



Local Economy Policy and Performance Board

**Monday, 16 June 2025 at 6.30 p.m.
The Board Room - Municipal Building,
Widnes**

S. Young

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Eddie Jones (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Angela Teeling (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Victoria Begg	Labour
Councillor Neil Connolly	Labour
Councillor Emma Garner	Labour
Councillor Robert Gilligan	Labour
Councillor Noel Hutchinson	Labour
Councillor Kath Loftus	Labour
Councillor Christopher Rowe	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Mike Ryan	Labour
Councillor Aimee Skinner	Labour

***Please contact Gill Ferguson on 0151 511 8059 or e-mail
gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 15 September 2025***

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

Part I

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1. MINUTES	1 - 6
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

**EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND
PERFORMANCE BOARD**

At a meeting of the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 24 February 2025 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), Connolly, Garner, S. Hill, Hutchinson, Rowe and Ryan

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Abbott, McDonough and Stretch

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, D. Cooke, K. Arrowsmith and H. Roberts

Also in attendance: T. Done & G. Heesom – Beacon Savings & Loans and J. Leake – Sci-Tech Daresbury

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

	<i>Action</i>
ELS20 MINUTES	
The Minutes from the meeting held on 18 November 2024, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
It was noted that the outstanding queries referred to in ELS19 would be sent to Members following the meeting.	
ELS21 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
ELS22 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The Executive Board minutes relating to the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community portfolio published since the last meeting of this Board were attached for information.	

ELS23 PRESENTATION - HALTON CREDIT UNION - NOW CALLED WEAREBEACON

The Board received a presentation from Tracey Done and Gareth Heesom, from Beacon Savings and Loans (previously Halton Credit Union).

Beacon is a not for profit organisation that provides ethical products and services to those who struggled to get credit. It was governed by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) as banks and building societies were.

The change of name from Halton Credit Union was explained as being part of the re-branding of the service so that it was non-geographical, as it was expanding across the whole of Cheshire. Beacon's services were now available to anyone who lived or worked in Cheshire and some neighbouring areas such as Liverpool and Stoke on Trent.

The website and app were introduced to the Board and the services available included family loans, Save to Borrow, secured borrowing for high savers, a salary saving scheme with payroll partners, life insurance at no cost to Members, and a Christmas savings club.

The guests advised that Beacon also supported employees and employers, as one in four people worried about debt or money issues, which in turn could affect performance at work. The salary schemes offered helped employees to be able to afford loans and better manage their money.

Beacon did currently work with partners such as the NHS, the Council, nurseries and Chamber of Commerce, but wanted to partner with more businesses to offer the same services. Members noted this for use in their constituencies.

Copies of the Annual Report, Information Packs and business cards were distributed to the Board. The guests were invited to send a briefing note for inclusion in the Environment and Regeneration Department's newsletter. The guests were thanked for their informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ELS24 SCI-TECH DARESBUY

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the delivery of Sci-Tech Daresbury's Talent and Skills Action Plan.

The Board welcomed Mr John Leake, the Business Growth Director for Sci-Tech Daresbury. He advised that the Sci-Tech Daresbury site was one of only 6 science and technology campuses in the UK and this was the only one in the North of England.

Sci-Tech Daresbury Talent and Skills Strategy was developed in 2021. It was a key component of the Sci-Tech Daresbury Strategy for Science, Innovation and Growth. The Strategy focussed on attracting, developing and retaining the wide range of skills and expertise essential to establishing Sci-Tech Daresbury as a global beacon of science and technology, focussed innovation and entrepreneurship.

The presentation outlined some of the key activities and recent successes, as well provided a summary of the priorities of the 2025 Action Plan.

Following the presentation, the Members received the following additional information in response to their questions:

- Public transport services were available to the site, with 3 bus services in operation;
- Although work experience take up for students was low to start with, in 2024, 12 places were awarded to students from Halton;
- There was collaboration with local companies and with schools but it was difficult to get into secondary schools due to their tight curriculums;
- John's team did have contact with the Lead Officer in the Council's 14-19 team, who assisted them with contacting secondary schools;
- It was challenging to get companies to adopt apprentices as a route to securing talent;
- Employees at the site came from a broad area, including Cheshire, Liverpool, Manchester and Wales, with some from Halton;
- A skills shortage existed in the whole of the UK not just in Halton; and
- Regarding future development of the site, it was felt that another access road would be needed.

Members were advised that a mapping assessment had been undertaken and professional advice stated that this was not needed.

Members comments on the future expansion of Sci-Tech Daresbury and the amount of additional infrastructure that would be needed to accommodate more companies and employees were noted.

Mr Leake was thanked for his informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

ELS25 HALTON ADULT LEARNING SUMMARY – ACADEMIC YEAR 23/24

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which provided an overview of the current services provided by Halton Adult Learning and provided a summary of the key performance indicators for the academic year 2023/24.

Halton's Adult Learning service delivered a range of accredited and non-accredited, community learning courses in Runcorn and Widnes, which aimed not only to improve residents lives, but also address the skills gaps in the Borough and across the Liverpool City Region (LCR). The service also delivered Family Learning in schools across Halton and co-ordinated the Pathways to Teaching Programme, on behalf of the LCR Combined Authority (LCRCA). Further, the Adult Learning team also co-delivered the Supported Internship Programme with Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ). This service aimed to improve the breadth of the curriculum offer in order to give adults within the Borough wider opportunities for development.

The overview included information on the following programmes:

- Maths, English and Digital Functional Skills;
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL);
- Education pathways;
- Test and Learn Programmes;
- Family Learning; and
- The Multiply initiative.

The report outlined the Adult Learning's performance and achievements. In relation to adult enrolments, these

had almost grown by 50% since 2021-22. Additionally, the retention rate overall across the service was good, at 91.1%. It was noted however, that there were concerns with the retention and achievement rates for Maths and English.

Members enquired about the promotion of the Adult Learning Service. This was done in the traditional way using brochures and flyers but it was also promoted by the staff running the service and on its Facebook page. The Family Learning Service was currently delivered by two qualified ex-primary school teachers.

In response to other questions, it was noted that funding for *Multiply*, a national initiative, would come to an end in March 2025. Also, clients were provided with feedback forms after using any of the services that came under Adult Learning.

Following a request, the e-version of the prospectus and the employer support information would be sent to the Board following the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the curriculum intent and its alignment with the local skills context be noted.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ELS26 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 3 OF 2024/25

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 3 of 2024-25 (1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2024-25 were agreed by Members and for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

- Enterprise, Employment and Skills; and
- Community and Environment.

The report detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period. Members were invited to highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be provided to a future meeting of the Board.

Members requested that an item on the Council's

'Connect to Halton' service for the use of agency staff be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

The Chair announced that a site visit to The Brindley Theatre had been arranged on 4 March 2025 at 11am; a calendar appointment would be sent.

RESOLVED: That the quarter 3 performance management reports be received.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ELS27 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 30 NOVEMBER 2024

The Board received a report from the Director of Finance, which gave the Council's overall revenue and capital spending position as at 30 November 2024, together with the latest 2024-25 outturn forecast.

On 16 January 2025, Executive Board received the attached report and appendices, which presented details of Councilwide revenue and capital spending by each department and outlined the reasons for key variances from budget.

Executive Board has requested that a copy of the report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board for information. This is to ensure that all Members had a full appreciation of the Councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility.

RESOLVED: That the Councilwide financial position as outlined in the report be noted.

Meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community
PPB

DATE: 16 June 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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

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

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

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

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

- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chair will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

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

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

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

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

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

None identified.

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

None identified.

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

None identified.

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

None identified.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None identified.

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

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Local Economy Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	16 th June 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment & Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning, Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Citizens Advice Bureau
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 A presentation will be provided to update on the services that Citizens Advice Bureau offer.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the presentation is welcomed by the board.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Citizen Advice Halton offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice and information on a wide range of subjects.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The CAB work with residents to provide support in many areas.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The CAB work with residents to provide support in many areas.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The CAB work with residents to provide support in many areas.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

- 6.5 The CAB work with residents to provide support in many areas.
Working Towards a Greener Future
N/A
- 6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**
The CAB work with residents to provide support in many areas
including this
- 7.0 **Risk Analysis**
- 7.1 None identified.
- 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**
- 8.1 None identified.
- 9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**
- 9.1 None identified.
- 10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**
- ‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

REPORT TO:	Local Economy Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	16 th June 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning, Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Connect2Halton update
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 A presentation will be provided to update on Connect2Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the presentation is welcomed by the board.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Connect2Halton is a joint venture company (50% owned by Halton and 50% owned by Kent Council) dedicated to recruiting our flexible workforce such as our temporary and casual workers.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S

- 6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**
N/A

- 6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**
Connect to Halton is a service providing opportunities to secure employment at the council which will promote economic growth around the Borough for our residents

- 6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families**
N/A

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
Connect to Halton is a service providing opportunities to secure employment at the council which will promote economic growth around the Borough for our residents

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future
N/A

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community
Connect to Halton is a service providing opportunities to secure employment at the council which will promote economic growth around the Borough for our residents

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 None identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None identified.

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

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

REPORT TO:	Local Economy Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	16 th June 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning, Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Halton Leisure Centre
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To receive a presentation providing an overview of the activities and operations at Halton Leisure Centre since its opening on 10th February 2025.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS: That the report and presentation be noted

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Construction of Halton Leisure Centre was completed as scheduled and transferred to the Council's ownership on 6th January 2025. The centre opened to the general public on 8th February 2025.
- 3.2 The facility provides a high-quality asset for residents and staff. The new leisure centre has seen an increase in users and membership, achieving approximately 1,000 new members since opening which has increased monthly direct debit revenue by circa £30,000 per month. The footfall during February was averaging 6,000 visits a week, with high demand for tours. The high usage has continued with 21,978 visits in March and 20,685 in April.
- 3.3 As may be anticipated with any new facility the customer feedback has been mixed whilst snagging and teething issues are worked through however, it is mostly positive. Customer feedback has been received specifically on pool design, sports hall, changing rooms and programme of use. The majority of customers, specifically those transferring from Kingsway have adjusted to the new site and many are utilising the new app to gain access to the activity areas.
- 3.4 There remain some glitches with the leisure management system, however, once identified the queries/issues are being responded to and resolved swiftly.
- 3.5 A new building, plant, equipment and technology, has required staff

training, new systems of work, and policies and procedures to be developed.

- 3.6 Some elements of delivery have been staggered and are still developing. The café opened in April and soft play is anticipated to commence by the end of May 2025 when access control measures are in place.
- 3.7 There is ongoing dialogue with Wates, the construction company with a defect reporting system implemented now the site has moved beyond the snagging phase. Bi-weekly meetings are in place to manage and progress any outstanding defects.
- 3.8 The Active Halton App is being used frequently by the majority of customers. App uptake has increased from 3364 users (Kingsway) to 8377 at present. Use off the app has reduced costs associated with supplying plastic cards. The App has been refreshed, and content is updated regularly.
- 3.9 A change in the Halton Leisure Card eligibility age from 60 to 65 years was implemented on 1st April 2025, 1,000 cards have been issued, the majority of card holders have purchased a bronze membership.
- 3.10 Halton's new leisure centre, unlike the previous building complies with school's requirements for swimming. There are 8 schools now utilising the pool with a further 2 due to start in September and others registering an interest in booking lessons from September.
- 3.11 Recovering service costs through the year is dependent on a number of factors, including:
- Demand – Will change year on year and could be determined by a number of drivers such as weather, economy, regional and national events, demographics etc.
 - Competition – There is a strong competitive market. Costs within the private sector are generally lower than in the public sector, for example employee terms and conditions.
- 3.12 Budgets are robustly managed and reviewed and service budget recovery is included in performance monitoring.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The provision supports Halton residents to be active directly contributing to all of the Councils priorities and the One Halton Health & Wellbeing Strategy [One-Halton-strategy.pdf](#)

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Councils internal audit are scheduled to review financial

management systems within the new centre once all areas are fully operational.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

There is increased importance on participation in physical activity for the prevention of ill-health and the need to break down barriers to accessing physical activity. Programme and prices are set to provide opportunities for all. "Every £1 spent on sport and physical activity generates almost £4 in return across health and wellbeing, strengthening communities and the national economy." (Sport England)

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Halton leisure centre is an integral part of the infrastructure that supports the delivery of sport which contributes to the attractiveness of the borough, access to high quality assets and Halton's economy.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Physical activity can improve people's lives physically, mentally and socially. Learning to swim at a young age can reduce the risk of drowning by up to 88% and develop social skills and psychological benefits.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Sports facilities offer a varied programme of use, supporting the wider agenda of access to opportunities and improving life chances.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Halton Leisure Centre is a greener cleaner facility adopting green technologies, including air source heat pumps.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The role of Councils is vitally important in the provision of health and wellbeing services. Creating greater cooperation between agencies to embed a shared vision enabling communities to be physically active is imperative to address inactivity and ill health and generate improved outcomes.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None to report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are discounted rates for residents in receipt of certain benefits to support residents from the most deprived areas and/or from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in being active.

- 8.2 The new centre includes a changing village, changing places facility, inclusive toilets/changing rooms, pool pod, lifts, these facilities and others promote accessibility and inclusion to ensure the time a customer spends at site is relaxed and enjoyable.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Leisure centres are 'energy hungry' facilities and represent a significant opportunity for the Council to take a meaningful step in reducing carbon footprint and optimise buildings with energy efficiency measures. Air source heat pumps have been installed in Halton Leisure Centre. EV car charging points are available in the car park. Energy saving measures such as PIR LED lights, non-concussive taps on sinks and showers are a feature in the centre.

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

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

REPORT TO:	Local Economy Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	16 th June 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning, Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Annual Report for 24/25
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To receive the Annual Report for 2024/25.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Local Economy Policy and Performance Board strategic priority is to develop policy and scrutinise performance in relation to the Council's objectives in relation to Enterprise and employment, Adult Learning and Skills, Culture, Leisure and Library Services.
- 3.2 During the Municipal Year 2024/25 the board met on four occasions.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S

The report has no direct implications on:

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

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 None identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None identified.

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

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING & SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

**Councillor Eddie
Jones
Chair**

Welcome to our Annual Report. The last Municipal year has again been eventful and challenging for the Council. Much hard work and creative thinking has been called for amidst the efforts to deliver services and projects for our residents. Therefore, I offer my personal thanks to the Officers who have worked diligently with the Vice Chair and myself to devise, develop and bring forward Agenda items to the PPB. I appreciate and commend the quality of reports and presentations that have been produced and built upon during the year. We should also recognise here the valuable input from external contributors that has informed and been welcomed by Members at our meetings.

I believe this has all contributed to very relevant agendas which members have been keen to interrogate and progress. A concept that the members of the Board have enthusiastically and skilfully embraced. I feel sure that Board members will continue to demonstrate that same intellectual vigour and rigour in the coming year. I am also certain that by alternating between challenge and cooperative problem solving, the members of this Board will continue to proactively shape the quality of services we provide to our residents.

