, and life experience



- 4.3 The evidence base relating to additional needs groups has been established based around these broad principles:
- People with additional needs are generally accommodated in mainstream housing and provided with care and support when needed;
 - Some people will have complex and multiple needs and therefore may fall into several different categories of need;
 - Some people require long-term accommodation to provide support for ongoing needs, and some require short-term supported housing which aims to support people for a period of time before moving on/back into mainstream housing; and
 - Most people with additional needs will not need specialist supported housing but they may need adaptations to their homes and/or care and support provided in other ways.

Age-related housing need

- 4.4 Age-related housing need relates to the needs of specific age groups in the housing market due to life events and the impact this has on the need for dwellings of particular sizes/types and affordability. For older households, this includes 'rightsizing' and adaptation of existing dwellings. For younger households, affordability is a particular concern, and this has been considered elsewhere in the report. For this section we therefore focus upon the needs of older persons for particular unit types.

Housing for older people

- 4.5 The NPPF Annex 2 defines older people as **'people over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialist housing for those with support and care needs.'**
- 4.6 PPG recommends the following are considered in an assessment of older persons need:
- The future need for specialist accommodation (including but not restricted to age-restricted general market housing, retirement living or sheltered accommodation, Extra Care, or housing with care), broken down by type and tenure.
 - The need for care in residential care and nursing homes (C2).
 - The need for co-housing communities.
 - The role of general housing and in particular bungalows and homes that can be adapted to meet a change in needs.
- 4.7 PPG notes that **'plan-making authorities will need to count housing provided for older people against their housing requirement'** (source: PPG June 2019 Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 63-016-20190626).

- 4.8 Over the period 2024 to 2042, the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase by 25.0% (ONS 2018-based population projections). Similarly, the number of households headed by someone aged 65 or over is expected to increase by 4,973 (27.9%) by 2042 (ONS 2018-based household projections).
- 4.9 The 2024 Household Survey indicates that the majority of older people (67.0%) want to remain in their current home with help and support when needed (Table 4.1). There is also interest in a range of options including buying on the open market, renting from a housing association or the council, sheltered accommodation, co-housing, and renting Extra Care housing.

Table 4.1 Older persons' housing preferences by age group

Housing option	65-74 (%)	75-84 (%)	85+ (%)	All 65+ (%)
Continue to live in current home with support when needed (e.g. home visits, 'call for help' alarm)	67.1%	62.3%	83.7%	67.0%
Buying a dwelling on the open market	15.4%	10.1%	0.0%	12.6%
Rent a dwelling from a private landlord	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%
Rent from housing association	14.8%	13.2%	0.0%	13.1%
Rent from the council	10.8%	6.9%	22.3%	10.6%
Sheltered accommodation – To rent	21.0%	12.9%	22.3%	18.7%
Sheltered accommodation – To buy	14.4%	6.3%	0.0%	10.8%
Sheltered accommodation – Part rent/buy (shared ownership)	4.2%	7.5%	0.0%	4.8%
Extra Care housing – To rent	10.4%	9.4%	22.3%	11.1%
Extra Care housing – To buy	7.9%	8.1%	0.0%	7.3%
Extra Care housing – Part rent/buy (shared ownership)	4.0%	1.0%	0.0%	2.8%
Supported housing for people with learning disabilities and autism	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Supported housing for mental health conditions	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Residential nursing/care home	0.5%	8.8%	5.9%	3.4%
Co-housing – your own home in a small community which shares facilities (e.g. laundry) and activities	6.8%	1.8%	5.7%	5.3%
Go to live with children or other relatives/friends	2.7%	7.1%	10.4%	4.6%
Other	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%
Base (total households responding)	3,140	1,497	398	5,034

Source: 2024 Household Survey

- 4.10 The 2024 Household Survey indicates 47.1% of older people planning to move would like to move to a property with fewer bedrooms, 44.6% would like to move to a property with the same number of bedrooms, and 8.3% would like a larger property (Table 4.2). The general conclusion is that smaller dwellings are

needed to accommodate older movers but there are households who would require the same or even an increase in the number of bedrooms in their properties.

Table 4.2 Future housing choices of older households (rightsizing)

Housing choice	Aspiration (%)	Expectation (%)
Downsizing (moving to a smaller property)	41.1%	47.1%
Staying same	44.4%	44.6%
Upsizing (moving to larger property)	14.4%	8.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Base (households responding)	2,137	2,137

Source: 2024 Household Survey

Future need for specialist older person accommodation and residential care provision

- 4.11 Across Halton, latest data would suggest there are around 1,587 units/bedspaces of specialist older persons accommodation comprising 678 specialist older accommodation units (C3 planning use class), 237 Extra Care (C2 use class), and 672 bedspaces residential care (C2 use class). Map 4.1 and Table 4.3 shows the current number of older persons units of accommodation across the borough using data provided by the Elderly Accommodation Counsel.

Table 4.3 Categories of older person accommodation

Category (and planning use category)	Current number of C3 units/ C2 bedspaces	Description
Age-exclusive housing (C3)	55	EAC definition: Schemes or developments that cater exclusively for older people, usually incorporate design features helpful to older people and may have communal facilities such as a residents' lounge, guest suite, and shared garden, but do not provide any regular on-site support to residents. PPG definition: This type of housing is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens but does not include support or care services.
Care homes (C2)	432	EAC definition: A residential setting where a number of older people live, usually in single rooms, and have access to on-site care services. Since April 2002, all homes in England, Scotland, and Wales are known as 'care homes', but are registered to provide different levels of care. A home registered simply as a care home will provide personal care only – help with washing, dressing, and giving medication.

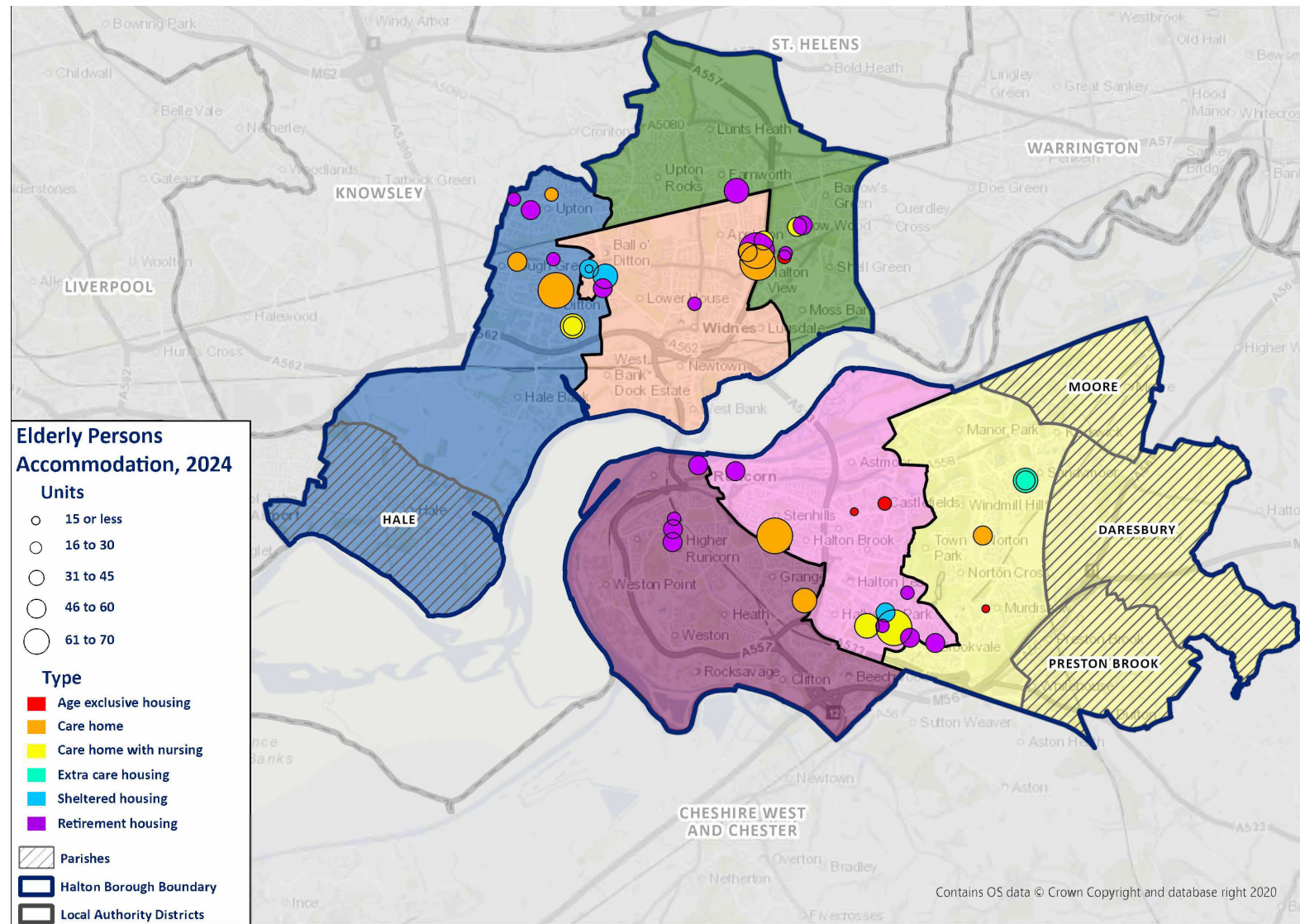
Category (and planning use category)	Current number of C3 units/ C2 bedspaces	Description
		PPG definition: These have individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care, meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.
Care home with nursing (C2)	240	A home registered as a care home with nursing will provide the same personal care but also have a qualified nurse on duty twenty-four hours a day to carry out nursing tasks. These homes are for people who are physically or mentally frail or people who need regular attention from a nurse.
Enhanced sheltered/close care (C3)	0	Sheltered housing that provides more facilities and services than traditional sheltered housing but does not offer the full range of provision that is found in an Extra Care housing scheme.
Retirement/ sheltered housing (C3)	623	EAC definition: Sheltered housing (S) means having your own flat or bungalow in a block, or on a small estate, where all the other residents are older people (usually over 55). With a few exceptions, all developments (or 'schemes') provide independent, self-contained homes with their own front doors. Retirement housing © means housing developments of a similar type to sheltered housing, but built for sale, usually on a leasehold basis. The term sheltered housing is now largely superseded by retirement housing. PPG definition: This usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room, and guest room. It does not generally provide care services but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24-hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.
Extra Care (EC) housing or housing with care (HC) (C3)	100 (EC) 137 (HC)	EAC definition: Extra Care Housing is housing designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care Housing have their own self-contained homes, their own front doors, and a legal right to occupy the property. Extra Care Housing is also known as very sheltered housing, assisted living, or simply 'housing with care'. It comes in many built forms, including blocks of flats, bungalow estates, and retirement villages.

Category (and planning use category)	Current number of C3 units/ C2 bedspaces	Description
		It is a popular choice among older people because it can sometimes provide an alternative to a care home. PPG definition: This usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an on-site care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24-hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are known as retirement communities or villages – the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses. Note Extra Care can also provide accommodation for people with additional needs who are not older people.
Total	1,587	

Source: EAC data 2024

- 4.12 This HNA will help provide evidence of the need for different accommodation options and support needs. Given the ageing of the population, the need for specialist older person accommodation is expected to increase.
- 4.13 Table 4.4 sets out an assessment of need for different types of older persons accommodation based on latest metrics provided by the Housing Learning and Information Exchange (Housing LIN). This establishes:
- A need in 2024 for 759 residential care bedspaces increasing to 1,127 by 2042. This compares to a current supply of 672 bedspaces.
 - A need in 2024 for 525 Extra Care units increasing to 780 by 2042. This compares to a current supply of 237 bedspaces.
 - A need in 2024 for 2,335 C3 specialist older person dwelling units rising to 3,468 by 2042. This compares with a current supply of 678 units.
- 4.14 Based on the analysis of demographic change and the Housing LIN estimates, Table 4.4 sets out the overall need for older persons specialist accommodation by type of provision and tenure to 2042. This indicates a net need for 2,790 additional C3 dwelling units over the period 2024 to 2042 or 155 each year, a need for 543 C2 Extra Care units or 30 each year, and 455 C2 residential care bedspaces or 25 each year. There is a particular need for leasehold sheltered housing, enhanced sheltered, and Extra Care housing for rent and sale. Halton has a good supply of dementia-friendly older persons accommodation through existing provision, with around 472 units of accommodation which are dementia friendly.

- 4.15 One of the key priorities for the council is to support people living independently in their own homes. The HNA evidence suggest that there is also a need to diversify the range of specialist accommodation for older people across Halton.

Map 4.1 Current older persons accommodation across Halton

Source: Elderly Accommodation Counsel 2024

Table 4.4 Future need for older person accommodation relative to current supply

	Supply	Modelled need	Modelled need	Change		
	2024	2024	2042	2024 to 2042		
	A	B	C	D=C-B		
Population 75+	-	11,675	17,342	5,667		
Type of accommodation		2024	2042	Change in need	Total need 2042 E=D+B-A	Annual need = E/19
Conventional sheltered housing to rent	620	700	1,041	340	421	23
Leasehold sheltered housing	58	1,401	2,081	680	2,023	112
Enhanced sheltered housing (divided 50:50 between that for rent and for sale)	0	233	347	113	347	19
Extra Care housing for rent	193	175	260	85	67	4
Extra Care housing for sale	44	350	520	170	476	26
TOTAL C3	678	2,335	3,468	1,133	2,790	155
TOTAL C2 Extra Care	237	525	780	255	543	30
TOTAL C2 residential care	672	759	1,127	368	455	25
GRAND TOTAL	1,587	3,619	5,376	1,757	3,789	210

Source: Housing LIN, 2018-based ONS population projection

Senior cohousing communities

- 4.16 Senior cohousing is specifically mentioned in PPG as a housing option for older people. Senior co-housing communities are created and run by residents, based on the intention to live with a group of people of a similar age. The sites often consist of self-contained private homes as well as shared community space. Some communities offer an additional option for informal care.
- 4.17 This option should be considered by the council as part of a diverse range of accommodation for older people. The 2024 Household Survey identified a total of 381 households interested in co-housing, with interest in a range of dwelling types and sizes. Overall, 14.9% were interested in 1-bedroom dwellings, 39.7% 2-bedroom, and 45.4% 3 or more-bedroom dwellings.

People with dementia and early onset dementia

- 4.18 The PPG makes specific reference to dementia and that **‘there should be a range of housing options and tenures available to people with dementia, including mainstream and specialist housing. Innovative and diverse housing models should be considered where appropriate’** (source: June 2019 PPG Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 63-019-20190626).
- 4.19 The PPG also outlines the characteristics of dementia-friendly communities:
- Easy to navigate physical environment;
 - Appropriate transport;
 - Communities shaped around the views of people with dementia and their carers;
 - Good orientation and familiarity;
 - Reduction in unnecessary clutter; and
 - Reduction in disorienting visual and auditory stimuli.
- 4.20 2020 POPPI/PANSI data estimates there are 36 people aged 30 to 64 with early onset dementia and 1,566 people aged 65 and over with dementia (Table 4.5). By 2042, the number of people aged 65 and over with dementia is projected to increase by 62.8%, with an increase of 87.9% amongst the 85+ age group. The number with early onset dementia is expected to remain at a similar level.

Table 4.5 People with dementia

Dementia	2024	2042	% Change 2024-2042
Early onset dementia (30-64)	36	35	-2.0%
Dementia (65-74)	338	375	10.8%
Dementia (75-84)	672	1,130	68.2%
Dementia (85 and over)	556	1,045	87.9%
Dementia (total 65+)	1,566	2,550	62.8%

Source: POPPI/PANSI applied to 2018-based population projections

- 4.21 The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) published a report on Housing and Care for Older People with Dementia in July 2021. [APPG Housing and care for Older People with Dementia](#)
- 4.22 This set out 23 recommendations which included:
- Recognise potential future loneliness and how we can maintain our family connections and wider social networks in the communities we live in before or after diagnosis.
 - Consider whether to move whilst we are able: rightsizing and moving to the right place and environment whilst able to still develop new routes and make new friends.
 - Make preventive changes, incrementally, to the home environment, such as when upgrading property or installing new technology, or where we require additional personal care and support to help us to live independently.
- 4.23 Regarding housing and planning, the report recommended:
- Support increased provision of Extra Care housing/assisted living accommodation and retirement housing that is dementia-ready, with top-sliced grant-aid through Homes England.
 - Strengthen MHCLG guidance to local planning authorities. LPAs should respond to demographic change and the need for more homes designed for older people, including those with dementia, through Local Plans specifying requirements for age-friendly housing.

The role of general housing and in particular bungalows and homes that can be adapted to meet a change in needs

- 4.24 The profile of dwellings occupied by households aged 65 and over by age group, based on the 2024 Household Survey, is summarised in Table 4.6. This shows that the majority (72.1%) live in houses, particularly with 3 or more bedrooms, 18.7% live in bungalows, 8.0% in flats, and 1.3% in other dwelling types.

