Public Document Pack

Local Economy Policy and Performance Board

Monday, 17 November 2025 at 6.30 p.m.
The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes

Interim 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 Isabelle Moorhouse on 01515113979 or isabelle.moorhouse@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 26 January 2026

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

Part I

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.

LOCAL ECONOMY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Local Economy Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 15 September 2025 in the Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), Begg, Connolly, Garner, Rowe, Ryan and Skinner.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Gilligan and Hutchinson.

Absence declared on Council business: None.

Officers present: D. Cooke, H. Roberts, K. Arrowsmith, G Ferguson, and I. Moorhouse.

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

ELS9 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 6th June 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS10 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

ELS11 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board was presented with the minutes relating to the Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Portfolio, which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of the Board.

The Board commented that they would have preferred to be consulted on the health and leisure in Halton before it went to Executive Board.

ELS12 PRESENTATION ON HALTON BUSINESS INVESTMENT & GROWTH TEAM

The Board received a report and accompanying presentation which provided an overview on the Halton Business Investment & Growth Team. The Team ran the

UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) funded Halton Business Support Service and offered expert assistance to local businesses to make them more productive and competitive. They also helped with growth strategies and property searches.

The presentation outlined the range of current services offered to Halton businesses and progress on the delivery of the funded programmes and a view to post March 2026 when UKSPF funding came to an end.

Work done by the Team included signposting businesses to local council services and having one to one meetings or workshops with businesses in Halton to educate them on areas like cyber security. 67 businesses were supported between 2022-25 which was the target, and 15 new businesses were created but it was unknown how many jobs were created.

Post March 2026, Liverpool City Region (LCR) will focus on business support, housing, strategic planning & regeneration, transport, digital & energy infrastructure, employment skills and health as part of its industrial strategy. LCR would look at what could be done to replace UKSPF money when it ends in March 2026. It was noted that in early 2026 an Economic Forum will be held; 140 companies attended this event last year.

It was confirmed that there was no clarity on what would replace the UKSPF as Central Government attention shifted to combined authorities and devolution. Business rate relief was unavailable under the UKSPF, but the Team would signpost businesses to alternative sources of support.

Following some questions from the Board the following points were made:

- a proposal was raised that the Council should require new developments in Halton to offer on-site apprenticeships for local young people, in partnership with schools and colleges.
- the Team's promotional materials for town centre regeneration will be shared with the Board.
- it was confirmed that outreach to developers and property agents was conducted via the LCR network, real estate events, and local promotion. The Council did not have its own budget for self-promotion. The Board noted a need to better highlight Halton's strengths, for example its transport links.

- it was suggested the Council explore co-location and flexible working spaces, following Liverpool City Council's example.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

Interim Regeneration and Business Growth Manager

Councillor Aimee Skinner left the Meeting at this juncture at 19:32

ELS13 PRESENTATION ON SCI-TECH DARESBURY

The Board received a report and accompanying presentation which provided an overview on the Sci-Tech Daresbury Joint Venture and the positive impact it had. Sci-Tech Daresbury Joint Venture was established in 2010 as a partnership with the Science & Technology Facilities Council (Daresbury Labs) and Langtree Property Partners. The site has been a legally designated Enterprise Zone since 2012 and in 2024 it became part of the Liverpool City Region Health & Life Sciences Investment Zone. It is the only National UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) Lab in the north of England and 160 companies were on site varying in size.

The presentation outlined the Sci-Tech Daresbury Campus including that it had the fastest supercomputer in the UK on site and one of Europe's largest liquid helium cryogenic cooling facilities. Other key points included:

- Businesses on site had a 95% survival rate.
- There were mainly small businesses onsite, but the average sales growth was 29%.
- £45 million was invested into the campus and £20 million of this was from public sector grants. £6.5 million of this came from the Council using the Enterprise Zone Borrowing Mechanism.
- The Council owned 25% of Daresbury Joint Venture assets. £883,000 per annum in business rates is currently retained by the Council for reinvestment into the enterprise zone until 2037.
- 15% of employees on site were from Halton.
- Over 70% of jobs at Daresbury were degree level and above and over 189 apprenticeships were created in the last four years.
- Roughly £3 million per annum is spent in the local supply chain just from the Joint Venture.
- A public engagement programme was established to work with local schools and colleges to engage with students on activities

	including coding and video game design.	
	It was confirmed that placements at Daresbury had increased for students from schools in Halton, but the reason why employment levels were unknown. Officers agreed to ask the companies on site to see if they were receiving applications from students from Halton.	Interim Regeneration and Business Growth Manager
	Regarding Daresbury's charity partnership, the Board requested that the next charity partnership be established with a charity based in Halton if possible.	
	RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.	
ELS14	HALTON ADULT LEARNING – THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM IN 24/25	
	The Board received a report on Halton's Creative Curriculum for Adult Learning in 2024/25. Work was done to design programmes that would allow a holistic development of literacy, teamwork, communication/presentation skills, self-reflection and confidence. Halton Adult Learning was wholly funded by LCR's Adult Skills Fund. Officers provided brochures to the Board detailing the work undertaken in 2024/25 including crafts, murals, educational trips to free to access places and writing stories which were published. Most of the 450 adult learners in Halton enrolled on the creative courses and the feedback received was very positive.	
	Regarding the books that the adult learners had got published, Officers agreed to see if they could be provided to local schools as it promoted local successes.	Quality & Learner Experience Manager
	The Board praised the work done by Halton Adult Learning and suggested that the learner's artwork go in Brindley Theatre.	
	RESOLVED: That the report be noted.	
ELS15	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2025/26	

The Board received the performance management reports for Quarter 1 of 2025-26 (1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025) 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 2025-26 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.

It was confirmed that the new Brindley Library was now set to open in the spring of 2026 due to site issues. Despite the footfall reduction at the relocated Library, service usage had increased due to the usage of online services.

Officers agreed to get an update regarding the condition of the swimming pool at Halton Leisure Centre. — Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ELS16 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 31 MAY 2025

The Board received a report from the Director of Finance, which gave the Council's overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31 May 2025, together year-end outturn position. All Policy and Public Performance Boards had received this report.

It was confirmed that the Board were unable to receive the budget information for July 2025 because this data was unavailable at the time when the agenda legally had to be published.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Meeting ended at 9:01p.m.

REPORT TO: Local Economy PPB

DATE: 17 November 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.

Agenda Item 4

REPORT TO:	Local Economy PPB
DATE:	17 November 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Executive Board Minutes
WARD(S)	Boroughwide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The Minutes relating to the relevant Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.**

3.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None.

4.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None.

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

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

5.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None.

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

None.

6.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 None.

7.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

8.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None identified.

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Local Economy Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2025

EXB40	**DCBL STADIUM - NEW PAVA SYSTEM AND STRUCTURAL STEEL MAINTENANCE WORKS AND PITCH REPLACEMENT**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, that sought Member approval to proceed with necessary works to the Public Address Voice Alarm (PAVA) System, the Structural Steelwork Repairs and replacement Pitch at the DCBL Stadium as identified in the report.

RESOLVED: That

1) the Capital works identified in the report in sections 3.3 to 3.6 be approved;

2) consideration be given to the options outlined in paragraph 5.4 below regarding how the annual capital financing costs might be funded;

3) Council be asked to add works to the capital programme and include a financial contribution of £1.325m, subject to further work to establish detailed costs, and to proceed with an option to include the implementation of a PAVA system and undertake steel repairs to four stands only. This is to ensure the ongoing safety of the public when using the premises. A decision on options relating to the pitch to be deferred; and

4) approval of the detailed costs and the option to be undertaken, be delegated to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Employment Learning, Skills and Community and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety.

EXB45	**PART 2 ITEM: SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS FOR HALTON PEOPLE INTO JOBS**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval for a sustainable funding option for the Council’s

Halton People Into Jobs Service when existing funding streams came to an end in March 2026.

RESOLVED: That the proposed sustainable funding option outlined in the report be approved.

Agenda Item 5a

REPORT TO:	Local Economy Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	17 November 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment Learning, Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Culture and Culture 26; Made In Halton
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 A presentation will be provided to the board on Culture including alignment to visitor economy, destination marketing and introducing Culture 26; Made In Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

1) **the report be noted.**
2) **The board receives the presentation.**
3) **The Board endorses the approach to Culture.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Halton has a legacy of cultural and visitor activity with borough of culture programmes and visitor destination initiatives providing platforms to grow Halton’s cultural and visitor offer.

3.2 Halton benefits from a local formally organised cultural organisation, Cultivate Halton. This has strengthened with development support and resources into a constituted collective partnership. They are a network facilitated by a Steering Group, who support and encourage creativity and cultural activity in the borough and have approximately 60 members including freelance artists, community organisations, education and service providers who use Culture in their practice and co-authored the Crucible of Culture strategy along with Norton Priory. Appendix 1.

3.3 Halton will be delivering borough of Culture in 2026 titled Culture 26; Made In Halton; this is being developed in partnership with Cultivate Halton. Cultivate hosted two consultation events in February and March to help shape the programme of Culture 26 with key outcomes being the desire for more festivals, exhibitions and workshops.

3.4 For the purposes of Culture 26; Made In Halton, Culture is defined as the following:

- Literature – poetry, storytelling, spoken word, or creative writing.
- Music – performance, composition, or recording across any genre.
- Theatre and Performance – plays, monologues, interpretive dance or live performances
- Visual Arts – painting, drawing, sculpture, or photography
- Dance – all styles and forms, from contemporary to community-based.
- Digital media - digital art, graphic design, animation and film

Activities that explore, celebrate or encourage access to other cultural experiences such as **heritage**, **science, nature** and **environment** through the above are also included.

3.5 The branding Culture 26; Made In Halton is a reflection of the aim to shine a spotlight on the cultural assets and activity already happening in Halton and to make sure those engaging in the arts and creative sectors have a voice and the opportunity to take part, to create work and develop as professionals. Cultivate Halton will deliver a training programme to reflect the needs of those currently delivering or wanting to deliver cultural activity in the borough. The logo is made up of local cultural icons and the colours reflect places within the borough, the purpose to embed this programme in the unique environment of Halton.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Culture 26 supports delivery of the Council's Crucible of Culture Strategy.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 £200k funding to support Halton's Borough of Culture year will be received from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, £100k in 2025 and a further £100k in 2026.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**
It is imperative access to culture is open to all; Culture HQ and the current temporary library have proven accessible footfall locations enable diverse access to amenities and activities. The borough of culture focusses on grass roots delivery and accessibility.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**
Part of the programme will include an Eco Fest, an opportunity for the Council to share and promote green initiatives and the Climate Action Plan via cultural activity and for organisations within the borough to celebrate the work and message of a greener future.

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**
Culture 26 is the perfect project for valuing and appreciating Halton and our community. Made In Halton will be the message all the way through. There will be an opportunity to revisit past projects to Artworks created will be with a view to raising aspiration 'See it, to be it' and spreading a civic pride and a 'Love Halton' message.

7.0 Risk Analysis

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

7.2 A lack of resources in Halton will hinder the boroughs opportunity to build on the positive work programme and ensure a share of resources are utilised in the Borough.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Halton's cultural offer is accessible to all.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None to report.

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

10.1 Executive Board April 2023.

THE CRUCIBLE OF CULTURE

THE CULTURAL VISION FOR HALTON

2023-2030

HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

OUR CULTURE COMMITMENT

Halton Borough Council is committed to ensuring that our borough is a place in which culture thrives and is nurtured. As a local authority, Halton will be the enabling force for the transformative change which the Crucible of Culture is founded upon.

Our commitment is highlighted throughout this Vision; here we put our names to that commitment. The Crucible of Culture will grow ever brighter as a result of this support for our borough's cultural and creative sector.

Contents

Foreword

When asked to write this foreword, I was reminded that writing is in itself an act of cultural engagement. The novel on the bedside table, the reference books on the library shelves, the diary we keep; all these are cultural touchstones, moments when humans interact with their own thoughts and those of others.

Culture is a difficult word to pin down. As a word, it can be where you are from, your beliefs, how you live your life. Here, it means the creative activity which engages you, which delights you, which makes your heart sing, or which – for a fortunate few – is what you do for a living.

Those who work in culture know its power. They know how a well-timed line in a pantomime can cause an audience to double over in laughter. They know how a song lyric about unrequited love can resonate with the listener's own experiences. That a musician playing a riff can induce instinctive toe-tapping. That an object or image from the past can help bring understanding to the present. That an artwork can provide hundreds of years of pleasure hanging on a wall of the homes of countless families. That a TV series can capture the attention of millions around the globe. In Halton, culture is all these things and more. It is your local theatre, your local museum, your community venue, your library, your child's school, your local pub's live music slot… and many more.

I know that culture, creativity and heritage are important to all those who call Halton home and to those who visit our borough. This vision sets out Halton Borough Council's ambitions for the borough's cultural sector: as a local authority, we will work productively with cultural partners, funders and communities to deliver ambitious, innovative and dynamic creative activity with a strong link to Halton's past, present and future.

We find ourselves in a period of economic uncertainty, with a cost of living crisis and the continued impact of Covid. Culture was a constant companion for many through the pandemic, and remains a source of the 'feel good' moments in life for us all, boosting mental and physical wellbeing, bringing people together and providing escapism from the realities of our current circumstances.

Despite these challenges, the period ahead brings bold and dynamic opportunities. A new library, an extension to the Borough's theatre and development for local creative industries and organisations. In 2024, Halton will celebrate its 50th anniversary, whilst 2026 sees the return of Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture to Halton.

I look forward to seeing this vision evolve, and to the delivery of a diverse portfolio of cultural activity that engages residents and visitors, and cements Halton as the crucible of culture. Our shared ambition is for Halton to step out of their doors and be met by world-class culture.

Cllr Paul Nolan
Executive Board Member - Employment, Learning & Skills, Community & Culture

2024

Halton will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

2026

The return of Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture to Halton.

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Context

2021 brought the Liverpool City Region's Borough of Culture to Halton. Much-awaited, this was Halton's moment to bring the region's cultural focus to this borough.

This borough has always been culturally alive. It's a place which acts as a crucible of culture, a nod to the borough's industrial roots, bringing together creative people, ideas, ambitions and dreams in response to a rich seam of heritage, creativity and sheer dynamism.

There is recognition that culture is a transformative power, providing change for the better and opportunities for improvements in health, education and the economy. Halton is stronger with culture, and a stronger cultural sector has the ability to unlock the full cultural and creative potential of this proud and vibrant place.

This Vision has been informed by the consultation and resulting cultural strategy report, undertaken by Art Reach in 2022. The report was commissioned as Halton's response to the Borough of Culture successes and the desire by the local authority to build a legacy for the Borough of Culture year and to ensure Halton is a place in which cultural thrives and is championed.

The Crucible of Culture

The Cultural Vision for Halton Borough is accompanied by an Action Plan, which sets out the pathway for future cultural development and growth across the borough.

Halton comprises of the two towns of Runcorn and Widnes, surrounded by smaller communities, each with their own identity. These communities include the civic parishes of Daresbury, Hale, Halebank, Moore, Preston Brook and Sandymoor. Since 2014, the unitary authority of Halton has been part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

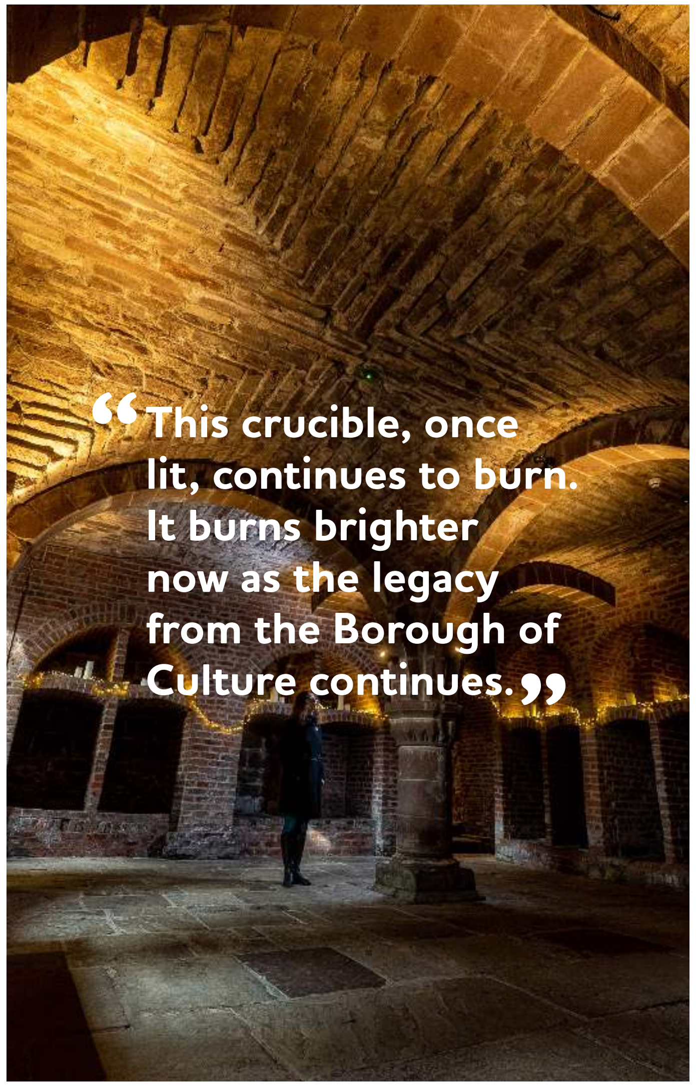
Whilst the global pandemic tempered the aspirations which the Borough of Culture brought, it did not alter the desire for change. A change in how culture is perceived and in where it sits. Culture HQ, based in one of the borough's key shopping centres, provided a literal shop window for culture, breaking down barriers and taking cultural excellence into the high street: quite simply, connecting everyday people with a cultural touchpoint during moments of everyday interactions.