I really must thank my colleagues on our PPB for bringing such passion and commitment to the table. I trust that the Board will continue to make a worthy contribution to creating an economically prosperous and equitable Borough for us all, despite this challenging environment.

Thank you.

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board comprised of eleven Councillors: -

Councillor Eddie Jones (Chair)
Councillor Angela Teeling (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Abbott
Councillor Neil Connolly
Councillor Emma Garner
Councillor Stan Hill
Councillor Noel Hutchinson
Councillor Katy McDonough
Councillor Christopher Rowe
Councillor Mike Ryan
Councillor Tom Stretch

The primary function of the Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board (ELS&C PPB) is as set out in the Council's constitution, the boards strategic priority is to develop policy and scrutinise performance in relation to the Council's objectives. Specifically in relation to 4 areas:

- Enterprise and Employment
- Adult Learning & Skills
- Culture and Leisure Services
- Library Services

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Board met 4 times during the Municipal Year 2023/24:

- 17th June 2024
- 16th September 2024
- 18th November 2024
- 24th February 2025

Some of the main activities and issues that have come before the Board during the year are set out below.

ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT

HPIJ – Employer Initiatives

HPIJ delivered a wide range of DWP Welfare to Work programmes since 2011 that included the Work Programme, Ways to Work, the Work and Health Programme JETS and the Work and Health Programme Pioneer Support Programme. These programmes have helped Halton residents look for work and sustain employment.

There had also been a range of externally funded projects funded by the DWP such as Future Jobs Fund and Kick Start that provided financial incentives / grants to employers to recruit unemployed and economically inactive residents. There was also the Intermediate Labour Market Wage subsidy Programme (ESF / SIF) funded through Ways to Work; this has been available since 2016.

Funding had been secured through the LCR to continue to deliver the Ways to Work programme from October 2023 – March 2024 before the UKSPF funded activities from April 2024 – March 2025.

HPIJ update on engaging with the Economically inactive residents and current funding position.

Since 2011 HPIJ had successfully delivered a range of DWP welfare programmes including the Work Programme, Ways to Work, the Work and Health Programme, JETS and more recently the Work and Health Programme Pioneer Support Programme. The programmes support Halton residents who are unemployed look for sustainable employment. Recent funding streams enabled HPIJ to continue to focus on engaging and supporting economically inactive residents into work and helping those 'at risk' of redundancy. HPIJ supported 100 economically inactive residents into employment between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025 through Ways to Work and Pioneer Programmes

An update on the current funding streams was provided and information provided on the requirement for HPIJ to secure funding to sustain the service that it provides to Halton Residents.

Supported Internship Programme Work Based Study

The programme is for young people aged between 16 – 24 with special educational needs and / or disabilities who had an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

The programme is delivered by the Employment, Learning and Skills division in collaboration with HPIJ and Adult Learning. The contract is to deliver 11 Supported Internships every academic year. In the financial year to March, we supported 8 so we are on target to achieve 11 by September.

Case studies were shared on 3 individuals who had completed a Supported Internship and are now working in part time paid employment.

Sci-Tech Daresbury

Mr Leake the Business Growth Director for Sci-Tech Daresbury who advised that the Sci-Tech Daresbury site was one of the only 6 science and technology campuses in the UK and this was the only one in the North of England.

Sci-Tech Daresbury Talent and Skills Strategy was developed in 2021 and was a key component of the Sci-Tech Daresbury Strategy for Science, Innovation and Growth. It focussed on attracting, developing and retaining the wide range of skills and expertise essential to establishing Sci-Tech Daresbury as a global beacon of Science and technology, focussed innovation and entrepreneurship.

Key activities and recent successes were shared as well as a summary of the priorities of the 2025 action plan.

ADULT LEARNING AND SKILLS

Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills

A number of conversations were taking place in the LCR on the proposition of Employment and Skills, Long term skills plan, Early years sector workforce provision, construction sector priorities, Department for Work and Pensions and Economies for Healthy Lives.

Halton Adult Learning Summary – Academic Year 23/24

There are a range of accredited and non-accredited community learning courses delivered in Runcorn and Widnes, with the aim to improve residents lives and address skills gaps in the borough and across the Liverpool City Region (LCR).

Family Learning was also delivered in Halton schools and co-ordinated the Pathways to Teaching Programme on behalf of the LCR Combined Authority (LCRCA). Also co-deliver the Supported Internship Programme with Halton People into Jobs. The service aimed to improve the breadth of the curriculum offer to give adults in the borough wider opportunities for development.

Adult Learning enrolments had increased by 50% since 21-22, the retention rates across the service were good at 91.1% however there are concerns with the retention and achievement rates for Maths and English.

Promotion of the Adult Learning Service is done via brochures and flyers and promoted by staff running the service on its Facebook page.

Funding to multiply a national initiative ends in March 2025.

CULTURE AND LEISURE SERVICES

The Brindley Enhancement Project

The project forms part of the Town Deal fund – Reconnecting Runcorn Programmes looking to transform the Brindley into a cultural hub for the borough and providing new space for Runcorn Library, a larger café and high quality outdoor green space. The works began on site in July 2024 with completion expected in Summer 2026. Although work has begun the Brindley is operating as business as usual.

Adult enrolments had almost grown by 50%.

LIBRARY SERVICE

The library in Runcorn has moved to its temporary home in the former HPIJ unit on Church street to facilitate the delivery of the Health and Education hub in Runcorn, prior to it moving to the Brindley in 2026. Since it moved there has been an increase in people accessing the service which is welcome news.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Riverside College

A Presentation was provided by the Principal of Riverside College on various areas of interest, including key developments taking place. There had been recent skills development and investment which included:

- An £8.5m Health and Wellbeing, Business, Computing and Immersive Room opened in June 2023 on the Cronton campus.
- New sports facilities Opened on the Cronton campus in November 2023.
- A new music hub and teaching block would open in Cronton in 2025.
- A hydrogen pipework rig opened March 2024 on the Riverside campus.
- As part of a joint venture with the Council and NHS a Health and Education Hub would be developed offering Health and Social Care and Maths and English courses, funded by Runcorn Town Deal.

Halton Cancer Support Centre

The centre provides therapeutic support for people who were affected by cancer offering professional quality service with warmth and compassion, responding to the needs of local people.

At the time of the presentation there were 851 clients registered at the centre. 400 had received a cancer diagnosis and the remaining 400 were a mix of carers and the bereaved.

A number of services are offered through the centre such as peer support, counselling, online support, therapies, respite breaks, a Children and Young People service and workshops.

The centre is funded by Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership and Halton Borough Council with remaining costs covered by grants and fundraising events.

The charity will reach its 30th anniversary in May 2025.

Proposed Topic Group

A proposal was made to form a topic group to discuss the funding of the voluntary and community sector in Halton following the agreed reduction in Funding by Executive Board in February 2023 and in March 2024 full Council approved the budget for 24-25 that included the reduction for the groups. Agreement from the board to hold a scrutiny topic group that would look at the whole of the voluntary sector.

Halton Credit Union - Wearebeacon

Beacon Savings previously Halton Credit Union. Beacon Savings is a not for profit organisation that provides ethical products and services to those who struggle to get credit. The change of name was part of the rebranding of the service so that it was non-geographical as it was expanding across Cheshire and some neighbouring areas such as Liverpool and Stoke on Trent. Services available are family loans, save to borrow, secured borrowing for high savers a salary saving scheme with payroll partners, life insurance at no cost to Members and a Christmas savings club.

Support is provided to employees and employers as one in four people worried about debt or money issues which in turn could affect their performance at work. The salary schemes offered helped employees to be able to afford loans and better manage their money. Work is carried out with partners such as the NHS, the Council, nurseries, the Chamber of Commerce but wanted to partner with more business to offer the same service.

Council wide Spending as of November 2024

The overall revenue and capital spending by each department and the key variances from budget outlined.

DURING 2025/26 THE BOARD PLANS TO FOCUS ON:

- Plans for the continuation of the Ways to Work programme and other initiatives to support our residents as funding is devolved to the Combined Authority
- Further scrutiny around the HPIJ and Adult learning programmes, with a focus on working with employers around the Borough working with HEP partners and the Business Investment and Growth team.
- The success of the new Leisure Centre.
- Monitoring the Brindley extension to facilitate the relocated Library and enhance the culture offer in the Borough.

Contact Officer for the Board

Members of the public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Damian Cooke, Director Economy, Enterprise & Property on 0151 511 6468 or via email damian.cooke@halton.gov.uk

REPORT TO: Local Economy Policy and Performance Board.

DATE: 16th June 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment & Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Employment Learning, Skills & Community

SUBJECT: Performance Management Reports for Quarter 4 of 2024/25

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider and to raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the final quarter period to 31st March 2025.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2024-25 were agreed by Members for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
- Employment Learning and Skills
 - Community and Environment

The report details progress made against objectives and milestones and performance targets and provides information relating to key developments and emerging issues that have arisen during the period.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Policy & Performance Board:

- 1) Receive the final quarter performance management report.**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification.**
- 3) Highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be reported at a future meeting of the Board.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Departmental objectives provide a clear statement on what services are planning to achieve and to show how they contribute to the

Council's strategic priorities. Such information is central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

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

6.1 All Key Performance Indicators relate directly to the following Council's priorities:

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

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 At the time at which Annual Business Plans are developed Directorate Risk Registers are also refreshed and updated.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

Employment, Learning, Skills and Community PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report Q4

Reporting Period: 1st January 2025 to 31st March 2025

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the final quarter of 2024 / 25 for service areas within the remit of the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2024 - 25 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy & Performance Board i.e.
- Employment, Learning and Skills
 - Library and Culture and Leisure Services
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 5 of this report.

1.4 Corporate Priorities



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

Plan on a Page



2.0 High Priority Equality Actions

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

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


3.0 Performance Overview







The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate.

Employment, Learning & Skills

Key Objectives / milestones


Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need. Employment, Learning & Skills
ERD 9	To promote access to learning to those who need it most and create employment opportunities for Halton residents

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Deliver six accredited ESOL and two Pre-ESOL courses across Widnes and Runcorn to help our BAME residents improve their English skills between 1 st August 2024 and 31 st July 2025		Achieved – six accredited and two non-accredited ESOL courses running, with an additional ESOL 'Conversation Club' launching 24 th April to supplement structured sessions.







Utilise a budget of £11,300 LCR Devolved ESFA Hardship Funding for adult learners between 1 st August 2024 and 31 st July 2025		Exceeded – as of March 2025, total is circa £14k. This has been used to support learners with childcare and transport costs, as well as to fund the centres' Warm Hubs.
Commence learning programme for those aged 19+ by 1 st August 2024		Achieved. Core provision of Adult Learning programmes commenced in September 2024 with additional creative, wellbeing and digital courses launching in December and January.
Commence year 3 of the Supported Internship Programme by August 2024		Cohort 4 started in September 2024, with 8 young people with SEND starting the Supported Internship Programme. All 8 Interns remain on programme at the end of Q4.
Learners passing courses = 92% by July 2025		Achieved – overall achievement rate sitting at 96% at last Quality, Income and Marketing report
Number of learners successfully placed into Employment = 330 by July 2025		101 residents were supported into work through HPIJ employment programmes in Q4. There were more job starts; however, we are awaiting evidence from employers for audit.
Percentage of people engaged in Learning from most deprived areas increased from 29% to 48% by July 2025		On track for achievement by end of the academic year – current figure is 37.4%

Library & Culture Services




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

Milestone: One new leisure centre open	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Opening February 2025		<p>Official opening on the 7th February with the public accessing from 10th February. As with all new buildings and services some operational and design/construction snagging and issues have arisen. The feedback from users has mostly been positive. Memberships increased by 50% and circa 6,000 visits per week.</p> <p>Training of staff, along with new risk assessments, safe systems of work, technology including a new leisure management system and other policies and procedures have been implemented. Alongside this front of house staff and management have completed customer service courses through Halton People into Jobs.</p> <p>Continue to develop the centre programme along with working through some design and defect issues that have arisen during mobilisation.</p> <p>The soft play and cafe areas will become operational in the next quarter.</p>

Corporate Priority	Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need. Leisure Services
ERD 24	Increase footfall at the Brindley

Milestone: Increase footfall at the Brindley	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Brindley - Total number of tickets sold.	 	<p>15,067 in Q4 In line with expectations due to closures for building works = 22 Days.</p> <p>Total Tickets sold 2024/25 = 74,264</p> <p>A decrease of 8,096 tickets sold compared to 2023/24.</p> <p>The enhancement works disruption, which commenced in August 2024, and the temporary access entrance were anticipated to affect attendances/performances throughout the period of construction.</p>
Brindley - Total number of days Hired days.	 	<p>37 in Q4 In line with expectations due to closures for building works = 22 Days for no Hire/Council Promotion bookings.</p> <p>Total number of hired days 2024/25 = 188</p> <p>A decrease of 25 Hired days compared to 2023/24</p>
Brindley - Total number of Council Promotions	 	<p>18 in Q4 In line with expectations due to closures for building works = 22 Days for no Council Promotions/Hire bookings.</p> <p>Total number of Council Promotions 2024/25 = 110</p> <p>A decrease of 10 Council Promotions compared to 2023/24</p>

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

Milestone: Increase footfall at the Libraries	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Footfall for all libraries: Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library		Ditton 8,988 Halton Lea 25,843 Runcorn 9,708 (inc. period of closure for relocation) Widnes Library 20,340 Total 64,879 Lower than same quarter last year and previous quarter, as expected with October half term & Christmas events, plus warm welcome campaigns.
Library Digital issues		Digital issues total 1,091,536 an increase on the same period in the previous year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ebooks- 4,258 Eaudio-7,861 Pressreader- 939,841 Online resources and subscriptions- 139,576
Library Issues in branch: Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library		Total library issues in branch 48,243 Ditton 3,922 Widnes 18,965 Runcorn 6,704 Halton Lea 18,652 Reduced slightly from previous quarter, Q3 49,821, as expected with Runcorn period of closure for relocation, and down slightly (900) from the same quarter last year.