Table 4.6 Dwellings occupied by households where the HRP is aged 65 and over

Dwelling type and size	65 to 74 (%)	75 to 84 (%)	85+ (%)	Total (%)
1 or 2-bedroom house	11.5%	6.0%	7.2%	10.1%
3-bedroom house	45.8%	45.3%	49.5%	45.8%
4 or more bedroom house	16.7%	15.2%	11.5%	16.2%
1-bedroom bungalow	4.2%	8.9%	6.6%	5.4%
2 or more bedroom bungalow	12.1%	15.0%	25.2%	13.3%
1-bedroom flat	5.0%	2.0%	0.0%	4.1%
2 or more bedroom flat	3.8%	4.9%	0.0%	3.9%
Other	1.0%	2.7%	0.0%	1.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Base	11,602	3,594	739	15,935

Source: 2024 Household Survey

- 4.25 The provision of appropriate adaptations to existing dwelling stock can help people lead independent lives. PPG also asks councils to consider the extent to which existing dwelling stock can help meet the needs of older people (source: PPG 2019 Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 2a-017-20190220).
- 4.26 Given that the majority of older people want to remain in their own homes with help and support when needed, the 2024 Household Survey provides a useful insight into the proportion of households who need care and support, and the extent which properties are adapted (Table 4.7).
- 4.27 Table 4.7 shows that 10% of all households require care and support to enable them to stay in their home. This is highest amongst 85+ age group and from households living in affordable housing. Of households with a Household Reference Person aged 85 and over, 40.5% require help and support to enable occupiers to stay in their own home.
- 4.28 60.6% of households have sufficient space for a carer to stay overnight if needed – and this increases to over 74.4% across 75 to 84 age group and 78.1% in the 85+ age group. Owner-occupiers were most likely to have space available, and private and social renters were less likely. Around 30.8% of respondents in affordable housing had sufficient space for a carer.
- 4.29 Around 3.6% of all dwellings had been adapted or purpose-built for a person with a long-term illness, health problem, or disability. This was highest amongst affordable housing occupants (10.9%) and lowest amongst owner-occupiers (1.5%). Older people were more likely to live in an adapted home, with 26.3% of households with a HRP aged 85 and over living in adapted homes.

Table 4.7 Adaptations, support needs, and space for carer by tenure and age group

	Is there sufficient space in your home for a carer to stay overnight, if this was needed?	Do you, or any other members of your household, require care or support to enable you/them to stay in this home?	Has your current home been adapted or purpose-built for a person with a long-term illness, health problem, or disability?	Has your current home been adapted or purpose-built for a wheelchair user?
Tenure	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)
Owner-occupied	71.8%	6.1%	6.8%	1.5%
Private rented	40.9%	7.8%	4.2%	2.4%
Affordable	30.8%	21.5%	22.5%	10.9%
All tenures	60.6%	9.5%	10.0%	3.6%
Age of household reference person	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)
Under 65	56.8%	7.6%	7.5%	2.5%
65 to 74	72.0%	13.9%	14.5%	6.1%
75 to 84	74.4%	13.3%	17.2%	6.5%
85 and over	78.1%	40.5%	47.6%	26.3%
All age groups	61.2%	9.6%	10.0%	3.8%

Source: 2024 Household Survey

Estimating future need for adaptations and home improvement

- 4.30 The 2024 Household Survey provides evidence of the range of adaptations and home improvements needs based on the age group of the Household Reference Person (Table 4.8).
- 4.31 Better heating, more insulation, renewable energy, and double glazing were most frequently mentioned improvements needed.
- 4.32 Regarding adaptations, these were mainly mentioned by older households and most frequently mentioned were bathroom adaptations, internal and external handrails/grabrails, and kitchen adaptations. The need for adaptations was generally highest amongst the 65-74 and 75+ age group.
- 4.33 These requirements are self-determined by residents responding to the 2024 Household Survey and may not necessarily reflect actual requirements following an independent assessment in the home.

Table 4.8 Adaptations and home improvements required by age group

Adaptation/improvement required	Age group (% of households)			Total
	Under 65	65-74	75+	
Home improvement				
More insulation (loft, wall cavities)	19.8%	17.2%	10.1%	18.5%
Better heating	20.0%	18.6%	11.6%	19.1%
Double glazing	12.5%	11.0%	5.8%	11.6%
Improved ventilation	8.2%	4.9%	4.4%	7.3%
Downstairs WC	4.8%	7.1%	9.5%	5.6%
Renewable energy (e.g. solar panels)	18.4%	15.2%	11.1%	15.6%
Adaptations				
Adaptations to bathroom	8.9%	12.2%	13.3%	9.9%
Adaptations to kitchen	5.3%	10.0%	10.7%	6.7%
External handrails/grab rails	4.9%	12.3%	11.3%	7.0%
Internal handrails/grab rails	5.8%	14.7%	18.6%	8.6%
Stair lift/vertical lift	4.2%	8.0%	7.8%	5.3%
Lever door handles	3.0%	3.3%	1.8%	3.0%
Room for a carer	2.3%	5.7%	5.2%	3.2%
Security measures (e.g. intruder alarm, external lighting or CCTV)	15.6%	14.2%	18.7%	15.6%
Base (all households)	39,977	11,602	4,333	55,912

Source: 2024 Household Survey

- 4.34 Resources for aids and adaptations remain limited, particularly for households in the private sector (owner-occupation or privately rented accommodation). However, the provision of appropriate adaptations is essential to older households in maintaining independent living. Alternative sources of funding, such as equity loans, could be considered to finance remedial measures required by older person households. It should be pointed out that whilst local

authorities will assess anyone's needs, assistance is currently means tested and some older person households will self-fund.

Assistance in the home

- 4.35 The 2024 Household Survey also provides information on a range of practical assistance required from households by age group (Table 4.9). Overall, the highest level of need is for help with repair and maintenance of the home, gardening, cleaning, and help with other practical tasks. For all types of assistance, the level of need increases with age, which includes the need for company/friendship mentioned by 10.0% of people aged 75+. The evidence from Halton is consistent with the findings from similar studies in other local authority areas. The range of support and assistance required should be recognised by the council to support people continuing to live in their own home, particularly amongst older age groups.

Table 4.9 Type of assistance required age group

Type of help needed now or in next 5 years	% households needing help by age group of HRP			
	Under 65	65-74	75+	All
Help with repair and maintenance of home	17.3%	29.8%	38.0%	21.5%
Help with gardening	11.2%	23.1%	26.7%	14.9%
Help with cleaning home	7.8%	22.2%	25.4%	12.1%
Help with other practical tasks	5.9%	19.3%	19.8%	9.8%
Help with personal care	5.1%	12.8%	18.8%	7.8%
Want company/friendship	4.3%	9.8%	10.0%	5.9%
Base (all households)	39,977	11,602	4,333	55,912

Source: 2024 Household Survey

Health-related housing need

- 4.36 A range of sources can be drawn upon to establish the overall scale of disability/support needs across Halton. In summary:
- The 2021 Census reported that across the borough, 78.2% were in good health, and 7.7% were not in good health (particularly across older age groups). Which compares with 17.5% across England. A total of 9,871 residents were in not good health.
 - 22.1% of residents reported that they were disabled, as defined under the Equality Act.
 - 10.7% of residents said their daily activities were limited 'a lot' and 11.4% 'a little' which compares with 7.0% and 9.9% respectively across England. This is mainly associated with older age groups.
 - The ONS Family Resources Survey 2018/19 estimates that around 21% of the population nationally has a disability. Based on the age profile of people with disabilities, for Halton an estimated 28,749 people have a disability (22.1%) in 2024, which is projected to increase to around 32,282 by 2042.

- 4.37 The 2024 Household Survey data considered illness/disability. The survey estimated a total of 34,691 people or 26.4% had an illness/disability which is higher than the national ONS estimate. Table 4.10 shows the number of people stating an illness/disability and the type of illness/disability. The most frequently mentioned illness/disability was a physical/mobility impairment (10.5%), mental health issue (7.6%), hearing impairment (4.3%), autism (3.6%), and older age-related illness or disability (3.5%).

Table 4.10 Number of people stating illness/disability

Illness/disability	Number of people	% of total population
Physical/mobility impairment	13,831	10.5%
Learning disabilities	3,390	2.6%
Autism	4,724	3.6%
Mental health issue	9,926	7.6%
Visual impairment	3,296	2.5%
Hearing impairment	5,654	4.3%
Dementia/Alzheimer's	459	0.3%
Older age-related illness or disability	4,645	3.5%
Other	10,875	8.3%
Total population (ONS, 2018-based projections for 2024)	131,418	
Total number of people with an illness/disability	34,691	26.4%
Households with at least one person with an illness/disability	Number of households	% of households
Total	22,728	40.6%

Source: 2024 Household Survey

Physical disability

- 4.38 POPPI and PANSI (Projecting Older People Population Information/Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information, Oxford Brookes University/Institute of Public Care) provide data on the likely prevalence in 2024 of a range of physical disabilities and how this is expected to change by 2042 (Table 4.11). In 2024, there were an estimated 8,787 people with mobility issues across all age groups which is projected to decrease to 10,414 by 2042, mainly due to an increase in the number of people aged 65 with mobility issues.

Table 4.11 Physical disability prevalence

Disability (age group)	2024	2042	% Change 2024-2042
Impaired mobility (18-64)	4,408	4,353	-1.2%
Mobility (unable to manage at least one activity on own) (65+)	4,379	6,061	38.4%
Moderate or serious personal care disability (18-64)	3,828	3,833	0.1%
Serious visual impairment (18-64)	50	50	0.8%
Moderate or severe visual impairment (65+)	2,201	2,751	25.0%
Severe hearing loss (18-64)	489	485	-0.9%
Severe hearing loss (65+)	1,791	2,596	44.9%
All with mobility issues (impaired mobility 18-64 and mobility 65+)	8,787	10,414	18.5%

Source: POPPI/PANSI; 2018-based ONS population projections

- 4.39 Regarding visual impairment, the RNIB has produced a document Visibly Better Housing ([click here to view document](#)). This includes recommendations for managing the home environment to reduce the impact of sight impairment and sight loss. Suggestions include appropriate lighting, anti-glare windows to reduce reflections which can be disorientating, and use of lighter fabrics and furnishings.

Learning disability and autism

- 4.40 A learning disability is the label given to a group of conditions present before the age of 18 that affects how an individual communicates and understands information. Autism is a lifelong developmental condition which affects how people communicate with, and relate to, other people and how they interact with the world around them.
- 4.41 The number of people across all age groups with moderate or severe learning disabilities is estimated to be around 498 in 2024, rising to 515 by 2042 (Table 4.12). There is a notable growth in the number of people aged 65 and over with learning disabilities. Around 986 people have autistic spectrum disorders in 2024, and this is expected to increase to 1,041 by 2042.

Table 4.12 Learning disability and autism

Learning disability (age group)	2024	2042	% Change 2024-2042
Total (18-64)	1,854	1,869	0.8%
Total (65+)	539	674	25.0%
Moderate or severe (18-64)	424	427	0.6%
Moderate or severe (65+)	74	88	19.2%
Moderate or severe (all ages)	498	515	3.4%
People with LD living with a parent (18-64)	151	152	0.8%
Downs syndrome (18+)	49	50	1.2%
Challenging behaviour (18-64)	34	34	0.6%
Autistic spectrum disorders (18-64)	744	750	0.9%
Autistic spectrum disorders (65+)	242	290	19.9%
Autistic spectrum disorders (all ages)	986	1,041	5.5%

Source: POPPI/PANSI and 2018-based ONS population projections

Mental health

- 4.42 Mental health refers to an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. 2023 POPPI/PANSI data estimates there are around 14,450 residents with a common mental health disorder (Table 4.13). Depression amongst people aged 65 or over is expected to increase considerably.

Table 4.13 Mental health prevalence

Mental health 18-64	2024	2042	% change 2024-2042
Common mental disorder	14,540	14,657	0.8%
Borderline personality disorder	1,846	1,861	0.8%
Antisocial personality disorder	2,522	2,542	0.8%
Psychotic disorder	535	539	0.8%
Psychotic disorders (2 or more)	5,508	5,552	0.8%
Older people with depression	2024	2042	% change 2024-2042
Depression 65+	2,211	2,767	25.2%
Severe depression (65+)	687	899	30.9%

Source: POPPI/PANSI and 2018-based ONS population projections

Accessible and wheelchair standard housing

- 4.43 PPG states that **‘where an identified need exists, plans are expected to make use of the optional technical housing standards (footnote 52 of the NPPF). This footnote says ‘Planning policies for housing should make use of the Government’s optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable housing, where this would address an identified need for such properties. Policies may also make use of the nationally described space standard, where the need for an internal space standard can be justified.’**
- 4.44 **To help bring forward an adequate supply of accessible housing. In doing so planning policies for housing can set out the proportion of new housing that will be delivered to the following standards:**
- **M4(1) Category 1: Visitable dwellings (the minimum standard that applies where no planning condition is given unless a plan sets a higher minimum requirement);**
 - **M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings; and**
 - **M4(3) Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings**
- ‘Planning policies for accessible housing need to be based on evidence of need, viability and a consideration of site-specific factors’** (source: PPG June 2019 Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 63-009-20190626)
- 4.45 PPG on Housing: optional technical standards provide further guidance and sets out that planning policies for accessible housing need to be based on evidence of need, viability, and consideration of site-specific factors.
- 4.46 Optional accessibility standards for dwellings were introduced by the government in 2015 to provide a mechanism for improving accessibility of housing for those with additional needs. National standards have been established and contained within Part M Volume 1 of the Building Regulations as set out in Table 4.14. Only one accessible housing standard can apply to any dwelling. The M4(2) accessible and adaptable dwelling standard is based on, and in 2015 effectively replaced, the ‘Lifetime Homes’ standard.

Table 4.14 Summary of accessible housing standards

Standard label	Standard title	Level of accessibility provided	Mandatory or optional
M4(1)	Visitable dwellings	Level access not necessarily provided into the dwellings – few accessibility features	Mandatory
M4(2)	Accessible and adaptable dwellings	Level access is provided into the dwelling – easy to adapt to make more accessible – not suitable for most wheelchair users	Optional
M4(3)	Wheelchair user dwellings	Dwellings suitable for wheelchair users: either wheelchair adaptable (a) or wheelchair accessible (b)	Optional

- 4.47 It should be noted that Part M of the Building Regulations sets a distinction between wheelchair accessible (a home readily useable by a wheelchair user at the point of completion) and wheelchair adaptable dwellings (a home that can be easily adapted to meet the needs of a household including wheelchair users) (source: PPG Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 56-009-20150327).
- 4.48 In order to establish an appropriate target for M4(3) dwellings, Table 4.15 sets out a series of assumptions regarding wheelchair use from the English Housing Survey and a report by Aspire Housing Association. Applying these assumptions would suggest a target of 5% of newbuild to meet the M4(3)(b) wheelchair accessible standard is required.
- 4.49 According to PPG (source: PPG Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 56-009-20150327), 'Local Plan policies for wheelchair accessible homes should be applied only to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling.' This would imply that the onus on wheelchair accessible housing delivery is with the local authority/registered providers, but private developers should also be encouraged to build to M4(3) wheelchair accessible or adaptable homes where appropriate. Any final targets should be set within the context of likely levels of delivery.

Table 4.15 Wheelchair use assumptions and resulting annual need

Assumption	% requirement	Number each year (based on 474 annual net housing need)
Wheelchair use from the English Housing Survey 2018/19 – households using wheelchair all the time	0.6%	3
Wheelchair use from the English Housing Survey 2018/19 – households using wheelchair either indoors or outdoors	3.0%	14
Halton has 2,161 current users of wheelchairs inside and outside the home based on the 2024 household survey. This equates to 3.9% of households.	3.9%	18
Aspire report on wheelchair accessible housing (*)	10.0%	47
Average of indicators (rounded up)	5%	24

(*) Wheelchair Accessible Housing: Waiting for appropriate housing in England, Aspire October 2014 recommends that the national government should set a minimum requirement of 10% of all new build properties across all tenures to be wheelchair accessible.

4.50 Table 4.16 considers the profile of wheelchair accessible or adaptable dwellings needed by number of bedrooms and age group of the Household Reference Person.