Culture HQ provided residents with a magical Mr. Benn moment; an opportunity to step into the world of culture, feeling immersed and engaged with the experience and being empowered to feel part of that world. It's an everyday experience which should become the norm. Culture on the street corner. Culture created in Halton, by Halton's own, the product of our own crucible of culture.

This crucible, once lit, continues to burn. It burns brighter now as the legacy from the Borough of Culture continues.

This crucible of culture forms the bright centre of this Vision. We invite you to join Halton's journey to ensure that bright centre burns ever brighter as we reposition culture as a powerful force for positive change, personal growth and wellbeing, and economic success.

The Crucible of Culture forms the bright centre of this vision.



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Our Vision

Halton is a crucible of culture, at a point of change. In this borough, run through by the mighty Mersey, culture thrives. The guardians of culture are venues, partner organisations and regular festivals and celebrations which populate this diverse and innovative borough. People value culture, engage with culture and, through culture, celebrate the richness of Haltonian ambition.

Heritage has forged the borough and the stories borne from the shared history of residents, past, present and future, continue to shape and influence creative outputs. Our history continues to shape our lives and is reflected throughout the cultural landscape.

Through our cultural aspirations, ignited by the Liverpool City Region's Borough of Culture in 2021, we can improve health and wellbeing, build sustainability into the economy and champion the 'feel good' moments. This is Halton's land, this is the story of proud communities looking for a more positive, more vibrant and more diverse future.

The Vision reflects the sense of strong community, heritage, self-starting creativity and collaborative working that exists in Halton. The combination of these factors forms the foundation from which to realise the full cultural potential of Halton. More than a neighbouring borough of the City of Liverpool, Halton has huge potential to become a cultural destination in its own right.
The Borough of Culture showed what was possible. It demonstrated what could be achieved. Even against the backdrop of a global pandemic, culture shone through as an undimmable light in Halton.

This vision for culture capitalises on that, it defines and promotes new and existing strategic partnerships, and in so doing increases the likelihood of securing larger amounts of funding, such as from Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Culture can be analogue, for example, the word on the page, the object in a museum case, the performance on the stage. It can also be digital, such as an augmented reality installation, a virtual museum, or a heritage Facebook page. Whatever its form, it is always about people: social connections and opportunities, sharing and (lifelong) learning, better understanding about us and our place in the world.

Set against an industrial past, Halton is a collection of proud and dynamic communities, studded with cultural excellence and bold creative aspirations. The cultural canvas of the borough reveals theatre, music, heritage, visual arts and performing arts. It brings together professionals, amateurs, volunteers and audiences to create a rich seam of opportunity and talent. These are the elements which when freed to achieve their potential will combine to create something new. Something bright. Something magical. Something Halton. This is our commitment, as a local authority, to connect organisations at all levels, to help forge new partnerships and to champion culture at every opportunity. This is our crucible. These are our people. Halton's culture is for everybody. We invite people from across the sector and beyond to join us on a journey which will take us to the next Borough of Culture in 2026 and onto 2030, when the Vision will be reviewed.

We will work to enable our cultural sector to become a shining light in this crucible of change, which will draw in new audiences and build on the strong foundations which already exist in the borough. We have identified four priorities, the Elements of Culture, which when combined will create new programmes of activity and opportunities for our children and young people, right through to our most experienced residents.

"Even against the backdrop of a global pandemic, culture shone through as an undimmable light in Halton Borough."

Our Vision is to establish Halton as the crucible of culture, bringing together elements of excellence to create a new, vibrant cultural economy, improving health and wellbeing for residents and visitors alike, whilst building a strong economic platform and creative opportunities for all.

Introducing the 4 Elements of Culture

These elements have been established through consultation with Halton's Cultural Sector and together provide the basis for a new way of working between Halton Borough Council and those organisations, be they professional, amateur, or volunteer-led, which form the bedrock of the Borough's vibrant cultural sector.

LEADERSHIP

The First Element

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

COMMUNICATION

The Second Element

Communication: To increase awareness of cultural opportunities and activities in Halton, both with residents and with visitors. Halton has an active cultural sector, the vibrancy and impact of which can only be enhanced through heightened public awareness.

DIVERSITY

The Third Element

Diversity: To ensure programming speaks to the widest possible audience, providing a voice and a creative space for everyone, whilst raising aspiration and providing talent and skill development opportunities for all ages.

DYNAMISM

The Fourth Element

Dynamism: To enable aspiration, ambition and creative excellence to flourish across the Borough, through supporting bold and energetic programming at a Borough-wide level, showcasing creative confidence at the heart of the crucible of culture.

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FUNDING: THE AGENT OF CHANGE

These 4 elements are not complete on their own. Alongside the 4 Elements of Culture sits Funding, the Agent of Change.

Funding: The 4 Elements of Culture require a unifying factor to bond them together and bring about change. That bond is provided by Funding. For change to happen in Halton's Crucible of Culture, funding is necessary… it is the 'agent of change', and the Four Elements are the enabling forces that will support the unlocking of external funding to deliver the ambition outlined in this Vision.

LEADERSHIP

The First Element of Culture

This Vision establishes Halton Borough Council as the enabler of cultural change in the borough. The value of culture and of the borough's active and successful cultural sector is recognised and championed at the highest levels, by both the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. Together, these two roles will work to raise awareness of the power of culture to improve both mental and physical wellbeing and to grow Halton's economic sector, bringing in more jobs and more opportunities. Two posts will sit alongside existing Council departments to directly engage with the Cultural Sector. These are an Events post and a Cultural Officer post. Together, these roles will support the sector in delivery of key annual events and festivals and in forging deeper connections, both within and outside the sector. The Cultural Officer role will also provide a bridge between the sector and external funding bodies to maximise

the flow of cultural Investment into the Borough. Leadership also resides within the sector itself, through Cultivate and Halton Heritage Partnership (HHP). Cultivate comprises of a number of professional-led organisations and includes Council representation, whilst HHP represents over 20 volunteer-led heritage organisations.

Through strong leadership, culture will thrive, providing everybody, across the borough and beyond, with the opportunity to enjoy world-class cultural activities which have been forged in Halton, the Crucible of Culture.

Our Leadership Commitment

1

To be advocates for Halton's Cultural Sector at all levels and to embed culture in the council as a part of statutory services, including Education, Economic Development and Health.

2

To ensure Halton has a voice both within and outside of the region and with key funding bodies.

3

To support and champion leadership from within the cultural sector, with the council acting in a facilitatory capacity, enabling Halton's cultural sector to be self-sufficient, through providing quality venues and facilities,alongside strong cultural connections.

COMMUNICATION

The Second Element of Culture

Communication is central to the success of this Vision. With increasing levels of cultural activity across the borough, comes a call to raise awareness of, and engagement levels in, creative opportunities for all.

Within this element is a recognition that communication is not only about levels of engagement as audiences, but also as participants. Halton is alive with opportunities for creatives to produce and curate work, be they professionals or amateurs, younger or more senior. But it runs deeper than that. Awareness of opportunities for skills development, to give something back, to be socially – and culturally – connected are all part of the canvas which communication must cover. Our vibrant cultural sector relies on volunteers to bring added value, to share passions for art and heritage and to be actively involved in the vibrancy of the Haltonian cultural landscape.

Here, communication means raising awareness of opportunities for engagement in cultural and creative opportunities at every level, a call to action for us all, for everyone, everywhere to hear the clarion call and to be part of the crucible of culture as individual elements: a part of the whole, a part of Halton's creative picture. Working with Cultivate and HHP, Halton Borough Council will ensure that culture in Halton is visible as never before. That people know how, where and when they can be involved, and that audiences for cultural activities grow. Those same audiences will be encouraged to be 'Culture Champions' sharing experiences with friends and families in person and through their own social media accounts using the #CrucibleOfCulture and #HaltonHighlights tags to unite their stories and experiences.

Our Communication Commitment

1

To establish recognised 'go to' places for cultural activities across Halton, uniting people with opportunities to be engaged and to capitalise on visitor economy programmes of work, including Visit Halton.

2

To promote opportunities for volunteering to enhance and grow the cultural sector, whilst also ensuring the amateur sector is included in the conversation.

3

To encourage our residents and visitors to be active engagers and 'Culture Champions', using their own social media accounts and our dedicated hashtags to champion the cultural activities they have engaged with and enjoyed.


MAPEX
3-5th Se


CELEBRATE
Music
HALTON
September 2021

DIVERSITY

The Third Element of Culture

The bold vison outlined here is for everyone, everywhere to access culture. It's about sharing Halton's creative capital with residents, but also welcoming people into our Borough to share our artistic ambition and our Halton highlights. We all need a stage, a place to create, a platform from which to share. From the everyday sharing of stories over a pint in the pub, to watching a world-class performance in the theatre, each of us has a moment when we shine. We become our own crucibles of culture, adding bright spots and moments of inspiration to Halton's creative canvas. We are also each different. The cultural activities we enjoy are varied. The places we come from are different. Our needs as individuals flex and change over time. This individual and collective diversity matters. We represent different genders, abilities, age groups, ethnicities, sexual preferences and religious beliefs. We may rely on technology to improve our vision or hearing, we may use wheelchairs or have 'unseen' differences, such as being autistic. Our differences should unite us as humans. We are all the same.

The crucible of culture in Halton reflects this. Through accessible performances and exhibitions, and equality of opportunity for all creatives, we will build a fully inclusive cultural canvas which reflects the diversity of us as individuals. Our programme will be rich and varied, from small intimate experiences to stadium-filling concerts, and from community co-created installations to internationally recognised performances, our culture will speak for everyone. Our approach will ensure equity of treatment for all.

The power of culture to support mental and physical wellbeing is recognised, via social prescribing, combatting social isolation, enjoying shared experiences, creating artwork, giving something back as a volunteer, or learning and developing new skills. Culture does all these things: our vision ensures this contribution is recognised and championed.

We will champion opportunities for skill and talent development, reaching out to children and young people to provide experiences and opportunities in their own communities: our talent will be home-grown, nurtured through the crucible of culture. Our Vision will ensure programming speaks to the widest possible audience, providing a voice and a creative space for everyone, whilst raising aspiration and providing talent and skill development

Our Diversity Commitment

1

To actively support a cultural canvas which is inclusive in content, form and messaging. In the crucible of culture everyone is welcome to play a part, either on the stage, in the wings or in the audience. Halton's culture is for everyone, now and always.

2

To listen to the needs of our cultural sector partners and organisations and ensure cultural interventions are a central part of the borough's strategy for improved health and wellbeing for all residents.

3

To work with our educators, at all levels, to ensure access is readily available for children and young people throughout their development, from Early Years sessions in libraries to opportunities to perform and showcase work and talent, developing integrated lifelong learning through cultural endeavours.

DYNAMISM

The Fourth Element of Culture

Our vision is bold, dynamic and innovative. The programming that the crucible of culture inspires will be energetic and will showcase the creative confidence which runs through the sector. Our cultural canvas is varied, with a network of venues and spaces in which to create, to perform, to animate.

We know Halton's creative sector is up to the challenge and is keen to be part of a step change in the role culture plays in the Borough. Through Cultivate and HHP members, combined with Liverpool City Region programmes and Halton Borough Council's own strategic direction, we will ensure culture is at the centre of Halton's success. In the crucible of culture, we will provide the spark to start the change. We will support the growth of the sector through external funding opportunities, through conversations at regional and national levels and we will share the ambitions of the cultural

sector. Creative platforms within Halton will be opened up, bringing vibrancy to the sector and supporting health and wellbeing outcomes through those touched by the programme.

Through nurturing creative excellence, the cultural sector will build sustainability, becoming a 'go to place' for those seeking quality experiences. Those seekers of experience will, in turn, support a vibrant cultural economy, helping grow businesses and attract new investment into the borough.
Building quality 'doorstep' cultural and creative opportunities for residents creates a desirable place to live and a place to set up new businesses and attract new workforces. Our ambition is that no one in Halton should be more than 10 minutes from a cultural event or experience. Together with the sector, we will celebrate accidental interactions with culture, alongside those long-awaited, venue-filling performances. Our audiences will be on the edge of their seats as they lose themselves in the creative products of Halton's crucible of culture.

Our Dynamism Commitment

1

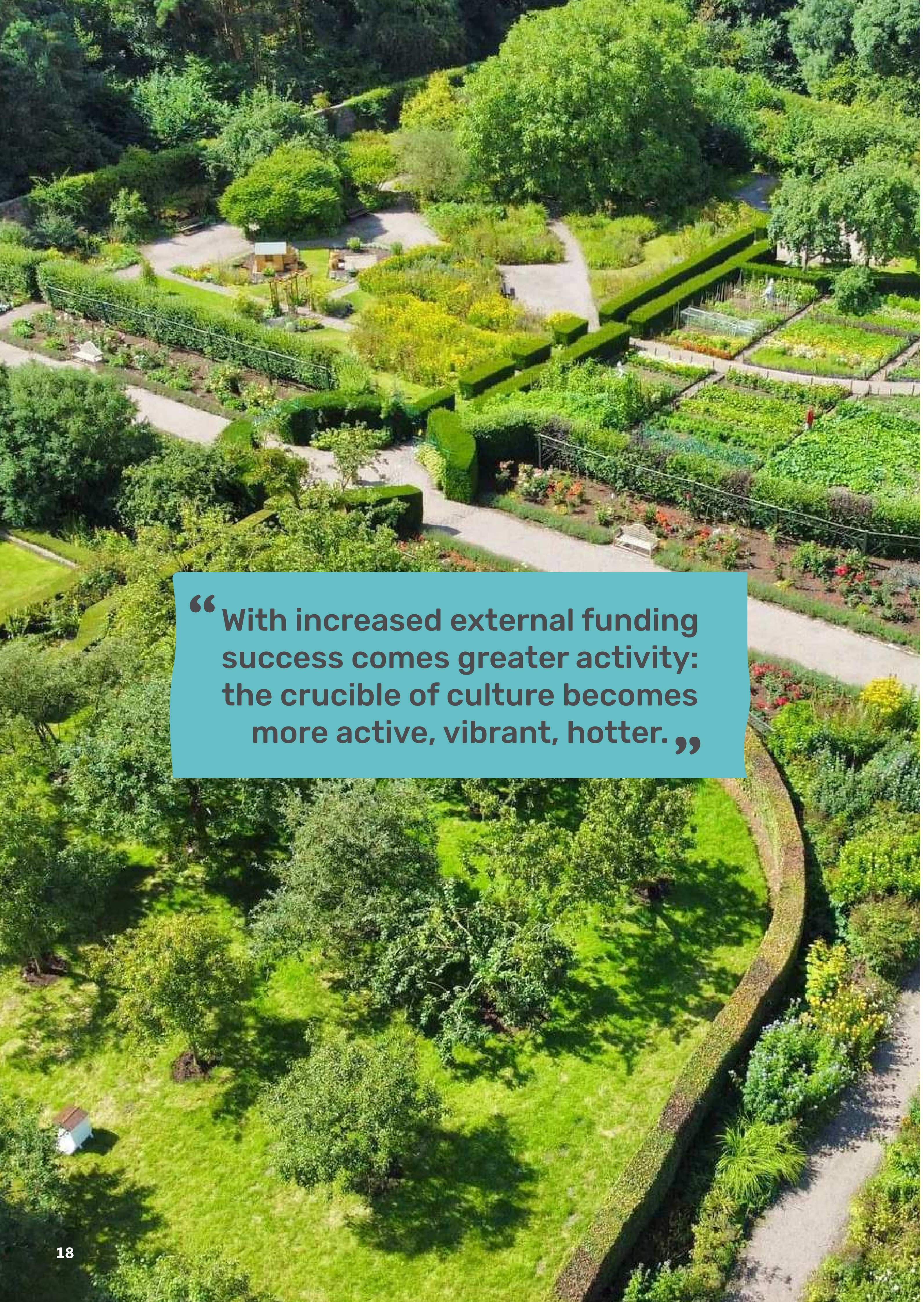
To commit to ongoing consultation with the cultural sector and to work together to unlock new opportunities.

2

To support the sector to unlock external funding to continue to increase quality creative output which delivers the step-change the sector is so keen to achieve.

3

To ensure the crucible of culture is at the centre of wider strategic planning, usinginnovative creative interventions to capitalise on the 'soft power' of culture to grow the economy and support mental and physical wellbeing.



> “With increased external funding success comes greater activity: the crucible of culture becomes more active, vibrant, hotter.”

FUNDING

The Agent of Change

In the crucible of culture, an enabling force is needed to spark or trigger the reaction between the elements. That 'agent of change' is funding. The cultural sector needs funding to be sustainable and resilient. Funding can come from two main sources: trading income and non-trading income. Trading income is that which is earnt, whilst non-trading income comprises grants, sponsorship and donations.

Non-trading income can be used to build resilience and to grow trading income. For many cultural practitioners, trading income comes from fees and / or ticket sales. Halton's cultural sector has in the past received lower levels of non-trading income from external funding bodies than the national average.
The borough has enjoyed success in grant applications headed by Halton Borough Council, and using the Four Elements of Culture, the success rate of applications from cultural organisations in the borough will increase.

Those organisations will grow in confidence and ambition, as the demand grows from residents and visitors to the borough alike. With more activity taking place, in more spaces and more frequently, the desire for quality creative installations and performances will grow. With increased external funding success comes greater activity: the crucible of culture becomes more active, vibrant, hotter. As the critical mass of culture grows, so do opportunities for increased inward investment.

Key external funding partners within the cultural arena include Art Fund, Arts Council England (ACE), Clore Duffield Foundation, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Foyle Foundation, National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Theatres Trust.

Our Funding Commitment

1

Halton Borough Council's Programmes Office and Community Development Team will work with local organisations, including at grass root level, to facilitate and secure funding to allow cultural growth across the borough to be nurtured.