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

Milestone: Monitor footfall, hires and events at Community Centres	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Community Centres - Total number of users in attendance (including drop-ins, events and hires)	<div><div>✓</div><div>↑</div></div>	<div>The total number of users for Q4 is 73,581</div> <div><div>Castlefields11,756</div><div>Ditton13,557</div><div>Grangeway22,152</div><div>Murdishaw10,272</div><div>Upton15,844</div></div> <div>The total number of users is much higher than the previous quarter across all five centres.</div>
Community Centres - Total number of hires	<div><div>✓</div><div>↑</div></div>	<div>The total number of hires for Q4 is 2,297</div> <div><div>Castlefields402</div><div>Ditton341</div><div>Grangeway453</div><div>Murdishaw430</div><div>Upton671</div></div> <div>All Community Centres are performing well with increased bookings at two out of five centres at Murdishaw with a five day hire and Upton seeing increased bookings in the sports hall. A total increase of 39 hires compared to the same period last year 2,258.</div>
Community Centres - Total number of Centre organised events	<div><div>✓</div><div>↔</div></div>	<div>24 events</div> <div>12 bingo sessions were held at Upton Community Centre and Grangeway Community Centres.</div>

4.0 Financial Statements

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget at 31 March 25

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employees	5,264	4,778	486
Agency - covering vacancies	0	417	(417)
Repairs & Mainenance	1,746	1,831	(85)
Premises	167	160	7
Energy & Water Costs	1,258	1,132	126
NNDR	687	666	21
Rents	173	166	7
Economic Regeneration Activities	17	-4	21
Security	544	588	(44)
Supplies & Services	477	570	(93)
Supplies & Services - Grant	1,270	1,270	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	159	154	5
Capital Finance	0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	1,177	1,231	(54)
Total Expenditure	12,939	12,959	(20)
Income			
Fees & Charges Income	-1,065	-1,175	110
Rent - Commercial Properties	-872	-900	28
Rent - Investment Properties	-38	-38	0
Government Grant	-2,652	-2,661	9
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-330	-387	57
Schools SLA Income	-221	-212	(9)
Recharges to Capital	-383	-383	0
Transfer from Reserves	-1,170	-1,170	0
Total Income	-6,731	-6,926	195
Net Operational Expenditure	6,208	6,033	175
Recharges			
Premises Support	2,074	2,074	0
Transport Support	28	28	0
Central Support	1,947	1,947	0
Asset Rental Support	1,154	1,154	0
Recharge Income	-7,927	-7,927	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,724	-2,724	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	3,484	3,309	175

Comments on the above figures

Finance communicates with the department on a regular basis to manage and analyse spending, identifying potential savings that could support current and future priorities. In an era of constrained budgets, achieving these goals is essential. The final outturn position shows the department is £0.175m under the annual approved budget.

Supporting Information

The department consists of 139fte, of which 69fte are externally funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.126m.

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

To fulfil statutory and contractual obligations and support the borough's regeneration, maintaining a complete staff is essential. However, the challenge of filling surveyor and project manager roles, even with a market supplement, has resulted in a lack of suitable candidates. Consequently, the engagement of agency personnel has been necessary, at a cost of £0.417m this financial year. Without these personnel, the borough's regeneration efforts would be hindered, potentially leading to a loss of business rates and council tax.

The recruitment of agency staff has increased commercial rental income by enabling the completion of pending rent reviews. All units at The Hive are now tenanted, although a rent-free period was provided to secure lease completions, resulting in a £0.020m shortfall. The budget should be balanced for the financial year 25/26, providing there is no increase in inflation.

A reconciliation of service charges at Rutland House and the relocation of Connect to Halton to the Municipal Building have increased the fees and charges income. As a result, the department had an overachievement of income by £0.110m for the year.

A recent exercise was conducted to determine the costs associated with empty properties within the Borough. Consequently, a new cost centre was established to monitor these expenses. In addition to the loss of rental income whilst the properties remain vacant, the Council also incur additional costs for utilities, repairs, and maintenance. As of the end of the financial year, the total costs related to these properties amount to £0.230m. To reduce the expenses actions need to be taken to accelerate the leasing or explore temporary uses for properties, such as short-term rentals or community projects, which will generate some income and reduce costs. Some properties are in poor condition and require refurbishment before any letting could be considered.

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

Whilst there has been a significant increase in energy costs over the last few years, it is anticipated that costs this financial year will be £0.152m lower than in 2023/24, representing a decrease of over 11%. The department spend is £0.126m under budget for 24/25.

Due to a delay in securing a new security contract, the current provider has been granted a one-year extension. At the end of 24/25 costs are £0.044m over budget. It has been agreed that departments will manage their own security budgets for 25/26 which will allow for tighter control of spend.

The Repairs and Maintenance program is under continuous review to ensure it stays within budget. This financial year is particularly challenging because the 2024/25 budget did not include an inflation adjustment and was further reduced by 10%. An exercise was conducted with the service to distinguish between capital and revenue expenditures, and the budgets have been adjusted accordingly. Despite these adjustments, revenue expenditure was £0.085m over the approved budget for the year.



Similar to previous years, the school cleaning service's level agreement (SLA) is not meeting its financial targets due to the employment of agency for covering absences and leave, as well as the anticipated pay award. This service will no longer be offered from April 2025.

Approved 2024/25 Savings

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

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX A

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

Capital Budget at 31 March 25

	2024/25 Revised Allocation	Actual Spend to 31 March 2025	Allocation remaining
	£000	£000	£000
3MG	134.5	0.0	134.5
Sandymoor Open Spaces Improvements	0.0	2.9	(2.9)
Murdishaw redevelopment	21.2	21.9	(0.7)
Equality Act Improvement Works	93.2	89.7	3.5
Foundary Lane Residential Area	1,240.0	494.1	745.9
Town Deal	11,552.9	3,160.1	8,392.8
Property Improvements	460.5	627.4	(166.9)
Runcorn Station Quarter	76.0	76.0	(0.0)
Waterloo Building	75.0	4.5	70.5
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	178.2	236.7	(58.5)
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	268.7	186.7	82.0
Changing Places	24.1	7.0	17.1
Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet	0.0	0.0	0.0
Port of Weston	20.0	3.0	17.0
Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition	750.0	41.2	708.8
Economy, Enterprise and Property Total	28,187.2	15,014.7	13,172.5

Comments on above figures

3MG 3MG is in its final stages for development with HBC Field being finalised this year and developments for Liberty Park and the Mound not presently forthcoming.

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

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

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

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

Waterloo Building All works complete, site now sold.

Equality Improvement Works All budget has been spent, £200k allocated to The Brindley.

Property Improvement

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

Changing Places

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

Runcorn Station Quarter

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

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

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

Town Deal

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

Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development

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

Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition

The demolition works are underway, following relocation of the Leisure Centre and period of decommissioning of the building.

Port of Weston

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

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

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

COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 31st March 2025

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employees	16,534	15,726	808
Agency - covering vacancies	0	191	(191)
Agency - in addition to establishment	0	256	(256)
Premises	3,443	3,367	76
Supplies & Services	1,452	1,710	(258)
Hired & Contracted Services	1,636	1,617	19
Book Fund	128	134	(6)
Food Provisions	388	416	(28)
School Meals Food	1,107	1,236	(129)
Transport	117	121	(4)
Other Agency Costs	460	486	(26)
Other Expenditure	41	63	(22)
Waste Disposal Contracts	7,072	7,190	(118)
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	64	30	34
Grants to Norton Priory	174	174	0
Transfer to reserves	1,357	1,357	0
Total Expenditure	33,973	34,074	(101)
Income			
Sales Income	-1,389	-1,353	(36)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,771	-5,633	(138)
Rental Income	-235	-280	45
Markets Income	-910	-847	(63)
Government Grant Income	-2,034	-2,034	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-1,053	-1,053	0
School SLA Income	-553	-553	0
School Meals Income	-2,622	-2,622	0
Internal Fees Income	-322	-434	112
Capital Salaries	-173	-92	(81)
Transfers From Reserves	-421	-925	504
Total Income	-15,483	-15,826	343
Net Operational Expenditure	18,490	18,248	242
Recharges			
Premises Support	1,675	1,675	0
Transport	2,257	2,295	(38)
Central Support	3,592	3,592	0
Asset Rental Support	2,845	2,845	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-843	-843	0
Net Total Recharges	9,526	9,564	(38)
Net Departmental Expenditure	28,016	27,812	204

Comments on the above figures

The net Departmental Expenditure has fallen £0.204m under budget at the end of the 2024/25 financial year. The position is £0.614m lower than forecast at month 10 and is due to several factors detailed below.

The largest shift from month 10 is in regard to Waste Disposal Contracts, which has seen a drop from a forecasted £0.284m underspend against the budget profile to £0.118m overspend. The invoices for these contracts are typically received very late after expenditure has been incurred so it can be difficult to forecast and within recent years the performance has been well within the budget. However, costs have risen by at least 25% which is producing a significant budget pressure due to the monetary value of the contracts. There is central government initiative to incorporate food waste recycling into all waste provisions across the country, there is scope to drive down these costs in subsequent financial years as when sorted at source, the processing costs are reduced. There is potential for reconciliation adjustments to be received in 2025/26 which may result in the annual cost being closer to the budget, but at this stage, the costs have risen above the approved budget.

Fees and Charges has also seen a significant change from that reported in Month 10. The change from £0.183m overachieved to £0.138m underachieved is due to a larger than expected portion of the funds received within the 2024/25 period relating to subsequent financial years.

Transfers From Reserves has also seen an increase as more funds were identified for utilisation against community and library services, releasing £0.505m of funds in comparison to the £0.202m in Month 10. Work will be carried out in 2025/26 to continue to identify opportunities such as this to help alleviate revenue budget pressures.

The largest contributor to the underspend continued to be spend on employees within the department, seeing £0.808m under the approved budget profile by the end of the financial year. There have been several restructures taking place across the Department in this financial year; in order to facilitate these, a number of vacancies have been held vacant whilst waiting for the new structure to be implemented. These will continue to be held into the 2025/26 financial year. Offsetting this, however, is agency spend within the Department which reached £0.447m for the 2024/25 financial year. As the Department offers a number of front-line services, including waste collections, in order to continue operations in the event of staff sickness, there is a reliance on agency to reduce the impact on residents within the borough.

Spend on premises costs is £0.076m under budget in 2024/25, a slightly improved position from month 10. Halton Leisure Centre is now open, and this facility will have lower building costs as there is little requirement for repairs and maintenance in comparison to the previous site. The premises costs of Kingsway Leisure Centre were a significant budget pressure for the department so the Council should start to see the benefits of increased revenue, and lower maintenance costs with the newer site. This has been built into the approved budget for 2025/26 so it is unlikely that there will be an underspend within the next financial year.



Supplies and services is showing an overspend of £0.258m which is a budget pressure throughout the Department, and is primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years, if the Council were to contain these costs within the budget profile there would be a reduction in the service provided.

The overall budget underspend of £0.205m for the department is largely contained to this financial year and not expected to continue into 2025/26. The budget for 2024/25 was set including a full year for the Kingsway Leisure Centre and School Meals service, next year does not include these, so the Council is likely to see expenditure and income more in line with the approved budget profile, there may be some temporary relief from vacancies as restructures are underway, and where possible, opportunities to identify available reserves will continue. However, due to the size of the waste disposal contracts, should there be any further increases even by a small percentage, any identified savings will be quickly offset.

Budget Savings

COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT

Ref.				Savings Value	Current	Comments
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	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000	Progress	
COMM3	Sport & Recreation	471	Restructuring the roles and responsibilities of the Sports Development Team	36	0		 Phase 1 of the restructure is underway with subsequent phases to occur within the next financial year.
COMM5	Stadium & Catering Services – School Meals	12	Cease to deliver the school meals service, which has made significant losses of over £200,000 for a number of years and is forecast to make a similar loss by year-end. Work would be undertaken with schools over the next two years to support them to secure an alternative means of delivery, whether in-house or via an external provider.	0	12		 The cessation of the service is complete.
Total Community & Environment Department				36	12		

Capital

	2024/25 Revised Allocation	Actual Spend to 31 March 2025	Allocation remaining
	£000	£000	£000
Stadium Minor Works	30.0	37.8	(7.8)
Halton Leisure Centre	8,997.0	8,897.3	99.7
Children's Playground Equipment	67.8	48.0	19.8
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340.0	0.0	340.0
Upton Improvements	13.0	0.0	13.0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12.0	0.0	12.0
Open Spaces Schemes	600.0	591.7	8.3
Runcorn Town Park	468.6	18.1	450.5
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,933.5	90.9	1,842.6
Pickerings Pasture Cafe	503.0	33.8	469.2
Replacement Cremator Widnes	308.0	325.9	(17.9)
Litter Bins	20.0	20.0	0.0
Community and Greenspaces Departmental Total	13,292.9	10,063.5	3,229.4




Halton Leisure Centre is now open so the costs will begin to wind up for this project, there will be some slippage into next financial year for any remedial works but the majority of work on the site is complete. Due to staffing issues several projects have had delayed starts so allocations will need to be carried through to the next financial year.

The overspend position against Stadium Minor Works and Replacement Cremator will be funded from the 2025/26 allocation being brought forward from 2024/25.





5.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

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

Direction of Travel Indicator

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

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 16 June 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Finance Director

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Councilwide Spending as at 31 January 2025

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report the Council's overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31 January 2025, together with the latest 2024/25 outturn forecast.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That;

- (i) **The Council's overall financial position as at 31 January 2025 as outlined in the Appendix, be noted.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 13 March 2025 the Executive Board received the report shown in the Appendix. This presented details of Councilwide revenue and capital spending by each Department as at 31 January 2025 along with forecasts to year-end, and outlines the reasons for key variances from budget.
- 3.2 Given the scale of the Council's current financial challenges, Executive Board requested that a copy of the report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board for information. This is to ensure that all Members have a full appreciation of the Councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility.
- 3.3 The report is presented to Executive Board every two months and the attached report covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 January 2025. It includes details of spending to date by each Department against both the revenue budget and capital programme.
- 3.4 Within the report Appendix 1 provides a Councilwide summary of revenue spending, while Appendix 2 presents details relating to each Department. The latest forecast of revenue spending to year-end compared to budget is also provided.
- 3.5 Appendix 3 presents spending to date against the Capital Programme. Appendix 4 indicates progress with implementation of previously approved budget savings for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

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

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

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

5.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

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

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

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 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.

6.2 A budget risk register of significant financial risks is maintained and is included at Appendix 5 of the attached report.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None

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

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

APPENDIX

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 13 March 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Finance Director

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: 2024/25 Spending as at 31 January 2025

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.2 To report the Council's overall revenue net spend position as at 31 January 2025 together with a 2024/25 forecast outturn position.

3.0 RECOMMENDED: That;

- (ii) **Executive Directors continue to identify areas where they can further reduce their directorate's spending or generate income, in order to reduce the councilwide forecast outturn overspend position;**
- (iii) **Executive Directors continue to implement the approved savings proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26 as detailed in Appendix 4;**
- (iv) **Council be asked to approve the revisions to the capital programme set-out in paragraph 3.22 and incorporated within Appendix 3;**
- (v) **This report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board, in order to ensure they have a full appreciation of the councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Revenue Spending

- 3.1 Appendix 1 presents a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 31 January 2025 and Appendix 2 provides detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms, net Council spending as at 31 January 2025 is £15.487m over budget. The outturn

forecast for the year estimates that net spending will be over budget by £18.906m if no corrective action is taken.