Table 4.16 Wheelchair dwellings needed by age group and number of bedrooms each year

Age group	Number of bedrooms (Table %)			Total
	1	2	3	
Under 65	6.1%	12.7%	44.2%	63.1%
65 and over	7.4%	9.4%	20.1%	36.9%
Total	13.5%	22.2%	64.3%	100.0%

Age group	Number of bedrooms (needed each year by age group)			Total
	1	2	3	
Under 65	1	3	11	15
65 and over	2	2	5	9
Total	3	5	16	24

Source: 2024 Household Survey

4.51 Given the ageing demographic of Halton and the identified levels of disability amongst the population, it is recommended that a policy to provide new homes built to accessibility standards is included in the Local Plan. On the basis of available evidence which takes into account the requirements of PPG, it is recommended that:

- 5% of new dwellings are built to M4(3) wheelchair accessible standard (this would imply an average target of around 24 each year); and

- All remaining new dwellings are built to M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards to take account of the ageing demographics of Halton. This will ensure that new dwellings can be occupied and also visited by people needing accessible/adaptable dwellings.

Looked-after children

- 4.52 The government believes that every child should have a loving, secure home close to their communities. To achieve this government priority, it is necessary to ensure that there is an appropriate amount and type of accommodation for looked after children, in the right locations, is planned for and provided. The Department for Education's definition of a looked-after child is: 'A child is looked after by a local authority if they are provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours (section 20 Children Act 1989) or are subject to a care order (defined in section 22(1) Children Act 1989)'. To support the provision of this type of housing, there is an explicit reference to looked after children in paragraph 63 of NPPF, which sets out that the housing needs for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.
- 4.53 Evidence of need for looked after children and the council's priorities for supporting children in care can be found in the council's Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2023-2026.
- 4.54 In June 2023 there were 372 children in care, with 65% in foster placements and 35% in other placements. 38% of placements are provided by council in-house carers including connected persons. In addition, there 44 children placed in care outside Halton.
- 4.55 Key objectives of the strategy are to:
- Place children with family members or people they have a connection with.
 - Endeavour to recruit more in-house local carers and provide training and support to them provide high-quality care and build positive relationships with children and their families.
 - Ensure that children have access to stable and safe placements that met their needs, including adoption, high-quality foster care, residential care, or kinship care.

Life experience-related housing need

Domestic abuse

- 4.56 Supporting survivors of domestic abuse with support and accommodation has been identified as a key priority in Halton. It is recommended the council carry out a thorough review of domestic abuse housing needs to ensure the council has an understanding of the true scale and impact of domestic abuse locally. There is a specific need to :
- develop a new 3-4 bed refuge provision for emergency placements, including those with complex needs.

- Provide appropriate accommodation options for older people (60+) fleeing abuse.
- Standardise and strengthen the Sanctuary Scheme offer across housing associations.
- Allow more survivors to remain safely in their homes.

Black and Global Majority population and households

- 4.57 Around 3.5% of the population in Halton identify as BGM. The distribution of BGM people within the borough is shown in Table 4.17. Residents who identify as BGM are located throughout the borough. The proportions of BGM households range from 2.6% in West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village, and 4.2% in East Runcorn.

Table 4.17 Distribution of BGM households across Halton

Sub-area	BGM population	% of BGM population in each sub-area	% of population in each area who identify as BGM	All people
Central and Southern Widnes	691	15.4%	3.9%	17,700
Central Runcorn	726	16.2%	3.3%	22,219
East Runcorn	780	17.4%	4.2%	18,451
East Widnes	932	20.8%	3.7%	24,898
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	555	12.4%	2.6%	21,595
West Runcorn	798	17.8%	3.4%	23,603
Borough of Halton	4,482	100.0%	3.5%	128,466

Source: 2021 Census

- 4.58 The 2024 Household Survey indicates that 96.6% of Household Reference People describe themselves as White British and 3.4% describe themselves as having other ethnicities. The 2021 Census identified that overall 3.5% of the population identify as BGM, with sub-areas ranging from 4.2% of the population in East Runcorn identifying as BGM to 2.6% in West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village.
- 4.59 Based on the 2024 Household Survey, housing information relating to Black and Global Majority (BGM) households includes:
- Around 61.8% are owner-occupiers, 10.2% rent privately, and 28.0% live in affordable housing (social rented or intermediate tenures).
 - 14.5% BGM households were in some form of housing need (compared with 9.8% of all households). Reasons for housing need included major disrepair or unfitness and household does not have resources to make fit the main reason (17.3%), households sharing facilities (15.3%), and mobility/special needs living in unsuitable property (15.3%).

- Of moving BGM households, there were particular aspirations towards larger dwellings (41.6% 4 or more bedroom houses and 16.8% 3-bedroom houses). Expectations were 30.0% 4 or more bedrooms and 25.1% 3-bedroom houses.

Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showperson need

- 4.60 The 2014 Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment identified a need for 12 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches for the period 2013 to 2028 and no need for Travelling Showperson plots. In 2025, a new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for the period 2025-2045 was jointly commissioned by Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire East Council, Halton Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council. The results will be used as an evidence base for policy development in housing and planning in Halton.

Other groups with particular housing requirements

- 4.61 This chapter concludes with a summary of the other household groups who have particular housing requirements in Halton.

People who rent their homes

- 4.62 Chapter 4 presents a range of data on the characteristics of households who rent their homes, either privately or from a social housing provider.

Self-build and custom housebuilding

- 4.63 The NPPF 2024 sets out that the government wants to enable more people to build their own homes and wants to make this form of housing a mainstream housing option. A total of 25 households are currently on the council's custom/self-build register.

Student housing need

- 4.64 There are no higher education organisations operating in Halton and no specific need for student accommodation has been identified.

Conclusion

- 4.65 This chapter has considered the needs of different groups in line with the NPPF and requirements of the brief. Key findings are now summarised.
- 4.66 In terms of older people, it is evident that the vast majority of older people wish to stay within their existing homes. For most, this is an informed and appropriate choice where current and future housing needs can be addressed through in situ solutions (including adaptations).
- 4.67 There are currently around 1,587 units of specialist older persons' accommodation comprising 678 specialist older accommodation units (C3

planning use class), 237 Extra Care (C2 use class), and 672 bedspaces residential care (C2 use class). It is estimated there is a need for 2,690 additional C3 dwelling units over the period 2024 to 2042 or 149 each year, a need for 643 C2 Extra Care units or 36 each year, and 464 C2 residential care bedspaces or 26 each year.

- 4.68 A key conclusion is that there needs to be a broader housing offer for older people across Halton and the HNA has provided evidence of scale and range of dwellings needed.
- 4.69 The HNA does not specify the precise nature of specialist older person dwellings to be built. This is to allow flexibility in delivery and PPG states that 'any single development may contain a range of different types of specialist housing' (source: PPG June 2019 Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 63-010-20190626).
- 4.70 A wealth of information has been assembled from various sources which helps to scope out the likely level of disability across the population of Halton. Although it is a challenge to quantify the precise accommodation and support requirements, the HNA has helped to scope out where needs are arising and has provided indicators of specific needs across various needs groups.
- 4.71 It is estimated there are around 28,749 people with a disability across the borough based on ONS disability estimates and is projected to increase to around 32,282 by 2042. Regarding housing for people with disabilities, the 2024 Household Survey suggests around 10.0% of households live in properties which have either been purpose-built or adapted for someone with an illness or disability. 3.8% of households need all facilities (living room, bathroom, kitchen, and bedroom) to be on one floor.
- 4.72 Given the ageing population of the borough and the identified levels of disability amongst the population, it is recommended that 5% of new dwellings are built to wheelchair accessible M4(3) standard. All remaining new dwellings are built to M4(2) accessible and adaptable standard, to take account of the ageing demographics of the borough.
- 4.73 Regarding self-build and custom housebuilding, there are 25 households on the council register.

5. Overall Dwelling Type and Mix

Introduction

- 5.1 This chapter considers overall housing need based on the government's standard method and establishes an overall dwelling type, size, and tenure mix for Halton. The detailed analysis underpinning this chapter is presented in Technical Appendix D.

Establishing housing need using the 'standard method'

- 5.2 The 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Paragraph 62) states 'to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for' (PPG 2024 Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 2a-001-20241212).
- 5.3 PPG notes that the process should be undertaken separately to assessing land availability, establishing a housing requirement figure, and preparing site allocation policies.
- 5.4 *'The standard method for assessing local housing need uses a formula that incorporates a baseline of local housing stock which is then adjusted upwards to reflect local affordability pressures to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for. The standard method identifies a minimum annual housing need figure, and ensures that plan-making is informed by an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area. It does not produce a housing requirement figure'* (PPG Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 2a-002-20241212).

Step 1: Setting the baseline

- 5.5 *'The baseline is 0.8% of the existing housing stock for the area, and the most recent data published at the time should be used'* (PPG Paragraph 004 Reference ID: 2a-004-20241212).
- 5.6 For Halton, the figure is 0.8% of 59,224 (MHCLG Table 125: dwelling stock estimates by local authority district) or 474.
- 5.7 Housing stock is used as a baseline as it *'provides a stable and predictable baseline that ensure all areas, as a minimum, are contributing a share of the national total that is proportionate to the size of their current housing market'* (PPG Paragraph 005 Reference ID: 2a-005.20241212).

Step 2: An adjustment to take account of affordability

- 5.8 The Step 1 housing stock baseline figure is then adjusted based on affordability of the area using ONS median workplace-based affordability ratios. The mean average affordability ratio over the five most recent years should be used. (PPG Paragraph 004 Reference ID: 2a-004-20241212).
- 5.9 The reason for the affordability adjustment is set out in PPG:

‘An affordability adjustment is applied as household growth on its own is insufficient as an indicator of housing demand because:

- Housing stock represents existing patterns of housing and means that all areas contribute to meeting housing needs. The affordability adjustment directs more homes to where they are most needed.*
- people may want to live in an area in which they do not reside currently, for example to be near to work, but be unable to find appropriate accommodation that they can afford.*

5.10 *The affordability adjustment is applied in order to ensure that the standard method for assessing local housing need responds to price signals and is consistent with the policy objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The specific adjustment in this guidance is set at a level to ensure that minimum annual housing need starts to address the affordability of homes.’* (PPG Paragraph 006 Reference ID: 2a-006-20241212).

5.11 Table 5.1 sets out the components of the local housing need calculation. This establishes a minimum local housing need of 474 each year.

Table 5.1 Components of the dwelling need calculation for Halton

Step		Description	Number	Calculation	Data source
Step 1	a	Baseline dwelling stock	59,224		2024 MHCLG Table 125
	b	0.8% of baseline dwelling stock	474	a x b	
Step 2	c	Affordability adjustment	4.97		Average 5-year median workplace-based affordability ratios median 2019-2024 (ONS data)
	d	Adjustment factor	1.0		((5year average affordability ratio)/5)×0.95+1
Local Housing Need	e	Annual minimum local housing need	474	b x d	Annual

Affordable housing need

5.12 A detailed analysis of affordable housing need in accordance with PPG is presented in Technical Appendix C. This establishes an overall gross affordable need of 992 and, after taking into account affordable lettings and newbuild, the net shortfall is 141 each year. Modelling assumes this is the shortfall over a 10-year period to align with the standard method calculation. PPG then says that *‘The total affordable housing need can then be considered in the context of its likely delivery as a proportion of mixed market and affordable housing developments, taking into account the probable percentage of affordable housing to be delivered by eligible market housing led developments. An*

increase in the total housing requirement included in the plan may need to be considered where it could help deliver the required number of affordable homes.' (PPG Paragraph Reference ID: 67-008-20190722 and PPG at Reference ID: 2a-024-20190220). There is no specific requirement to meet this identified affordable need in full.

- 5.13 Analysis would suggest an overall tenure split of 50% social rented, 27% affordable rented, and 23% affordable home ownership across Halton. This split needs to be considered on a site-by-site basis. For instance, there may be some sites which are not of sufficient scale for more than one type of affordable housing to be feasible.
- 5.14 Delivery to help address affordable housing need is expected through the application of existing affordable housing policies, subject to viability. There is clear evidence of affordable housing need which supports a robust affordable housing policy. In order to meet affordable need, the council works closely with housing association and developer partners to deliver a range of new affordable housing products, including affordable rent and discounted home ownership. The council are therefore making positive steps to help address the affordable housing shortfalls across the borough and will continue to keep this under review.
- 5.15 According to the council's dwelling completions data, around 24% of homes built have been affordable over the period 2013/14 to 2023/24.

Dwelling type and mix

- 5.16 Dwelling mix analysis is underpinned by a demographic scenario model which takes into account projected household change to 2042 using 2018-based ONS household projections. To support flexibility in delivery, dwelling type and mix by tenure is presented as a broad range which also considers household aspirations and expectations. Table 5.2 summarises dwelling mix by tenure for the borough. Further details of analysis are presented in Technical Appendix D.

Table 5.2 Overall annual dwelling type/size and tenure mix recommendations

Dwelling type/size	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
Overall % split>>	75%	19%	6%	100%
1/2-bedroom house	5-10%	20-25%	15-20%	10-15%
3-bedroom house	25-30%	10-15%	25-30%	25-30%
4+ bedroom house	25-30%	10-15%	20-25%	20-25%
1-bedroom flat	0-2%	10-15%	0-2%	2-5%
2+ bedroom flat	2-5%	5-10%	5-10%	2-5%
1/2-bedroom bungalow/level access	10-15%	25-30%	5-10%	15-20%
3+ bedroom bungalow/level access	10-15%	10-15%	15-20%	10-15%
Dwelling type/size	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
House	65-70%	40-45%	65-70%	60-65%
Flat	5-10%	15-20%	5-10%	5-10%
Bungalow/level-access	25-30%	35-40%	25-30%	25-30%
Dwelling type/size	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
1	2-5%	20-25%	2-5%	5-10%
2	25-30%	40-45%	25-30%	25-30%
3	40-45%	20-25%	40-45%	35-40%
4+	25-30%	10-15%	20-25%	20-25%

Source: 2024 Household Survey

From a local housing need to a housing requirement

- 5.17 The purpose of the HNA is to identify the overall local housing need using the standard method calculation in PPG. The council will then need to determine what is an appropriate housing requirement that can be delivered across the borough. The 474 minimum annual need compares with the current annual Local Plan target of 350 dwellings.

Conclusions

- 5.18 The local housing need for Halton based on the 2024 standard method is 474 dwellings each year.
- 5.19 The HNA has established future household change and the implications this has for dwelling type, size, and tenure mix. This helps the council and its partners make informed decisions on the range and size of dwellings to be built to meet need over the period to 2042.

- 5.20 Given the level of net affordable need (141 homes each year), the Local Plan needs to maintain a robust affordable housing policy setting out targets and tenure split in order to maximise new supply. An affordable policy should therefore continue to support the ongoing delivery of affordable housing and diversify the affordable products available to local residents to reflect identified needs.

6. Conclusion: Policy and Strategic Issues

- 6.1 This document has been prepared to equip the council and their partners with robust, defensible, and transparent information to help inform strategic decision-making and the formulation of appropriate housing and planning policies. The work also takes account of existing and emerging government policy and guidance.
- 6.2 The Halton HNA will help the council plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends, and the needs of different groups in the community. Specifically, the HNA identifies the size, type, and tenure of housing required by considering current market demand relative to supply and also identifies a continued affordable housing shortfall across the borough.
- 6.3 This concluding chapter summarises key messages from the research findings, structured around a commentary on the current and future housing markets and key local strategic issues.

Overall housing need

- 6.4 The government's latest standard method calculation identifies a minimum need for 474 dwellings each year across Halton.

Dwelling type, tenure, and mix

- 6.5 The relationship between household change and dwelling type/size and tenure requirements have been fully explored. The evidence will help the council deliver an appropriate range of dwelling stock for residents over the plan period. It is recommended that future planning policy references the broad mixes evidenced in Table 6.1 and is taken into account when determining future applications. The table assumes 80% of new dwellings will be market and 20% affordable.
- 6.6 Regarding affordable need, there is an annual net shortfall of 141 dwellings over the next ten years. A recommended affordable tenure split is 50% social rented, 27% affordable rented, and 23% affordable home ownership across Halton. Delivery of affordable housing is subject to economic viability and the council does not need to plan to meet this number in full but affordable housing delivery should be maximised at every possible opportunity.

Table 6.1 Summary of overall dwelling mix

Dwelling type/size	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership including First Homes	Total
Overall % split>>	75%	19%	6%	100%
1/2-bedroom house	5-10%	20-25%	15-20%	10-15%
3-bedroom house	25-30%	10-15%	25-30%	25-30%
4+ bedroom house	25-30%	10-15%	20-25%	20-25%
1-bedroom flat	0-2%	10-15%	0-2%	2-5%
2+ bedroom flat	2-5%	5-10%	5-10%	2-5%
1/2-bedroom bungalow/level access	10-15%	25-30%	5-10%	15-20%
3+ bedroom bungalow/level access	10-15%	10-15%	15-20%	10-15%
Dwelling type	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
House	65-70%	40-45%	65-70%	60-65%
Flat	5-10%	15-20%	5-10%	5-10%
Bungalow/level-access	25-30%	35-40%	25-30%	25-30%
Number of bedrooms	Market	Affordable/ Social Rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
1	2-5%	20-25%	2-5%	5-10%
2	25-30%	40-45%	25-30%	25-30%
3	40-45%	20-25%	40-45%	35-40%
4+	25-30%	10-15%	20-25%	20-25%

Meeting the needs of older people and those with disabilities

- 6.7 There is evidence to support a programme of accommodation delivery to help meet the needs of older people and those with disabilities. Although the majority of older people want to remain in their own home with support when needed, there is a need to diversify options available to older people wanting to move to more appropriate accommodation.
- 6.8 There are currently around 1,587 units of specialist older persons' accommodation comprising 678 specialist older accommodation units (C3 planning use class), 237 Extra Care (C2 use class), and 672 bedspaces residential care (C2 use class). It is estimated there is a need over the period 2024 to 2042 for:
- 2,790 additional C3 dwelling units or 155 each year;
 - 543 C2 Extra Care units or 30 each year; and
 - 455 C2 residential care bedspaces or 25 each year.