2

A dedicated officer will lead on Halton's Visitor Economy, ensuring that culture andcultural activity is a key driver within the visitor economy.

3

The Council will engage with key funding bodies, sharing the Crucible of Culture and its aspirations and raising awareness of the need for cultural investment within Halton to realise this ambition.

What Next?

With a stronger and increasingly vibrant cultural sector comes new opportunities, attracting inward investment and developing the visitor economy. In this place, forged of industry and canal-crossed, emerges a new industry of creative innovation and excellence. Born of the crucible of culture, this new-found drive and determination will enhance and enrich the borough. As cultural sector sustainability grows, so too will that of the wider economy. Culturally richer and financially richer.

The council will work to ensure that money being spent on regeneration and facilities improvements are coordinated through a Culture Group headed by Cultivate and its representatives. The council will have a role within the Culture Group and will forge a new way of working between the council, private sector and third sector organisations, establishing a cultural partnership delivery model. A new Culture Officer post will be recruited to by the council, underlining local authority commitment to this Vision and cementing Halton's place as the crucible of culture. Alongside this, a cultural action plan has been developed, the delivery of which will be central to the translation from cultural ambition on the page, to cultural reality in Halton's communities. The action plan, which sits alongside this Vision, will be a live document, adapting to community aspiration and need and working in tandem with the priorities of the Vision and will be a published document.

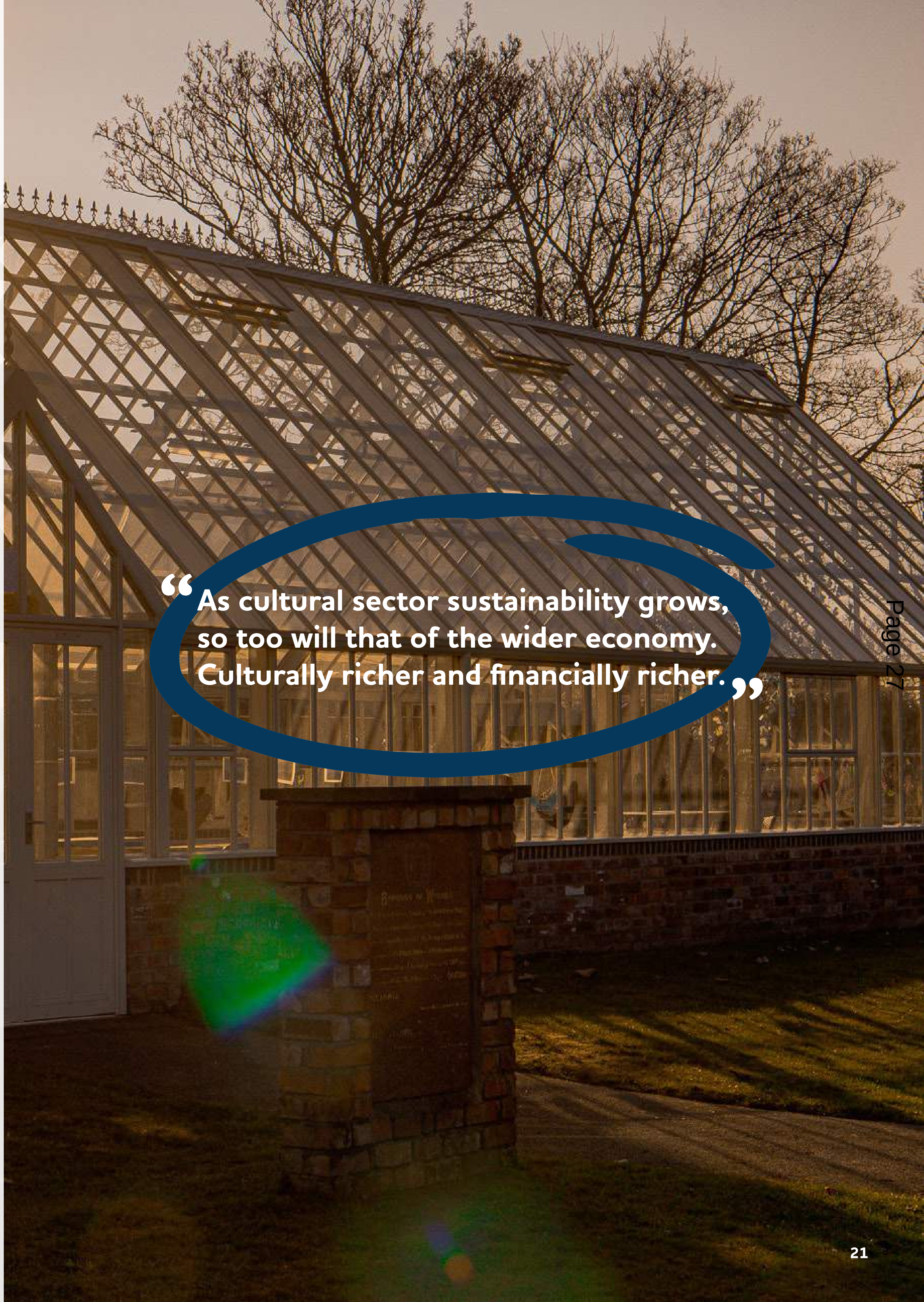
Halton's aspirations include growing the number of National Portfolio Organisations in the borough and looking to other Arts Council England programmes, such as Creative People and Places to deliver the necessary step change to the borough's cultural programming. As part of the Let's Create vision identified by Arts Council England, the crucible of culture is well-placed to capitalise on delivery of bold, innovative and dynamic content.

In finding places for cultural work to exist, the concept of spaces or 'community crucibles' emerges. As culture becomes a transformative force in the borough, Halton Borough Council will become a facilitator, or cultural broker, between arts groups and organisations and those who hold the keys to underused spaces, be they commercial or community spaces. There is a clear need for the establishment of exhibition and performance spaces, but also for start-up spaces and meeting spaces for groups, especially those from the voluntary and amateur sectors.

As a new cultural sector grows in the centre of old Runcorn, bringing theatre, library and creative partner organisations closer together, plans for a cultural quarter in Widnes will be considered. Using the stoic Victorian architecture of the old Town Hall, the Kingsway buildings and St Paul's Church as physical markers, this area has huge potential as a cultural quarter, and a twin to the development planned in Runcorn.

Halton's children and young people represent the future of the borough. Through digital media, their connections with culture sit in their hands in a way previous generations could only have dreamt of. For them, providing real world experiences, 'hands-on' rather than 'hand-held', are key. Young people need physical stages, exhibition and performance spaces, volunteer and skills development opportunities and a voice to shape what happens in their own communities.

Working with education providers at all levels, from Early Years through to college level, this will be a clear priority: the crucible of culture starts in the formulative years and becomes a lifelong engagement.



Acknowledgements

There is more information about Halton's cultural DNA at visithalton.co.uk, the Visit Halton website. To be part of our ambition and find out more about the Crucible of Culture, visit cultivatehalton.co.uk, to discover the organisations which together form part of Halton's cultural forum, Cultivate.

To share your own experiences and photographs of Halton's cultural highlights as 'Culture Champions' on social media platforms, please use our hashtags #CrucibleOfCulture and #HaltonHighlights.

The Crucible of Culture: The Cultural Vision for Halton has been authored for Halton Borough Council, by Rob Sanderson-Thomas, Chief Executive of Norton Priory Museum and Gardens, in conjunction with representatives of Halton's cultural sector and Halton Borough Council colleagues. The vision is owned by Halton Council. However, it is the culmination of consultations and workshops with the cultural sector, facilitated by Art Reach. The full document 'Halton Cultural Strategy Consulatation Results' is available on the websites.

Accountability

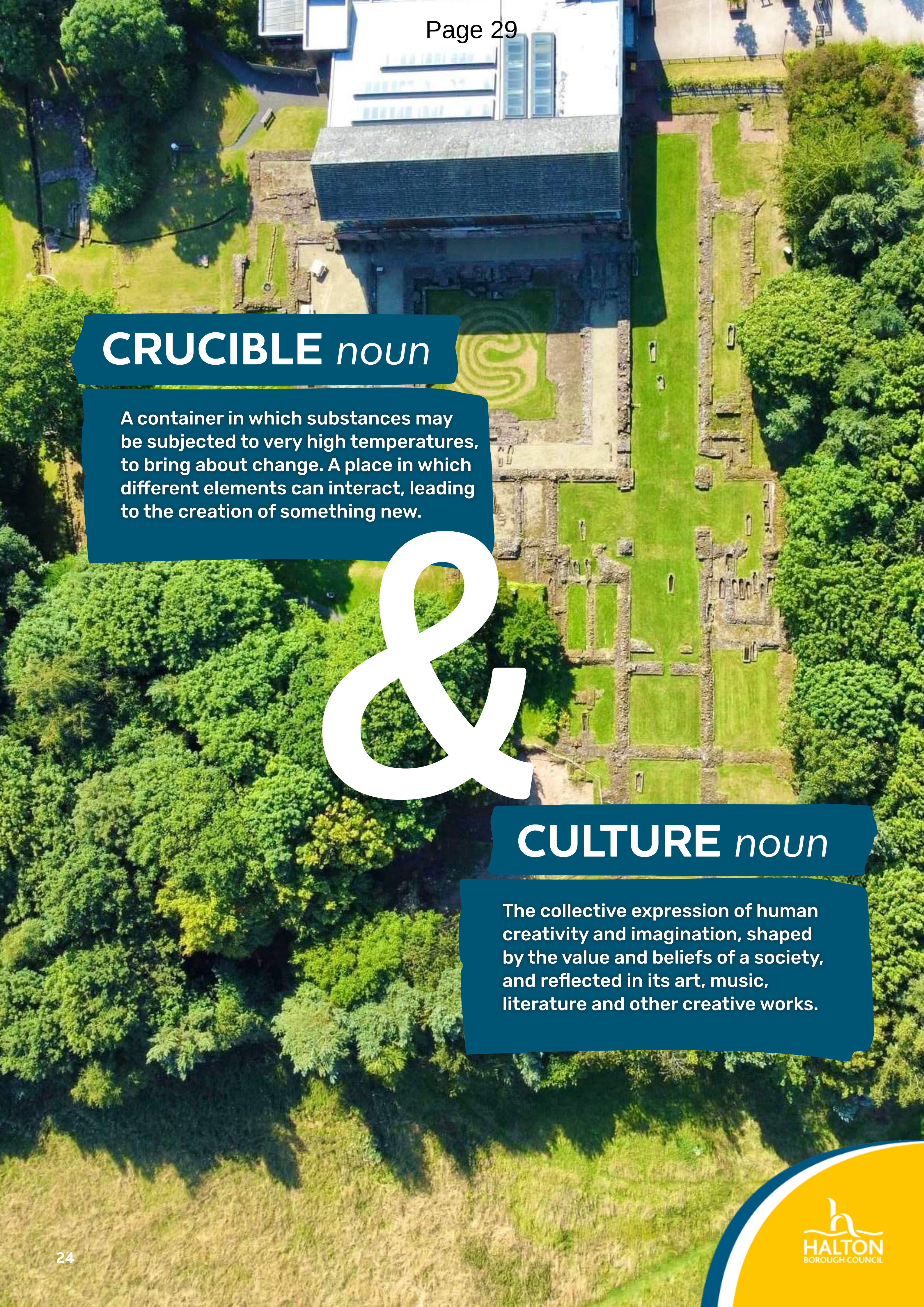
The success of the vision relies on a transformation in the way in which culture is both perceived and delivered in the borough. This vision establishes culture as an enabler of positive change. Halton Borough Council will provide the impetus for this change, working with an already engaged and active sector.

The crucible of culture relies on the Four Elements of Culture being supported and adopted by all who are invested in this vision. When the Four Elements are brought together, the opportunities to secure meaningful levels of funding (the Agent of Change) increase greatly.

Accountability to deliver on this ambition sits firstly with Halton Borough Council, as owner of the vision and the driver of the aspirations laid out within this document. This is a partnership delivery model, so that accountability will also be carried by organisations such as Cultivate and HHP.

Halton Borough Council's intention to facilitate and drive cultural change and growth is underlined by its commitments, as defined here in The Crucible of Culture: The Cultural Vision for Halton, which includes investment in a new Cultural Officer post and the ownership of the Borough's cultural Action Plan. The local authority also has a key enabling role to play in the realisation of the Agent of Change, Funding, for the Borough's vibrant and dynamic cultural sector.

In the wider cultural landscape of the borough, that accountability, that drive for excellence, dynamism and creativity also sits with the organisations which together form the crucible of culture, the venues, the organisations, the volunteer and amateur groups, the participants and the audiences. Groups and organisations are encouraged to use the Vision to support grant funding applications.



CRUCIBLE *noun*

A container in which substances may be subjected to very high temperatures, to bring about change. A place in which different elements can interact, leading to the creation of something new.

&

CULTURE *noun*

The collective expression of human creativity and imagination, shaped by the value and beliefs of a society, and reflected in its art, music, literature and other creative works.

REPORT TO:	Local Economy Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	17 November 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment Learning, Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Halton Library Service Review - Service update including Runcorn library relocation.
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update on the Library service including: the relocation of Runcorn Library, acquisition of an electric vehicle and amendment to opening hours.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

1) Members receive a presentation on the Library Service.

2) Members note the report and endorse the Library Service approach.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In March this year, the Library service reported responses to public consultation which demonstrated changes in Library user's needs and identified ways to best deliver a service that is responsive, whilst ensuring service consistency and continuing to meet the Council's statutory duty in a climate of reduced resources.

3.2 The Library service consultation (appendix 1), posed questions around changes to opening hours with responses demonstrating:

- 94% of survey responders use Halton Libraries.
- 57% agree with the proposed opening hours.

3.3 A full consultation dashboard was developed:-
https://my.visme.co/view/x40jq4jd-library-opening-hours#s1

3.4 Amendments to opening hours, to reflect the responses and the data on footfall (appendix 2) are being progressed for implementation from January 2026 across the Libraries four static sites.

3.5 The revised hours, provide consistency in Library site opening hours and supports the transition of Runcorn Library into its permanent location, at the Brindley in Spring 2026, the service will offer an evening opening along with extended library access via self-service stations.

3.6 In April 2025, Runcorn Library relocated from Granville Street to its temporary site in Church Street; the move preserved Library relations with the Old Town community.

3.7 The highly visible location has experienced increased footfall and curiosity with local residents presenting key opportunities to engage and promote the Brindley extension, a core pillar of Reconnecting Runcorn regeneration.

3.8 The temporary site has enabled engagement and community conversation on the future expansive Library plans and provided a space for Culture 2026 visuals and promotion.

3.9 The permanent library relocation is planned for Spring 2026, on completion of the extension programme. The enhanced Library will not only provide a site that is bigger in size but also vaster in its offers and ability to best serve the communities of Runcorn and further afield, as it becomes a desirable co-location space with community and culture at its core.

3.10 The acquisition of an electric library vehicle and part time courier, to help significantly expand the library service's outreach offer and provide new and enhanced services to a wider sector of the community, is near completion with the van acquired and branded, and courier recruitment commenced. The alterations to the 'Home Library' delivery service model are scheduled for implementation in early 2026, with a significant increase in demand forecast.

3.11 Opening hours across the four sites to be implemented are as set out in the consultation document detailed in appendix one.

3.12 **Service Efficiency**
The evolving Library service delivery model simultaneously grows and expands the reach and access to the Library service throughout the borough whilst ensuring an efficient use of resources.

3.13 The overall financial position is the proposals presented in March, provide a saving in year one of £49,599.97. With reduced costs in subsequent years of £91,599.97 less the £2,666 increased outreach costs, a net position of £88,933.87 savings per annum.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 require the Council to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library service for all those who live, work or study and want to access the service in the borough.

4.2 Consultations with the Department for Culture Media and Sport have and continue to take place regarding any changes to Library opening hours.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 A cost saving analysis has been completed working with the Council's Finance service to determine cost savings of the recommendations:

Cost savings of proposals per year		
Initiate proposed more consistent opening hours	25.6 % of total savings	£37,917.10
Closing Runcorn and Ditton on Saturdays (commenced Summer 25)	16.1 % of total savings	£23,766.61
Amend late nights to 6pm from 7pm	20.3 % of total savings	£29,916.26
Total:		**£91,599.97**

Estimated costs of vehicle acquisition.	
Purchase cost of vehicle	£39,000
Custom livery and branding	£3,000
Total Capital Outlay:	**£42,000**
Estimated annual running costs of vehicle.	
Annual vehicle maintenance costs	£2,000
Part-time courier at HBC3* 18.5 hrs p/w. *subject to evaluation	£ 15,996
Total:	**£17,996**
RMU costs per annum, to be deducted from total above (not required if own vehicle and courier in library service)	-£15,330
Total annual cost difference: £17,996-£15,330	**£2,666**

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

Halton library service has consulted on the proposed amendment to opening hours and received a high response rate of 718 consultations completed, with 57% of respondents in favour of the proposals.

See *Appendix* 1 for: Main findings from the Councils, Research and Data team of analysis of the consultation.

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

A Library offer directly impacts residents wellbeing with connectivity to assets and services and supporting learning, leisure and research.

Delivering an outreach Library service directly to individuals in their homes promotes independence, supporting positive mental health. The Library service offers dementia boxes and a variety of other reading and support materials.

The Home Library Service caters to carers, individuals with mobility challenges, those facing illness, and those with caregiving responsibilities.

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

Enhancing residents' skills and development through signposting, IT support, online resources and specialist book stock. Fostering stronger partnerships and collaborative relationships with local businesses, charities and organisations.

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

The Library service provides high-quality services to children, young people, to enhance children's literacy levels, empowering children to achieve their full potential. The service works with Family Hubs and local stakeholders to support and strengthen this delivery.