- 3.2 The forecast outturn overspend has improved by £1.851m from the amount reported on 16 January 2025. Whilst the financial position for the year remains deeply concerning the forecast outturn is a significant improvement. The improvement largely relates to reduced net spend estimates across Children Services. Further information regarding significant departmental variances is included within the report and departmental figures are included in Appendices 1 and 2.
- 3.3 Over the two month period since the last reported position, financial focus workshops led by the Chief Executive have taken place with each Directorate's senior leadership team on a monthly basis. These workshops are looking for urgent ways to reduce or stop spending, or generate income. The aim is that initiatives identified in these workshops will help reduce the overall forecast overspend position for the year.
- 3.4 Ordinarily, where net spend is exceeding available resources for the year, the Council would have used reserves to achieve a balanced position. Due to decreasing levels, the Council are not in a position to cover the forecast overspend for the year. Therefore, on 04 December 2024 Council approved an application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). The Government's EFS arrangement provides councils with exceptional permission to capitalise annual revenue costs and fund them from long term borrowing (over 20 years) from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). EFS provides permission to borrow and does not provide grant funding. On 20 February 2025 MHCLG confirmed the Deputy Prime Minister is minded to approve a capitalisation direction of a total not exceeding £52.8 million over the period 2024/25 and 2025/26. The position will only be confirmed following an external assurance review to be undertaken in the summer of 2025.
- 3.5 The Council's available useable reserves (general and earmarked) total £11.484m. This is well below that required to help provide a balanced budget position given the forecast outturn overspend. Further detail on reserves is provided at paragraph 3.19.
- 3.6 The forecast outturn figures reflect a prudent yet realistic view of spend and income levels through to the end of the year. Work will continue to update the financial position as more information becomes available. Included within the forecast position is the 2024/25 pay award which was paid in November 2024.
- 3.7 The largest pressure on the Council's budget continues to be within the Children & Families Department and the Adults Directorate. Against Children & Families net spend for the year is forecast to be £6.817m (16.2%) above 2023/24 actual spend. Against the Adults Directorate net spend for the year is forecast to be £4.557m (7.5%) higher than 2023/24 actual spend.

- 3.8 On 24 October 2024 the Board approved additional revenue funding of £4.2m per year, to help develop a programme around the stabilisation and redesign of Children's Social Care, following the Ofsted review. This investment is focused upon proactive early intervention and prevention systems. It is envisaged that this investment will help control and reduce costs within Children's Social Care over the next few years, and these cost reductions will be built into future year budget targets.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 Analysis of agency spend for the year, together with comparative analysis of 2023/24 costs, is included in the table below. Note information for Q4 only includes data for one months, January.

	2024/25					2023/24
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to Date	Total	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adult Social Care	1,341	1,656	1,210	1,241	5,448	5,927
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	132	179	239	82	632	0
Children & Family Services	1,283	1,432	1,321	400	4,436	6,157
Community & Greenspace	116	129	104	33	382	336
Economy, Enterprise & Property	86	105	110	38	339	343
Education, Inclusion & Provision	99	78	53	14	244	393
Finance	14	42	31	8	95	56
Legal & Democratic Services	253	274	212	41	780	814
Planning & Transportation	94	85	19	3	201	206
Public Health & Public Protection	11	10	1	0	22	21
Total	3,429	3,990	3,300	1,860	12,579	14,253

- 3.11 Within the approved budget for the year is a £4m savings target against the Transformation Programme. To date budget savings of £0.129m have been identified against this target. In addition, the Transformation Delivery Unit (TDU) have identified cost reductions and cost avoidance measures, although these will not lead to an overall reduction in the budgeted target. Progress against transformation savings is reported monthly to the Transformation Programme Board.
- 3.12 The forecast overspend is significantly above that which has been recorded in recent years. Whilst the current year net budget for the Council has increased by £7.7m (5.45%), this is well below the forecast increase in net costs, currently estimated as an increase of £20.997m (14.1%).

Revenue - Operational Spending

- 3.13 Operational net spending for the first ten months of the year is higher than the budget to date by £15.487m. Based on current forecasts it is estimated net spend will be over budget for the year by £18.906m if no further corrective action is taken.

3.14 Within the overall budget forecast position for the quarter, the key budget variances are as follows;

(i) **Children and Families Department**

The overall estimated forecast overspend position at the end of 2024/25 has reduced by £1.616m since last reported at 30 November 2024.

Significant investment as part of a Children's Social Care improvement plan has helped to reduce the forecast overspend position as well as reductions in agency and placement costs.

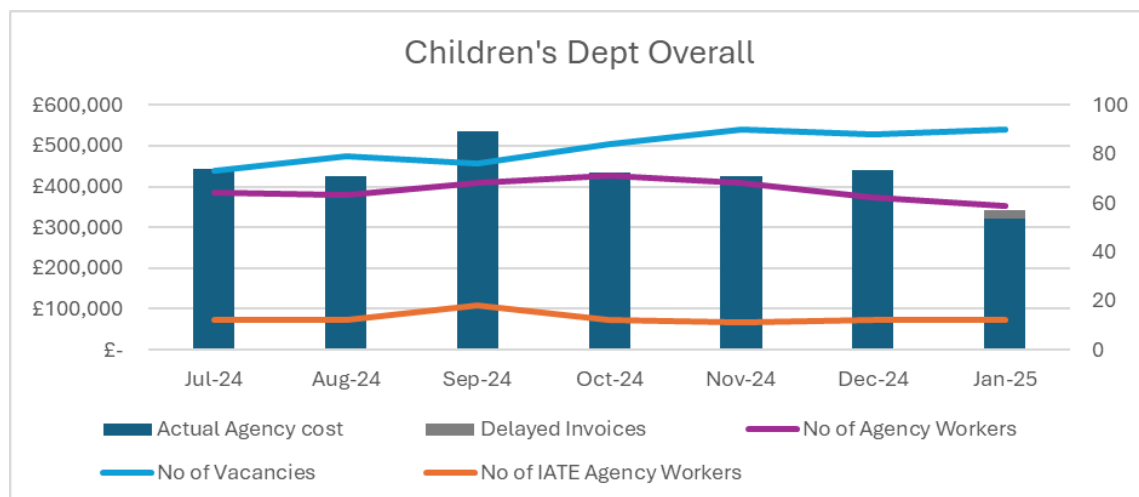
Although that there is a reduction in estimated forecast overspend across the Children's and Families department the overspend is still an area of serious concern and the issues remain the same. The difficulty in the recruitment of social workers and the subsequent extortionate agency costs, along with the spiralling costs of residential placements. This has been an ongoing problem for a number of years.

Employee Expenditure

Employee costs are forecast to be over budget profile at the end of financial year 2024/25 by £1.994m this is a reduction of £0.624m based on information available at 31 January 2025.

The reduction mainly relates to an agreed investment within children's services which has resulted in the establishment of new roles across the department. Agency staff that were previously in addition to the establishment (IATE) are no longer considered as IATE. Additional in-year budget of £0.501m (funded from contingency) has been provided for some of the newly established posts which has helped reduce the overspend position.

The chart below demonstrates agency cost that cover the month of April to January based on the period that was worked, the number of agency members of staff that the Council have received an invoice for within each period, the number of vacancies across the department and the number of staff that are currently in addition to the establishment (IATE).

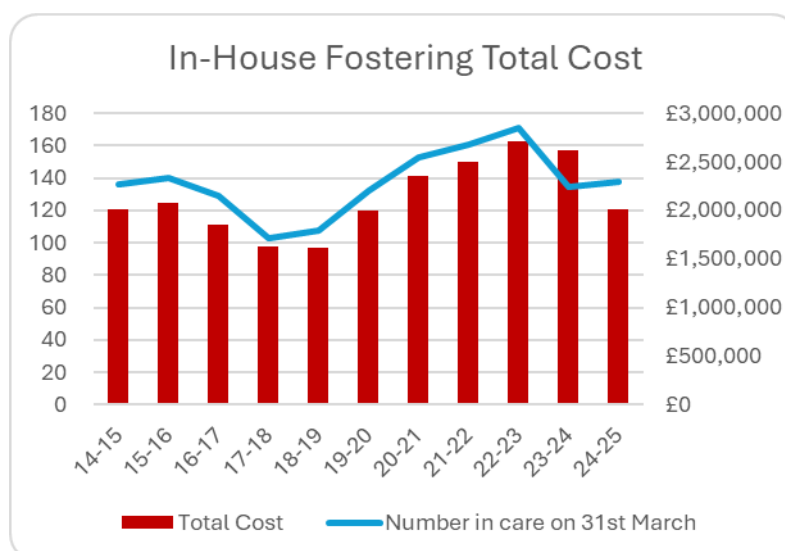


Various workstreams are in place to target the difficulties in recruitment, including a recruitment work group, social work academy and market supplements for applicable posts.

The chart above shows the level of agency has consistently reduced since October this is due to a number of agency converting to vacant positions and external recruitment which has resulted agency staff being stepped down.

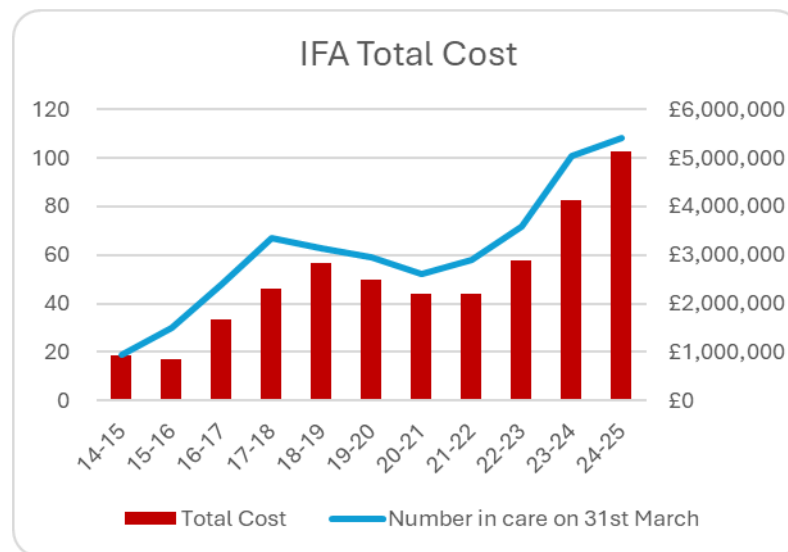
Fostering

Inhouse fostering placements is estimated to be £0.348m under budget profile for financial year 2024/25. Inhouse fostering budgets were increased to support the budget pressure in this area.



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 IFA. Higher numbers of children placed within IFA provision and increased IFA rates has resulted in an estimated forecast overspend for the end of 2024/25 as £0.886m.



Residential Care

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

Provision	Weekly Costs	31-Jan-25		30-Nov-24	
		No. Placed	Estimated cost for the year	No. Placed	Estimated cost for the year
Residential	£1000 - £3000	4	488,662	4	476,360
Residential	£3001 - £5000	27	5,108,252	25	4,956,870
Residential	£5001 - £7000	26	6,737,694	26	7,413,389
Residential	£7001 - £15982	16	9,452,930	17	9,291,964
Secure	£6397 - £8137				
Leaving Care	£443 - £7175	11	2,134,843	14	2,341,056
Parent & Child	£2000 - £5500	7	774,025	7	913,562
Total:		91	24,696,405	93	25,393,201

At the end of financial year 24/25 the estimated overspend is £6.410M over budget for residential placements this has reduced by £0.784m since last reported.

Overall cost of packages are increasing due to the complexity of support the young people require as well as standard package cost increases. This is a national issue and market factors such as low supply and high demand have resulted in the costs of

residential care packages rising significantly over the last year, meaning that the level of spend is unsustainable at the current rate.

A number of initiatives are taking place to try and address the issue including a High Cost Placement Panel where high cost packages are individually scrutinized to ensure the placement is right for the young person and at the best available cost for the placement.

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

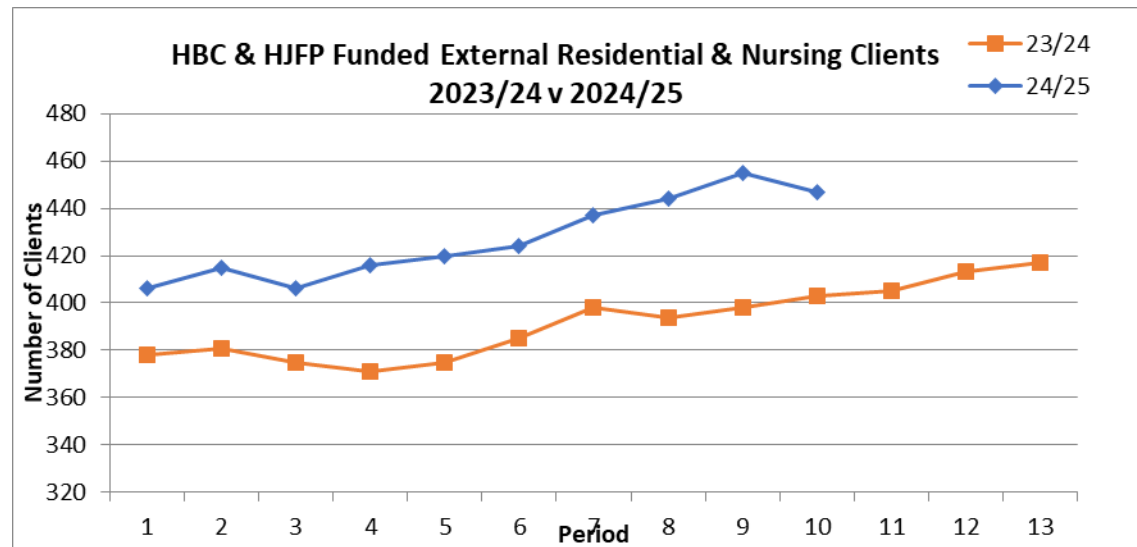
At the end of January 2025 expenditure on Community Care services is over budget profile by £2.679m. It is anticipated that at the end of the financial year it will be overspent by £3.527m. This is an increase of £0.585m from the previous position reported at the end of November 2024.

Residential & Nursing Care

There are currently 447 residents in permanent external residential/nursing care as at the end of January 2025 compared to 444 in November, an increase of 0.6%. Compared to the 2023/24 average of 391 this is an increase of 14.3%. The average cost of a package of care in the current year for the same period has increased from £873.48 to £902.99 an increase of 3.3%. Based on this average cost, the 3 additional service users from November to January will cost approximately £0.032m to year end.

In addition there is an increase in supplementary invoices during this period, amounting to £0.223m.

The graph below illustrates the demand for permanent placements.



Additional 1:1 hours in care homes currently cost the Council £0.023m per week. Spend to date is £0.596m for 30 individuals (27,432hrs), the forecast to year end is circa £0.803m.