The C3 units should be included in the overall housing figure. Delivery of C2 units would be in addition to this figure.

- 6.9 A key conclusion is that there needs to be a broader housing offer for older people across Halton and this HNA has provided evidence of scale and range of dwellings needed.
- 6.10 A range of information has been assembled from various sources which helps to scope out the likely level of disability across Halton's population.
- 6.11 Given the ageing population of the borough and the identified levels of disability amongst the population, it is recommended that 5% of new dwellings are built to M4(3) wheelchair accessible and adaptable standard and all remaining new dwellings are built to M4(2) accessible and adaptable standard to take account of the ageing demographics of Halton.
- 6.12 It is expected that some of this need will be met through the development of C3 accommodation and there is overlap between affordable, specialist older person and M4(3) need. For instance, the development of an older person's level access, wheelchair accessible affordable dwelling would help address three aspects of housing need.
- 6.13 It is also assumed that there will be ongoing adaptation of existing dwellings to support those with additional needs.

Final comments

- 6.14 The evidence presented in this HNA suggests that there are three main policy areas that require particular attention from both a planning policy and social policy perspective:
- The challenge of enabling the quantity and mix of housing that needs to be delivered, including an appropriate level of affordable housing.
 - The challenge of ensuring that the housing and support needs of older people are met going forward.
 - The challenge of ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities is appropriately addressed.

Technical Appendix A: Research Methodology

Overall approach

A.1 A multi-method approach was adopted in order to prepare a robust and credible Housing Needs Assessment for Halton:

- A random sample survey of households across the borough area was undertaken, with 16,530 households in the borough contacted during December and invited to complete a questionnaire. 1,620 questionnaires were returned and used in data analysis. This represents a 9.8% response rate overall and a sample error of $\pm 2.4\%$ at the borough level and between $\pm 5.0\%$ and $\pm 7.3\%$ at sub-area level. Low response rates are expected and the sample errors achieved would be described by ONS as 'Precise' if $\pm 15\%$ or lower and 'reasonable precise' if between $\pm 5\%$ to under $\pm 10\%$.
- A survey of key stakeholders including representatives from the council, neighbouring local authorities, housing associations, specialist housing providers, estate agents, adult social care, and developers.
- Interviews with estate and letting agents operating within the borough.
- A review of relevant secondary data including the 2021 Census, house price trends, CORE lettings data, and MHCLG Statistics.

Table A1 Household survey sample information

Sub-area	Total households sample base (2021 Census)	Sample target for +/- 5%	Households contacted	Actual response	Actual response rate	Actual sample error
West and North West Widnes (inc. Hale Village)	9,419	369	3,263	263	0.081	6.0%
Central and Southern Widnes	7,789	366	2440	177	0.073	7.3%
East Widnes	10,475	370	2469	293	0.119	5.6%
West Runcorn	10,873	371	2473	305	0.123	5.5%
Central Runcorn	9,754	369	2463	215	0.087	6.6%
East Runcorn (inc. Daresbury, Moore and Preston Brook)	7,635	366	3,422	367	0.107	5.0%
TOTAL	55,945	381	16530	1620	0.098	2.4%

Parishes	Total households sample base (2021 Census)	Sample target for +/- 5%	Households contacted	Actual response	Actual response rate	Actual sample error
Hale Village	791	259	812	53	0.065	13.0%
Daresbury	135	100	217	20	0.092	20.2%
Moore	373	189	399	40	0.100	14.6%

Technical Appendix B: Affordable Housing Definitions

Affordable housing definitions

Definitions relating to affordable housing are presented in the NPPF 2024 (Annex 2):

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) **Social Rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent; (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
- b) **Other affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- c) **Discounted market sales housing** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

First Homes

In May 2021, Planning Practice Guidance was issued which set out the concept of First Homes and their delivery: (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes - first-homes-definition-and-eligibility-requirements>). Key points are:

- First Homes are a discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes.

- They must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against market value. After the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 outside London.
- They must be sold to people meeting eligibility criteria which includes first-time buyers and household incomes should not exceed £80,000.
- The discount is passed onto each subsequent purchaser.

NPPF 2024 (paragraph 66 footnote 30) states that 'the requirement to deliver a minimum of 25% of affordable housing as First Homes, as set out in 'Affordable Homes Update' Written Ministerial Statement dated 24 May 2021, no longer applies. Delivery of First Homes can, however, continue where local planning authorities judge that they meet local need.

Technical Appendix C: Housing Need Calculations

Introduction

- C.1 Identifying the scale of affordable housing need is a key consideration of planning practice guidance. This is a separate calculation to the overall housing need figure derived using the standard model and set out in PPG paragraphs 18 (Reference ID: 2a-018-20190220) to 24 (Reference ID: 2a-024-20190220). The affordable housing need analysis helps to establish the overall scale of affordable housing need by location, type, size, and tenure and whether the council should plan for more dwellings to help meet the need for affordable housing.
- C.2 PPG states that ‘all households whose needs are not met by the market can be considered in affordable housing need (PPG Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 2a-018-20190220). PPG then considers how affordable housing need should be calculated:
- ‘Strategic policymakers will need to estimate the current number of households and projected number of households who lack their own housing or who cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market. This should involve working with colleagues in their relevant authority (e.g. housing, health and social care departments).’* (PPG Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 2a-019-20190220).
- C.3 The PPG focuses on the use of existing (secondary data) but does not preclude the use of primary survey evidence.
- C.4 There are four broad components to the needs assessment method. These have remained relatively unchanged through the different guidance issued by government and focus on:
- Step A. Existing households in need (current unmet gross need).
 - Step B. Future households in need.
 - Step C. Affordable supply.
 - Step D. Annual need for affordable housing.

Affordability assumptions

- C.5 As part of the affordable needs assessment, the extent to which households in need cannot afford open market prices or rents is considered. PPG does not specify what household income should be spent for a property to be affordable although does state the ‘need to identify the minimum household income required to access lower quartile (entry level) market housing’ PPG 2019 Paragraph 021 Reference ID 2a-021-20190220. The last guidance to consider affordable prices/rents was published in the 2007 DCLG Strategic Housing Market Assessments Practice Guidance Version 2 August 2007, which stated that gross household incomes should be used to assess affordability and:
- A household can be considered able to afford to buy a home if it costs 3.5x the gross income of a single earner or 2.9x the gross income for dual-income households; and

- A household can be considered able to afford market renting where the rent payable was up to 25% of gross household income.
- C.6 The former guidance did note that local circumstances could justify higher figures being used for affordable renting and that allowances should be made for access to capital that could be used towards the cost of home ownership.
- C.7 Mortgage lending practices would suggest that 4.75x a single or joint income could be considered. This is the maximum single or joint household income multiple offered by First Direct July 2020.
- C.8 Based on this data, the principal assumption considered by arc4 with reference to affordability is:
- For buying up to 3.5x gross household income; and
 - For renting up to 25% gross household income.

Step A: Current unmet gross need

- C.9 PPG Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 2a-021-20190220 states that 'strategic policy-making authorities can establish the unmet (gross) need for affordable housing by assessing past trends and current estimates of:
- The number of homeless households;
 - The number of those in priority need who are currently housed in temporary accommodation;
 - The number of households in over-crowded housing;
 - The number of concealed households;
 - The number of existing affordable housing tenants in need (i.e. householders currently housed in unsuitable dwellings); and
 - The number of households from other tenures in need and those that cannot afford their own homes, either to rent or to own if that is their aspiration.'
- C.10 PPG notes that care should be taken to avoid double-counting and to only include those households who cannot afford to access suitable housing in the market. Table C1 sets out the overall scale of current need before affordability of market housing is considered.

Table C1 Current gross unmet need (before affordability testing)

Reason for need	Total in need	Comment	Source
A1 Homeless households	793	Number of households identified as homeless Apr 2024 to Dec 2024	Council
A2 Priority need/temporary accommodation	1,285	Households identified as threatened with homelessness plus households living in temporary accommodation between Apr 2024 and Dec 2024	Council
A3 Overcrowded	1,217	2021 Census data households	2021 Census TS052
A4 Concealed household	574	Census definition refers to couples and lone parents living within another family unit	2021 Census RM009
A5 Existing affordable tenants in need	1,424		2024 Household Survey
A6 Other tenures in need	3,263		2024 Household Survey
A7 Sum of households in A3 to A6 with one or more needs	6,478	Sum of A3 to A6 BOLD figures	
A8 Total in A7 adjusted to remove any double counting	5,242	This is the total number of households with one or more needs	
A9. All households in need (A1+A2+A8)	7,320	Represents 13.1% of all households.	

Note: table subject to rounding

Further Notes to Table C1:

A3. Overcrowding

The extent to which households are overcrowded is measured using the 'bedroom standard'. This allocates a standard number of bedrooms to each household in accordance with its age/sex/marital status composition. A separate bedroom is allocated to each married couple, any other person aged 21 or over, each pair of adolescents aged 10-20 of the same sex, and each pair of children under 10. Any unpaired person aged 10-20 is paired, if possible, with a child under 10 of the same sex, or, if that is not possible, is given a separate bedroom, as is any unpaired child under 10. This standard is then compared with the actual number of bedrooms (including bedsits) available for the sole use of the household.

Note: the model has used overcrowding and concealed households data from the 2021 Census.

A4. Concealed households

The number of couples and lone parents living within a household.

A5. Existing affordable tenants in need and A6. Other tenures in need

Households in need based on the numbers who have one or more of the following needs: under notice, real threat of notice, or lease coming to an end; too expensive; too difficult to maintain; sharing facilities; unsuitable due to age/mobility impairment; lacking facilities; major disrepair; harassment/threat of harassment from neighbours.

A7 and A8. Sum of households

A7 is the sum of households who are overcrowded, concealed, are existing tenants in need, or other tenures in need. A8 adjusts this total to remove double counting to give a figure for the total number of households with one or more housing need. This final figure takes account of any duplicates (so if the household is overcrowded and has another need, it is only counted once as a household in need).

Affordability of open market options

C.11 Table C2 sets out lower quartile prices and rents for each sub-area.

Table C2 Lower quartile house prices and rents by sub-area

Area	Lower quartile rent 2024	Lower quartile private price 2024
Central and Southern Widnes	£594	£100,000
Central Runcorn	£576	£95,000
East Runcorn	£797	£135,000
East Widnes	£750	£160,000
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	£797	£120,000
West Runcorn	£676	£104,000
Borough of Halton	£676	£112,500

Source: Data produced by Land Registry © Crown copyright 2024, Zoopla 2024

- C.12 Table C3 sets out the proportion of households in need who could not afford open market prices or rents. Where no prices/rents are available, borough average prices/rents have been used. The affordability analysis uses data on ward-level lower quartile prices and rents and assumes that a property is affordable if up to 25% of household income is spent on rent and buying costs up to 3.5x household income.
- C.13 It is reasonably assumed that all households in A1 (homeless) and A2 (priority need/in temporary accommodation) cannot afford open market prices or rents given their housing circumstances (and income information is not available from secondary data source).
- C.14 The affordability of open market options is tested on the remaining households in need (rows A3 to A6 in Table C1) based on the 2024 Household Survey.

- C.15 Analysis concludes that **4,980** households across Halton are in housing need and cannot afford to buy or rent at lower quartile market prices.

Table C3 Affordability of open market housing for households in need

Needs groups	Number of households	% cannot afford to buy or rent	Number cannot afford to buy or rent
Sum of A1 and A2 households	2,078	100%	2,078
Sum of households in A3 to A6 with one or more needs	7,320	39.6%	2,902
Total cannot afford to buy or rent			4,980

Step B: Future households in need

- C.16 **PPG Paragraph 021 Reference ID: 2a-021029190220** states that 'projections of affordable housing need will have to reflect new household formation, the proportion of newly-forming households unable to buy or rent in the market area, and an estimate of the number of existing households falling into need. The process will need to identify the minimum household income required to access lower quartile (entry level) market housing. It can then assess what proportion of newly-forming households will be unable to access market housing.'

New household formation

- C.17 The most useful data sources for assessing the level of new household formation are:
- MHCLG/ONS household projections, from which an annual net increase in households can be derived; and
 - The English Housing Survey, from which a national gross household formation rate can be derived and referenced as a data source in the PPG.
- C.18 Based on the requirements of PPG, the gross annual formation rate used in analysis is 855. This is the household formation rate derived from a range of projections set out in Table C4. Through the standard method of calculating need, allowance is made for increasing the level of housing delivery to support household formation through the affordability adjustment.

Table C4 Net and gross household formation 2024-2042

Scenario	Annual household formation	Notes	Source
A. MHCLG 2014-based household projections	165	3,748 NET increase between 2024 and 2039	MHCLG 2014-based household projections
B. ONS 2018-based household projections	288	3,614 NET increase between 2024 and 2042	ONS 2018-based household projections
C. Average gross household formation rate based on applying national rate to total households over the period 2024-2039 (2014-based projections)	840	Gross household formation rate of 1.435%	English Housing Survey 3-year average 2017/18 to 2019/20
D. Average gross household formation rate based on applying national rate to total households over the period 2024-2043 (2018-based projections)	869	Gross household formation rate of 1.439%	English Housing Survey 3-year average 2017/18 to 2019/20
G. Blended rate of gross household formation (C, D)	855		

NOTE: this analysis is based on DCLG 2014-based household projections which run to 2039

New households likely to be in affordable housing need

- C.19 Analysis of the incomes of households who have formed in the past 5 years using the 2024 Household Survey concludes that 39.2% could not afford buying or renting lower quartile (entry level) properties. Based on a gross formation rate of **855**, 335 households are estimated to be in affordable housing need.

Existing households expected to fall into need

- C.20 The 2024 Household Survey identifies 790 households who have fallen into need in the past 5 years and require affordable housing or 158 each year.

Total newly arising affordable housing need (gross per year)

- C.21 Total newly arising need is therefore 494 each year as summarised in Table C5.

Table C5 Total annual newly-arising affordable housing need

A. Number of newly-forming households		855
B. Proportion unable to afford market housing	39.2%	335
C. Existing households falling into need		158
Total newly arising affordable need (B+C)		494

Step C: Affordable housing supply

C.22 PPG Paragraph 022 Reference ID: 2a-022-20190220 notes that ‘there will be a current supply of housing stock that can be used to accommodate households in affordable housing need as well as future supply.’ There are five aspects to affordable supply to be considered as set out in Table C6.

Table C6 Affordable housing supply

Source of supply/stock loss	Data source	Data
The number of affordable dwellings that are going to be vacated by occupiers that are fit for use by other households in need	RP lettings data over most recent 4-year period	Annual average of 660 general needs affordable dwellings have been let 2020/21 to 2023/24.
Suitable surplus stock (vacant properties)	MHCLG vacant dwelling statistics	139 vacant affordable (council and housing association excluding not available for letting) dwellings reported as vacant in 2023 or 1.0% of total affordable stock. This is below the transactional rate of around 2% to allow movement in stock so no suitable surplus stock available.
The committed supply of new net affordable homes at the point of assessment (number and size)	Council data	Total of 849 affordable dwellings have been completed between 2019/20 to 2023/24, or an annual average of 170 over the 5-year period. Annual figure is used in supply calculation as proxy for committed supply.
Supply of affordable home ownership through resale	English Housing Survey Table FA4131	EHS indicates 5.9% of owner-occupiers with a mortgage moved to their accommodation in the past year. This is used as a basis for estimating the number of resales of affordable home ownership products at 5% each year. Based on 433 dwellings, there are an estimated 22 resales each year.
Units taken out of management	Local authority data	None identified.
Total annual supply	Calculation	660 lettings + 0 vacant + 170 newbuild + 22 AHO resales – 0 units taken out of management = 851 each year

Note: stock losses through Right to Buy are not referenced in PPG and not included in this table. Any losses through Right to Buy would increase the shortfall.

C.23 Overall, the model assumes a total annual affordable housing stock supply of **851** dwellings.