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

The Library service provides accessible advice, information, and services to support individuals in Halton's community facing the greatest need. Offering resources, guidance, and assistance to those dealing with poverty, inequality, and vulnerability.

The Library service acknowledges and strives to meet the diverse needs of the local community.

Providing an enhanced digital inclusion by offering access to essential tools and fostering the development of skills and confidence necessary for success. Empowering individuals to improve their digital abilities and connect to the internet.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**
Using an electric vehicle and improving inefficient delivery routes, will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality contributing to the Council's ambitions set out in the Climate Action Plan.

The proposed changes to Halton Libraries opening hours will reduce energy and utility consumption in Library buildings.

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**
Halton Library Service is a vital resource for Halton's community, offering access to books, educational opportunities, cultural activities, as well as information, events, and various opportunities for all members of the community.

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 The risk of not implementing these proposals is continuing inconsistent service provision across the Library sites and a limited outreach provision lacking future adaptability for the service.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 A thorough Equality Impact statement and Needs Assessment was completed, reports can be accessed here: -

Equality Impact statement – Appendix 3
Halton Libraries Needs Assessment – Appendix 4

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Halton Library service is committed to supporting climate change.

Pledging to be a part of the Green Libraries Campaign, which is a UK-wide, cross-sector programme focused on the contribution of Librarians, information and knowledge professionals to the sustainability agenda. With the aim to encourage Libraries to actively reduce their carbon footprint and increase awareness of environmental issues for the wider public by providing accessible resources of which Halton library service endorses, provides and highlights regularly with focused stock collections, our e-resources and on our social media channels and at focused events such as information stands, and partnership work.

9.2 The Green Libraries Partnership was developed in response to COP26 and the long-term climate commitments made by local authorities across England with the aim to place Libraries at the heart of environmental change and enable Libraries to build environmental action within their communities.

9.3 The Library service has acquired an electric vehicle to replace the existing non-electric vehicle that is used for all Library deliveries. Also reducing the amount of carbon pollution generated by the needs of the Library service along with the proposed opening hours resulting in lower energy and utility consumption by the buildings.

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

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

Appendix 1 - Public consultation survey including proposed opening hours and results analysis.

Halton Library Service Consultation

How people use our libraries is changing. We need to consider how best to provide a library service that responds to the changing library user needs, that continues to meet our statutory duty and is mindful of reduced resources.

A review of Halton Borough Council's library service may result in budget savings for the council while still keeping all four of the borough's libraries open. The council must make significant efficiencies over the next 3-year period. This means the council will have to make tough budgetary decisions around the delivery of services.

However, the council is clear that it does not want to close libraries and is considering making some changes which would help make libraries more sustainable and cost effective. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 requires the council to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all those who live, work or study and want to access the service in the Borough.

We are looking at the services offered by our libraries and how they work, to see if there are ways to reduce costs while providing a comprehensive and efficient service for our users.

We are now consulting on our library service opening hours to provide a more consistent offer across the library sites. Information, along with data on local needs will be used as the basis for a review by the council.

Cllr Nolan (Executive Board Member Employment, Learning and Skills and Communities) said:

"I'm proud to have libraries within my portfolio, they offer a great service to our users, from libraries within our communities to the Home Library Service. I'm very supportive of the library service and everything it offers. As with all council services, the library service has to ensure it can continue to meet the needs of the community and provide best value for money.

The consultation is important to ensure that any decisions are informed by the views of the community. All responses to the consultation will be analysed and no decisions will be taken until after all the findings have been considered."

We want to hear your views on the proposals and also any alternatives to be more efficient.

The consultation takes the form of a short questionnaire which will be available in all four Halton libraries, Direct Links, community centres, the library service and the council's websites and will be circulated as widely as possible.

The consultation opens on 27th August and closes on 8th October 2024. If you require any further information, please contact hlelib@halton.gov.uk

Proposed Opening Hours Information

Ditton Library, Queens Avenue, Widnes:
changes to Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

Existing Hours	Proposed Hours
Monday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Tuesday 10-6pm	10-5pm
Wednesday closed	closed
Thursday 9.30-5pm	10-5pm
Friday 10-2pm	10-2pm
Saturday 10-2.30pm	closed

Runcorn Library, Granville Street, Runcorn:
changes to Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

Existing Hours	Proposed Hours
Monday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Tuesday 10-6pm	10-5pm
Wednesday closed	closed
Thursday 9.30-5pm	10-6pm
Friday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Saturday 10-2.30pm	closed

Halton Lea Library, Runcorn Shopping City, Runcorn:
changes to Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

Existing Hours	Proposed Hours
Monday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Tuesday 9-5.30pm	10-5pm
Wednesday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Thursday 9-5.30pm	10-5pm
Friday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Saturday 10-2.30pm	10-2pm

Widnes Library, Victoria Square, Widnes:
changes to Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

Existing Hours	Proposed Hours
Monday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Tuesday 9-7pm	10-6pm
Wednesday 10-5	10-5pm
Thursday 9-7pm	10-5pm
Friday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Saturday 10-2.30pm	10-2pm

How you use Halton Libraries

1. **Do you use Halton Libraries? Please select ONE answer**

☐ Yes **(Please go to Q3)** ☐ No **(Please go to Q2)**

2. **If you do NOT use Halton Libraries please tell us why in the box below**

If you do NOT use Halton Libraries please go to q6

3. **Which Halton Libraries do you use? Please select all that apply**

☐ Ditton Library ☐ Runcorn Library ☐ Halton Lea Library ☐ Widnes Library

4. **What times of the day do you use the library? Please select all that apply**

☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening ☐ Weekend

5. **Why do you use the library? Please tell us in the box below**

6. **Do you agree with the proposed opening times?** **Please select ONE answer**

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. **If we made the proposed changes to the opening hours how would this impact you?** **Please tell us in the box below**

8. **What improvements or changes, if any, would you like to see in Halton Library Service?** **Please tell us in the box below**

Halton Library Service Budget

The Library Service budget for 2024/25 is £2,180,740. This equates to £16.91 per person, per year based on the current Halton population.

9. **What are your thoughts on this?** **Please tell us in the box below**

Further Ideas to Reduce Cost

10. **Do you have any suggestions for how Halton Library Service can make cost savings? Please tell us in the box below**

Further Comments

11. **If you have any further comments about Halton Library Service please tell us in the box below**

Thank you for completing.
Please hand in at the venue you received the questionnaire or return to any one of Halton's libraries.

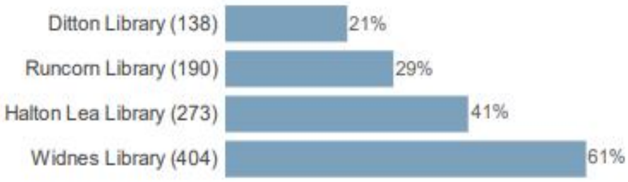
Data Protection
The information you are entering will be held processed hosted on a web platform with https://www.snapsurveys.com/.
Further information on snapsurveys please visit https://www.snapsurveys.com/gdpr/gdpr-snap-xmp/
For information on the Halton Library Service privacy notice please visit https://library.haltonbc.info/policies/

Halton Libraries Consultation

Number of responses: 718

Do you use Halton Libraries? Please select ONE answer

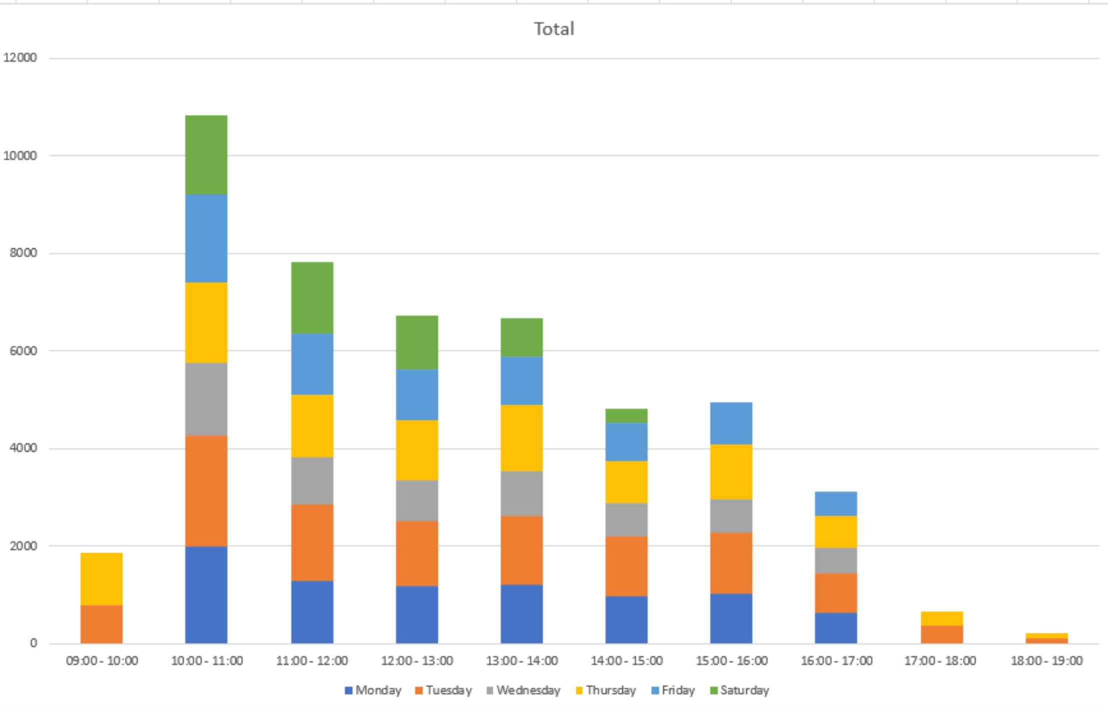
Which Halton Libraries do you use? Please select all that apply



What times of the day do you use the library? Please select all that apply

Do you agree with the proposed opening times? Please select ONE answer

Appendix 2: Footfall data charts showing hourly, total Library service footfall during current opening hours.



Total

Day	09:00 - 10:00	10:00 - 11:00	11:00 - 12:00	12:00 - 13:00	13:00 - 14:00	14:00 - 15:00	15:00 - 16:00	16:00 - 17:00	17:00 - 18:00	18:00 - 19:00	Total
Monday	0	1983	1288	1194	1205	976	1034	624	0	0	**8304**
Tuesday	789	2287	1565	1331	1425	1220	1258	823	362	101	**11161**
Wednesday	0	1490	976	830	912	695	682	522	0	0	**6107**
Thursday	1086	1654	1279	1235	1343	868	1123	663	293	104	**9648**
Friday	0	1799	1244	1043	1011	775	858	487	0	0	**7217**
Saturday	0	1612	1466	1099	780	280	0	0	0	0	**5237**
Total	**1875**	**10825**	**7818**	**6732**	**6676**	**4814**	**4955**	**3119**	**655**	**205**	**47674**

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Equality and Diversity UK Ltd

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Template

The Equality Act 2010 has outlined Protected Characteristics as covering: **Race, Disability, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender reassignment, Maternity and Pregnancy and Age**.

Protected Groups refers to people who share a protected characteristic. The General Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

Undertaking an EIA helps organisations comply with the General Equality Duty as it involves proactively considering the three aims of the Duty as part of the decision making process.

This involves considering how organisations act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policy; how they design, deliver, and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure services from others.

Policy/Procedure/Function Details

Name of Policy/Procedure/Function*	
Halton Library Service Consultation 2024 on consistent library opening hours.	
EIA Carried out by:	Sally McDonald - Head of Leisure Services Andrew Lucas – Communities Services Manager Joanne Stevens – Library Services Manager Lorna Hulme – Development Officer-Digital
Date:	20.08.2024
Equality and Diversity Coordinator: (QA)	
Date:	
Head of Department:	Sally McDonald – Head of Leisure Services S McDonald
Date:	20.08.2024
Date Passed to Governance Services Unit:	

*In this template the term 'policy' is used as shorthand for what needs to be equality impact assessed. Policy needs to be understood broadly to embrace the full range of policies, practices, activities and decisions: essentially everything we do, whether it is formally written down or whether it is informal custom and practice. This includes existing policies and any new policies under development.

Section 1 – Initial EIA - to be completed for all policies

A.	What is the purpose of this policy. Consider explicit and implicit aims	The overall aim is to continue to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service within a reduced budget.
B.	Does the policy have an impact on staff or the wider community that the organisation has links with? **Please give details**	Halton residents, community groups, schools, businesses, visitors and other agencies.
C	What results/outcomes are intended? How are these measured? What factors could contribute or detract from the outcome?	HBC internal audit have a rolling programme which audits all services. The service collects postcodes and therefore can identify which disadvantaged communities are accessing the library service. Halton Libraries will continue to provide a variety of channels for customers to inform us of their comments or suggestions regarding any aspect of the service, including any implemented changes. These comments are retained and shared with the Library Service Manager. Monitoring of information requests in other formats due to a language or disability barrier.
D	Is there is any evidence that the policy relates to an area with known inequalities? **Please give details**	A 12 week exercise was conducted in 2023, in conjunction with Halton Council's Transformation Delivery Unit, at all four library sites to understand

				footfall usage in respect of our current opening hours. There is a neutral impact on each of the equality groups.
E	Will/Does the implementation of the policy result in different impacts for protected groups and the general population of the organisation?			
		Yes	No	Explain your reasons
	Disability		X	All services of the library will be accessible to all.
	Sexual Orientation		X	All services of the library will be accessible to all.
	Sex		X	All services of the library will be accessible to all.
	Gender Reassignment		X	All services of the library will be accessible to all.
	Race		X	All services of the library will be accessible to all.
	Marriage/Civil Partnership		X	All services of the library will be accessible to all.
	Maternity/Pregnancy		X	All services of the library will be accessible to all.
	Age		X	All services of the library will be accessible to all.
	Religion or Belief		X	All services of the library will be accessible to all.
	Others groups identified: i.e. socio economic status; neurodiversity etc		X	All services of the library will be accessible to all.
	If you have answered 'Yes' to any of the questions, then you are required to carry out a full Equality Impact Assessment – please go to section 2			

Section 1: Result of initial Equality Impact Assessment

The above-named policy has been considered and does not require a full equality analysis	
Initial EIA Carried out by:	Sally McDonald – Head of Leisure Services  Andrew Lucas – Communities Services Manager Joanne Stevens – Library Services Manager Lorna Hulme – Development Officer - Digital
Date:	20.08.2024
Agreed by: Equality and Diversity Coordinator: (QA)	
Date:	20.08.2024

Section 2 – Full Equality Impact Assessment

1a. Does the policy impact differently on people from any of the Protected Groups?				
	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	**Please describe the impact for each of the protected groups and outline the evidence for your conclusion**
Disability				
Sexual Orientation				
Sex				
Gender Reassignment				
Race				
Marriage and Civil Partnership				
Maternity/ Pregnancy				
Age				
Religion or Belief				
Socio economic status				
Other impacted groups i.e., neurodiversity				

General Duty

1b. Now consider and detail below how the policy impacts on elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advances the equality of opportunity and promotes good relations between groups. Where there is evidence, address each protected characteristic (Disability, Sexual Orientation, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Marriage/Civil Partnership, Maternity/Pregnancy, age, Religion and Belief)	
Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation	
Advance equality of opportunity	
Promote good relations between groups	

2. Engagement and Involvement

How have you engaged stakeholders in gathering evidence?	
Have you engaged stakeholders in consulting on the policy proposals?	
For each engagement activity, please state who was involved, how and when they were engaged, and the key concerns/issues identified.	

3. Action Plan

The following action plan should be completed if the EIA exercise has identified that additional steps need to be taken to address adverse outcomes for particular protected groups, maximise positive impact or to collect additional evidence to inform the EIA.

Action	**Target Date for Completion**	**Person Responsible**	**Outcome**

4. Making a decision

An EIA has been undertaken on this policy and meets the requirements of the General Equality Duty. The following decision has been taken: (please tick one box)		
	Approve – No major change	Your analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust, and the evidence shows no potential for discrimination and that you have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.
	Adjust the policy	This involves taking steps to remove barriers or to better advance equality. It can mean introducing measures to mitigate the potential effect. This should be done before the policy is implemented. Where this cannot happen the action plan must outline
	Continue with the policy	This means adopting your proposals, despite any adverse effect or missed opportunities to advance equality, provided you have satisfied yourself that it does not unlawfully discriminate. In cases where you believe discrimination is not unlawful because it is objectively justified, it is particularly important that you record what the objective justification is for continuing the policy, and how you reached this
	Stop and remove the policy	decision. If there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you will want to consider stopping the policy altogether. If a policy shows unlawful discrimination it ***must*** be removed or changed.

5. Sign off and review:

When the actions listed above have been completed a copy of this form should be sent to Equality and Diversity Coordinator.

Full EIA Carried out by:	
Date:	
Equality and Diversity Coordinator: (QA)	
Date:	
Manager:	
Date:	
Date Passed to Governors/Directors:	

Review Date

Unless the policy is reviewed before the date below, the next EIA will be carried out in ……………………………………………………………………………………….

(A maximum of 3 years from date of completion as shown on this template)

Halton Libraries Needs Assessment – 2024

Authors : Joanne Stevens, Library Service Manager and Lorna Hulme, Digital Development Officer

Contents

1. Summary

A needs assessment has been undertaken to inform the future direction of library provision in Halton and the need to continue to provide a service that is compliant with statutory obligations, is focused on the needs of the community and relevant demographic groups, and is delivered within the budget available.

The needs assessment evidences the status of library service provision for Halton residents, highlighting how it is currently meeting its statutory duty. It also identifies where further improvements or changes may be proposed or required to ensure the library service is relevant, sustainable and fit for the future. It is recognised that the future of libraries is changing and transformation to meet the needs of current and future users, needs to be considered whilst being mindful of reduced resources.