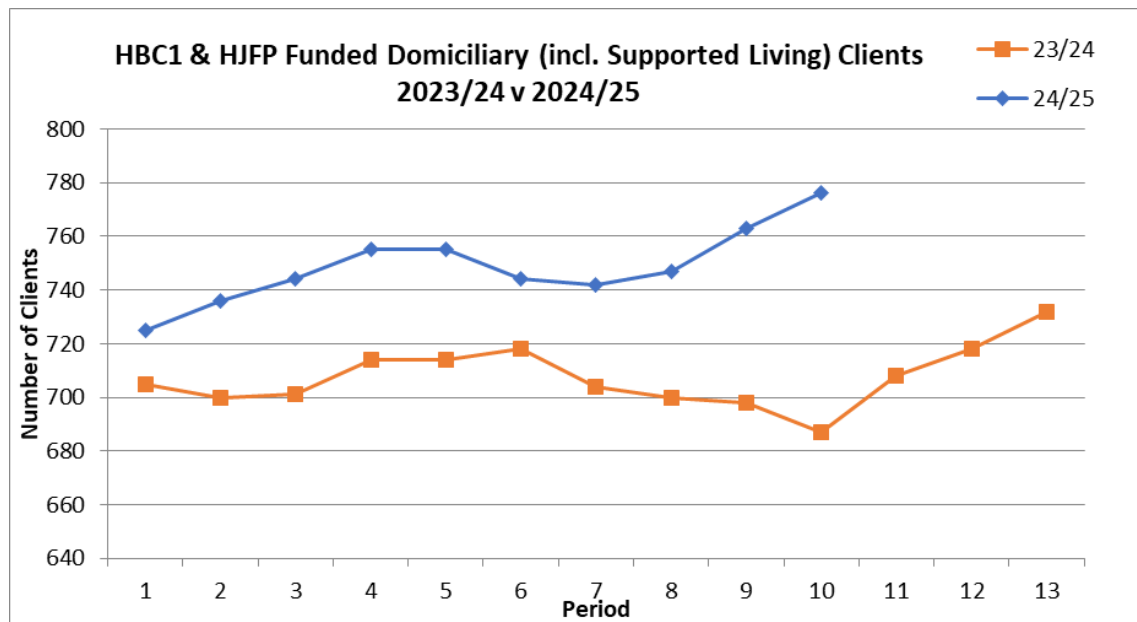
There are 76 care homes charging an additional payment over and above the contracted framework bed price. The current cost of additional payments is £0.012m per week, circa £0.610m per annum.

Domiciliary Care & Supported Living

There are currently 776 service users receiving a package of care at home compared to 747 in November, an increase of 29 (3.8%). However, the average number of service users during 2023/24 was 707, so there has been an increase of 9.8% demonstrating that demand for the service has increased this financial year.

The average cost of a package of care has increased by 5.3% from £450.89 to £475.14.

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

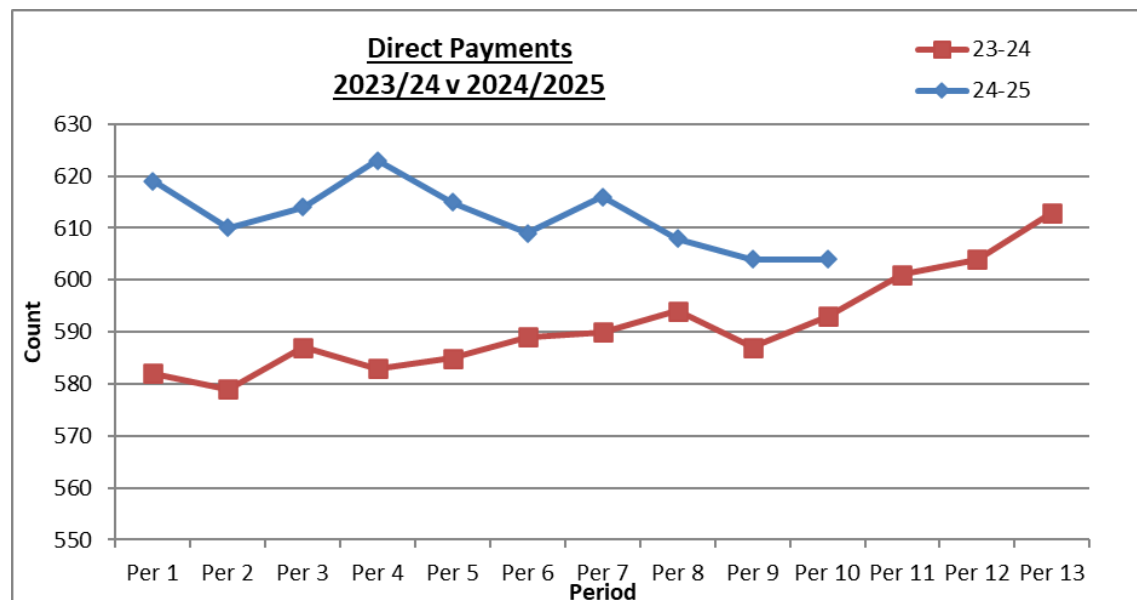


Direct Payments

In January 604 clients received a Direct Payment (DP) compared with 608 in November, a decrease of 0.6%. However, the average number of DP's in 2023/24 was 591, therefore there has been an increase of 2.2% on last year's average.

The average cost of a package of care has decreased since November from £471.94 to £438.54 in January, a reduction of 7.1%.

The forecast position for Direct Payments assumes an amount of £1.6m will be recovered from service users following an audit to seek assurance the DP is spent in line with their care and support needs. Variations to the amount recovered will directly affect the forecast.



Care Homes

The spend to 31 January 2025 across the Division is over budget profile by £1.020m. The forecast for the end of 2024/25 financial year is an estimated outturn position of £1.159m over budget. This is assuming the level of agency staffing continues at a similar rate and includes higher spend assumptions later in the financial year due to winter pressures surrounding staffing and utilities.

Recruitment of staff is a continued pressure across the care homes, where there remains a high number of staff vacancies. A proactive rolling recruitment exercise is ongoing, 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 January 2025 total agency spend across the care homes reached £3.034m, the cost of which has partially been offset by staff vacancies.

(iii) Education, Inclusion and Provision

Schools Transport is the main budget pressure for the Education, Inclusion and Provision Department. 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.

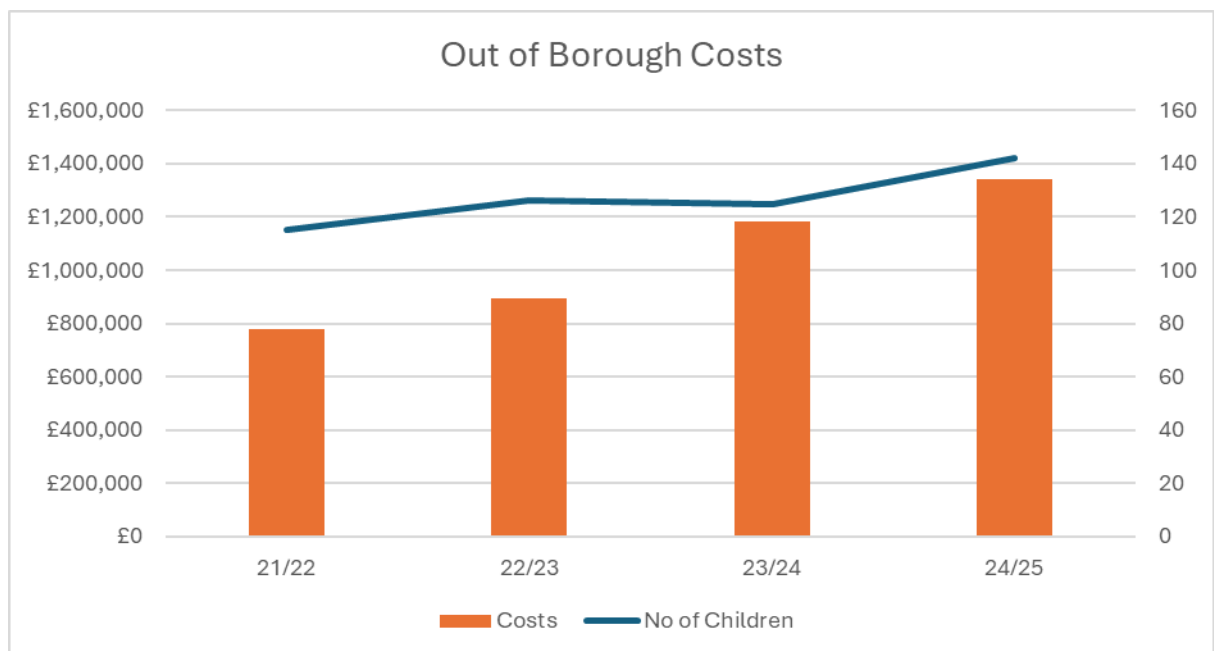
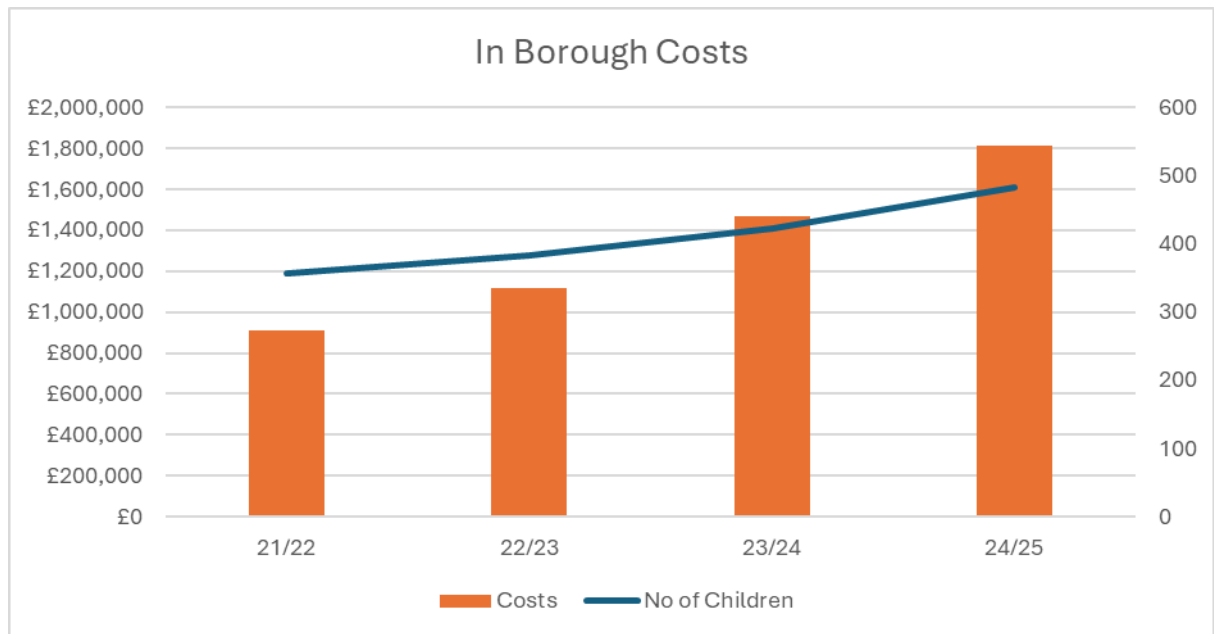
The table below illustrates the split between the two areas, and how each areas spend compares to the budget.

2024-25 as at Jan-25					
Area	Number of Users	Budget £000	Projected Spend £000	Variance £000	Average Cost per User
In Borough	482	1826	1812	14	£3,759.16
Out of Borough	142	491	1343	(852)	£9,459.70
Total	624	2317	3155	(838)	

The current records show 624 service users, the majority of which attend schools within the Borough. The Out of Borough overspend has increased from the previous reporting period from £0.797m to £0.852m.

During the current Academic year, it is anticipated that these figures will continue to rise, based upon historic information. The demand for the School Transport Service continues to increase in line with the increasing number of pupils with SEN within the Borough.

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



A further pressure on the departmental budget for the year relates to Psychology and SEN Assessment services provided to schools. For a number of years these costs have been funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The Department for Education have recently advised that these costs cannot be DSG funded as

they are outside of scope in meeting the grant conditions. It is therefore currently assumed this cost will fall upon the Council's budget at a cost of £0.860m, until at such time other sources of funding are found.

Income figures have changed compared to previous reports due to a review of departmental earmarked reserves and £0.420m being released to the General Fund.

(iv) ICT Department

At the end of the 2024/25 financial year it is forecasted that the ICT and Administration Department will be over the approved budget profile by £0.596m.

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

(v) Community and Greenspaces Department

The net departmental expenditure is forecast to be £0.819m under budget at the end of the 2024/25 financial year. This is an improved position from the expected £0.616m forecasted at the end of November 2024.

The largest contributor to the underspend is in relation to spend on Employees, which is currently forecast to be £0.951m under the approved budget profile by the end of the financial year. There are several restructures taking place across the Department, therefore, in order to facilitate these a number of posts are currently being held vacant until the new structure is implemented. The most notable of these being the new structure being implemented when the new Halton Leisure Centre opens.

Collection Fund

- 3.15 The council tax collection rate through to the end of January 2025 is 89.01% which is 0.08% 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. £2.205m (12.52%) has so far been collected this year in relation to previous years' debt.

- 3.16 Business rate collection through to the end of November 2024 is 92.70% which is 3.21% higher than the collection rate at the same point last year.

£2.057m has so far been collected this year in relation to previous years' debt.

Review of Reserves

- 3.17 As at 31 January 2025 the Council's General Reserve is unchanged from the previous period at £5.149m, which represents 3.44% of the Council's 2024/25 net budget. This is considered to be a minimum level.
- 3.18 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

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

Summary of General and Earmarked Reserves	
Reserve	Reserve Value £m
Corporate:	
General Fund	5.149
Transformation Fund	6.355
Capital Reserve	0.499
Insurance Reserve	1.000
Specific Projects:	
Adult Social Care	0.507
Fleet Replacement	0.454
Highways Feasibility Costs	0.102
Local Development Framework	0.494
Community & Environment	0.253
Mersey Valley Golf Club	0.483
Mersey Gateway	27.222
Various Other	0.554
Grants:	
Building Schools for the Future	6.529
Public Health	0.232
Supporting Families Performance Payments	0.114
Children's & Education	0.741
Domestic Abuse	1.186
Enterprise & Employment	0.112
Various Other	0.767
Total Earmarked Reserves	52.753

- 3.20 Held within the Transformation Reserve is £6.355m, set aside to help fund future balanced budgets, fund overspends, and meet a range of

potential spending commitments in future years associated with delivering the Transformation Programme.

- 3.21 The above table shows the diminishing level of reserves available to assist with funding any future budget overspends and balancing future budgets. Only the £11.484m of the General Fund and Transformation Reserve could now be used for these purposes, as all remaining reserves are committed for specific purposes. Use of these reserves will help contribute towards reducing the Council's overall forecast overspend position and mitigate against the level of Exceptional Financial Support required.