Step D: Total annual need and breakdown by size and tenure

- C.24 Table C7 summarises the total annual need for affordable housing across Halton which establishes a gross annual need of 992 and after taking into account supply, a net need of 141 affordable dwellings each year. This assumes a clearance of gross unmet need over 10 years to align with the standard method. Table C7 also considers how the scale of need varies according to the length of time to clear the current gross unmet need. Table C8 presents the data for individual sub-areas.

Table C7 Gross and net annual affordable need

				Alternative assumptions regarding backlog clearance		
Scenario	Factor	Number	Data source/ assumption	5-year clearance	15-year clearance	19-year clearance
A1	Current gross unmet need (before affordability test)	7,320	Table C1 row A9	7,320	7,320	7,320
A2	Current gross unmet need (after affordability test)	4,980	Table C3	4,980	4,980	4,980
A3	Current gross unmet need (after affordability test and pipeline supply)	4,980		4,980	4,980	4,980
A4	Annualised need	498	Assume unmet need is cleared over a 10-year period to reflect the standard method 10-year time period	996	332	277
B	Newly-arising annual need	494	Table C5	494	494	494
TGN	Total gross need	992	A3+B	1,490	826	770
C	Affordable annual housing supply	851	Table C6	851	851	851
	Total annual net need	141	TGN – C	639	-25	-81

Notes: Table subject to rounding errors

Table C8 Gross and net annual affordable need by sub-area

CODE	Factor	Data source/ assumption	BOROUGH OF HALTON	Central and Southern Widnes	Central Runcorn	East Runcorn	East Widnes	West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	West Runcorn
A1	Current gross unmet need (before affordability test)	Table C1 row A9	7,320	805	1,419	1,134	873	1,334	1,755
A2	Current gross unmet need (after affordability test) and housing register information	Table C3	4,980	587	946	760	694	1,011	983
A3	Current gross unmet need (after affordability test and pipeline supply)		4,980	587	946	760	694	1,011	983
A4	Annualised need	Assume unmet need is cleared over a 10-year period	498	59	95	76	69	101	98
B	Newly-arising annual need	Table C5	494	91	98	68	69	95	72
TGN	Total gross need	A3+B	992	150	193	144	139	196	170
C	Affordable annual housing supply	Table C6	851	134	234	129	59	168	126
	Total annual net need	TGN – C	141	16	-42	14	80	28	44

C.25 According to the latest available Local Authority Housing Statistics data, there are 2,709 households on the housing register for (Table C9) and an overall average of 3,836 over the past 4 years 2020/21 to 2023/24

Table C9 Households on the housing register and bedrooms required

Year	Total households on the housing waiting list	How many bedrooms did these households require?			
		1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 or more bedroom
2023/24	2,709	1,341	887	352	129
2022/23	4,233	2,270	1,244	560	159
2021/22	4,154	2,164	1,297	544	149
2020/21	4,249	2,233	1,323	566	127
Average (4 yr)	3,836	2,002	1,188	506	141
Average (4yr) %	100.0%	52.2%	31.0%	13.2%	3.7%

Source: MHCLG Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS)

C.26 Table C10 summarises affordable need by number of bedrooms, based on 2024 Household Survey data. This indicates a broader range of need.

Table C10 Affordable need by number of bedrooms by sub-area

Sub-area	Number of bedrooms					Base (annual gross need)	Base (annual net need)
	1	2	3	4 or more	Total		
Central and Southern Widnes	14.0%	21.4%	48.2%	16.4%	100.0%	150	16
Central Runcorn	15.3%	36.8%	24.4%	23.5%	100.0%	193	-42
East Runcorn	15.1%	40.7%	28.4%	15.8%	100.0%	144	14
East Widnes	14.3%	23.0%	43.5%	19.2%	100.0%	139	80
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	20.7%	58.8%	14.4%	6.1%	100.0%	196	28
West Runcorn	16.8%	38.7%	39.4%	5.1%	100.0%	170	44
Borough of Halton	21.0%	39.6%	27.1%	12.3%	100.0%	992	141

Source: 2024 Household Survey

First Homes

C.27 First Homes are described at Appendix B.

C.28 Table C11 considers the price of First Homes using different discounts based on median prices across the borough. Table C12 shows that based on median prices, the First Home product at borough level is within the £250,000 threshold. The First Home discount should be consistent across a local authority area. Based on house price data for Halton as a whole, First Homes could be delivered at a 40% discount and be affordable to households on median incomes. This assumes that the First Home price is a discount to the overall median price in the borough.

Table C11 First Home prices by borough

Tenure option		Price (2024) Halton Borough
Market price (median) 2024		£160,000
Discount to median price		
	30%	£112,000
	40%	£96,000
	50%	£80,000
Note: To be eligible as a First Home, the maximum price after discount is £250,000		
Income required (10% deposit and 3.5x household income)		
Discount to median price		
	30%	£28,800
	40%	£24,686
	50%	£20,571
Income required (10% deposit and 4.5x household income)		
Discount to median price		
Median		
	30%	£22,400
	40%	£19,200
	50%	£16,000
Actual household income (2024 CAMEO)		
Median		£25,000
Comparison between household income and income required for a First Home		
(Less than 1 or 1 is affordable (green) ; greater than 1 is not affordable (red))		
Income required (10% deposit and 3.5x household income)		
Discount to median price		
	30%	1.2
	40%	1.0
	50%	0.8
Income required (10% deposit and 4.5x household income)		
Discount to median price		
	30%	0.9
	40%	0.8
	50%	0.6

Tenure mix

- C.29 Analysis needs to consider the range of affordable tenures as set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF that may be appropriate for existing households in need and newly-forming households.
- C.30 For need arising from homeless households and those in temporary accommodation, it is assumed they all require social rented accommodation. For newly-forming households and existing households in need, a split between affordable rented and affordable home ownership should be considered.

However, there is insufficient household income and savings data available from the housing register to complete this analysis. Therefore, CAMEO household income data has been used to establish the proportions of households who could afford social rent, affordable rent, and affordable home ownership.

- C.31 Table C12 summarises the overall tenure split between affordable rented options (social and affordable rent) and affordable home ownership solutions (including shared ownership, discounted for sale, First Homes, and other tenures as set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF).

Table C12 Affordable tenure split

Sub-area	Social rented (%)	Affordable rented (%)	Affordable home ownership (%)	Total
Central and Southern Widnes	49.9%	24.7%	25.4%	100.0%
Central Runcorn	37.7%	31.2%	31.2%	100.0%
East Runcorn	50.0%	30.2%	19.8%	100.0%
East Widnes	66.8%	23.0%	10.2%	100.0%
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	46.9%	26.6%	26.6%	100.0%
West Runcorn	48.9%	25.6%	25.6%	100.0%
BOROUGH OF HALTON	50.0%	27.0%	23.0%	100.0%

- C.32 Analysis would suggest an overall tenure split of 50% social rented, 27% affordable rented, and 23% affordable home ownership across Halton. In calculating the tenure mix, analysis has considered the tenure preferences and incomes of existing and newly-forming households. It also recognises the increased emphasis on delivering social rented affordable dwellings as part of new affordable housing supply.

C.33 The 2024 Household Survey has provided information on the number of bedrooms needed by households in affordable need and dwelling type aspirations and expectations. This is shown in Table C13 and indicates a broad range of affordable dwellings are needed.

Table C13 Affordable dwelling mix by sub-area, number of bedrooms, and dwelling type

Dwelling type/size	Sub-area						
	Central and Southern Widnes	Central Runcorn	East Runcorn	East Widnes	West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	West Runcorn	Borough of Halton
1/2-bedroom house	13.1%	16.5%	13.8%	15.0%	40.9%	15.7%	19.4%
3-bedroom house	48.2%	8.6%	19.5%	18.8%	8.2%	16.8%	15.0%
4+ bedroom house	16.4%	23.5%	15.8%	19.2%	6.1%	5.1%	12.3%
1-bedroom flat	8.4%	8.5%	8.7%	8.2%	9.6%	9.7%	10.9%
2-bedroom flat	5.4%	12.8%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	5.8%
3+ bedroom flat	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.4%	1.9%	0.8%	1.0%
1/2-bedroom level-access	8.5%	14.3%	30.6%	14.0%	29.0%	23.5%	24.5%
3+ bedroom level-access	0.0%	15.8%	8.9%	16.3%	4.3%	21.8%	11.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Annual need (gross)	150	193	144	139	196	170	992
Annual need (net)	16	-42	14	80	28	44	141

Comparison of current housing stock and current/future needs

- C.34 PPG states that 'strategic policy-making authorities will need to look at the current stock of houses of different sizes and assess whether these match current and future need (PPG Paragraph 023 Reference ID: 2a-023-20190220). Table C14 sets out this comparison with 2024 Household Survey information. Although there is need for all sizes of affordable housing, analysis would suggest there is a particular shortfall of 2 and 4 or more bedroom dwellings.

Table C14 Comparison between current affordable supply and annual gross affordable need

Number of bedrooms	Current supply estimate	%	Annual gross need %	Variance %
1-bedroom	3,126	21.8%	21.0%	0.8%
2-bedroom	4,261	29.7%	39.6%	-9.9%
3-bedroom	6,233	43.4%	27.1%	16.4%
4 or more bedroom	736	5.1%	12.3%	-7.2%
Total	14,355	100.0%	100.0%	

Source: 2024 Household Survey

Technical Appendix D: Dwelling Mix and Modelling

Introduction

- D.1 This technical appendix describes the method used by arc4 to establish future dwelling type and size mix across the borough. It presents the baseline data used as a starting point for the analysis and how data are interpreted to establish a reasonable view on dwelling type and mix.

Starting points

- D.2 There are four main data sources which underpin the analysis:
- Household projections;
 - Dwelling stock information;
 - Data identifying the relationships between households and dwellings derived from the 2024 Household Survey; and
 - Data derived from affordable housing need analysis.

Household projections

- D.3 These are used to establish the number of households by Household Reference Persons (HRP) and household type using the 2018-based data, and how this is expected to change over the period 2024 to 2042.
- D.4 The change in the number of households over this period can be established and, assuming that the dwelling needs of these households do not change significantly over the plan period, the potential impact on type and number of bedrooms of future dwellings can be determined.

Relationship between households and dwellings

- D.5 The relationship between the age of Household Reference Person, household type, and dwellings occupied by type and size can be derived from the 2024 Household Survey.
- D.6 The data available is summarised in Table D1. For each age group, the proportion of Household Reference Persons (HRPs) by household type living in different type/size and size of dwelling has been estimated.
- D.7 The 2024 Household Survey also provides data on household aspirations and what households would expect to move to. This data can also be broken down by HRP age group and household type.
- D.8 By combining this range of data, it is possible to model the likely change in dwelling type/size requirements with reference to:
- The current relationship between HRP/household type and dwelling type/size and this remains constant over the plan period (demographic baseline);
 - Household aspirations by HRP/household type (aspirations); and

- What households would expect by HRP/household type (expect).

Table D1 Age groups, household type, and dwelling types used

Age group of Household Reference Person	Household type	Dwelling type and number of bedrooms
15 to 24	One-person household	1-bedroom house
25 to 34	Household with 1 dependent child	2-bedroom house
35 to 44	Household with 2 dependent children	3-bedroom house
45 to 54	Households with 3 dependent children	4 or more bedroom house
55 to 64	Other household with two or more adults	1-bedroom flat
65 to 74	All	2-bedroom flat
75 to 84		3 or more bedroom flat
85+		1-bedroom bungalow
All		2-bedroom bungalow
		3 or more bedroom bungalow
		All

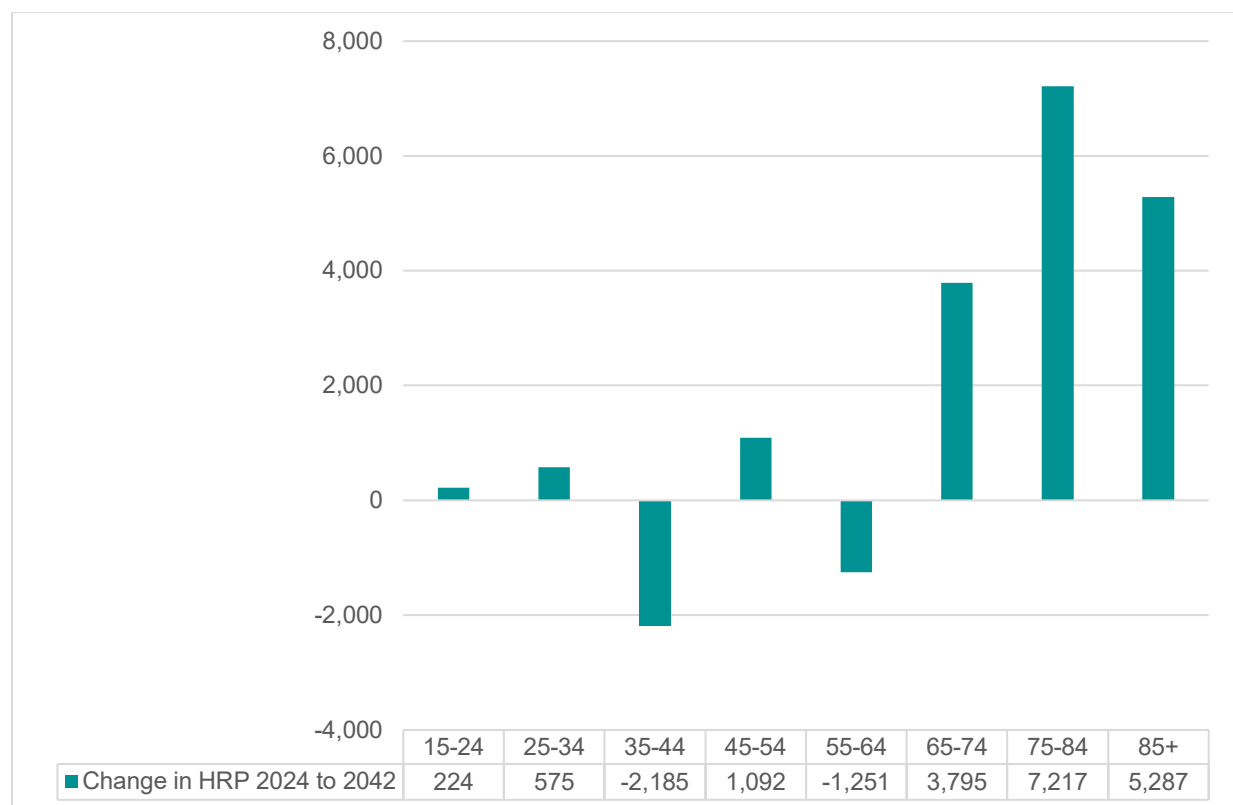
Applying the data at authority level

- D.9 Applying the data at authority level is done in a systematic way. Firstly, the change in the number of households by age group and household type is established from household projections. Assuming that the dwelling needs of these households do not change over the plan period, the overall impact on type/size of dwellings can be determined.
- D.10 Table D2 presents the baseline demographic data for Halton. The total number of households is expected to increase by 14,754 over the period 2024-2042 using 2018-based ONS household projections. Growth is mainly expected across older age cohorts. Figure D1 illustrates how the number of households by HRP age is expected to change over the period 2024-2042.

Table D2 Change in number of households by age group and household type 2024 to 2042

2024	One person	Household with 1 dependent child	Household with 2 dependent children	Household with 3 or more dependent children	Other households with two or more adults	Total
15-24	385	586	181	93	307	1,552
25-34	1,692	1,796	1,399	749	1,373	7,008
35-44	2,449	2,434	2,401	1,036	1,651	9,971
45-54	2,708	2,053	1,305	335	3,878	10,279
55-64	3,501	835	260	60	6,302	10,958
65-74	3,487	227	33	1	5,245	8,994
75-84	3,194	67	16	0	3,479	6,757
85+	1,484	5	5	0	579	2,073
TOTAL	18,901	8,003	5,600	2,275	22,813	57,591
2042	One person	Household with 1 dependent child	Household with 2 dependent children	Household with 3 or more dependent children	Other households with two or more adults	Total
15-24	403	607	194	101	333	1,637
25-34	1,765	1,860	1,447	773	1,429	7,274
35-44	2,304	2,262	2,243	967	1,550	9,325
45-54	2,939	2,264	1,451	374	4,217	11,246
55-64	3,337	799	246	56	6,057	10,495
65-74	3,734	234	33	1	5,615	9,617
75-84	4,543	91	22	0	4,734	9,390
85+	2,712	8	10	0	1,059	3,790
TOTAL	21,738	8,125	5,646	2,272	24,994	62,774
Change 2024-2042	One person	Household with 1 dependent child	Household with 2 dependent children	Household with 3 or more dependent children	Other households with two or more adults	Total
15-24	53	48	32	13	78	224
25-34	125	152	99	52	147	575
35-44	-515	-533	-512	-239	-385	-2,185
45-54	268	228	239	115	242	1,092
55-64	-371	-171	-78	-32	-599	-1,251
65-74	1,325	42	9	3	2,416	3,795
75-84	3,174	45	9	5	3,983	7,217
85+	3,349	59	1	5	1,874	5,287
TOTAL	7,408	-131	-201	-78	7,756	14,754

Source: ONS 2018-based household projections

Figure D1 Change in HRP age groups 2024-2042

Source: 2018-based ONS household projections

D.11 Table D3 applies 2024 Household Survey data on dwelling occupancy to the demographic profile in 2042. The two right hand columns indicate the likely profile of demand for dwelling types and sizes and how this translates to an overall percentage dwelling requirement.