A comprehensive proposal report, on proposed future library service opening hours and adjustments will be presented to Halton Borough Council Members at an Executive Board meeting, following on from a 6-week public consultation period from 27th August 2024 – 8th October 2024 and will include an Equality Impact Assessment, Needs Assessment report and report analysis dashboard from the public consultation surveys.

Transformation options for libraries to aim to ensure the following design principles, identified to develop library services, are met:

- meet legal requirements
- are shaped by local needs
- focus on public benefit and deliver a high-quality user experience
- make decisions informed by evidence
- support delivery of consistent England-wide core offers
- promote partnership working, innovation and enterprise
- use public funds effectively and efficiently

2. Introduction and Strategic Vision for Halton library service

Halton Borough Council is responsible for overseeing the delivery of a comprehensive and efficient library service reflecting the changing needs of local communities.

Halton libraries developed a library strategy detailing the service vision and strategy for the service from 2023 – 2028.

This 18 page insightful, 'Libraries Strategy' document can be viewed here: HBC Library strategy 2023 to 2028.pdf.pdf

Halton libraries Vision:

An energetic library service, inspiring learning, embracing change and contributing to a thriving, diverse Halton.

The focus of the vision is as follows:

- **Energetic library service** – maximising space and expanding service offers.
- **Inspiring learning** – for all.
- **Embracing change** – Implementing new technology, expanding social media and developing partnerships.
- **Contributing to a thriving, diverse Halton** – developing income streams, support to asylum seekers and refugee residents, developing local history collection.
- **Green Pledge** – adopting CILIP's (The library and information association) Green Libraries manifesto, considering Halton libraries impact on the environment.

Requirements of statutory library service change

Previous judicial challenges to transformation decisions of other local authorities indicate that significant changes to an authority's Library Service delivery model must be made in the context of a strategic review that is in turn informed by a needs assessment. It is considered that only through the strategic review and needs assessment process, can an authority demonstrate that any proposal to fundamentally change the service delivery model would continue to secure the delivery of a comprehensive and efficient service.

The needs assessment sets out the current Library Service provision and service offer and considers how well it is reaching its resident population. The needs assessment is based on desk top research. All aspects of the Council's statutory public library service are within scope of this needs assessment.

The needs assessment derives its findings from a body of evidence that includes:

• Demographic profiles (age and socio-economic) of library active users and library catchment populations.

• Indicators of deprivation levels in library catchment populations sourced using Office for National Statistics (IMD) data.

• Distances and travel times between each library service point

• Patterns of library activity sourced from the Library Management System, computer booking system and locally collected library data.

Ambition for Libraries (Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) , whilst providing guidance, does not provide a simple formula for defining a library service. The report states that a comprehensive and efficient service should consider:

• accessibility (physical, virtual and outreach)

• quality (mapped to local needs)

• availability (including opening hours)

• sustainability (including value for money)

3. National context

In 2016, the national Libraries Taskforce published Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-202. (Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021 - GOV.UK) In which it sets out the strategic vision and commitment to public libraries in England. It recognised the challenging times that councils are facing in running Library Services and calls for radical thinking to protect frontline library services, acknowledging the need for councils to work in 'new and different ways' to 'thrive and not just survive'.

The Library Taskforce described libraries as vital community hubs - bringing people together and giving them access to the services and support they need to help them live better. The report sets out an ambition for individuals to:

• choose to use libraries, because they see clear benefits and positive outcomes from doing so.

• understand what library services offer, and how they can make the most of what's available to them.

• be introduced to new ideas and opportunities, then given confidence and quick and easy access to tools, skills and information they need to improve their quality of life.

• receive trusted guidance through the evolving information landscape and build the skills needed to thrive in a changing world.

Libraries Connected and partners including The Arts Council and The Reading Agency state that they are committed to keeping library services relevant and accessible.

The new Universal Library Offers cover:

- Culture and creativity
- Health and wellbeing
- Information and digital
- Reading

To deliver these ambitions, councils are encouraged to use seven common design principles to develop their library services which are as follows:

• meet legal requirements

• shaped by local needs

• focus on public benefit and deliver a high-quality user experience

• make decisions informed by evidence, building on success

• support delivery of consistent England-wide core offers

• promote partnership working, innovation and enterprise

• use public funds effectively and efficiently

Equalities Duties

Local Authorities have a duty when planning and delivering services to give due regard under the Equality Act 2010 to consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all, and which meet different people's needs.

4. Current service provision and service offer

Halton libraries' aim is to provide an energetic, diverse service with an inclusive offer across all of our communities.

Halton library service is currently delivered through four public libraries and as an outreach service across the Borough, this includes the Community Library Service our bespoke offer to care and residential homes, and the Home Library Service, to provide services to those unable to access our buildings.

Current provision:

Halton libraries:

- Runcorn – Halton Lea Library and Runcorn Library
- Widnes – Ditton Library and Widnes Library

Home Library Service – a borough wide service for residents unable to access a local library.

Online services – a range of online services including the lending of e-Books and e-audio books.

The service is an early adopter of new technologies including open source software solutions, embracing innovation to improve customer experiences and financial efficiency.

The library service is a key resource for our community, providing access to books, learning opportunities, cultural activity, and information. The buildings are important meeting spaces which offer a welcoming, neutral environment and host a range of events and opportunities for the whole community.

The table below signifies Halton libraries offer to National Libraries Taskforce outcomes, and indicates potential customer impacts associated with each offer.

DCMS National Libraries Taskforce Outcomes	**Halton Council Vision**	**Library Service Offer**	**Customer Impacts**
Improved Reading and Literacy	Supporting families. Investing in Early Years, education and youth provision. Continue to remove barriers to education and employment.	Reading and Literacy General and specialist book collections. Targeted literacy programmes including Read Now Write Now. Reading Groups for adults Rhymetimes in all libraries Book start packs. Reading and literacy events. Summer Reading Challenge each Summer	Improved literacy skills. More confident reading Speech and language development. Positive parent/child engagement A love of reading
Healthier and Happier Lives	Improving health, promoting wellbeing and supporting greater independence.	Safe and welcoming spaces. Specialist book formats including Dyslexia Friendly. Self-help book collections.	Reduced social isolation Safe spaces for meetings Increased social interaction

		Reading Friends Wellbeing Wednesday and other groups for social connections. Digital support to reduce digital exclusion. Programme of events for children.	More positive outlook and increased self esteem
Improved Digital Access & Literacy	Digital inclusion for all where everyone has the tools, skills and confidence to thrive in the digital era. Help people access the Internet and improve their digital skills so everyone can benefit from its uses.	Public PCs at no charge. Code clubs Digital library services: eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines Free wifi in all libraries IT Clinics in all libraries Digital Champions – trained staff Tablet lending to Home Library Service users Digital heritage offer including genealogy sessions. Signposting to formal digital support.	Improved digital skills Reduced digital exclusion Engaged with technology Greater confidence to access information and support services online. More confident
Greater Prosperity	Strengthen families and communities and provide on-going support to people who are likely to experience poverty, inequality and vulnerability.	Signposting to Adult Learning courses Access to business resources Volunteer and work experience opportunities for young people.	More likely to gain employment More likely to increase qualifications, skills and knowledge More likely to volunteer.

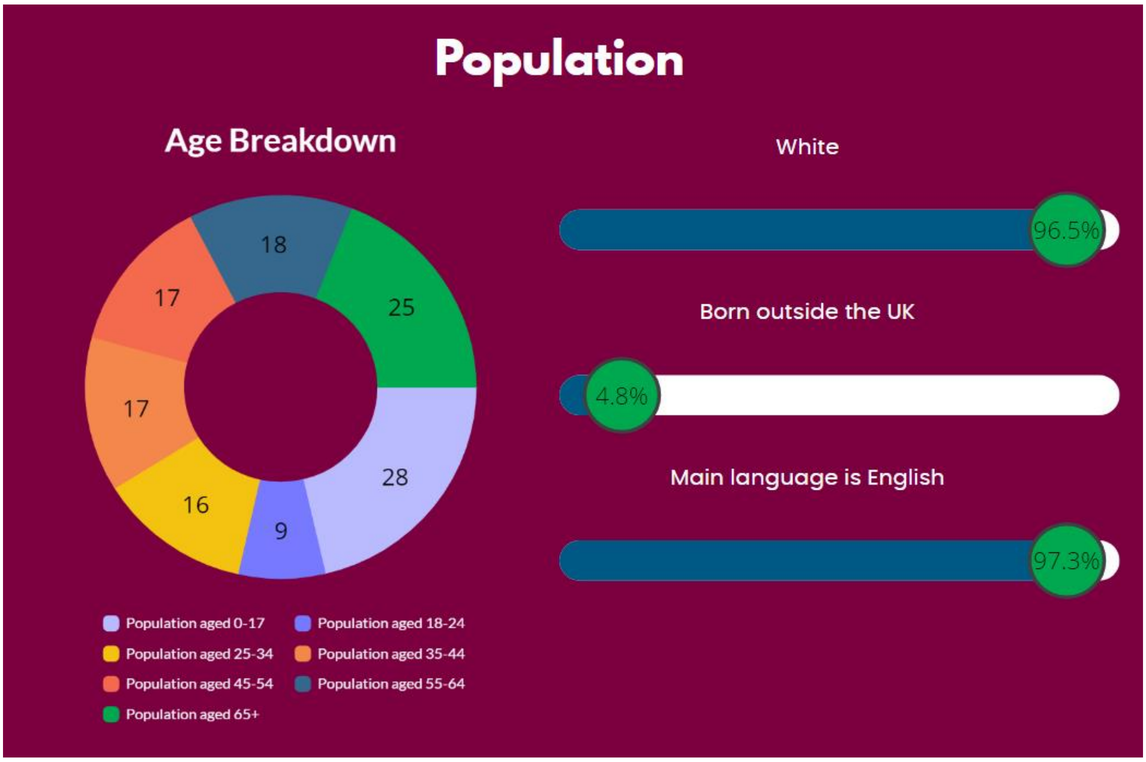
	Deepen Halton's talent pool by developing, upskilling and reskilling residents.		
Cultural and Creative Enrichment	Build upon our cultural strategy which ensures Halton is s a place where culture and creativity thrives. More events and activities for the whole community to appreciate and enjoy. Supported by a new Halton Leisure Centre, alongside improved access and facilities at the Brindley Theatre.	Art/photography exhibition space in 2 libraries. Creative writing courses Author talks Events including theatre company performances	Greater connection with local community activities Improved confidence and skills A more diverse outlook with greater knowledge of the wider community, and cultures
People achieve their full potential and stronger, more resilient communities	Encourage healthy lifestyles for the people of Halton throughout their lives. Offer easily accessible and integrated health care, advice and services from birth. Seek to break the cycle of dependence on services, promoting independence in Halton. Encouraging the creation of youth groups and invest in youth services.	Children's literacy schemes e.g. Summer Reading Challenge. Digital Skills support with You Can Do IT weekly sessions. In to employment support group. Regular information stands from variety of support services including Kooth Youth support for mental health.	Increased digital and literacy skills. Increased likelihood of employment or progression to training course. Increased social interactions. Better mental health.

5. **Data Analysis**

Halton Borough Council was created in 1974, and became a unitary authority in 1998, with the two largest settlements of Widnes and Runcorn facing each other across the River Mersey. The borough benefits from excellent connectivity and transport infrastructure. There are good road and rail connections to London (less than 2 hours by train) and Birmingham via West coast mainline. Similarly there is good proximity and access to airports at Liverpool and Manchester and to the Merseyside seaports.

Halton became a part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in 2014. This is one of the few City Regions to have secured a Devolution Agreement with the Government, meaning decision making and resources around key priorities are managed locally.

- Halton population is 128,964
- 1,624 population per square kilometre
- 30% are living in high deprivation areas

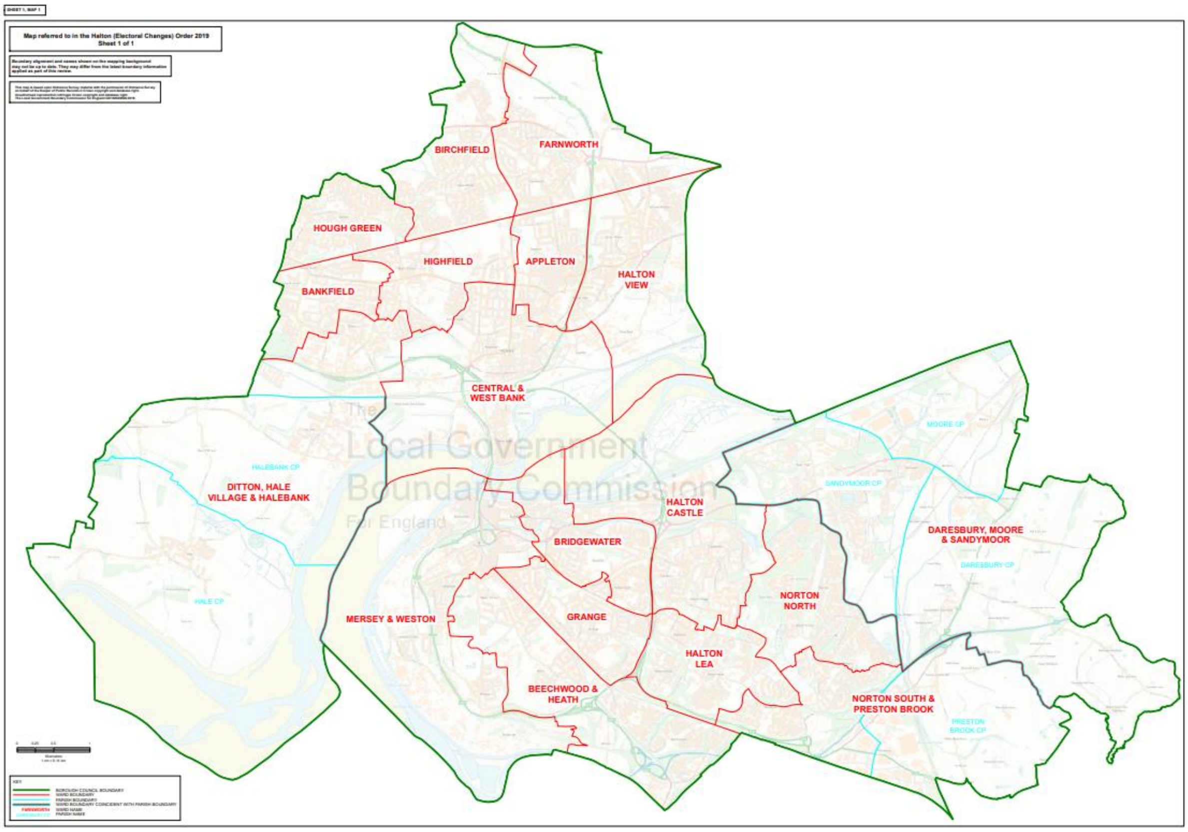


Halton Population Age Breakdown

0-17 years	21.4%
18-24 years	7.2%
25-34 years	12.6%
35-44 years	16.83%

45-54 years	13.2%
55-64 years	13.6%
65+ years	19.0%

Halton Boundaries

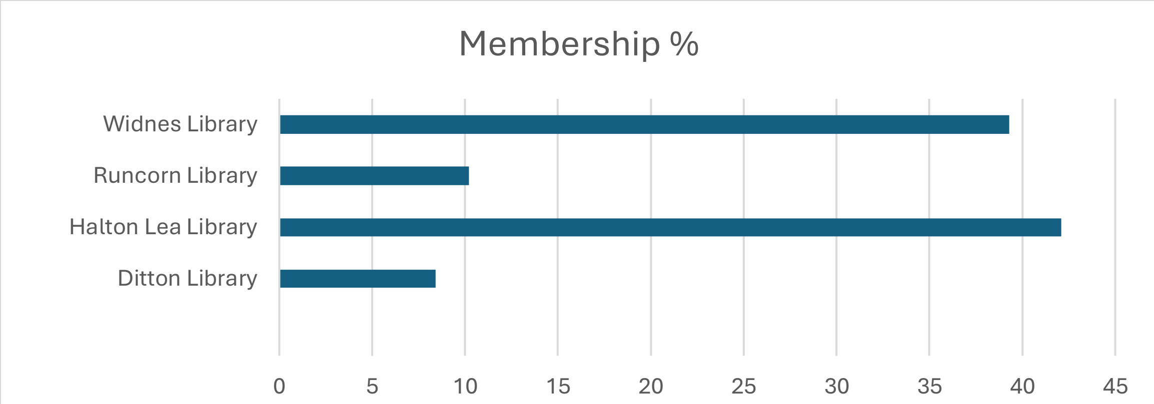


Library Membership

- Halton libraries have 79,590 members.
- Active members between 04/09/2023 and 04/09/2024 = 6,468 members.