Capital Spending

- 3.22 Council approved the 2024/25 Capital Programme on 6 March 2024. Since then the capital programme has been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles and funding as schemes have developed. Included in the list below is a number of schemes which have been revised where profiles have been moved forward to 2025/26. Appendix 3 brings all the separate elements together and report on the Council's total planned capital programme expenditure over the next three years. The schemes which have been revised within the programme are as follows:

- I. Basic Need Projects
- II. SEND capital allocation
- III. SCA unallocated
- IV. Childcare Expansion
- V. Stair Lifts
- VI. Joint Funding RSL Adaptations
- VII. Madeline McKenna Refurbishment
- VIII. St Lukes Care Home
- IX. St Patricks Care Home
- X. Foundary Lane Residential Area
- XI. Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet
- XII. Port of Weston
- XIII. Street Lighting - Structural Maintenance
- XIV. Street Lighting – Upgrades
- XV. Risk Management
- XVI. Fleet Replacements
- XVII. Mersey Gateway Handback Land
- XVIII. Halton Smart Microgrid

- 3.23 Capital spending at 31 January 2025 totalled £33.9m, which represents 66.9% of the total revised Capital Programme of £50.7m (which assumes a 20% slippage between years).

Approved Savings

- 3.24 On 02 February 2023, Council approved savings proposals against the budget for the three year period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2026. Appendix 4 lists those savings covering 2024/25 and 2025/26, together

with RAG rated information on progress to date with developing and implementing the target savings.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 As at 31 January 2025, net revenue spend is forecast to be £18.906m over the budget for the year.
- 4.2 It is clear that Council reserves alone will not be sufficient to fund this pressure. As a result of this position and future budget challenges, the Council has successfully applied to Government for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS).
- 4.3 Departments should continue to ensure that all spending continues to be restricted 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. This will assist with minimising the ongoing cost of EFS borrowing.

5.0 POLICY 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 31 January 2025

APPENDIX 1

Directorate / Department	Annual Budget £'000	Budget To Date £'000	Actual To Date £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	January 2025 Forecast Outturn (o'spend) £'000	November 2024 Forecast Outturn (o'spend) £'000
Adult Social Care	22,925	19,355	19,734	(379)	(467)	(456)
Care Homes`	9,989	8,332	9,352	(1,020)	(1,159)	(1,245)
Community Care	16,460	15,255	17,934	(2,679)	(3,527)	(2,951)
Complex Care Pool	10,706	5,191	4,843	348	189	234
Adults Directorate	60,080	48,133	51,863	(3,730)	(4,964)	(4,418)
Finance	5,030	5,143	4,958	185	95	(162)
Legal & Democratic Services	-621	-482	492	(974)	(1,101)	(1,137)
ICT & Support Services	2,278	981	1,475	(494)	(596)	(657)
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	1,169	845	924	(79)	(90)	(14)
Chief Executives Directorate	7,856	6,487	7,849	(1,362)	(1,692)	(1,970)
Children & Families	38,866	28,142	36,665	(8,523)	(10,087)	(11,702)
Education, Inclusion & Provision	9,771	6,924	7,932	(1,008)	(1,240)	(1,598)
Children's Directorate	48,637	35,066	44,597	(9,531)	-11,327	(13,300)
Community & Greenspace	25,369	18,364	17,865	499	819	616
Economy, Enterprise & Property	2,335	1,031	944	87	116	123
Planning & Transportation	8,405	5,519	5,026	493	336	528
Environment & Regeneration Directorate	36,109	24,914	23,835	1,079	1,271	1,267
Corporate & Democracy	-4,477	-4,657	-2,649	(2,008)	(2,272)	(2,418)
Public Health Directorate	1,291	-962	-1,032	70	82	82
Total Operational Net Spend	149,496	108,981	124,463	(15,482)	(18,902)	(20,757)

Adult Social Care

APPENDIX 2

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	17,595	14,633	13,695	938	1,127
Agency- Covering Vacancies	4	3	1,066	(1,063)	(1,275)
Premises	482	435	401	34	41
Supplies & Services	769	673	864	(191)	(229)
Aids & Adaptations	37	30	37	(7)	(9)
Transport	242	201	328	(127)	(149)
Food & Drink Provisions	214	178	166	12	14
Supported Accommodation and Services	1,385	1,154	979	175	210
Emergency Duty Team	115	36	36	0	0
Transfer To Reserves	210	0	0	0	0
Contracts & SLAs	1,090	910	906	4	6
<u>Housing Solutions Grant Funded Schemes</u>					
Homelessness Prevention	502	418	407	11	0
Rough Sleepers Initiative	167	75	67	8	0
Trailblazer	72	43	43	0	0
Total Expenditure	22,884	18,789	18,995	(206)	(264)
Income					
Fees & Charges	-910	-754	-732	(22)	(27)
Sales & Rents Income	-480	-423	-456	33	39
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-2,058	-1,051	-1,072	21	25
Capital Salaries	-121	-91	-91	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-164	-164	-164	0	0
Housing Schemes Income	-703	-661	-666	5	0
Total Income	-4,436	-3,144	-3,181	37	37
Net Operational Expenditure	18,448	15,645	15,814	(169)	(227)
Recharges					
Premises Support	529	441	441	0	0
Transport Support	582	475	685	(210)	(240)
Central Support	3,465	2,887	2,887	0	0
Asset Rental Support	13	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-112	-93	-93	0	0
Net Total Recharges	4,477	3,710	3,920	(210)	(240)
Net Departmental Expenditure	22,925	19,355	19,734	(379)	(467)

Care Homes

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
<u>Madeline Mckenna</u>					
Employees	698	582	553	29	30
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	99	(99)	(119)
Other Premises	101	77	81	(4)	0
Supplies & Services	20	13	19	(6)	(6)
Food Provison	48	36	41	(5)	(1)
Total Madeline Mckenna Expenditure	867	708	793	(85)	(96)
<u>Millbrow</u>					
Employees	2,057	1,744	1,099	645	665
Agency - covering vacancies	3	3	846	(843)	(952)
Other Premises	129	100	128	(28)	(33)
Supplies & Services	61	45	75	(30)	(31)
Food Provison	78	33	39	(6)	1
Total Millbrow Expenditure	2,328	1,925	2,187	(262)	(350)
<u>St Luke's</u>					
Employees	2,883	2,451	1,920	531	685
Agency - covering vacancies	433	433	1,257	(824)	(999)
Other Premises	172	132	214	(82)	(89)
Supplies & Services	60	41	82	(41)	(42)
Reimbursements & other Grant Income	-248	-226	-226	0	0
Private Client Income 1:1	-81	-81	-81	0	0
Food Provison	120	100	117	(17)	(17)
Total St Luke's Expenditure	3,339	2,850	3,283	(433)	(462)
<u>St Patrick's</u>					
Employees	1,838	1,531	1,030	501	608
Agency - covering vacancies	42	42	832	(790)	(944)
Other Premises	157	121	122	(1)	(3)
Supplies & Services	64	47	42	5	8
Food Provison	122	102	92	10	11
Reimbursements & other Grant Income	-21	-21	-21	0	0
Total St Patrick's Expenditure	2,202	1,822	2,097	(275)	(320)
<u>Care Homes Divison Management</u>					
Employees	306	254	215	39	73
Supplies & Services	0	0	4	(4)	(4)
Care Home Divison Management	306	254	219	35	69
Net Operational Expenditure	9,042	7,559	8,579	(1,020)	(1,159)
<u>Recharges</u>					
Premises Support	264	220	220	0	0
Transport Support	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	683	553	553	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0	0	0
Net Total Recharges	947	773	773	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	9,989	8,332	9,352	(1,020)	(1,159)

Community Care

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Residential & Nursing	13,715	11,929	14,050	(2,121)	(2,758)
Domiciliary Care & Supported living	12,890	10,130	10,610	(480)	(624)
Direct Payments	14,125	13,063	13,289	(226)	(293)
Day Care	648	497	484	13	22
Total Expenditure	41,378	35,619	38,433	(2,814)	(3,653)
Income					
Residential & Nursing Income	-13,138	-10,345	-10,412	67	87
Community Care Income	-2,270	-2,000	-2,027	27	40
Direct Payments Income	-1,014	-882	-888	6	10
Income from other CCGs	-466	-446	-481	35	0
Market sustainability & Improvement Grant	-2,796	-2,330	-2,330	0	0
Adult Social Care Support Grant	-5,167	-4,306	-4,306	0	0
War Pension Disregard Grant	-67	-55	-55	0	(11)
Total Income	-24,918	-20,364	-20,499	135	126
Net Operational Expenditure	16,460	15,255	17,934	(2,679)	(3,527)

Complex Care Pool

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Intermediate Care Services	5,225	4,089	4,174	(85)	(103)
Oakmeadow	1,831	1,476	1,584	(108)	(129)
Community Home Care First	2,088	1,507	1,402	105	126
Joint Equipment Store	871	715	707	8	9
Development Fund	174	97	0	97	116
Contracts & SLA's	3,255	1,620	1,620	0	0
Inglenook	134	107	83	24	29
HICafs	3,703	2,468	2,275	193	231
Carers Breaks	554	436	332	104	126
Carers centre	371	361	342	19	23
Residential Care	7,265	5,435	5,435	0	0
Domiciliary Care & Supported Living	4,227	3,170	3,170	0	0
Pathway 3/Discharge Access	391	0	0	0	(41)
HBC Contracts	72	73	78	(5)	(6)
Total Expenditure	30,161	21,554	21,202	352	381
Income					
BCF	-13,484	-11,237	-11,237	0	0
CCG Contribution to Pool	-2,959	-2,387	-2,387	0	0
Oakmeadow Income	-19	-17	-13	(4)	(4)
ASC Discharge Grant Income	-1,631	-1,360	-1,360	0	0
ICB Discharge Grant Income	-1,282	-1,282	-1,282	0	0
Other Income	-80	-80	-80	0	0
Total Income	-19,455	-16,363	-16,359	(4)	(4)
ICB Contribution Share of Surplus					(188)
Net Operational Expenditure	10,706	5,191	4,843	348	189

Finance Department

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	6,989	5,829	5,713	116	140
Insurances	975	859	685	174	209
Supplies & Services	417	406	479	(73)	(87)
Rent Allowances	35,500	29,583	29,583	0	0
Concessionary Travel	1,748	1,270	1,383	(113)	(136)
LCR Levy	1,748	0	0	0	0
Bad Debt Provision	77	0	0	0	(145)
Non HRA Rent Rebates	70	43	39	4	4
Discretionary Social Fund	106	90	12	78	94
Discretionary Housing Payments	300	199	186	13	16
Household Support Fund Expenditure	2,613	2,371	2,371	0	0
Total Expenditure	50,543	40,650	40,451	199	95
Income					
Fees & Charges	-335	-252	-254	2	2
Burdens Grant	-60	-62	-85	23	26
Dedicated schools Grant	-144	-16	0	(16)	(19)
Council Tax Liability Order	-581	-507	-604	97	116
Business Rates Admin Grant	-157	0	0	0	0
Schools SLAs	-312	-312	-307	(5)	(5)
LCR Reimbursement	-1,748	0	0	0	0
HB Overpayment Debt Recovery	-400	-325	-201	(124)	(149)
Rent Allowances	-34,700	-28,917	-28,717	(200)	(221)
Non HRA Rent Rebate	-70	-59	-61	2	0
Discretionary Housing Payment Grant	-300	-300	-277	(23)	(23)
Housing Benefits Admin Grant	-498	-415	-407	(8)	(9)
Housing Benefits Award Accuracy	0	-2	-12	10	12
Universal Credits	-5	-4	0	(4)	(5)
Household Support Fund Grant	-2,613	-1,303	-1,303	0	0
VEP Grant	0	0	-7	7	7
CCG McMillan Reimbursement	-87	-65	-70	5	5
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-185	-220	-440	220	263
Transfer from Reserves	-7	-7	-7	0	0
Total Income	-42,202	-32,766	-32,752	(14)	0
Net Operational Expenditure	8,341	7,884	7,699	185	95
Recharges					
Premises Support	377	314	314	0	0
Transport Support	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	2,365	1,971	1,971	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-6,053	-5,026	-5,026	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,311	-2,741	-2,741	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	5,030	5,143	4,958	185	95

Legal Services

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	1,511	1,321	1,326	(5)	(7)
Agency Related Expenditure	0	0	780	(780)	(871)
Supplies & Services	388	345	306	39	46
Civic Catering & Functions	23	14	4	10	12
Legal Expenses	218	166	365	(199)	(240)
Transport Related Expenditure	11	11	7	4	6
Other Expenditure	0	3	3	0	0
Total Expenditure	2,151	1,860	2,791	(931)	(1,054)
Income					
School SLA's	-98	-95	-77	(18)	(20)
Licence Income	-304	-230	-228	(2)	(2)
Government Grant	-42	-42	-42	0	0
Reimbursement & Other Grants	-164	-164	-164	0	0
Fees & Charges Income	-74	-65	-44	(21)	(25)
Transfer from Reserves	-27	-27	-27	0	0
Total Income	-709	-623	-582	(41)	(47)
Net Operational Expenditure	1,442	1,237	2,209	(972)	(1,101)
Recharges					
Premises Support	53	44	44	0	0
Transport Recharges	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support Recharges	275	229	231	(2)	0
Asset Rental Support Costs	0	0	0	0	0
Support Recharge Income	-2,391	-1,992	-1,992	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,063	-1,719	-1,717	(2)	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	-621	-482	492	(974)	(1,101)

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,596	4,660	4,444	216	259
Supplies & Services	921	763	1,112	(349)	(420)
Capital Finance	100	84	43	41	49
Computer Repairs & Software	1,724	1,542	1,834	(292)	(350)
Communication Costs	13	0	123	(123)	(147)
Premises	159	130	108	22	27
Transport	3	2	2	0	0
Total Expenditure	8,516	7,181	7,666	-485	-582
Income					
Fees & Charges	-1,056	-533	-589	56	68
Schools SLA Income	-646	-622	-571	(51)	(62)
Reimbursements & Grant Income	0	3	20	(17)	(20)
Transfer from Reserves	-148	-148	-148	0	0
Total Income	-1,850	-1,300	-1,288	(12)	(14)
Net Operational Expenditure	6,666	5,881	6,378	(497)	(596)
Recharges					
Premises Support	550	458	458	0	0
Transport Support	19	18	18	0	0
Central Support	2,380	1,983	1,983	0	0
Asset Rental Support	1,494	0	0	0	0
Support Costs Income	-8,831	-7,359	-7,362	3	0
Net Total Recharges	-4,388	-4,900	-4,903	3	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,278	981	1,475	(494)	(596)

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	3,304	2,689	2,776	(87)	(103)
Employees Training	99	82	65	17	21
Apprenticeship Levy	300	242	265	(23)	(27)
Supplies & Services	391	366	312	54	65
Total Expenditure	4,094	3,379	3,418	-39	-44
Income					
Fees & Charges	-223	-150	-142	(8)	(8)
Schools SLA Income	-565	-559	-522	(37)	(43)
Transfer from Reserves	0	0	-5	5	5
Total Income	-788	-709	-669	(40)	(46)
Net Operational Expenditure	3,306	2,670	2,749	(79)	(90)
Recharges					
Premises Support	174	145	145	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	1,209	1,008	1,008	0	0
Asset Rental Support	53	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-3,573	-2,978	-2,978	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,137	-1,825	-1,825	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	1,169	845	924	(79)	(90)