Table D3 Impact of change in households by age group on dwellings occupied by 2042

Dwelling type and size	HRP age 15-24	HRP age 25-34	HRP age 35-44	HRP age 45-54	HRP age 55-64	HRP age 65-74	HRP age 75-84	HRP age 85+	TOTAL	%
1-bedroom bungalow/level access	55	38	33	175	244	439	961	310	2,254	3.6%
1-bedroom flat	261	47	393	553	384	527	263	189	2,618	4.2%
1-bedroom house	19	94	50	96	263	68	161	0	749	1.2%
1-bedroom other	176	10	21	14	15	69	74	0	377	0.6%
2-bedroom bungalow/level access	14	77	36	85	475	458	541	250	1,935	3.1%
2-bedroom flat	244	903	459	310	459	379	518	344	3,615	5.8%
2-bedroom house	135	1,252	1,555	1,581	1,142	1,147	483	133	7,428	11.8%
2-bedroom other	135	77	39	25	34	35	42	0	387	0.6%
3-bedroom house	371	3,830	4,822	5,452	4,361	4,228	3,980	1,816	28,861	46.0%
3 or more bedroom bungalow/level access	24	32	184	261	350	695	858	478	2,883	4.6%
3 or more bedroom flat	28	73	116	100	72	66	146	56	656	1.0%
3 or more bedroom other	57	7	14	34	39	21	114	0	287	0.5%
4 or more bedroom house	119	834	1,604	2,561	2,656	1,488	1,251	213	10,725	17.1%
Total	1,637	7,274	9,325	11,246	10,495	9,617	9,390	3,790	62,774	100.0%
Number of bedrooms	HRP age 15-24	HRP age 25-34	HRP age 35-44	HRP age 45-54	HRP age 55-64	HRP age 65-74	HRP age 75-84	HRP age 85+	TOTAL	%
1	511	188	496	838	906	1,102	1,458	499	5,999	9.6%
2	528	2,308	2,089	2,000	2,111	2,018	1,583	728	13,364	21.3%
3	480	3,943	5,137	5,846	4,823	5,009	5,098	2,350	32,686	52.1%
4 or more	119	834	1,604	2,561	2,656	1,488	1,251	213	10,725	17.1%
Total	1,637	7,274	9,325	11,246	10,495	9,617	9,390	3,790	62,774	100.0%

Note: totals by age group may vary slightly due to rounding errors; Source: ONS 2018-based household projections and 2024 household survey

D.12 Table D4 sets out how the profile of dwelling stock changes when aspirations and expectations of households are considered. This indicates a notable shift towards bungalow/level-access accommodation and two and four bedroom dwellings.

Table D4 Dwelling type and size outcomes under aspiration and expectation scenarios

Dwelling type and size	Demographic	Aspirations	Expectations	BLEND	Current Stock
1/2-bedroom house	13.0%	10.5%	14.3%	13.4%	13.4%
3-bedroom house	46.0%	22.6%	28.2%	53.2%	53.2%
4 or more bedroom house	17.1%	26.2%	18.2%	12.2%	12.2%
1-bedroom flat	4.2%	0.7%	3.5%	5.4%	5.4%
2 or more bedroom flat	6.8%	3.8%	6.6%	6.8%	6.8%
1/2-bedroom bungalow/level-access	7.9%	21.3%	19.9%	5.2%	5.2%
3 or more bedroom bungalow/level-access	5.0%	15.0%	9.3%	3.8%	3.8%
Dwelling type	Demographic	Aspirations	Expectations	BLEND	
House	76.1%	59.2%	60.7%	65.3%	
Flat	11.0%	4.5%	10.1%	8.5%	
Bungalow/level access	12.9%	36.3%	29.2%	26.1%	
Number of bedrooms	Demographic	Aspirations	Expectations	BLEND	
1	9.6%	4.4%	7.5%	7.1%	
2	21.3%	31.4%	35.5%	29.4%	
3	52.1%	38.0%	38.9%	43.0%	
4	17.1%	26.2%	18.2%	20.5%	

Overall dwelling mix by tenure

- D.13 Table D5 summarises dwelling type/size mix based on the demographic scenario relating to the period 2024 to 2042. This analysis assumes a minimum 20% affordable housing target and an affordable tenure split of around 80% rented and 20% affordable home ownership. The analysis factors in the dwelling type/size analysis carried out as part of the affordable housing needs calculation and the dwelling type/size choices of households considering affordable home ownership solutions based on the range of dwellings currently available.
- D.14 The analysis can be revised if annual targets and affordable housing delivery targets are updated.

Table D5 Summary of overall dwelling mix by tenure

Dwelling type/size	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
Overall % split>>	75%	19%	6%	100%
1/2-bedroom house	5-10%	20-25%	15-20%	10-15%
3-bedroom house	25-30%	10-15%	25-30%	25-30%
4+ bedroom house	25-30%	10-15%	20-25%	20-25%
1-bedroom flat	0-2%	10-15%	0-2%	2-5%
2+ bedroom flat	2-5%	5-10%	5-10%	2-5%
1/2-bedroom bungalow/level access	10-15%	25-30%	5-10%	15-20%
3+ bedroom bungalow/level access	10-15%	10-15%	15-20%	10-15%
Dwelling type	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
House	65-70%	40-45%	65-70%	60-65%
Flat	5-10%	15-20%	5-10%	5-10%
Bungalow/level-access	25-30%	35-40%	25-30%	25-30%
Number of bedrooms	Market	Affordable/ social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
1	2-5%	20-25%	2-5%	5-10%
2	25-30%	40-45%	25-30%	25-30%
3	40-45%	20-25%	40-45%	35-40%
4+	25-30%	10-15%	20-25%	20-25%

Overall dwelling mix by sub-area

- D.15 Further analysis considers the range of dwellings by sub-area and tenure. This is based on the need for affordable/social rented dwellings, the need for affordable home ownership, and open market need. This takes account of the dwelling type aspirations and expectations of households, and the number of bedrooms needed.
- D.16 Table D6 summarises the overall dwelling mix by tenure and sub-area. Market mix is based on underlying demographics of the borough blended with the expectations of existing and newly forming households planning on moving in the general market. Affordable mix is based on the housing register and household survey evidence and includes a specific consideration of the needs

of households who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation. Affordable home ownership mix is based on household survey evidence. It is important that both planners and developers maintain a flexible approach to what is built within Halton, but this evidence helps to determine the relative priorities of development in particular sub-areas.

Table D6 Dwelling mix by number of bedrooms and sub-area

Neighbourhood Area	Tenure	Dwelling type and size						
		1 and 2-bedroom house	3-bedroom house	4 or more bedroom house	1-bedroom flat	2 and 3-bedroom flat	1 and 2-bedroom bungalow/level-access	3 or more bedroom bungalow/level-access
Central and Southern Widnes	Open market	5-10%	35-40%	35-40%	2-5%	0-2%	10-15%	2-5%
	Social/affordable rented	10-15%	25-30%	10-15%	10-15%	2-5%	30-35%	0-2%
	Affordable home ownership	10-15%	55-60%	15-20%	5-10%	5-10%	0-2%	0-2%
Central Runcorn	Open market	10-15%	25-30%	20-25%	0-2%	10-15%	10-15%	10-15%
	Social/affordable rented	15-20%	5-10%	15-20%	10-15%	10-15%	15-20%	15-20%
	Affordable home ownership	10-15%	15-20%	30-35%	0-2%	10-15%	10-15%	15-20%
East Runcorn	Open market	5-10%	25-30%	25-30%	0-2%	2-5%	10-15%	15-20%
	Social/affordable rented	15-20%	15-20%	10-15%	10-15%	2-5%	30-35%	5-10%
	Affordable home ownership	5-10%	25-30%	25-30%	0-2%	0-2%	10-15%	15-20%
East Widnes	Open market	10-15%	30-35%	20-25%	0-2%	2-5%	5-10%	15-20%
	Social/affordable rented	10-15%	15-20%	15-20%	5-10%	5-10%	10-15%	15-20%
	Affordable home ownership	10-15%	15-20%	25-30%	0-2%	5-10%	15-20%	10-15%
West and North West Widnes, and Hale Village	Open market	10-15%	15-20%	20-25%	2-5%	0-2%	30-35%	10-15%
	Social/affordable rented	35-40%	5-10%	2-5%	10-15%	0-2%	35-40%	2-5%
	Affordable home ownership	45-50%	10-15%	5-10%	0-2%	5-10%	10-15%	5-10%
West Runcorn	Open market	10-15%	30-35%	20-25%	0-2%	2-5%	10-15%	15-20%
	Social/affordable rented	15-20%	10-15%	0-2%	10-15%	5-10%	25-30%	15-20%
	Affordable home ownership	10-15%	20-25%	15-20%	0-2%	2-5%	5-10%	40-45%
Halton Borough	Open market	5-10%	25-30%	25-30%	0-2%	2-5%	10-15%	10-15%
	Social/affordable rented	20-25%	10-15%	10-15%	10-15%	5-10%	25-30%	10-15%
	Affordable home ownership	15-20%	25-30%	20-25%	0-2%	5-10%	5-10%	15-20%

Source: 2024 Household Survey

Technical Appendix E: Stakeholder review

Introduction

- E.1 arc4 contacted a range of stakeholders to obtain feedback on the housing needs of people living in Halton. The findings from 12 achieved responses are summarised in this appendix. Note that these views are the views of stakeholders and not necessarily the view of arc4 or the council.

All stakeholders

Strengths of Halton's housing market

- E.2 Halton is a popular place to live for those working in commuter cities to move to due to good transport links, a variety of housing and communities, and affordable prices.
- E.3 Stakeholders identified positive net migration, being part of the broader Liverpool City Region (LCR), and a collegiate local authority approach as strengths.
- E.4 New builds on land around the old town part of Runcorn, for instance Halton Road, Picow Farm Road is a strength.
- E.5 Halton has some key partnerships with a number of registered social landlords (RSL), which is definitely a strength. They have provided a number of affordable housing schemes to support people on lower incomes getting into the housing market.
- E.6 There is a future housing strategy for autistic adults and adults with a learning disability, which is great to see and can provide some clearer direction to commissioners, developers, and providers.
- E.7 Halton has some good examples of supported living accommodation at Ashley Green where there are 4 interlinked bungalows which is a great way of sharing staff across properties. This helps to reduce the costs of care packages and help when urgent cover is required. This also means waking nights can be shared which is a massive saving. Ashley Green gives the tenants their own front door which enables the tenants to be close to their friends.
- E.8 The Halton boundary with St Helens is with the southerly wards of Bold and a small section of Rainhill. There are a number of greenfield sites in this location.

Weaknesses of Halton's housing market/supply

- E.9 There are plenty of family homes available but less starter homes. The number of core services do not seem to match the number of houses and population. For example, it is difficult to get a doctor's appointment and register with an NHS dentist, families do not always get into their school of choice, and public transport does not cover the whole of the area.
- E.10 There are not enough houses. There are some empty properties that could help the issue but the process to get them back into operation is long winded and very onerous.

- E.11 The poor state of some of the private rentals with no recourse to have them improved is a weakness.
- E.12 The difficulty in the housing market at present is the significantly higher build and financial costs of production.
- E.13 Stakeholders also identified land availability and affordability, mix of tenures and property sizes, and availability of construction labour as areas of weakness in the housing market.
- E.14 A high number of families entering into Early Help services or Social Care living in Private Rentals are known to be experiencing both damp and mould that is causing health issues. Stakeholders questioned what is happening to improve this and hold landlords to account.
- E.15 The lack of and cost of supply of Specialist Support Housing is blocking the ability to increase capacity to support some of the most vulnerable people away from hospitals. Unlocking the costs between the LA, NHS, and housing will see significant cost saving across the local system.
- E.16 The strategy between Local Authority (LA), RSLs and children's residential providers could be more joined up/ambitious for children.
- E.17 Halton supported living services are in urgent care of additional accommodation. The borough has an aging population so there is a need for an influx of bungalows. Some properties are spread out and are not on bus routes making it difficult to staff and for tenants to access the local community.

Gaps in the supply of types of housing in Halton

- E.18 Affordable home ownership especially for first-time buyers, and affordable rented properties are both gaps in the Halton housing market.
- E.19 Opportunities are needed for first-time buyers and adults still living with parents who are required to build a substantial deposit.
- E.20 There is a gap in social rented housing in general and particularly general needs one bedroom properties in some areas such as Castlefields and Brookvale but this could include other areas as well.
- E.21 There is a lack of accommodation for young people in the borough (foyer-type supported accommodation or accommodation for young people leaving care) and this ties in with the lack of one bedroomed general needs accommodation.
- E.22 Specialist Supported Housing is a gap in the housing market.
- E.23 Based on local feedback from key stakeholders, it would appear that there remains key gaps in housing provision for autistic adults and adults with learning disabilities, especially for some adults that have complex needs and as a result may display behaviours deemed challenging. There also appears to be a lack of good quality housing for young people as they enter into adulthood. It would be positive if these can be addressed together, so that young people with a variety of care and support needs stay close to home within their local community, as opposed to being moved out of area and away from those people that are important to them.

- E.24 Massive shortages which stops services like ours (Halton Supported Housing Network) being able to provide support to people who need it.
- E.25 Stakeholders listed a lack of single person accommodation, insufficient mother and baby supported accommodation, insufficient supported accommodation for those with additional needs, and limited housing options for those in rent arrears with RSL's to move on from.
- E.26 There is insufficient domestic abuse (DA) emergency accommodation and a total lack of specialist DA accommodation for those who cannot be placed in the emergency accommodation i.e. complex needs, offending history.
- E.27 High quality Children's Residential Homes run by not-for-profit providers is a gap.
- E.28 There are gaps in housing for some adults with disabilities in Halton.

Setting future housing standards

- E.29 It is important to understand the customer needs, emerging trends/patterns, future needs and anticipating requirements of demographic need to be able to set future housing standards.
- E.30 There needs to be careful consideration of current housing stock and what it can provide.
- E.31 It is important to ensure housing standards are in line with legal, national requirements.
- E.32 LA development guidelines in neighbouring boroughs should be checked.
- E.33 The infrastructure needs to go hand in hand with public transport, schools, healthcare, green spaces, and some social activity which all need to be considered. There also needs to be careful consideration of community resources and accessible transport links.
- E.34 Ensuring there are communal facilities for communities to grow within new builds will help to keep Halton residents spending within the borough, and improve the economy, rather than living in Halton and going out of the borough for shopping/leisure.
- E.35 Stakeholders suggested "designing out crime" from the onset.
- E.36 There needs to be consideration of the green agenda.
- E.37 More single accommodation options that are not simply flats or apartments are needed, and larger family accommodation (5+ bedrooms) would be desirable.
- E.38 There needs to be an adequate supply of accessible housing available.
- E.39 Specialist housing needs to ensure that housing benefit can cover the actual costs of the accommodation. The ceiling on exempt housing, especially for adults with complex needs, behaviours of concerns, and the housing needs to be robust enough to meet needs and manage risk.
- E.40 Accessibility should be considered first. Bungalow-type accommodation is needed for older people/people with poor mobility. More ground floor properties made for disabled access, something like the over 50s with communal areas for

contact with friends, community access, and friendly where staffing costs could be shared would work well.

- E.41 With the increase in homelessness, small affordable properties are necessary.
- E.42 Building the right homes to bring people out of hospital back into local communities and ensuring community resources are available.
- E.43 Safe, welcoming communities for children in the care system. High quality homes in various shapes and sizes for children leaving care, delivered by range of providers.

Priority locations in Halton for housing development

- E.44 Waterfront areas of both Runcorn/Widnes as part of neighbourhood renewal were suggested as priority locations.
- E.45 The Old Town Runcorn would attract some inward investment.
- E.46 Runcorn is a priority location for what was the CLT development programme.
- E.47 The toll bridges, for bringing in solutions from out of borough or support into the borough as this is currently both a cost and geographical barrier.
- E.48 There is plenty of land available to build the properties but there does not seem to be the uptake from housing associations to fund this.