Library Membership by branch

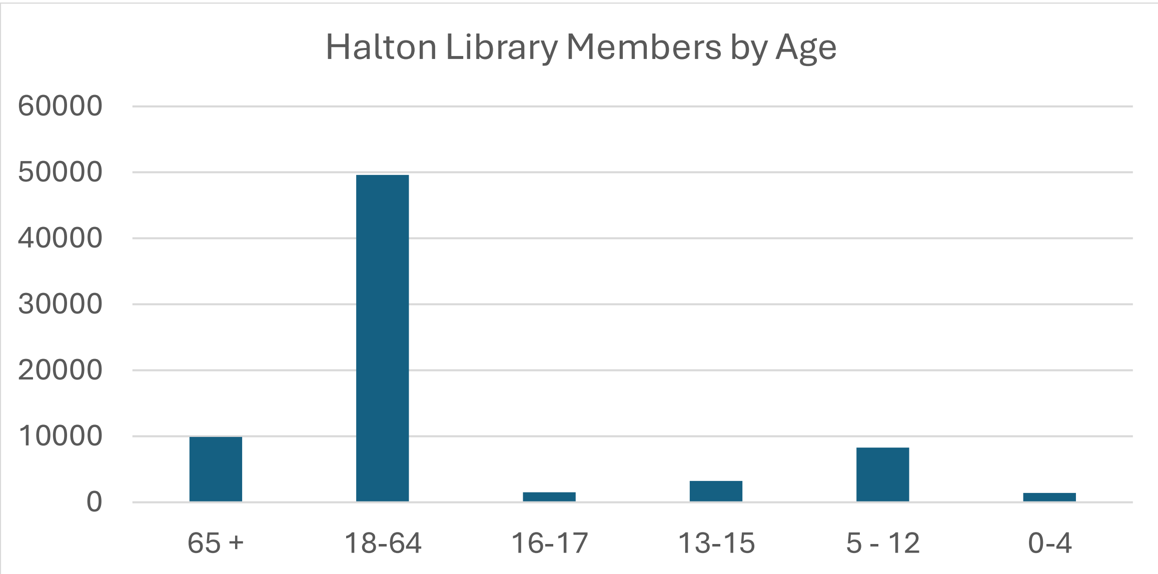
- Ditton Library 6,646
- Halton Lea Library 33,525
- Runcorn Library 8,119
- Widnes Library 31,300



	Ditton Library	Halton Lea Library	Runcorn Library	Widnes Library
Membership %	8.4	42.1	10.2	39.3

Halton Lea Library has the largest membership with 42.1%

Library Membership by Age

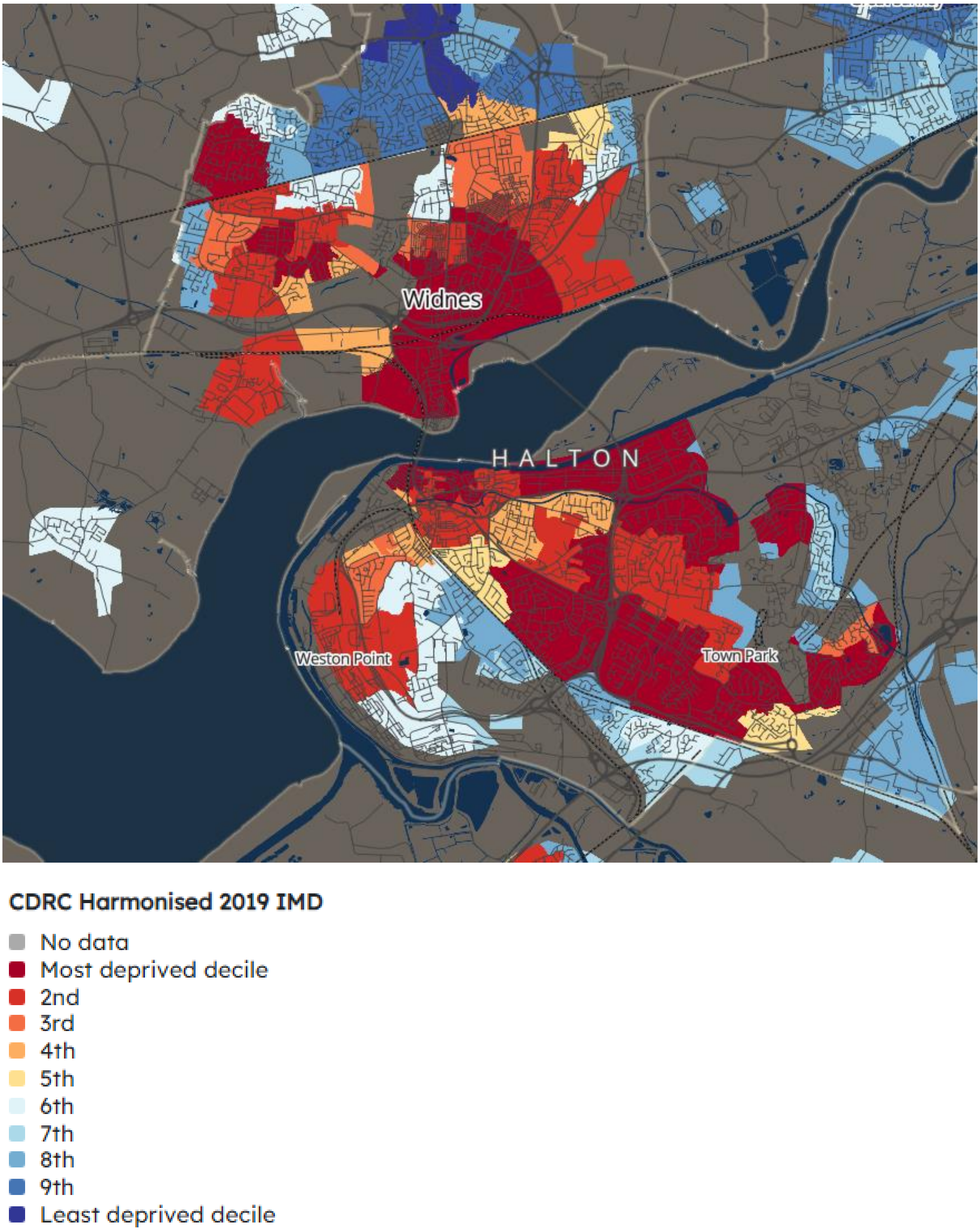


The percentage of Halton members is as follows:

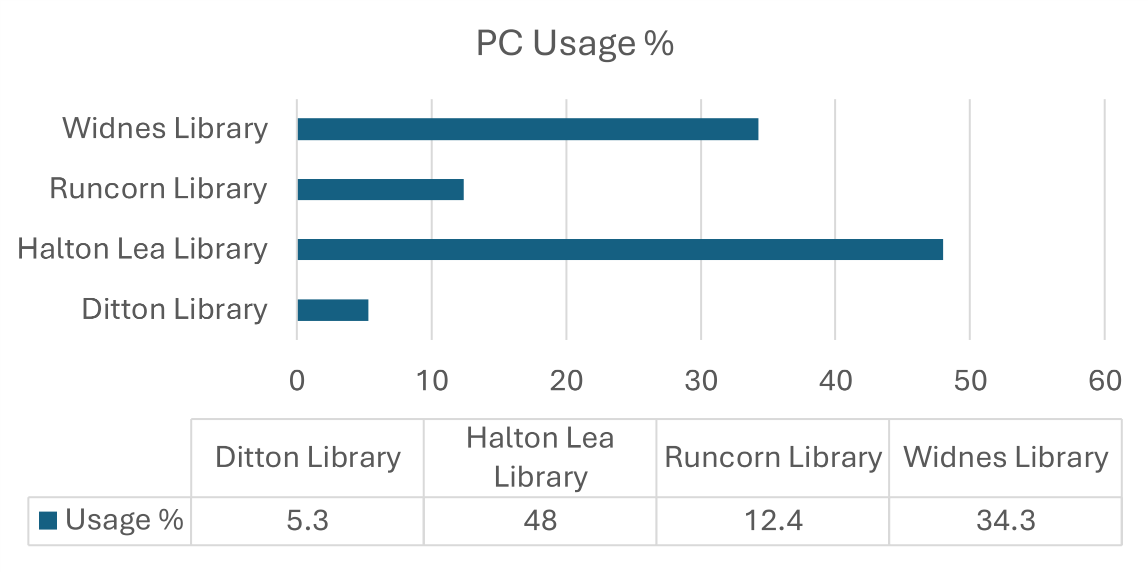
- 0-4 years -1.95%
- 5-12 years -11.15%
- 13-15 years -4.42%
- 16-17 years -2.06%
- 18 – 64 years -67.6%
- 65+ -13.3%

Deprivation

Overall, Halton is ranked the 39th most deprived local authority in England, out of 317 local authorities with all 4 of our sites located in deprivation areas.

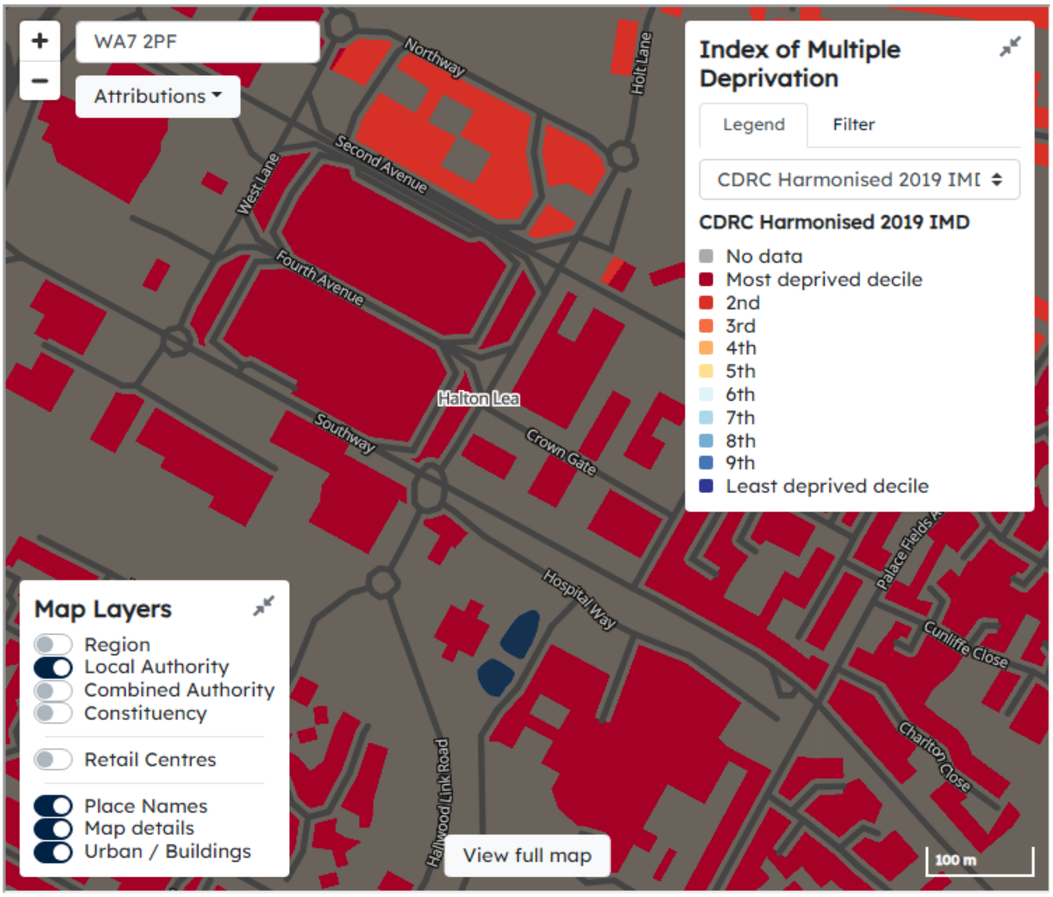


PC Use by Branch



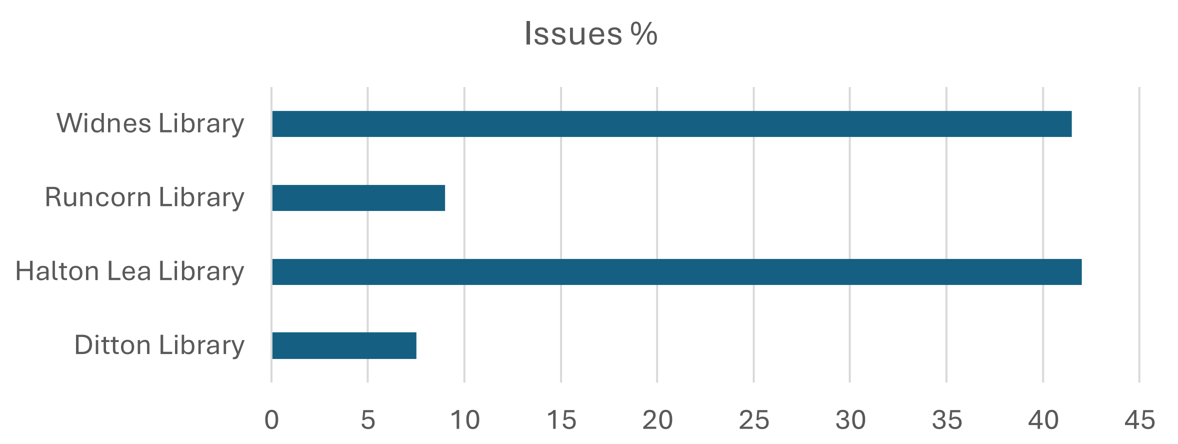
	Ditton Library	Halton Lea Library	Runcorn Library	Widnes Library
Usage %	5.3	48	12.4	34.3

Halton Lea Library (WA7 2PF) in Runcorn has the highest percentage of PC usage with 48%. (01 April 2023 – 31 March 2024). It is also in an area of high deprivation.



Widnes Library (WA8 7QT) has the second highest pc usage and is also in an area of high deprivation.

Book Issues by Branch



	Ditton Library	Halton Lea Library	Runcorn Library	Widnes Library
Issues %	7.5	42	9	41.5

Halton Lea Library has the highest number of book issues with 42% (01 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

6. Public engagement and consultation

Library Service Opening Hours Consultation

Halton library service opened a 6 week public consultation window from 27th August 2024 – 8th October 2024 and engagement was encouraged via a range of mechanisms and formats. This was promoted and distributed broadly to ensure as wide and diverse of an audience as possible was reached and in turn a good response rate was received.

A full example of the consultation which showcases all proposed changes, is included below.

Opening Hours Public Consultation

Halton Library Service Consultation

How people use our libraries is changing. We need to consider how best to provide a library service that responds to the changing library user needs, that continues to meet our statutory duty and is mindful of reduced resources.

A review of Halton Borough Council's library service may result in budget savings for the council while still keeping all four of the borough's libraries open. The council must make significant efficiencies over the next 3-year period. This means the council will have to make tough budgetary decisions around the delivery of services.

However, the council is clear that it does not want to close libraries and is considering making some changes which would help make libraries more sustainable and cost effective. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 requires the council to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all those who live, work or study and want to access the service in the Borough.

We are looking at the services offered by our libraries and how they work, to see if there are ways to reduce costs while providing a comprehensive and efficient service for our users.

We are now consulting on our library service opening hours to provide a more consistent offer across the library sites. Information, along with data on local needs will be used as the basis for a review by the council.

Cllr Nolan (Executive Board Member Employment, Learning and Skills and Communities) said:

"I'm proud to have libraries within my portfolio, they offer a great service to our users, from libraries within our communities to the Home Library Service. I'm very supportive of the library service and everything it offers. As with all council services, the library service has to ensure it can continue to meet the needs of the community and provide best value for money.

The consultation is important to ensure that any decisions are informed by the views of the community. All responses to the consultation will be analysed and no decisions will be taken until after all the findings have been considered."

We want to hear your views on the proposals and also any alternatives to be more efficient.

The consultation takes the form of a short questionnaire which will be available in all four Halton libraries, Direct Links, community centres, the library service and the council's websites and will be circulated as widely as possible.

The consultation opens on 27th August and closes on 8th October 2024. If you require any further information please contact hlelib@halton.gov.uk

Ditton Library

Existing Hours	Proposed
Monday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Tuesday 10-6pm	10-5pm
Wednesday closed	closed
Thursday 9.30-5pm	10-5pm
Friday 10-2pm	10-2pm
Saturday 10-2.30pm	closed

Runcorn Library

Existing Hours	Proposed
Monday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Tuesday 10-6pm	10-5pm
Wednesday closed	closed
Thursday 9.30-5pm	10-6pm
Friday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Saturday 10-2.30	closed

Halton Lea Library

Existing Hours	Proposed
Monday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Tuesday 9-5.30pm	10-5pm
Wednesday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Thursday 9-5.30pm	10-5pm
Friday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Saturday 10-2.30pm	10-2pm

Widnes Library

Existing Hours	Proposed
Monday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Tuesday 9-7pm	10-6pm
Wednesday 10-5	10-5pm
Thursday 9-7pm	10-5pm
Friday 10-5pm	10-5pm
Saturday 10-2.30pm	10-2pm

Question 1 - Do you use Halton Libraries? If no please tell us why.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 2 - Which library do you use the most and when? Please tell us why.

Halton Lea	☐	Morning	☐
Widnes	☐	Afternoon	☐
Runcorn	☐	Evening	☐
Ditton	☐	Weekend	☐

Question 3 – If we made these proposed changes to our opening hours how would this impact you?

Question 4 – What improvements or changes would you like to see to our library service?

Question 5 - The Library Service budget for 2024/25 is £2,180,740. This equates to £16.91 per person, per year based on the current Halton population. What are your thoughts on this?

Question 6 – Do you have any suggestions for how we can make cost savings in the library service?

Please use the box below for any further comments.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return to a member of Halton Borough Council staff.

Consultation Survey Distribution List

The consultation document was shared with the following:

Halton Libraries

Halton Libraries x 4 sites

Home Library Service users

Halton Libraries website

Halton Libraries social media channels

Halton Libraries reading group members

Groups and Organisations

Castlefields Health Centre

Halton Housing residents

Asylum seekers and Refugees through Halton Borough Council

Halton Community Centres (x 6) paper copies and social media channels

Register Office via paper copies and social media channels

Halton Direct Link (x 2, Widnes and Runcorn branches)

Riverside College

All Halton primary schools

All Halton secondary schools

All Halton special schools

Age UK

Halton College

Halton Adult Learning

Domestic Violence Groups

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer at Halton Borough Council

Halton Carers Centre and disability charities

Halton CAB

Tutors in the local authority

Mailing Lists

Community Development Mailing list

Partners In Prevention mailing list

Halton Council Health Team mailing list

Halton Borough Council all staff mailing list, including Halton Chamber of Commerce

Newsletters

Halton and St Helens Voluntary and Community Action newsletter

Halton Healthwatch monthly bulletin

Halton Libraries monthly newsletter

8 public consultation, drop in, face to face sessions were also held, across sites at differing times with the Library Service Manager.