Children & Families

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	15,708	12,970	14,646	(1,676)	(1,994)
Other Premises	415	267	277	(10)	(14)
Supplies & Services	1,726	1,966	2,417	(451)	(571)
Transport	360	252	224	28	27
Direct Payments	1,097	822	1,053	(231)	(277)
Commissioned services to Vol Orgs	224	168	168	0	0
Residential Care	18,620	14,049	19,391	(5,342)	(6,410)
Out of Borough Adoption	96	0	0	0	96
Out of Borough Fostering	4,363	3,154	3,930	(776)	(886)
In House Adoption	548	380	272	108	131
Special Guardianship Order	2,510	1,960	1,993	(33)	(39)
In House Foster Carer Placements	2,739	2,150	1,859	291	348
Lavender House Contract Costs	234	176	164	12	15
Home Support & Respite	340	258	270	(12)	(13)
Care Leavers	277	251	378	(127)	(151)
Family Support	53	36	43	(7)	(9)
Contracted services	3	3	3	0	0
Early Years	0	0	0	0	0
Emergency Duty	132	38	72	(34)	(42)
Youth Offending Services	321	129	169	(40)	(47)
Transfer to Reserves	8	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	49,774	39,029	47,329	(8,300)	(9,836)
Income					
Fees & Charges	-33	-13	0	(13)	(14)
Sales Income	-4	-3	0	(3)	(4)
Rents	-81	-70	-70	0	0
Reimbursement & other Grant Income	-832	-904	-766	(138)	(167)
Transfer from reserve	-82	-82	-82	0	20
Dedicated Schools Grant	-50	0	0	0	0
Government Grants	-11,559	-11,260	-11,191	(69)	(86)
Total Income	-12,641	-12,332	-12,109	(223)	(251)
Net Operational Expenditure	37,133	26,697	35,220	(8,523)	(10,087)
Recharges					
Premises Support	2,274	1,895	1,895	0	0
Transport	398	332	332	0	0
Central Support Recharges	16	14	14	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Internal Recharge Income	-955	-796	-796	0	0
Net Total Recharges	1,733	1,445	1,445	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	38,866	28,142	36,665	(8,523)	(10,087)

Education, Inclusion & Provision

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	7,390	6,158	6,318	(160)	(215)
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	230	(230)	(290)
Agency - addition to establishment	72	60	14	46	58
Premises	14	12	11	1	3
Supplies & Services	4,597	3,041	3,069	(28)	(33)
Independent School Fees	10,201	8,743	8,743	0	0
Schools Contingency	295	295	295	0	0
Transport	43	33	41	(8)	(10)
Schools Transport	2,341	1,433	2,130	(697)	(837)
Early Years Payments	11,419	9,696	9,696	0	0
Early Years Pupil Premium	132	102	102	0	0
Commissioned Services	1,879	1,431	1,525	(94)	(111)
Inter Authority Special Needs	1,164	973	973	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	110	25	75	(50)	(60)
Capital Financing	4,661	3,507	3,506	1	1
Total Expenditure	44,318	35,509	36,728	(1,219)	(1,494)
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-556	-530	-527	(3)	(4)
Government Grant Income	-8,339	-6,838	-6,838	0	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	-25,530	-21,275	-21,275	0	0
Inter Authority Income	-274	-274	-274	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-1,785	-1,343	-1,343	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-436	-374	-396	22	27
Transfers from Reserves	-119	0	-350	350	420
Total Income	-37,039	-30,635	-31,003	368	443
Net Operational Expenditure	7,279	4,874	5,725	(851)	(1,051)
Recharges					
Premises Support	344	287	287	0	0
Transport Support	528	427	582	(155)	(186)
Central Support	1,603	1,336	1,338	(2)	(3)
Asset Rental Support	17	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0	0	0
Net Total Recharges	2,492	2,050	2,207	(157)	(189)
Net Departmental Expenditure	9,771	6,924	7,932	(1,008)	(1,240)

Community & Greenspaces

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	17,435	14,211	13,419	792	951
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	182	(182)	(218)
Agency - in addition to establishment	0	0	200	(200)	(240)
Premises	3,455	2,466	2,532	(66)	(78)
Supplies & Services	2,243	1,622	1,748	(126)	(151)
Hired & Contracted Services	854	854	854	0	0
Book Fund	128	111	111	0	0
Food Provisions	388	334	304	30	36
School Meals Food	1,960	1,087	1,192	(105)	(126)
Transport	117	62	100	(38)	(45)
Other Agency Costs	429	425	425	0	0
Other Expenditure	0	0	67	(67)	(67)
Waste Disposal Contracts	7,002	3,562	3,326	236	284
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	64	50	24	26	30
Grants to Norton Priory	174	174	174	0	0
Total Expenditure	34,249	24,958	24,658	300	376
Income					
Sales Income	-1,373	-1,218	-1,209	(9)	(10)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,490	-4,623	-4,775	152	183
Rental Income	-235	-193	-241	48	57
Markets Income	-910	-738	-716	(22)	(26)
Government Grant Income	-1,628	-1,628	-1,628	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-703	-687	-687	0	0
School SLA Income	-1,313	-563	-563	0	0
School Meals Income	-3,598	-2,127	-2,210	83	100
Internal Fees Income	-322	-214	-293	79	95
Capital Salaries	-173	-129	-58	(71)	(85)
Transfers From Reserves	-15	-15	-15	0	202
Total Income	-15,760	-12,135	-12,395	260	516
Net Operational Expenditure	18,489	12,823	12,263	560	892
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,675	1,396	1,396	0	0
Transport	2,257	1,855	1,916	(61)	(73)
Central Support	3,897	3,247	3,247	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-1,148	-957	-957	0	0
Net Total Recharges	6,880	5,541	5,602	(61)	(73)
Net Departmental Expenditure	25,369	18,364	17,865	499	819

Economy, Enterprise & Property

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,075	4,438	3,991	447	536
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	349	(349)	(407)
Repairs & Maintenance	1,706	1,478	1,560	(82)	(98)
Premises	136	120	120	0	0
Energy & Water Costs	1,248	920	830	90	108
NNDR	690	684	659	25	30
Rents	173	133	128	5	6
Economic Regeneration Activities	21	16	16	0	0
Security	544	417	473	(56)	(67)
Supplies & Services	506	305	335	(30)	(36)
Supplies & Services - Grant	2,090	812	812	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	75	107	107	0	0
Capital Finance	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	185	186	185	1	1
Total Expenditure	12,449	9,616	9,565	51	73
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-987	-711	-771	60	72
Rent - Commercial Properties	-872	-758	-758	0	0
Rent - Investment Properties	-38	-32	-33	1	1
Government Grant	-2,510	-1,714	-1,714	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-193	-510	-492	(18)	(22)
Schools SLA Income	-227	-223	-210	(13)	(15)
Recharges to Capital	-295	-239	-243	4	5
Transfer from Reserves	-1,120	-1,165	-1,167	2	2
Total Income	-6,242	-5,352	-5,388	36	43
Net Operational Expenditure	6,207	4,264	4,177	87	116
Recharges					
Premises Support	2,074	1,728	1,728	0	0
Transport Support	30	22	22	0	0
Central Support	1,947	1,623	1,623	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-7,927	-6,606	-6,606	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,872	-3,233	-3,233	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,335	1,031	944	87	116

Planning & Transportation Department

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,814	4,831	4,440	391	469
Agency - covering vacancies	110	53	120	(67)	(81)
Agency - in addition to establishment	24	2	75	(73)	(88)
Efficiency Savings	-150	-125	0	(125)	(150)
Premises	193	169	127	42	51
Hired & Contracted Services	59	0	208	(208)	(166)
Planning Appeal Decision	0	0	0	0	(300)
Supplies & Services	144	178	340	(162)	(195)
Street Lighting	1,662	862	884	(22)	(25)
Highways Maintenance - Routine & Reactive	1,772	1,215	1,411	(196)	(235)
Highways Maintenance - Programmed Works	1,908	1,028	738	290	349
Fleet Transport	1,455	1,202	1,184	18	21
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	23	22	15	7	8
Bus Support	498	746	746	0	0
Agency Related Expenditure	8	8	49	(41)	(41)
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	31	31	31	0	0
NRA Levy	74	74	73	1	2
LCR Levy	1,059	794	794	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	359	359	359	0	0
Total Expenditure	15,043	11,449	11,594	(145)	(381)
Income					
Sales & Rents Income	-97	-80	-148	68	82
Planning Fees	-826	-691	-442	(249)	(299)
Building Control Fees	-245	-204	-190	(14)	(17)
Other Fees & Charges	-908	-760	-1,169	409	491
Grants & Reimbursements	-206	-131	-131	0	0
Government Grant Income	-240	-243	-253	10	0
Halton Hopper Income	-24	-20	-8	(12)	(15)
Recharge to Capital	-562	-91	-91	0	(36)
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-1,059	-1,036	-1,036	0	0
Contribution from Reserves	-1,036	-794	-794	0	0
Total Income	-5,203	-4,050	-4,262	212	206
Net Operational Expenditure	9,840	7,399	7,332	67	(175)
Recharges					
Premises Recharges	560	467	467	0	0
Transport Recharges	749	634	648	(14)	(17)
Central Recharges	1,534	1,278	1,278	0	0
Asset Charges	851	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-5,129	-4,259	-4,699	440	528
Net Total Recharges	-1,435	-1,880	-2,306	426	511
Net Departmental Expenditure	8,405	5,519	5,026	493	336

Corporate & Democracy

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	412	343	293	50	17
Contracted Services	39	32	35	(3)	0
Supplies & Services	119	108	110	(2)	(23)
Premises Expenditure	5	5	7	(2)	0
Transport Costs	1	1	8	(7)	(9)
Members Allowances	983	819	823	(4)	0
Interest Payable - Treasury Management	1,341	1,118	1,826	(708)	(849)
Interest Payable - Other	115	96	179	(83)	(100)
Bank Charges	132	99	203	(104)	(100)
Audit Fees	348	261	27	234	0
Contingency	538	538	0	538	667
Capital Financing	2,409	2	2	0	301
Debt Management Expenses	20	17	4	13	0
Precepts & Levies	240	200	175	25	30
Transformation Efficiency Savings	-4,000	-3,333	0	(3,333)	(3,871)
Total Expenditure	2,702	306	3,692	(3,386)	(3,937)
Income					
Interest Receivable - Treasury Management	-4,152	-3,460	-4,358	898	1,078
Interest Receivable - Other	-19	-16	-16	0	0
Other Fees & Charges	-158	-128	-85	(43)	(61)
Grants & Reimbursements	-255	-85	-418	333	333
Government Grant Income	-377	-314	-504	190	315
Total Income	-4,961	-4,003	-5,381	1,378	1,665
Net Operational Expenditure	-2,259	-3,697	-1,689	(2,008)	(2,272)
Recharges					
Premises Support	21	17	17	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0	0
Central Support	1,016	889	889	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-3,026	-1,866	-1,866	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-1,989	-960	-960	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	-4,248	-4,657	-2,649	(2,008)	(2,272)

Public Health

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,419	3,914	3,913	1	1
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	0	0	0
Other Premises	6	0	0	0	0
Supplies & Services	388	283	248	35	42
Contracts & SLA's	8,112	6,218	6,188	30	36
Transport	4	3	2	1	1
Transfer to Reserves	19	19	19	0	0
Other Agency	24	24	24	0	0
Total Expenditure	13,970	10,461	10,394	67	80
Income					
Fees & Charges	-88	-116	-116	0	0
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-574	-559	-559	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-1,714	-1,714	-1,714	0	0
Government Grant Income	-12,193	-11,984	-11,984	0	0
Total Income	-14,569	-14,373	-14,373	0	0
Net Operational Expenditure	-599	-3,912	-3,979	67	80
Recharges					
Premises Support	149	125	125	0	0
Transport Support	22	18	20	(2)	(2)
Central Support	2,387	1,990	1,990	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-669	-557	-557	0	0
Net Total Recharges	1,889	1,575	1,577	(2)	(2)
Net Departmental Expenditure	1,291	-2,337	-2,402	65	78

Capital Programme as at 31 January 2025

Appendix 3

Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation £000	2024/25 Revised Allocation £000	Q1 Spend £000	Q2 Spend £000	Q3 Spend £000	Q4 Spend £000	Total Spend £000	Allocation remaining £000	2025/26 Allocation £000	2026/27 Allocation £000
Childrens Directorate										
Capital Repairs	749.0	749.0	151.0	531.0	50.0	1.0	733.0	16.0	550.0	
Basic Need Projects	600.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	600.8	
SEND capital allocation	3,355.2	1,529.2	178.0	519.0	356.0	65.0	1,118.0	411.2	1,781.0	
SCA unallocated	255.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	448.0	
Family Hubs & Start for Life	53.2	110.4	1.3	54.1	10.0	27.7	93.1	17.4		
Childcare Expansion	314.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	314.8	
Childrens Directorate Total	5,328.6	2,388.6	330.3	1,104.1	416.0	93.7	1,944.1	444.6	3,694.6	0.0
Adults Directorate										
Halton Carers Centre Refurbishment	199.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		
Grants - Disabled Facilities	600.0	1,050.0	353.0	227.0	157.0	147.0	884.0	166.0	600.0	600.0
Stair Lifts	270.0	250.0	66.0	23.0	62.0	50.0	201.0	49.0	270.0	270.0
Joint Funding RSL Adaptations	270.0	250.0	53.0	24.0	81.0	49.0	207.0	43.0	270.0	270.0
Telehealthcare Digital Switchover	0.0	135.0	60.0	0.0	20.0	-20.0	60.0	75.0		
Oakmeadow & Peelhouse Network Improvements	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0		
Madeline McKenna Refurbishment	0.0	120.0	9.0	73.0	2.0	7.0	91.0	29.0		
Millbrow Refurbishment	0.0	50.0	26.0	8.0	0.0	12.0	46.0	4.0		
St Lukes Care Home	0.0	120.0	10.0	14.0	7.0	74.0	105.0	15.0		
St Patricks Care Home	1,200.0	150.0	14.0	16.0	-1.0	86.0	115.0	35.0		
Adults Directorate Total	2,539.0	2,165.0	591.0	385.0	328.0	405.0	1,709.0	456.0	1,140.0	1,140.0