Registered Providers of social housing

Broad overview of the affordable stock in Halton

- E.49 The stock held by Plus Dane Housing is mainly general needs with a small number of other tenure types – freehold/leasehold, shared ownership, and supported.
- E.50 Tenure number of homes as a percentage: Shared Equity (2) - 0.2%, Supported (22) - 2.5%, Leasehold (23) - 2.5%, Freehold (26) - 3.0%, Shared Ownership (39) - 4.5%, General Needs (746) - 87.0%, Total – 858.
- E.51 The 744 general needs stock is split between houses, flats, and bungalows:
- E.52 Type number of homes as a percentage: bungalows (66) - 8.8%, flats (208) 28.0%, houses (470) 63.1%, total (744).
- E.53 Only 8 of the 208 flats are one bedroom, creating a serious bottleneck for people who need to downsize due to factors such as the Under-Occupancy Charge.
- E.54 Torus currently have a very low stock in the Halton area. They have 54 homes and are also on site (Daresbury) and in conversation with developers to acquire additional units across a couple of sites.

Main concerns about existing and future affordable and specialist housing providers

- E.55 Inflationary pressures on developing such housing has far outstripped housing benefit, meaning quality and appropriateness of the environments is now way out of kilter with public expectations and even care and health regulation.
- E.56 There is not enough affordable and specialist housing. As people age, they lose mobility, which means they could be stuck sleeping in a living room for months waiting for ground floor accommodation. This has a massive impact on other tenants as some properties have steps and stairs which makes it impossible to get in or out of.
- E.57 There is a lack of accommodation for young people in the borough (foyer-type supported accommodation or accommodation for young people leaving care) and this ties in with the lack of one bedroomed general needs accommodation. In addition, there is a limited provision for older people in terms of bungalows.
- E.58 Torus is currently in conversation with a number of developers regarding acquiring units at Daresbury, Hale Gate Road, and Sandymoor.

Demand for affordable housing products such as shared ownership and discounted for sale

- E.59 Plus Dane Housing are experiencing high demand for all affordable tenures including affordable/social rent and shared ownership.
- E.60 Rented supported living is also in demand according to Halton Supported Housing Network (HSHN)
- E.61 Torus have sold shared ownership on two developments within Halton in the last 18 months. The first being Beamish Place, Sandymoor where the average open market value was £269,375 for a three-bedroom house. The average first tranche sales on this development were 43% against the eight shared ownership sales units. The second development is at Bridgewater View, Daresbury, where Torus committed to delivering 58 shared ownership sales. The average open market sales value on this development is £335,040. Torus have legally completed on 34 of the 58 units with an average first tranche sale of 29%. A lower first tranche sale is to be expected on higher values units due to eligible purchasers' affordability and longer-term sustainability. Torus are currently considering additional smaller units on the next phase of this development.
- E.62 With regards to the customer profiling in this location the average age is 35 with an average income of £36,641 and average savings of £32,576. This includes a small proportion of purchasers who have utilised their savings to secure their first tranche sale. With regards to previous LA area 27% applied from within Halton, a further 13% were from Warrington, with 13% from Cheshire West and Chester, and other purchasers relocated from Lancashire and Hampshire. Looking at previous tenures, 93% of purchasers were first-time buyers and the remaining 7% were from relationship breakdowns.

Improving the provision of affordable housing for rent and sale

- E.63 More rented supported living is needed.
- E.64 The development of the Plus Dane Housing proposed site with Halton and Cityheart at Foundry Lane has seen some exemplary joint working to access grant funding from Homes England and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA). This has meant that they have been able to apply for Homes England grant funding as part of a strategic approach. However, access to grant funding for any other developments is on hold pending the announcement of the new grant funding round. This is impacting on all RP's ability to progress development sites.
- E.65 Sites, especially council owned sites, should look to consider the immediate demand of the area they are being developed in. This should help to alleviate local pressures and add to the affordable housing provision in the borough.

Significant housing developments proposed in the Halton area

- E.66 Plus Dane Housing are proposing the development of the Foundry Lane site in partnership with Halton and Cityheart. It will provide 63 new homes in phase 1 split 34 social/affordable rent and 29 shared ownership.
- E.67 Torus are currently in conversation with a number of developers regarding acquiring units at Daresbury, Hale Gate Road, and Sandymoor.
- E.68 1st Enable had significant housing developments proposed in the Halton area, but this has just fallen through due to it taking too long to get an agreement and soaring costs. This is having a huge cost and negative impact on individual users which could break down causing significant increased costs on one or other parts of the health and social care 'system'.

Delivering Build to Rent in the future

- E.69 Plus Dane Housing do not have any current plans for Build to Rent (BTR) in Halton but generally do consider the inclusion of BTR in new scheme developments dependent on demand and viability.

Positive/attractive about Halton as a place to develop/deliver new homes

- E.70 Halton is at the centre of major transport networks (M56 and the main line services to Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and London).
- E.71 Professionals care and are supportive but not backed up by a national/local strategy which helps the sharp end of the system which is coping on delivering the efficiency but is now in real risk of breaking down due to recent budget pressures.
- E.72 More resources need to be put into building very expensive hospital type accommodation as opposed to community-based placements. This is completely opposite to what the governments stated aims are (even though taxation policy in the care sector is causing movement in exactly the opposite direction and is happening now despite multiple warnings).

- E.73 Strong market for intermediate tenures (as long as properties are appropriate for the area).

Current or future plans to provide housing to meet specialist needs

- E.74 Plus Dane Housing are working with a charity looking to develop two small children's homes in Halton, in conjunction with Halton Borough Council. They are also discussing the possibility of developing a young person's foyer in the borough with move on accommodation with the council.
- E.75 Torus do not have any current plans to build any specialist housing in the borough, but this could change if the right site was presented to them.

Willingness to provide homes to meet older person needs or those with specialist needs

- E.76 1st Enable are willing to provide homes to meet older person needs or those with specialist needs through their development and funding partners, it is just completely out of sync with the reality of costs.
- E.77 Plus Dane Housing are also willing to provide these home.
- E.78 Torus would be for older people if the need is there. They would want to see what additional funding would be available for people with additional needs.

Willingness to provide housing to meet children in care/care leavers needs

- E.79 1st Enable thought it may be possible to provide housing to meet children in care/care leavers needs if working with partners.
- E.80 Plus Dane Housing stated a willingness to provide housing to meet these needs.
- E.81 Torus would like to provide such housing, however, they would not want to manage such schemes. Torus would look to enter into a lease arrangement with the LA who would need to manage the schemes.

Priorities for investment within existing stock

- E.82 There are literally hundreds of millions of pounds (if not billions) that is ready to be invested into the care system but cannot be deployed currently under the expectations of cost. The more that is a factor the more it will eventually cost the local 'system'.
- E.83 Torus are expecting notable investment requirement from 2030 onwards because of the time that has passed since stock transfer works were completed. As an example, from 2030, in excess of 2500 properties per year will require a new kitchen for the next 10 years. This investment will be aligned with their carbon zero commitments to 2030 and 2050. The volume of investment required has meant a more strategic approach to retrofit and how they utilise data collected and funding opportunities to support their commitment to greener homes.

- E.84 Retrofit on Castlefields was suggested by Plus Dane Housing.

Planning or interested in providing Extra Care accommodation in Halton

- E.85 1st Enable thought this was a possibility.
- E.86 Plus Dane Housing are not currently planning to provide Extra Care accommodation in Halton.
- E.87 This is something that Torus would likely consider if the right site was to be presented to them, and if the LA are committed to funding and commissioning care and support on site.

Current provision or planning to deliver Extra Care housing in Halton

- E.88 All of Plus Dane Housing's Extra Care sites incorporate communal spaces within the building including a resident's lounge, dining, catering kitchen, buggy store, accessible bathroom, and guest room. They will always ensure adequate storage within individual apartments and access to well designed, accessible outside space including sensory planting.
- E.89 Torus would look to provide a bistro and hair salon within an Extra Care setting. Other facilities in addition to services would include an internal scooter room/ bike storage, green space, additional parking, laundry room, and a guest room.

Current provision or planning to deliver sheltered housing in Halton

- E.90 Plus Dane Housing are not currently considering this provision.
- E.91 Torus stated that this would depend on funding arrangements for caretaking and cover.

Properties with an EPC rating less than C

- E.92 The current EPC ratings for the Halton stock for Plus Dane Housing is as follows: EPC rating number of homes and percentage: A (92 plus) - 7 - 0.81%, B (81-91) - 66 - 7.6%, C (69-80) - 469 - 54.6%, D (55-68) - 222 - 25.8%, E (39-54) - 5 - 0.58%, N/A - 89 - 10.3%, Total 858.
- E.93 In Halton, virtually all Torus stock is new which means it performs above the standard. Torus are already part of the LCR Consortium for Wave 3 Social Housing Warm Homes Plan. In their bid, they submitted proposals for more than 2000 properties to receive warm homes funding and bring these properties to EPC C and above.

Survey of EPC rating of properties

- E.94 Plus Dane Housing reported that all of their properties have an EPC rating survey.
- E.95 Torus recently undertook a stock condition survey, this means that over 31,000 properties have a full complement of stock condition and energy data recorded on Torus systems. However, this also means that circa 3000 properties have

energy data but may not have a full EPC for them. Torus have been using Sava intelligent energy software to process and manage their energy data, the data quality indicator for the data they hold currently stands at 95.3%.

Improving rented properties through retrofitting grants from the government or energy companies in the last 5 years

- E.96 c.1,500 for Plus Dane Housing.
- E.97 Torus reported that approximately 1000 properties have received grants over the last few years, with a small amount of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded properties.

Developers/House Builders

Main challenges facing the delivery of new homes in Halton

- E.98 Although no developers/house builders commented, 1st Enable mentioned the expectations of LA's and NHS with regards to how much things cost.

Type and size of housing in the greatest demand

- E.99 Although no developers/house builders commented, 1st Enable reported that 1-bedroom properties with staff accommodation in the learning disability (LD) and complex autism sector are in the greatest demand.

Significant housing development proposed in the Halton area

- E.100 1st Enable did have a significant housing development proposed in the Halton area. It was specialist high acuity supported living with substantial gardens and staff space, but this has now been shelved by the developer due to challenges getting agreements in place to fund the project.

Typical customers looking for new homes

- E.101 Typical customers for 1st Enable are people with LD, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Personality Disorder etc.

Customers looking for sale or rent

- E.102 Generally, rent for 1st Enable customers.

Demand for build to rent products

- E.103 Yes, 1st Enable believe so from conversations with commissioners and social workers. They would be looking to develop alongside housing partners.

Suggestions to help to deliver new homes across Halton

- E.104 1st Enable suggested the need to combine buying power with the health system and LA budgets to deliver new homes across Halton.

Barriers or challenges to accelerating house building in Halton

- E.105 Old commissioning models that will not work anymore were suggested as a barrier/challenge to accelerating house building in Halton by 1st Enable.

Positive/attractive about Halton as a place to develop/deliver new homes

- E.106 1st Enable identified access to good staff and demand for use as positives about Halton as a place to develop/deliver new homes.

Current or future plans to provide housing to meet specialist needs

- E.107 1st Enable have plans with their partners or other RPs to meet specialist needs, if they can get previously identified challenges resolved.

Confidence in the future construction workforce being in place with projected housing development growth

- E.108 1st Enable are relatively confident, although costs constraints on the sector is making life very difficult.

Construction workforce gaps locally that are not being met by local training providers/colleges

- E.109 No response from stakeholders.

Modern methods of construction

- E.110 1st Enable commented that providing modern methods of construction meet 20th century demands, efficient models are always welcome to all stakeholders.

Percentage of overall planned or completed housing in Halton

- E.111 1st Enable have 100% 1 and 2-bedroom homes — usually in small cluster flat settings.

Plans to build sheltered or Extra Care housing in Halton in the next five year

- E.112 No response from stakeholders.

New homes (new build) warranties

- E.113 No response from stakeholders.

Developer or leasehold properties and building more or less properties in Halton in the next 5 year

- E.114 No response from stakeholders.

Use of restrictive covenants in developments

E.115 No response from stakeholders.

Applying biodiversity net gain (BNG) through offsite agreements in future rather than applying BNG onsite

E.116 No response from stakeholders.

Specialist Housing Providers

Age related need

This relates to older people, younger people with support needs, and care leavers.

- E.117 1st Enable commented that it is difficult to manage future requirements. Development is in a reactive culture (which can lead to higher costs as demand always outstrips supply). They can see the local demand as they work with Halton Council and Merseycare NHS Trust which is relatively high.
- E.118 There are not enough high quality, local homes for local children in the care system. We Are Juno CIC are working with the LA, and RSL Plus Dane Housing, to try and open ethical homes in the area. Their first will be in Runcorn.
- E.119 Most of Halton's children in residential care are currently living outside of the borough.
- E.120 Transforming plc are aware from discussions across the country that there is a shortage of supported living for younger people and care leavers. This has also been advised by colleagues in Halton Adult Social Care.

Health related need

This relates to physical disability, learning disability, autism, mental health, and dementia.

- E.121 1st Enable commented that it is too expensive relative to local government expectations to get appropriate models into planning/development, but they do have evidence of specific accommodation and/or support needs for these health-related needs groups.
- E.122 Transforming plc report a need for good quality specially adapted accommodation for autistic adults, and adults with LD and mental health. They are working with Halton Borough Council to be able to provide accommodation that can be adapted to meet the needs and risks for the person. Co-operation and additional funding streams are usually required to be able to provide cost effective solutions. Co-operations from DFG for grants need to be timely assessed and provided.

Life-experience related need

This relates to Armed Forces Veterans.

E.123 A comprehensive response was received from the Royal British Legion. The Legion is the largest welfare provider in the Armed Forces charity sector and helps veterans, serving personnel and families. Support includes financial, respite and recovery, lifelong care and independent living. The Legion have set out a range of recommendations for the Council regarding current and veteran armed forces communities:

- We recommend that Halton Council review the implications of the Covenant Duty in the drafting of its Housing Strategy, and provide evidence that due regard has been paid to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Halton Council should ensure that all residents approaching housing services, and all other statutory services relating to welfare or support, are asked a question that will identify members of the Armed Forces community.
- Halton Council should regularly review staff training processes to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the housing policies specific to the Armed Forces community.
- We recommend that Halton Council should consider setting aside housing stock specifically for ex-Service personnel and their families and explore partnership opportunities with Stoll's Veteran Nomination Scheme.
- We recommend that the Halton homelessness service should be aware of and linked into other tailored services available to veterans, including health and care support provided by the local Integrated Care System, Op Fortitude and Op Courage, and identified vulnerable veterans should be referred into those services where appropriate. A commitment to provide this tailored advice should be added to the Action Plan.
- Halton Council should engage with national organisations, such as RBL and Op Fortitude. These organisations should be included within pathways of housing support when creating tailored housing plans to meet the needs of members of the Armed Forces community facing multiple or complex problems.
- We recommend that Halton Council be participant to carrying out and publishing the results of a mechanism, CHAIN or other, that records the number of ex-Service personnel sleeping rough in the local authority area.
- In line with national regulations, Halton Council should ensure that all veterans, being exempted from local connection requirements, are allowed access to homelessness and housing support regardless of the time elapsed since they left Service.
- We recommend that the guidance is clear that local connection is exempt for divorced or separated spouses or partners of Service personnel who are separating, regardless of whether they are in Service accommodation or other accommodation.

Halton Borough Council Officers, with housing responsibilities

Main challenges facing the local authority in supporting the delivery of new homes

- E.124 Stakeholders identified money and lack of properties as the main challenges in supporting the delivery of new homes.

Main challenges with existing housing stock

- E.125 The main challenges with existing housing stock are older properties and not enough stock.

Addressing challenges

- E.126 Money is needed to begin to address the challenges.
- E.127 Good relationships with the current landlords are needed to improve the stock.
- E.128 Working with RSL's and private housing developers to build to specifications to meet needs.

Cross boundary issues facing Halton housing market area

- E.129 No response from stakeholders.

Significant housing development proposed in the Halton area

- E.130 No response from stakeholders.

Views on how the council works across departments and with its partners to deliver housing priorities

- E.131 On the whole, the council works well across departments and with its partners to deliver housing priorities.

Neighbouring or Combined Authority/Homes England

Significant housing development proposed near to the boundary with Halton

- E.132 St Helens Borough Council borders Halton in the south, with the wards of Bold and part of Rainhill. In Bold, there are two greenfield sites included in the St Helens Local Plan. Bold Forest Garden Village is a site of 132.8h with an overall capacity for 2988 units of housing. The development trajectory is that 270 units of housing would be developed between 2030-2034, and a further 300 between 2035-2040. Under the Local Plan, 30% of this would be affordable housing. Gartons Lane (WA9 4RA) is a site of 21.67h and has planning approval for 514 homes, 155 affordable (30%), and 359 market. First homes could be completed in 2026 with development continuing over subsequent years.

- E.133 Warrington Borough Council has allocated the former Fiddlers Ferry Power Station on the boundary with Halton for employment and residential development.