This widespread dissemination of the consultation resulted in 718 responses being received and a report analysis was then produced by the Research Data and Insight team in Halton Borough Council and the details of such can be viewed here:

Library Opening Hours

- With the majority (57%) agreeing with the proposed opening times

The top 5 reasons for using a Halton library being identified in the consultation report as:

1. "To borrow books as there is a large choice, cheaper than buying new, can't afford to buy new, it is a sustainable approach, great range, the monthly book displays, books for hobbies and education."
2. "Bring own children, grandchildren to borrow books, school holiday events, clubs and groups - rhyme time, science club, dungeons and dragons, Lego, craft. It is free."
3. "Study /course work, ancestry / family records, journals, reference, maps, research for work, local information."
4. "For example book club, Good Yarn, Knit and Natter, IT Club, Brownies, Outreach, Home Education, Coffee Mornings, Men's Shed, run groups."
5. "To print and photocopy, do not have equipment at home."

A full breakdown of all comments and suggestions can be found here:

Microsoft Power BI

Loneliness Survey, Halton Borough Council.

In Spring 2024 Halton Borough Council conducted a survey relating to loneliness. The results were used to create a loneliness prevention strategy for Halton. They received 261 responses.

Of those who responded 37% feel they lack companionship often, 36% feel isolated from others often and 28% feel lonely often.

Halton libraries have accessed funding to employ an Activities Co-ordinator who is tasked with implementing initiatives to tackle chronic loneliness. Halton libraries have introduced a weekly adult meet up group, Midweek Meetup, aimed at all, a Men's Shed meet up session aimed at providing men with an inclusive space to discuss a variety of topics to improve their health and wellbeing and a Together Unlimited session, to unite people with disabilities or limitations.

Transformation

Halton Borough Council currently has a transformation programme in operation who compiled footfall data and analysis over a 3 month period in 2023, across all library sites to provide us with key data to support proposals.

Data to support Saturday footfall at Runcorn & Ditton (recorded over a 3 month period)-

- Runcorn library, total Saturday footfall = 994 people
- Ditton library, total Saturday footfall = 435 people

In comparison for the same period,

- Halton Lea library total Saturday footfall total = 2,412 people
- Widnes library total Saturday footfall total =1,396 people

Distance and locations

- Widnes library is 1.8 miles away from Ditton walking or 2.4 miles by car.
- Halton lea library is 2.0 miles away from Runcorn walking or 2.4 miles also by car.

Emphasising the close proximity of sites and the library provision that would remain available on Saturdays.

7. Conclusion

In defining its approach to further library service transformation, Halton Borough Council is led by precedent, comments made by the Secretary of State and the outcome of High Court Judgements, which define a legal landscape of library change in which:

• there is no clear or absolute definition of what constitutes a, 'comprehensive and efficient' library service as described in the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act; nor is there an agreed mechanism for defining the need for that service;

• the only way that a library authority can demonstrate that the transformation of its library service will continue to meet its statutory duty of delivering a 'comprehensive and efficient' service, is through a strategic review of that service which is underpinned by a needs assessment.

• an authority must make the required value judgements to establish a needs assessment framework which describes the need for its library service.

• a 'comprehensive and efficient service' is not determined by the number of libraries provided; but must be understood in the context of available budget.

Against this legal background, and based on findings from the need's assessment undertaken and documented in this paper, the following recommendations are put forward to shape Halton's approach to further library transformation:

- Keep library services progressive and operational
- Move to a more consistent opening hours model
- Reduction in whole of service total opening hours by approximately 20 hours from current opening hours total
- Reduce late night provision
- Achieve environmental and energy savings, realised by the proposed changes to our opening hours, for example less consumption

Prioritise need

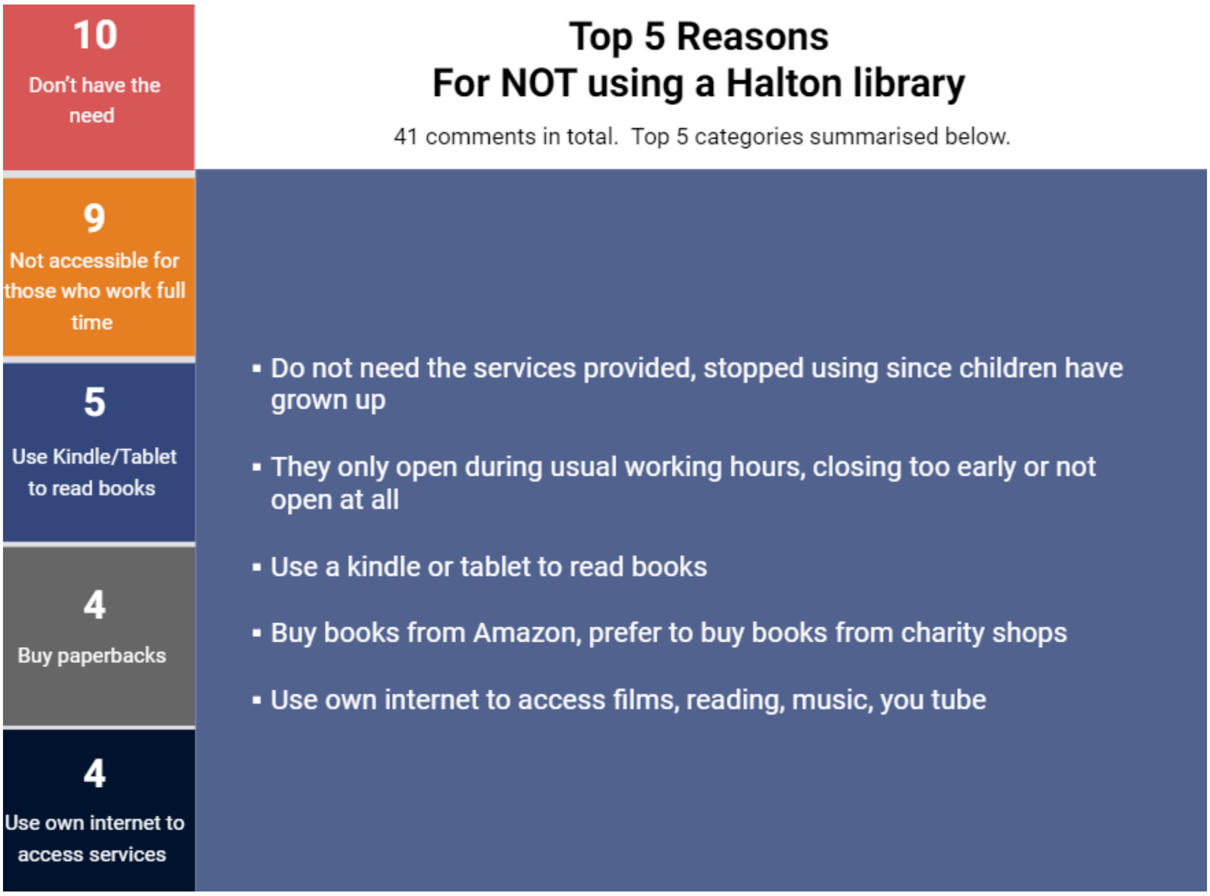
The Councils approach to transformation must prioritise resources in those areas which have the greatest need and for the library service, work is needed to address under representation of individuals by socio-economic groups and to understand why some people are not using some or all areas of the service. Halton library service possess a proactive Outreach team who are working to ensure the library service is as far reaching as possible, across all areas of the Borough.

Value for money

The proposed changes must aim to reduce costs and seek to increase participation in services that libraries currently provide. Within any transformation, the service must deliver a service offer that reflects the Council's objectives, whilst reflecting upon national standards of delivery.

Public response to any suggestion of changes to library services and analysis of library use, indicates that there is a need to continue to support a comprehensive book lending collection. Libraries are valued by those who use them, however the needs of the persons not using library services also need to be considered.

The consultation report analysis produced a ‘top 5 reasons for using’ a Halton Library and a ‘top 5 reasons for not using a Halton Library’, both are included below.



Access to free computers and internet access remains a key part of the existing library offer, however it is recognised that demand may change or develop. This aspect of delivery should be explored and advanced further as a wider digital inclusion offer in the future of Halton libraries offers.

REPORT TO:	Local Economy Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	17th November 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment Learning, Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Youth Guarantee Trailblazer (YGT)
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide members with an update on the DWP Youth Guarantee Trailblazer.

1.2 To provide opportunities to members to raise any questions with regards to the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 **Background to the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer (YGT)**
In August 2025 Halton Borough Council were commissioned to deliver the DWP/LCRCA Youth Guarantee Trailblazer which is aimed at supporting care leavers and young people aged 18-21 that are not in education, employment or training (NEET). There are 8 UK Youth Guarantee Trailblazers being piloted nationally. The YGT areas are: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, East Midlands, **Liverpool City Region**, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West of England, and two in London.

3.2 YGT is delivered by HBC's Employment, Learning and Skills Division (jointly delivered by Halton People into Jobs and Halton Adult Learning and in close collaboration with the council's Post 16 Education to Employment and 16-25 Young People's Pathway Teams).

3.3 Year 1 of the programme is contracted to run from September 2025 – March 2026. Funding for subsequent years may be available.

3.4 There are four separate funding streams within the YGT:

1.1	**Support for care leavers and care experienced young people aged 18-21.**
1.2	**Tracking young people aged 18 and 19 not in Employment,**

	Education and/or Training (NEET)
1.3	**Employment and Employability Support for young people aged 18-21 (NEET)**
1.4	**Employer engagement and incentives for recruting young people aged 18-21 (NEET or care leavers)**

3.5 Halton's YGT was launched on 9th September 2025 at the DCBL Stadium, which was a positive step towards supporting young people that may not engage with services. To make the Trailblazer a real success and to maximise the funding that is available in year 1 it will require all services that have a role in supporting NEET young people and/or care leavers to work collaboratively.

3.6 The aim of the Trailblazer is to try new and innovative approaches to engage with NEET young people and/or care leavers. Funding can be used more flexibly to help remove barriers that are impacting on young people accessing training, employment, or self-employment.

3.7 YGT supports the work of the Council and Corporate Parenting Board by providing care leavers access to a wide range of opportunities to help them progress (both inside and outside of borough).

3.8 All referrals to the Trailblazer are triaged through Halton People into Jobs to ensure that the right referral is made at the right time for each young person. Employment Specialists provide a tailored programme of practical support and signpost to appropriate services where specialist advice is needed e.g. housing, debt, mental health etc. This wrap around support is provided throughout their time on the programme and continues when they move into work to ensure they have the best chances of sustaining employment.

3.9 Halton Adult Learning, funded by devolved Adult Skills Budget, offers a range of programmes to support Halton residents aged 19+ (due to specific funding criteria). YGT can provide opportunities for young people to upskill and to engage in activities and interventions for young people that are aged eighteen who would not ordinarily be able to access these services through Adult Learning.

3.10 Effective employer engagement is a key element of the Trailblazer. Sourcing employers who can provide paid opportunities that young people want is vital. Financial incentives of £3,000 can be offered to employers who are recruiting a young person that is eligible and has signed up to the Trailblazer.

3.11 **Performance/achievement**
Contract delivery commenced in September 2025.
Performance is comprehensively managed and monitored through a

range of internal and external measures.

3.12 Performance to date (year 1 Sep 25 – Mar 26)

YGT Funding Strand	Programme	Target to achieve in year 1	Performance as of 22nd Oct 25	Number supported into paid work
1.1	Care Leavers Support	42 care leavers supported	8 care leavers supported	3 care leavers offered paid employment
1.2	Tracking Project	Engage with 32 young people	Project to go live in Nov 25	N/A
1.3	Employment and Employability Support (NEET)	32 NEET young people to be supported	28 NEET young people supported	6 NEET young people into paid work
1.4	Employer Incentives	16 grants to be issued	3 grants committed	N/A

3.13 **Key Successes**
Collaborative working across HBC and other external services has resulted in a strong number of referrals being made to the Trailblazer meaning more young people are gaining access to the support they need to improve their prospects and find paid work.

3.14 9 young people have secured employment as part of the Trailblazer since the launch on 9th September 2025.

3.15 **Key issues**
Engagement from young people can sometimes be inconsistent. Employment Specialists are finding that in some cases it can take up to three appointments for the young person to attend. Innovative ways to improve referral to attendance rates are currently being explored further.

3.16 Early identification of who our NEET young people and care leavers are in the borough is crucial. Involvement in the care leavers Pathway Plan process will ensure that teams are working together to achieve the best outcome for the young person.

3.17 **Concluding comments**
The teams that deliver the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer have worked hard to improve the lives of the young people across the Borough. The Trailblazer compliments the work undertaken by the wider Employment, Learning & Skills Division and allows for the provision of a tailored package of support which will progress the care leaver/young person in a way that works for them.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Key policy implications have related to Safeguarding Children & Young People. Policies have been reviewed and continue to be updated in line with guidance to keep young people safe.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer is externally funded by DWP via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. A Grant Funding Agreement is in place between the LCRCA and Halton Borough Council.

5.2 Financial claims are submitted to the LCRCA to draw down the income to cover project expenditure retrospectively on a quarterly basis.

5.3 Income and expenditure are closely monitored through a combination of internal and external mechanisms, to ensure that contracts are delivered efficiently.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence
NEET young people and care leavers will be signposted to various health and wellbeing initiatives that are delivered by Halton Borough Council and other external agencies including the Health Improvement Team to support individuals with a range of complex health barriers, resulting in greater independence.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
The fantastic achievements that have come out of the various programmes delivered by Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning and Skills Division have led to increased qualification levels and many residents gaining employment - positive outcomes for the local economy.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families
The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer supports young people aged 18-21 (including some young people with SEND). Key elements of the Trailblazer will help young people develop a wide range of skills that help in the workplace.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer supports vulnerable young people that need support to access paid employment, self-employment, or training to upskill. The HPIJ team liaises with Halton Employers to tackle inequality and source equal access to placements for care leavers.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer supports young people aged 18-21 (some with SEND) to access opportunities and support in the community. Placements can be offered in community venues such as Halton Adult Learning to add value to the community.

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 The management of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer will be meticulously and closely monitored both internally and externally to ensure any risks identified are carefully mitigated, with clear action plans in place to address any underperformance, quality, and compliance factors.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

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

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

REPORT TO:	Local Economy Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	17th November 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Employment Learning Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Performance Management Reports for Quarter 2 of 2025/26
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 second quarter period to 30th September 2025.

1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2025-26 were agreed by Members for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:

- Employment Learning and Skills
- Community and Environment

1.3 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 second quarter performance management report.**

2) **Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification; and**

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.

Local Economy – Priority Based Monitoring Report Q2

Reporting Period: 1st July to 30th September

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the second quarter of 2025 / 26 for service areas within the remit of the Local Economy Policy and Performance Board.

1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2025 - 26 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Local Economy Policy and Performance Board.

- Employment, Learning and Skills
- Library Services and other Culture & 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

2.0 High Priority Equality Actions

2.1 Equality issues continue to form a routine element of the Council's business planning and operational decision-making processes. Additionally, the Council must have evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011.

2.2 The Councils latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives is published on the Council website and is available via:

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

3.0 Performance Overview

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 08	**To promote access to learning to those who need it most and create employment opportunities for Halton residents**

Milestone	**Progress Q2**	**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 1st August 2024 and 31st July 2025		On track to achieve – figure at R02 (October 2025) sitting at 102%
Percentage of people engaged in Learning from most deprived areas increased from 29% to 48% by July 2025.		On track to achieve. One T&L project commenced (Care Leaver Ambassador programme), two further projects (ESOL Baby Steps, Adult Learning Mentoring project) to launch in January 2026
The % of residents accessing Halton Adult Learning courses and achieving will increase from 88% to 92% between 1st August 2024 and July 2025.	N / A	On track to achieve – achievement data generated after half term and reported for Q3

330 residents who access HPIJ employment programmes to obtain employment between April 2025 – March 2026.		43 residents were supported into work through HPIJ employment programmes in Q2 (115 residents cumulative for 25-26). There were more job starts; however, we are awaiting evidence from employers for audit. Therefore, on target to achieve by end of Q4.

Library Services and Other Culture & Leisure Services

Corporate Priority	Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. **Leisure Services**
ERD 21	**Community Assets – Capital Investment Projects**

Milestone:	**Progress Q2**	**Supporting Commentary**
Brindley Enhancement completion Summer 2026. A soft launch of the building extension will take place in Spring 2026. This will include the transition of the library including the full fit out. The completion of Brindley Green will follow by Summer 2026, along with the formal opening of Building and Green.	U U	Due to unforeseen circumstances particularly during the ground works, completion is likely to be winter 2026. The library is still on course to move in during the Spring. The delay in the programme means the Brindley Green will be delayed, and we are now targeting completion Christmas 2026.
Runcorn Leisure Centre options report on provision by autumn 2025 to Executive Board.	U	Additional capacity is being arranged to progress this piece of work.