Capital Programme as at 31 January 2025 continued

Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation	2024/25 Revised Allocation	Q1 Spend	Q2 Spend	Q3 Spend	Q4 Spend	Total Spend	Allocation remaining	2025/26 Allocation	2026/27 Allocation
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Environment & Regeneration Directorate										
Stadium Minor Works	30.0	30.0	7.9	7.7	0.0	22.2	37.8	-7.8	30.0	30.0
Halton Leisure Centre	8,997.0	8,997.0	2,030.0	3,045.4	3,229.2	469.0	8,773.6	223.4		
Children's Playground Equipment	67.8	67.8	1.0	1.0	40.0	0.0	42.0	25.8	65.0	65.0
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340.0	340.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	340.0	340.0	340.0
Upton Improvements	13.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0		
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0		
Open Spaces Schemes	600.0	600.0	130.0	154.4	135.0	-11.0	408.4	191.6	600.0	600.0
Runcorn Town Park	468.6	468.6	0.0	6.8	0.0	3.0	9.8	458.8	280.0	280.0
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,933.5	1,933.5	2.4	4.4	38.0	0.0	44.8	1,888.7		
Pickerings Pasture Cafe	503.0	503.0	9.7	1.2	1.1	0.0	12.0	491.0		
Replacement Cremator Widnes	308.0	308.0	0.0	77.3	7.0	0.0	84.3	223.7		
Litter Bins	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
3MG	134.5	134.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	134.5		
Murdishaw redevelopment	21.2	21.2	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4	15.8		
Equality Act Improvement Works	293.2	93.2	8.7	17.6	59.6	3.8	89.7	3.5	300.0	300.0
Foundary Lane Residential Area	1,160.0	1,240.0	1.8	464.8	2.3	11.0	479.9	760.1		
Town Deal	11,352.9	11,552.9	174.9	261.8	940.0	588.0	1,964.7	9,588.2	7,190.4	
Property Improvements	360.2	460.5	4.3	131.1	286.6	136.3	558.3	-97.8	200.0	200.0
Runcorn Station Quarter	484.7	76.0	0.0	60.5	15.5	0.0	76.0	0.0		
Waterloo Building	0.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.3	73.7		
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	178.2	178.2	0.0	0.0	12.2	152.0	164.2	14.0		
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	484.7	268.7	8.6	122.9	61.5	0.2	193.2	75.5		
Changing Places	24.1	24.1	2.5	0.1	1.6	0.0	4.2	19.9		
Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet	2,200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,200.0	
Port of Weston	0.0	20.0	0.0	1.3	1.7	0.0	3.0	17.0	3,940.0	
Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition	0.0	750.0	0.0	30.7	0.0	0.9	31.6	718.4		







Capital Programme as at 31 January 2025 continued

Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation £000	2024/25 Revised Allocation £000	Q1 Spend £000	Q2 Spend £000	Q3 Spend £000	Q4 Spend £000	Total Spend £000	Allocation remaining £000	2025/26 Allocation £000	2026/27 Allocation £000
Bridge and Highway Maintenance	0.0	2,265.6	280.8	313.0	20.0	114.0	727.8	1,537.8		
Runcorn Busway	0.0	0.0	227.4	80.0	371.0	237.0	915.4	-915.4		
ATF3 Murdishaw to Whitehouse	0.0	3,000.0	175.3	363.0	497.0	194.0	1,229.3	1,770.7		
ATF4 Widnes Town Centre Accessibility	0.0	114.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	114.5		
A56 Reconstruction (Delph Lane)	0.0	943.7	351.1	0.0	10.0	2.0	363.1	580.6		
Dukesfield ATL (Waterloo Bridge)	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	-1.1		
LCWIP Phase 2 Daresbury	0.0	3,861.7	629.3	56.0	15.0	1.0	701.3	3,160.4		
Additional Pothole Funding	0.0	429.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	429.1		
CRSTS	5,819.4	5,288.6	1,656.0	884.0	2,184.0	305.0	5,029.0	259.6		
Street Lighting - Structural Maintenance	1,025.6	250.0	0.0	37.0	94.0	21.0	152.0	98.0	975.6	200.0
Street Lighting - Upgrades	969.4	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	869.4	
East Runcorn Connectivity	5,851.7	5,851.7	452.5	207.0	810.0	1,670.0	3,139.5	2,712.1	5,851.7	5,851.7
Risk Management	597.8	50.0	4.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.9	45.1	667.8	120.0
Fleet Replacements	4,927.4	2,500.0	1,081.8	455.0	256.0	76.0	1,868.8	631.2	3,850.7	
Environment & Regeneration Directorate Total	49,390.3	53,054.5	7,247.4	6,800.4	9,187.5	4,085.1	27,320.4	25,734.1	27,380.6	8,006.7
Chief Executives Directorate										
IT Rolling Programme	1,026.9	1,026.9	27.7	668.2	20.0	24.0	739.9	287.0	700.0	700.0
Halton Smart Microgrid	11,000.0	1,000.0	0.0	0.0	128.0	0.0	128.0	872.0	10,000.0	
Transformation Programme	3,740.0	3,740.0	435.0	624.0	712.0	201.0	1,972.0	1,768.0	1,000.0	
Chief Executives Directorate Total	15,766.9	5,766.9	462.7	1,292.2	860.0	225.0	2,839.9	2,927.0	11,700.0	700.0
Grand Total	73,024.8	63,375.0	8,631.4	9,581.7	10,791.5	4,808.8	33,813.4	29,561.6	43,915.2	9,846.7

Progress Against Agreed Savings

Appendix 4

Adult Social Care




	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
ASC1	Housing Solutions	474	Remodel the current service based on good practice evidence from other areas.	0	125		Anticipated to be achieved, currently under review.
ASC2	Telehealthcare	680	Explore alternative funding streams such as Health funding or Disabled Facilities Grants.	170	0		Currently Under Review
			Increase charges / review income.	170	0		Charges were increased by 40% w.e.f. April 2024, so this should be achieved
			Cease the key safe installation service.	15	0		Service still being provided
ASC17/18	Quality Assurance Team	395	Review the activities of the Quality Assurance Team, given there are fewer providers for domiciliary care and the transfer of four care homes into the Council.	0	0		Saving implemented
			Merge the service with the Safeguarding Unit.	50	0		

ASC16	Shared Lives (Adult Placement Service)	115	Engage with an external agency currently operating Shared Lives to take over the running of this service. It is anticipated that this would provide an improved service.	58	0	u	Service currently still provided in-house, although a balanced budget will be attained for 2024/25 as a result of current temporary savings, and work is ongoing to ensure the 2025/6 structure can achieve the permanent savings target
ASC19	Voluntary Sector Support	N/A	Review the support provided by Adult Social Care and all other Council Departments, to voluntary sector organisations. This would include assisting them to secure alternative funding in order to reduce their dependence upon Council funding. A target saving phased over two years has been estimated.	200	100	✓	Anticipated to be achieved
ASC4	Positive Behaviour Support Service	349	<p>Increase income generated in order to ensure full cost recovery, through increased service contract charges to other councils.</p> <p>Review the Integrated Care Board</p>	100	0	✓	<p>Contracts being re-costed on renewal, saving anticipated to be achieved</p> <p>ICB funding not secured, although a balanced budget will be attained for 2024/25 as a result of current temporary savings, and</p>


			contribution for Adults, to ensure the full recovery of related costs.	150	0	u	work is ongoing to ensure the 2025/6 structure can achieve the permanent savings target
ASC15	Learning Disability Nursing Team	424	Cease provision of this service. The service is a Health related function rather than Adult Social Care, but this is a historical arrangement. The Integrated Care Board would need to consider how they want to provide this function.	424	0	✓	Costs now recharged to the ICB
ASC14	Care Management Community Care Budget	18,982	Attract £500k investment from the pooled budget (BCF) from 2024/25. Undertake work in years 1 and 2 to reduce reliance upon contracted services from 2025/26. Services are currently in the process of being redesigned on a "Strengths Based Approach" ie. focused upon prevention.	500	1,000	u	Position currently being reviewed.

Total Adult Social Care Department				1,837	1,225		




Finance

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




Legal and Democratic Services

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

Children and Families



Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
C1	Ditton and Warrington Road Daycare Centres	52	Closure of Ditton and Warrington Road daycare centres, given the significant on-going net losses at both centres. Sufficient alternative provision exists nearby, as well as in the adjoining nursery schools.	26	0		Early Years has now closed and budget for 24/25 has been removed
C2	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.	0	22		This is subject to further review as external factors are changing the original review parameters. Potential alternative funding also to be reviewed.
C3	Children with Disabilities and Inglefield	858	Explore the potential for selling Inglefield and then purchase two bungalows within the community to provide a more appropriate setting.	112	0		Amount was removed at budget setting as will not be achieved
Total Children & Families Department				138	22		

Education, Inclusion and Provision

Ref	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EIP1	Education Psychology Service	339	There is excess demand from schools for the Education Psychology Service. The service is valued and there is opportunity to expand our offer and generate additional income.	52	0		
EIP2	SEN Assessment Team	82	Consideration will be given to funding the full service costs from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.	80	0		DSG funding removed as does not comply with grant conditions.
EIP5	Commissioning	148	Review with Health colleagues how the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Carers could instead be provided by	148	0		To be reviewed.



			Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as they are commissioned by the Integrated Care Board.				
Total Education, Inclusion and Provision Department				280	0		

Community and Greenspace


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




Total Community & Greenspace Department	36	12		
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Economy, Enterprise and Property

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

Policy, Planning and Transportation

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
PPT6	Traffic	N/A	Consider introducing civil traffic enforcement for traffic violations. Employ private sector civil enforcement officers to issue fines and generate income. It would take 12 months to apply for powers from the DFT and put the scheme in place. The Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board will consider this via a Topic Group.	150	0		Not currently viable, therefore no income will be generated in the current year as the traffic enforcement will not be carried out.
Total Policy, Planning & Transportation Department				150	0		

<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.

2024/25 Budget Risk Register as at 31 January 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay award Staff Turnover Saving Target Agency, casuals and overtime National Living Wage Pension Costs 	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget based upon individual staff members/vacancies Budget monitoring Contingency Balances Medium Term Forecast Engage with Cheshire Pension Scheme and pension actuary Recruitment and retention scheme children social care workers. Social Care Academy for children social care workers Connect to Halton 	3	3	9	ED/SB/Executive Directors	Monthly	2024/25 pay offer accepted and implemented November 2024. •£1290 on all pay points from 1st April •Equivalent to 5.77% on point 2 and 2.5% on point 43 •2.5% on all pay points above 43 and below chief officer level Estimated 4% 2024.25 budget uplift will cover cost of pay award. Connect to Halton scheme went live September 2024, agency and casual appointments to be covered by	31/01/25

											the scheme.	
2	Redundancy and Early Retirements	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Transformation Reserve 	2	3	6	ED/SB	Quarterly	Tracker created to monitor redundancy costs in current year. Transformation reserve created to cover costs but limited reserves will impact use of this. Look to capitalise compulsory costs where possible where evidence exists it creates in a longer term saving.	31/01/25
3	Savings not achieved	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget monitoring • Contingency • Reserves / Provisions • Rigorous process in approving savings. • Review of savings at departmental and directorate level • Monthly budget 	4	2	8	RR/ED/SB	Monthly	Savings for 2024/25 have been written into Directorate budgets. Budget savings monitored closely and if necessary offsetting savings sought. Transformation Programme Board meeting on monthly basis to discuss	31/01/25

					monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Forecast • 2023/24 to 2025/26 savings agreed February 2023. • RAG monitoring of savings included in quarterly monitoring reports. • Transformation saving targets reported monthly through Transformation Programme Board. 						progress against programme.	
4	Price inflation	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prudent budget provision • Latest forecast information used eg. utilities • Budget monitoring • Contingency • Balances 	3	3	9	ED/SB	Monthly	CPI for January 2025 is 3.0% and RPI is 3.6%. Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast inflation to be 2.6% in 2025 and 2.1% through to 2027. Rates are higher than forecast in September 2024	31/01/25

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPI/RPI monitoring • MTFS 						and remain above Governments 2% target.	
5	Review of LG Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business rates retention – 100% Pilot and Review • Fair Funding Review • National Public Spending Plans • Social Care Green Paper 	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPs • SIGOMA / LG Futures • Liverpool City Region & Merseyside Treasurers Group • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Member of business rate retention pilot region • Dialogue with DCLG 	3	3	9	ED/SB/NS/MW/MG	Weekly/Monthly	Business rate retention pilot continues through to March 2026. Government are committed to providing more certainty on LG Finances through multi year settlements. Final settlement announced 03 February 2025, funding is higher than within financial forecast.	31/01/25
6	Treasury Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borrowing • Investment 	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasury Management Strategy • Link Asset Services advice • Treasury Management planning and monitoring 	1	3	3	ED/SB/MG	Daily / Quarterly	Investment rates continue to be high relative to last decade. BoE base rate reduced to 4.5%, Impact of Exceptional Financial Support request to be	31/01/25

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at Networking and Benchmarking Groups Officer Training 						assessed with regards to timing of future borrowing.	
7	Demand led budgets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in Care Out of borough fostering Community Care 	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget monitoring Contingency Balances Review service demand Directorate recovery groups Monthly budget monitoring 	4	4	16	ED/SB/NS/MW	Monthly	<p>Children in care, numbers and costs continue to exceed budget. 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.</p> <p>Investment in Children Services following OFSTED inspection to be monitored with regard to control and reduction of future costs.</p>	31/01/25
8	Mersey Gateway Costs	4	2	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring with 	2	1	2	ED/SB/MG	Quarterly	Arrangements in place to monitor spend and	31/01/25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs Toll Income Funding Accounting treatment 				Crossing Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital reserve Government Grant Liquidity Fund 						availability of liquidity fund.	
9	Council Tax Collection	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	Collection rate to 31 January 2025 was 89.01% which is marginally lower than the rate of 89.09% at the same point last year. To 31 January 2025 £2.205m was collected in relation to old year debt.	31/01/25
10	Business Rates Retention Scheme	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and monitoring of latest business rates income to baseline and estimate for year. Prudent allowance for losses in collection Prudent provision set 	3	1	3	ED/SB/LB/MG	Monthly	Collection rate to 31 January 2025 was 92.7% which is 3.21% higher than the rate at the same point last year. To 31 January 2025 £2.057m was collected in	31/01/25

					<p>aside for losses from valuation appeals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring of annual yield and baseline / budget position Benchmarking Groups Review recovery procedures 						relation to old year debt.	
11	Income recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty to economy following Brexit, cost of living and high inflation 	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Cost of living crisis adds to uncertainty over collection.	31/01/25
13	Capital Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs Funding Key Major Projects Clawback of Grant Availability and timing of capital 	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Management Regular monitoring Detailed financial analysis of new schemes to ensure they are affordable Targets monitored to minimise clawback of 	3	2	6	Project Managers/ED /SB/LH	Quarterly	Capital receipts have been fully committed therefore new capital schemes need to bring own funding.	31/01/25

	receipts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cashflow Contractors 				grant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor due diligence Dialogue with Government departments. 							
14	Academy Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of transfer upon Council budget Loss of income to Council Services 	2	4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early identification of school decisions DfE Regulations Prudent consideration of financial transactions to facilitate transfer Services continue to be offered to academies Transfer Protocol 	1	3	3	ED/SB/NS	Monthly	Consideration given in MTFS for loss of funding.	31/01/25
15	Reserves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diminishing reserves, used to balance budget, fund overspend positions. 	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitored on a quarterly 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	31/01/25

16	Budget Balancing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Before transformation targets, there is a forecast budget gap of £68.5m through to 2028/29. 	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Transformation programme in place. 	4	4	16	ED/SB	Ongoing	Updated benchmarking to be reported to better inform Transformation Programme targets.	31/01/25