Cross boundary issues between Halton and your authority area

- E.134 The St Helens Borough Council Housing team are not aware of any specific cross boundary issues. They have also consulted colleagues in Planning Policy and no issues have been brought to their attention.
- E.135 Warrington Borough Council has worked closely with Halton Borough Council and is shaping the allocation policy and then the Development Framework for the Fiddlers Ferry allocation. Warrington is committed to working with Halton to ensure impacts on Halton's transport and social infrastructure are appropriately mitigated as the development comes forward.

Significant infrastructure developments near to the boundary with the Halton area

- E.136 St Helens Borough Council reported the development of Gartons Lane and Bold Forest Garden Village (BFGV) will necessarily involve infrastructure to create new highway connections. The BFGV is still at an early stage of planning so final decisions about, for example, an additional school have not yet been made.
- E.137 Warrington Borough Council reported that there are a number of infrastructure improvements that will come forward as part of the Fiddlers Ferry development. The council is also working with Halton and wider partners across the north west in respect of the Northern Powerhouse Rail and the proposed Hynet pipeline.

Significant regeneration projects proposed near to the boundary with the Halton area

- E.138 Regeneration projects in the borough of St Helens are centred on the town centres of St Helens (which is anticipated to deliver significant numbers of additional housing units in the long term) and on Earlestown which is not close to the boundary.
- E.139 There are a number of other brownfield sites in St Helens closer to the boundary which stand to be developed for housing but may be subject to accessing brownfield land funding. Most are smaller sites but one on Chester Lane, Bold has a capacity for around 250 homes.
- E.140 There is regeneration linked to the Fiddlers Ferry development in Warrington.

Proposals to develop or extend accommodation-based special care facilities for adult social care or young people that would impact on the Halton area

- E.141 The Adult Social Care Commissioning Team in St Helens has recently produced a new Housing with Care Strategy and will be looking to develop additional Extra Care Housing in St Helens. However, locations are not yet

decided and locations near the Halton boundary are not likely to be priority areas. An existing Extra Care scheme at Thatto Heath around 4 miles from the border currently has vacant apartments for market and shared ownership sale.

E.142 Warrington is looking to meet its own need in this regard.

All stakeholders — Summary section

Improving the housing market

- E.143 Starting with a strategy is a great step forward; understanding what options are available that increase housing stock locally is fundamental. Being creative and innovative is a must do and barriers must be reduced to achieve the intended outcome. It is important to understand how all sectors can help including public, private, and explore grant options available to drive the plan and achieve success.
- E.144 There needs to be a long-term funding offer as part of a broader masterplan including housing, education, and the economy. There needs to be a joined-up plan with skills development.
- E.145 It is important that the solution of supply and demand should not be ignored.
- E.146 Many more land sites suitable for residential development should be made available. Early engagement with housing providers is needed to meet specific needs.
- E.147 Empty properties could be brought back into use and there is a need to create more small houses.
- E.148 More homes are needed for first-time buyers and affordable properties to rent however, this has to go hand in hand with infrastructure.
- E.149 More engagement with the private landlord sector is needed and support for them to provide housing.
- E.150 Stakeholders must ensure all local land opportunities as maximised. Refurbishment of old properties, building on brown land, ensuring planning is future facing are all positive suggestions to improve the housing market.
- E.151 Stakeholders also identified the need to prioritise some stock/funds to achieve housing for local adults in need, subsidise developments, and apportion grants to more SME's.
- E.152 More interlinked houses should be built. Compatibility should be assessed to ensure the right people are living together which would reduce care costs and the amount of voids and people waiting for a property.
- E.153 A closer collaboration between the not-for-profit sector and the LA would help to improve the housing market.

Key priorities for your organisation

- E.154 Halton Borough Council identified more properties and improving housing stock as the main priority areas.

- E.155 There is a need to support domestic abuse victims to have emergency housing accommodation, rather than being sent outside the borough or put in hotels. Equally, where vulnerable families face eviction, the support pathway needs to be improved across multi-disciplinary teams who can prevent rather than respond.
- E.156 Ensuring that the council is compliant with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Accommodation Duty is a key area.
- E.157 1st Enable would like to prioritise housing and funding solutions so they can continue to deliver real cost savings to both the health and social care sectors. Delivering training outside of traditional teaching models e.g. colleges, universities etc. to tackle NEETS and getting disabled and other people into paid work. Some training needs to be de-regulated away from Ofsted to grow innovation in this area.
- E.158 Transforming plc would like to continue to engage with Halton Borough Council/ASC to bring good quality accommodation for adults with disabilities in Halton. This is a key area of strategic need.
- E.159 Halton Supported Housing Network would like to prioritise having suitable properties for adults with learning and physical difficulties and those who need large staff teams.
- E.160 Plus Dane Housing are prioritising decent, safe and warm homes. They would like to see a balanced investment in new and existing homes with partnerships working to place make.
- E.161 We Are Juno CIC would like to support the council to open more high quality, not for profit care homes that improve outcomes for children in Halton.
- E.162 It will be important for Halton to work closely with neighbouring authorities through the Duty to Cooperate to ensure that each borough is able to meet its own housing needs.

Technical Appendix F: Estate Agent Review

Introduction

- F.1 Seven estate agents from across Halton Borough were contacted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the local property market. All managed both sales and lettings with two of the agents interviewed covering the whole borough. Of the remaining five, two covered Widnes and Hale Village and three covered Runcorn, Daresbury, Moor, and Preston Brook/Preston on the Hill/Dutton. This gave us a well-rounded and representative sample.
- F.2 Despite differences in property prices across Halton all participating agents reported observing similar market trends, highlighting consistent patterns in market activity and customer behaviour throughout the area. This suggests that broader market forces are shaping the local property market. Because of this, the agent responses are presented as a whole representation across the borough rather than specific areas, to avoid repetition, with the few exceptions noted.

Market overview

- F.3 The housing market in Halton Borough presents a mixed picture, with high demand in both the sales and rental sectors, but significant challenges in terms of property supply and affordability.
- F.4 The rental market is described as exceptionally busy, with around fifty enquiries per property and tenants taking whatever they can find. One agent noted that even properties in poor condition are being let due to the severe shortage. Rental prices have risen sharply, for example, a two-bedroom terrace in Widnes town centre that used to rent for £550pcm now commands at least £750pcm. Landlords are increasingly exiting the market, citing difficulties in managing tenants and diminishing returns. This exodus is exacerbating the supply crisis. The calibre of tenants has also become a concern, with agents in Runcorn reporting a high number of applicants with pets or bad credit histories, making it harder to secure suitable renters despite overwhelming demand.
- F.5 The sales market is similarly fast paced. Properties priced at £350,000 and below are described as “flying out,” with buyers rushing to complete sales before potential stamp duty changes. Agents have noted a significant uptick in activity, with the market busier than expected and plenty of offers being made. However, supply remains an issue, with a lack of valuations over the Christmas period and poor weather contributing to the slowdown. Despite this, there are many buyers waiting, and properties sell quickly once listed.

Gaps in the housing market

- F.6 Agents across the borough consistently highlighted significant gaps in the supply of housing, particularly in the affordable sector. There is a pronounced shortage of both affordable homes for sale and properties available for rent. This is contributing to heightened competition for available homes, driving up prices, and limiting options for lower and middle-income families.

- F.7 Specialist housing for older people also faces challenges. While there are plenty of sheltered housing schemes in Halton, agents noted that they are difficult to access, with long waiting lists being a common issue. For example, in Widnes, there is high demand for apartments at the Naughton Fields development for the over-55s.
- F.8 Agents describe council housing as notably absent in the area, further exacerbating the issue of affordable housing availability. Bungalows, which are often preferred by older residents and those with mobility issues, are described as sporadic and insufficient to meet demand.
- F.9 Regarding types of property and location the only thing highlighted was three to four-bedroom properties within the Wade Deacon school catchment area for between £300,000-£400,000 are in short supply.
- F.10 While one agent observed that there is a good mix of property types, most agents agreed that there are gaps across all housing categories, from family homes to specialised properties for older residents. The general consensus is that demand exists for a wide variety of property types, but supply continues to fall short.

Improvements to the housing market

- F.11 To revitalise Halton's housing market, agents proposed several measures. Lowering interest rates emerged as a key recommendation, as current high rates are discouraging people from moving, with many opting to stay put instead.
- F.12 Another crucial area of concern is the private rental sector. Agents suggested making it more desirable to be a landlord rather than implementing punitive measures that discourage property investment. With many landlords exiting the market, incentives to retain or attract new landlords could help stabilise rental availability.
- F.13 There is also an issue with elderly residents occupying larger three and four-bedroom homes because of a lack of suitable downsizing options. Developing attractive, age-appropriate housing solutions could free up substantial housing stock for families and alleviate supply pressures.
- F.14 More affordable housing is seen as an essential part of any solution. Introducing additional financial products to assist first-time buyers would also help people take their first steps onto the property ladder. These combined steps would address current blockages in both the rental and sales markets.

Future Housing Standards

- F.15 When planning future housing developments in Halton, agents suggested several key factors which should be prioritised to ensure new properties meet the needs of residents.
- F.16 One recurring concern among agents is room size. New two-bedroom properties are often criticised for being too small, with inadequate bedroom dimensions, and insufficient storage space. These issues significantly impact

liveability, and agents emphasise the importance of designing homes with decent-sized rooms and ample storage solutions.

- F.17 Outdoor space is another crucial consideration. Providing gardens or green areas is seen as essential for maintaining a good quality of life.
- F.18 Accessibility should also be prioritised, ensuring that homes are designed to accommodate people with mobility needs.
- F.19 Finally, infrastructure must be addressed alongside the development of new housing. There are concerns about whether local amenities, including schools, GP surgeries, dental practices, and shops, will keep pace with new residential developments.

Priority locations for housing development

- F.20 When asked about priority locations for housing development, agents highlighted a few key areas of activity they were aware of.
- F.21 In Widnes, agents noted that new developments are widespread, with construction taking place across various parts of the town. However, this has led to significant traffic congestion, with one agent describing it as “a joke.” Concerns were raised that “any bit of green space they can get, they have taken,” sparking worries about environmental preservation and adequate infrastructure planning.
- F.22 In Runcorn, redevelopment efforts are focused on the town centre. Agents mentioned that Churchill Mansions and Brunswick House are being demolished to make way for revitalisation projects. Additionally, new retirement apartments for the over-55s are being built in the Old Town, indicating a focus on meeting the housing needs of older residents.

Types of dwellings being built

- F.23 There is a mixed opinion on whether the right types of dwellings are being built in Halton. While there seems to be a good variety of new builds, their pricing is often seen as prohibitive. For instance, an agent in Widnes highlighted new two-bedroom properties being marketed at £330,000, whereas older homes of similar size are around £200,000. This pricing disparity makes new builds less accessible to many buyers.
- F.24 There is also concern about the lack of affordable housing in the area, with one agent pointing out that there don't appear to be many new apartments being constructed either. Although the range of properties being built appears to be popular, the general consensus is that there are insufficient smaller properties being developed, and those that are being built are often too expensive. This includes both two-bedroom houses and apartments, which are in high demand but not adequately supplied in new developments.

Rent to Buy

- F.25 There is a consensus among agents that 'Rent to Buy' products would be beneficial and are definitely needed in Halton. Any scheme that helps people

build up a deposit while renting is seen as a positive step towards addressing the challenges faced by those trying to get onto the property ladder.

- F.26 However, there is scepticism about how affordable such schemes could be in the current economic climate, given rising living costs and high property prices. Despite these concerns, agents agree that any initiative to support prospective homeowners would be well-received and helpful in improving accessibility to home ownership.

Build to Rent market

- F.27 Agents across Halton are not aware of any active 'build to rent' developments in the area.

Conveyancing chains

- F.28 The sales market in Halton appears to be running smoothly, with most transactions typically completing within twelve to sixteen weeks. Agents have noted that council searches are quick and efficient, which helps to keep the process moving without unnecessary delays. Even probate times, which have previously been a cause for concern, are reported to have improved. Overall, there are no significant issues causing blockages in conveyancing chains at present.

Most popular dwelling types and areas

Sales market

- F.29 Across the whole borough agents agreed that two-bedroom terraced homes are among the most sought-after, likely due to a shortage of suitable properties for first-time buyers.
- F.30 In Widnes, three-bedroom semi-detached homes within the sought-after Wade Deacon School catchment area are particularly popular. Buyers are also keen on three-bedroom townhouses and semi-detached properties priced between £150,000 and £300,000. School catchment areas are the key driving factor for location preferences in this area.
- F.31 In Runcorn, two and three-bedroom terrace properties in the Old Town, typically priced between £110,000 and £130,000, are highly sought after. However, preferences are subjective; one agent mentioned that Castlefields and Palacefields are popular, while another suggested that Palacefields is less desirable.
- F.32 Ex-council stock across Runcorn remains consistently popular, with properties priced below £180,000 in high demand. Also, one agent highlighted the Sandymoor and Norton as areas that attract interest for their strong sense of community.

Rental market

- F.33 In Halton's rental market, demand is exceptionally high, making it difficult to pinpoint specific property types as the most popular, as tenants are increasingly

desperate and willing to take what they can get. The intense demand is illustrated by examples such as a one-bedroom flat in Runcorn advertised at £640pcm, which received fifty enquiries, and a two-bedroom apartment in Widnes listed at £700pcm, which attracted thirty enquiries.

- F.34 Agents agreed however that in Widnes, three-bedroom townhouses and semi-detached homes priced between £850 and £1,200 per month are particularly sought after. Whilst in Runcorn, two and three-bedroom terraced properties in the Old Town are among the most popular, typically letting for around £700pcm.
- F.35 The widespread demand across the borough underscores the ongoing shortage of rental properties, making almost all property types highly desirable.

Least Popular Dwelling Types and Areas

Sales market

- F.36 Across Halton, apartments consistently take longer to sell due to the deterrent of service charges, which many buyers are keen to avoid.
- F.37 In Widnes, properties priced above £350,000 tend to struggle in the market. Many potential buyers simply cannot afford the mortgage repayments or heating costs for larger homes. New build estates not situated within desirable school catchment areas, such as those with maintenance charges like Nazareth House Lane, are slower to sell.
- F.38 While older terraced housing was traditionally less popular and typically snapped up by landlords, the current lack of properties on the market and a decline in landlord purchases have opened up these homes to a broader range of buyers.
- F.39 In Runcorn, higher-end properties priced above £300,000 take longer to sell. However, no specific area stands out as being particularly unpopular. Areas that might be seen as less desirable have historically still been attractive to landlords, sustaining demand across the borough. However, given the reduction in buy-to-let investors, this dynamic could be about to change.

Rental market

- F.40 In Halton's rental market, the severe shortage of available properties makes it difficult to identify any particular property type or area as the least popular.
- F.41 In Widnes, even properties in the £1,500 to £3,000pcm range, which were once difficult to let, are now being rented due to high demand. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) take slightly longer to let, but this is primarily because landlords need to find tenants who are a good fit for the property and existing housemates.
- F.42 In Runcorn, more expensive properties priced above £1,200pcm are less in demand. Despite this, the overall scarcity of rental properties means that even higher-end homes are finding tenants, albeit at a slightly slower pace than more affordable options.

A Housing Strategy for Halton 2026 – 2031, Homes that drive Growth, Opportunity, and Fairness for all.

Vision: Our Housing Strategy will deliver access to quality, affordable, and sustainable homes. It will underpin a foundation for thriving, inclusive communities, stronger local economies, and greater opportunity and fairness for all in Halton.

Priority One: Driving Economic Growth through housing-led investment.

- Establish a one-stop-shop to support residential developers.
- Development sites will be brought together into a Housing Opportunity Prospectus.
- To guide delivery, the council will develop area specific Housing Delivery Plans.

Priority Two: Creating an inclusive housing market to promote fairness.

- Create a dedicated Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Fund through s106 committed sums.
- Work with Housing Associations to make better use of existing homes i.e. support right sizing.
- Creating more affordable homeownership pathways for local people, i.e. through a local connections policy.
- Raise standards in the private rented sector, i.e. through selective licensing and HMO article 4 direction.
- Tackling homelessness and housing insecurity, i.e. increase access to temporary accommodation.

Priority Three: Supporting Independent Living, Empowering People, and Strengthening Communities

- Produce a Specialist Housing Prospectus, including undertaking a thorough accommodation needs assessment and apply an 'invest to save' model.
- Improve delivery of specialist housing i.e. by working with Housing Associations and the use of Council land.
- Making homes work for every age, i.e. promote use of technology and increase number of accessible homes.

Priority Four: Promoting healthy homes, thriving communities and resilient neighbourhoods.

- Tackling fuel poverty by working with local partners to enhance energy efficiency by promoting and delivering retrofit measures across the borough.
- Bringing long-term empty homes back into use, i.e. through the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs).
- Maximising our impact in delivering a healthy Halton, i.e. through closer working between health practitioners, housing associations, and blue light partners to make every contact count.

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