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 22	**Increase footfall at the Leisure Centres**

Milestone:	**Progress Q2**	**Supporting Commentary**
% of memberships at Brookvale Recreation Centre (only)		18% memberships excluding learn to swim. 34% of learn to swim members at Brookvale
Footfall at Brookvale Leisure Centre Annual Target 210,000 for 25/26		46,129 (cumulative 98,873)
% memberships for Halton Leisure Centre (which incorporates access to Brookvale Recreation Centre)		82% of memberships are assigned to Halton Leisure Centre 66% learn to swim members at Halton.
Footfall at Halton Leisure Centre Annual target to be determined after one full operating year		Footfall in Q2 99,959 (cumulative 188,036) The gate access system is still to be refined; it currently doesn't capture the number of gym users who then go on to use other facilities such as the sauna/steam or pool. Thus, this has been calculated as 3 out of 10 users will use these facilities. Survey scheduled for next quarter to provide a more accurate data.
Number of community classes at Frank Myler Target to deliver 1000 annually		Q2 total is 314 (cumulative 621) 247 activity hall 67 MUGA 67 29 football teams utilising grass pitches 1 rugby league team Misc usage: - 13 rugby bookings, 2 pre-season matches and 4 Widnes cup matches. Summer camp for ages 7-11 years; football camp for ages 12–14 years
Annual target 65% of service budget recovery for 25/26		68.03%, an increase from 49.83% in the previous quarter and the highest it has been since 23/24.

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	**Increase footfall at the Brindley**

Milestone: **Progress**	**Q2**	**Supporting Commentary**
Total number of tickets sold this quarter, including the cumulative in year quarter total. Annual target for 25/26 75,000 (18,750 per quarter)	U	**10,471** tickets sold in Q2 Q2 Includes a month of maintenance when the building is closed to the public. The enhancement works disruption, and the temporary access entrance were anticipated to affect attendances/performances throughout the period of construction.
Total number of Theatre & Studio bookings this quarter.	U	Total of **67** bookings (available over 7 days a week) for theatre and studio in Q2, out of 122 available; a reduction of 17 bookings from Q1. This is related to large scale construction works and the significant impact for the Studio space and shut down for maintenance in August.
Theatre bookings this quarter of total % availability	U	**75%** achieved in Q2 11 x theatre cancellations (dates not re-programmed due to construction works) Shut down for maintenance in August.
Studio bookings this quarter of total % availability	U	**33%** achieved in Q2, 18 bookings out of 85 available and 4 studio cancellations (with dates not re-programmed due to construction works) Shut down for maintenance in August.
75% of service budget recovery in 25/26		65.86%, a reduction from 118.5% in last quarter owing to the impact of construction works and August shut down annual maintenance period.

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 and e-access at the Libraries**

Milestone:	**Progress Q2**	**Supporting Commentary**
Footfall for all libraries – Ditton, Widnes, Runcorn and Halton Lea. Quarterly target 70,000 Annual target 280,000		**Total Q2 = 51,950, lower target than Q1 (66,623).** • Ditton= 6,970.5 • Runcorn= 6,220 • Halton Lea= 19,735.5 • Widnes= 19,024 Cumulative yearly total **118,573** Q2 total footfall lower than target, annual target may not be achieved.
Total number of e-library digital issues Quarterly target 1m Annual target 4m		**Total Q2 = 1,056,995, lower than Q1 (993,030)** • ebooks = 4,543 • eaudio = 8,783 • Ancestry = 2,462 • House of images = 89,175 • Access to Research = 3 • Pressreader = 952,029
Library book borrowing per site – Ditton, Widnes, Runcorn and Halton Lea Quarterly Target 50,000, annual Target 200,000	U	**Q2 Total = 52,048, higher than Q1 (44,068)** • Ditton = 3,922 • Halton Lea = 20,873 • Runcorn = 3,662 Widnes = 23,591
Number of attendances at Library events, both adults and children Annual Target 25,720		**Q2 Total = 8,905, higher than Q1 (6430)** • 7,827 Library internal events • 1,078 Library outreach events Increase of 2475 from Q1 (6,430), summer holiday events programme has supported uplift.

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 25	**Increase footfall at the Community Centres to demonstrate levels of usage and demand for the Council's community assets.**

Milestone:	**Progress Q2**	**Supporting Commentary**
Monitor the number of users in attendance at the Community Centres (including drop-ins, events and hires). Quarterly Target 55,000 Annual Target 238,000		**Q2 total 86,060 (Cumulative 155,776)** Castlefields 8,874 Ditton 21,617 Grangeway 24,661 Murdishaw 10,683 Upton 20,225 Numbers have increased this quarter and exceeded the quarterly target, more accurate footfall since the introduction of door counters. Customers entering from other open doors has reduced as security measures are being controlled.
Community room / hall hires Quarterly Target 2175 Annual Target 8,700		**Q2 total hires 2,556 (Cumulative 5057)** Castlefield's 380 Ditton 557 Grangeway 457 Murdishaw 502 Upton 660 Bookings have increased overall as we have new customers, Upton and Murdishaw have increased their bookings during Q2. Ditton and Castlefield's are on par with Q1. Grangeway bookings have decreased due to the summer holidays as they have more youth activity at the centre.
Community Centres - total number of centre organised events Quarterly Target 30 Annual Target 120		**Q2 Total Events 31 (Cumulative 64)** Bingo sessions are running at Grangeway and Upton, the service is planning to introduce bingo at Ditton and Castlefields in Q3.

		Upton have held an additional 3 events during Q2, a pop-up shop, a Hawaiian festival and an arts and craft event. Murdishaw held their annual family summer event, Castlefields held a table-top sale in September.
% of service budget recovery		20.45%, an increase from 16.49% in Q1

4.0 Financial Statements

<u>ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT</u>

<u>Revenue Operational Budget at 30 Sept 25</u>

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

Comments on the above figures

Finance maintains regular communication with the department to monitor and analyse expenditure, helping to identify potential savings that can support both current and future priorities. In today's climate of tight budgets, achieving these efficiencies is more important than ever.

The latest report indicates that the department is projected to be under budget by £0.163 million at year-end. This improved forecast is largely due to increased income from fees and charges, following the reconciliation of service charge invoices, as well as a review of repairs and maintenance spending throughout the year.

Supporting Information

Maximising grant funding remains a key priority, supported by diligent account monitoring and careful planning. Specific projects have been identified, with staff time allocated to ensure delivery aligns with funding objectives. Compliance with grant conditions is maintained at every stage, and this focused approach will continue throughout the year.

Maintaining a fully staffed team is essential to fulfilling statutory and contractual obligations and driving forward the borough's regeneration agenda. Despite the introduction of a market supplement, recruitment for key roles, particularly surveyors, recruitment continues to be challenging due to a limited pool of qualified candidates. On a positive note, the successful appointment of Project Managers marks a significant step forward and is expected to reduce reliance on agency staff, helping to manage costs more effectively. Agency staffing costs are currently projected at £0.259 million for this financial year. These roles are critical to the delivery of regeneration activity. Without them, there is a risk of project delays, which could impact future revenue from business rates and council tax. Where possible, staffing costs are recovered through capital budgets and external funding streams.

The financial impact of vacant properties across the borough continues to present a significant budgetary challenge. In addition to the loss of rental income while these properties remain unoccupied, further costs are incurred for utilities, repairs, and ongoing maintenance. As of the end of July, total costs stood at £0.136 million, rising to £0.154 million over the past two months. To help reduce these expenses, it is essential to accelerate leasing activity or explore interim uses, such as short-term rentals or community-based initiatives, that could generate income and offset costs. However, several properties are currently in poor condition and will require refurbishment before they can be considered for letting.

Despite a notable rise in energy costs over recent years, the department is currently forecasting a year-end underspend of £0.093 million. However, this projection may be reduced if energy usage increases, particularly as more staff return to the office or if demand rises due to seasonal temperature fluctuations.

The Repairs and Maintenance programme is subject to ongoing review to ensure expenditure remains within the allocated budget. It is projected that costs will be contained within budget for the remainder of the financial year. Regular monitoring will continue to ensure early identification of any emerging pressures, allowing for timely intervention and mitigation where possible.

Approved 2025/26 Savings

Please see Appendix A for details of progress towards achieving budget efficiency savings agreed by Council in March 25.

Capital Budget at 30 Sept 25

	205/26 Original Allocation	2025/26 Revised Allocation	Cumulative Actual Spend to 30 Sept 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 30 Nov 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026	Allocation remaining	2026/27 Forecast Allocation
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Equality Act Improvement Works	303.5	303.5	0.0	150.0	236.0	303.5	0.0	300.0
Foundary Lane Residential Area	3,520.9	3,520.9	878.0	1,020.9	1,200.0	3,520.9	0.0	0.0
Property Improvements	231.1	231.1	111.2	133.2	153.6	231.1	0.0	200.0
Town Deal	21,823.1	18,949.5	4,986.3	8,663.1	11,300.7	13,210.2	5,739.3	2,873.6
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	101.2	101.2	0.0	20.0	55.0	102.2	-1.0	0.0
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	82.0	82.0	4.2	33.3	56.4	82.0	0.0	0.0
Changing Places	17.0	17.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.0	0.0	0.0
Kingsway Centre Demolition	708.0	708.0	293.0	438.0	488.0	538.0	170.0	0.0
Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet	2,200.0	2,200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,200.0	0.0	0.0
Astmoor Masterplan	81.6	81.6	0.0	0.0	30.0	81.6	0.0	0.0
Sci-tech Daresbury - CPO	3,000.0	3,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,000.0	0.0	0.0
Warm Homes Plan	0.0	587.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	587.6	0.0	0.0
Total Economy, Enterprise & Property	**32,068.4**	**29,782.4**	**6,272.7**	**10,458.5**	**13,519.7**	**23,874.1**	**5,908.3**	**3,373.6**

Comments on above figures

Foundry Lane

The development at Foundry Lane continues to progress at pace, with several key milestones achieved over the past two months. On-site operations remain well-coordinated and steady, keeping firmly on track to deliver this exciting new housing scheme.
All remaining homes scheduled for completion by 26 November.
To maintain momentum, outline planning permission has now been submitted for Phase 2, ensuring the next stage of development can move forward without delay.

Sci-Tech Daresbury Project Violet

The LCR CA have approved the full business case for the lab building and the grant funding agreement is currently being drafted. The second building which was initially expected to be office space is currently being reviewed as a potential second lab construction, with an outline business case being prepared for the CA. The current programme anticipates tendering the project and contract award in late 2025 and construction commencing in July 2026.

Property Improvements

Various works undertaken as and when required, works ongoing, the budget will be spent at year end.

Changing Places

Works complete, all retention monies to be paid.

Town Deal

All Town Deal funded projects are progressing at different stages of work.
The Brindley extension started on site August 2024. Estimated date for completion is April 2026.
RIBA stage 4 of the Brindley Green has started following submission of the planning application.

The youth centre -part of the Creative and Digital Skill centre - started September 2024, with the new build now well advanced with interior work now taking place. The roof of the wintergarden is now in place. Completion is expected March 2026.

The Health Hub started work on site April 2025, after the library vacated to temporary location. The construction work is expected to be completed November 2025 followed by commissioning by the NHS.
The Runcorn Street art was delivered in May 2025. A celebration event was held 26 July. This project is completed.

The construction of the Temple Hall started March 2025, with foundation complete. All steelwork is up, and block walls erected, with outer skin of brick work progressing well. Practical completion is expected by the end of 2025.
The construction of two canal trip boats has been ordered at a boatyard in Liverpool, with one boat having been launched in Runcorn on the canal 26 July.

The over 55s apartment block Mercia House is under construction at High Street has now all doors and windows in, and external brickwork is well advanced. Legacie are preparing for the external landscaping.
HBC has entered into a pre-construction service agreement with F Parkinsons through a design and build route for the Enterprise Facility.
Design work progresses on the remaining projects.

Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition

The demolition works are now complete.

UKSPF

New reduced allocation for 25/26 which is for town centre improvements.

Sci-tech Daresbury Project – CPO

The JV continues to develop the required documentation to make the CPO in order to secure land for the delivery of the Sci-Tech Daresbury masterplan. It is anticipated that the CPO process will run during 2026 with funds only required at the conclusion of that project or shortly after. The majority of spend is potentially in 26-27 at the earliest.

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT
APPENDIX A

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Asset Management		Accelerate the lease or sale of surplus land, non-operational buildings, surplus space within building, etc. to either generate lease rentals or capital receipts to help fund capital schemes and thereby reduce future capital financing costs.	0	100	U	It is not expected this saving will materialise in the current year.

COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 30th September 2025

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

Comments on the above figures

Net spend against the Community and Greenspaces department has seen an improvement to the net outturn position since the previous report at 31st July 2025. The forecasted outturn is now expected to fall £0.72m under the approved budget profile (in comparison to £0.123m overspend previously forecasted).

Employee spend continues to be an area providing underspend for the department into the new financial year, forecast spend being £0.603m under the approved budget profile. There continue to be vacancies held for restructures taking place contributing to the underspend. However, as a result of this, in order to facilitate the very visible services provided to the residents of Halton, both Agency and Supplies & Services expenditure is forecasted to be (£0.274m and £0.249 respectively) above the approved 2025/26 budget.

Estimated spend on premises costs is forecast to be £0.093m over budget in 2025/26. The Stadium utility costs are notably higher than the available budget and will continue to be a budget pressure this year. There is more focus on internal services that can be provided (See £0.179m forecast overachieved Internal Fees Income), and should this continue it can be utilised to offset the premises costs in subsequent financial years.

Supplies and Services is forecasting an overspend of £0.249m which is a budget pressure throughout the Department and is primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years. There is a risk if the Council were to contain these costs within the budget profile there would be a reduction in the service provided.

Historically, Waste Disposal Contracts had contributed to an underspend for the department, however, due to the rise in costs last year, expenditure is now likely to fall close to the approved budget profile. It is worth noting, as the size of the contracts are very large, small percentage changes to the invoices can have significant impacts on the outturn position of the department, and with invoices being received several periods after the costs are incurred, the outturn position may change throughout the year. Within 2025/26 there has been a budget line created for the Extender Producer Responsibility Scheme, this funding has been provided to manage packaging waste. In order to facilitate the scheme and ensure compliance, £0.500m has been forecasted to be utilised within the financial year, should there be any budget underutilised by 31st March 2026 this will require carrying forward into the 2026/27 financial year.

Income for the Community and Greenspaces Department is on track to be higher than the approved budget by £0.257m. The aforementioned internal fee focus by the Stadium is contributing to this as well as increasing usage of internal room hire across the buildings within the Department. The benefit of this income staying within the council rather than going to external suppliers is offset by some other income targets being unachievable. The main contributor to the overachievement however is with Halton Leisure Centre, income is remaining consistently high and forecasts have been adjusted as such to reflect this. In comparison to last financial year, the outturn income figure is expected to rise by approximately 99%.

There also continues to be pressures with the Brindley as the extension works are underway, income did fall within the previous financial year, and is currently forecast to do the same this year. Once the works are completed the income is likely to rise again, however, this will require close monitoring as the utility expenditure will also increase with the larger site.

APPROVED BUDGET SAVINGS COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Stadium & Catering Services – School Meals	12	Cease to deliver the school meals service, which has made significant losses of over £200,000 for a number of years and is forecast to make a similar loss by year-end. Work would be undertaken with schools over the next two years to support them to secure an alternative means of delivery, whether in-house or via an external provider.	12	0	✓	School meals service has ceased and is reflected in the 25/26 budget.
Green Waste		Green Waste – increase green waste charges from £43 to £50 per annum, to bring Halton onto a comparable basis with charges levied by neighbouring councils.	0	100	✓	Green waste charges have been increased to £50.
Area Forums		Area Forums – cease the funding for Area Forums.	0	170	✓	Area forum budgets have been removed in 25-26
Total Community & Greenspace Dept			**12**	**270**		

Capital

Scheme Detail	205/26 Original Allocation	2025/26 Revised Allocation	Cumulative Actual Spend to 30 Sept 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 30 Nov 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026	Allocation remaining	2026/27 Forecast Allocation
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Stadium Minor Works	22.1	22.1	24.6	24.6	24.6	24.6	-2.5	30.0
Halton Leisure Centre	99.7	99.7	89.3	86.8	88.8	90.8	8.9	0.0
Children's Playground Equipment	67.8	67.8	50.5	60.5	60.5	65.0	2.8	65.0
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Upton Improvements	13.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	0.0	0.0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	0.0	0.0
Open Spaces Schemes	600.0	770.0	564.5	600.0	650.0	770.0	0.0	600.0
Runcorn Town Park	450.6	450.6	0.0	0.0	60.0	125.0	325.6	280.0
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,841.6	250.0	152.5	170.0	180.0	250.0	0.0	1,591.6
Pickerings Pasture Cafe	469.2	450.0	110.3	175.0	300.0	450.0	0.0	19.2
Cemetery Infrastructure work	469.1	469.1	0.0	89.0	207.0	410.0	59.1	683.0
Stadium Public Address System	810.0	346.0	34.9	176.0	286.0	346.0	0.0	379.0
Litter Bins	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	20.0
Replacement Cremator	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Stadium Steelwork Repairs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	600.0
Brindley Lighting	0.0	200.0	0.0	100.0	150.0	200.0	0.0	0.0
Grangeway Court Refurbishment	0.0	52.0	8.0	10.0	16.0	52.0	0.0	948.0
CCTV Infrastructure Works	0.0	105.0	1.2	5.0	50.0	105.0	0.0	395.0
Total Community & Greenspaces	**5,215.2**	**3,327.3**	**1,035.8**	**1,496.9**	**2,072.9**	**2,933.4**	**393.9**	**5,630.8**

There were some delays to capital projects starting within the last financial year due to staffing issues. These are likely to be completed within the 2025/26 capital scheme. In regard to the cemetery infrastructure work there is potential to receive grant/external funding rather than rely solely on borrowing. The *replacement cremator* line is in relation to a cremator installed last year, however the contractors are requiring some additional works required to get it fully commissioned and proper emissions testing to be carried out. Management are currently reviewing options, where possible this will be funded from underspend from other schemes.

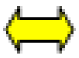
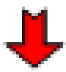
5.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

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

Direction of Travel Indicator

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