



Housing and Safer Policy and Performance Board

**Tuesday, 16 September 2025 at 6.30 p.m.
Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Butler'.

Interim Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Mike Fry (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Chris Carlin (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Irene Bramwell	Labour
Councillor Neil Connolly	Labour
Councillor Emma Garner	Labour
Councillor Chris Loftus	Labour
Councillor Angela McInerney	Labour
Councillor Louise Nolan	Labour
Councillor Margaret Ratcliffe	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Tom Stretch	Labour
Councillor Angela Teeling	Labour

*Please contact Kim Butler on 0151 511 7496 or e-mail
kim.butler@halton.gov.uk for further information.*

The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 18 November 2025

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

Part I

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

HOUSING AND SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Housing and Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 10 June 2025 at the Board Room, Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Fry (Chair), Carlin (Vice-Chair), Bramwell, Connolly, Garner, C. Loftus, A. McInerney, Ratcliffe and Teeling

Apologies for Absence: Councillor L. Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Butler, N. Goodwin, A. Plant and N. Renison

Also in attendance: None

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

		<i>Action</i>
SAF1	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged that the Board had a busy agenda for the next 12 months.	
SAF2	MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2025 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF3	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
SAF4	ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2024 – MARCH 2025	
	Members considered the 2024-25 Annual Report from the Chair of the Board, which outlined the contributions made to the ongoing work of the Board. The Board had met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out during the Municipal Year April 2024 to March 2025.	

The Chair and Deputy Chair thanked Councillor Norman Plumpton-Walsh, the outgoing Chair, for all his work and dedication to the Board.

Following discussions, some additional information was noted:

- Concerns were raised about the number of registered dangerous dogs in the Borough, many which have been seen off lead and without muzzles. The Chair confirmed that he was due to meet with the Police Crime Commissioner and would raise these concerns and feedback to the Board in due course. It was suggested that Royal Mail workers were able to help and identify addresses where the dogs live; further information about this would be provided to the Chair. Members were also advised that Neighbourhood Patrol Officers would also be able to provide some support;
- Another concern was the rising numbers of ketamine use. It was noted that this issue was discussed at length at the Children & Young People Policy and Performance Board and an event had been arranged to discuss. Members were also reassured that drugs and alcohol was a key priority for Public Health and information was being sent to schools and parents. In addition, the Safer Halton Partnership had funded a series of events to raise the awareness and dangers for schools. It was agreed that a briefing note about this would be sent to all Members.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Councillor Garner declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the following item; her partner was employed by Evolve, a subsidiary of Riverside Housing.

SAF5 PRODUCTION OF A BOROUGH WIDE HOUSING STRATEGY – PROGRESS UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided a progress update on the new Housing Strategy for the Borough.

Following the approval for production of a new Housing Strategy at the Council's Executive Board in April 2024, Board members were advised that Arc4, a housing research policy specialist, had been commissioned to

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support the production process of the Strategy. This had commenced in September 2024 and consisted of two stages, the first being a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) which included a household survey of residents in Halton being undertaken.

The survey took place between November and December 2024 and was sent to 16,530 households. 1,620 useable responses were received (9.8% response rate). It covered 4 broad themes:

- Your home, neighbourhood and household;
- Housing history;
- Future housing requirements: whole household; and
- Future housing requirements: newly forming households.

The main purpose of the survey was to provide evidence to help assess housing need by type, size and tenure within different parts of the Borough.

The Housing Strategy was currently in the draft process (Stage 2) and once completed, an informal stakeholder engagement would be undertaken in June/July 2025, followed by a formal 6 week public consultation in July/August 2025; the final revisions and adoption was planned for September/October 2025.

Some concerns were raised by Members regarding housing standards and difficulties Ward Councillors had contacting the housing providers. Following discussions, the Chair agreed to contact the Chief Executive of Halton Housing regarding the matters raised and the Board agreed a focus on housing standards, as part of its responsibilities, moving forward.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) Note the progress of the new Boroughwide Housing Strategy; and
- 2) Promote participation the Stakeholder and Formal Public Consultation process.

SAF6 DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE

The Board received a report from the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the following ongoing service developments in the Domestic Abuse Service:

- Domestic Abuse Strategy - this had been renewed until the end of 2026 and was appended to the report. The 4 strategic priorities remained the same and Strategy was approved by the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board in April 2025;
- Domestic Abuse Partnership Board – Halton’s needs assessment required an update and this would be completed by the end of the year. This would inform the emerging from 2026 onwards;
- White Ribbon - the steering group signed off the action plan on 7 May 2025 and submitted to White Ribbon to complete the last stage of accreditation. A copy of the action plan was appended to the report for information; and
- Harm Reduction – the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office had secured additional resources for Halton to deliver a harm reduction initiative. This would include joint working with a number of agencies including health, housing, criminal justice agencies, drug and alcohol services and local authority departments. An evaluation report would be presented to the Board in due course.

Members acknowledged that it was pleasing to note the work being done and that action is being taken against domestic violence for all victims. Members also suggested that they would like to see a workforce policy for domestic abuse.

RESOLVED: That the Board note and comment on the report.

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SAF7 COMMUNITY SAFETY & PROTECTION DIVISION

The Board received a report from the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the progress in the Community Safety and Protection Division. The report highlighted some key matters for the Board to note, that would progress over the next 12 months, in the following areas:

- Enforcement and CCTV – a report would be presented to the Executive Board in July and a piece of work was planned to invest in this area of work; the Board would receive further updates throughout the year;

- Emergency Planning - the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (also known as Martyn's Law) received Royal Assent on 3 April 2025. The regulator had been confirmed as the Security Industry Authority (SIA). A Halton working group had been set up to scrutinise the guidance to ensure the Council was compliant; and
- Devolution Arrangements – arrangements were progressing in Cheshire and Warrington and the anticipated implementation of a Mayor and Combined Authority was May 2026. A piece of work was being undertaken to consider a pan-Cheshire Community Safety Partnership in a devolved administration. The Board would be updated throughout the year on arrangements and how progress would impact on Halton.

Following discussions, some additional information was noted:

- Requests for CCTV in hotspot areas would be addressed outside of the meeting;
- Issues with electric bikes should be reported to the Police; and
- Concerns were raised about inappropriate comments on social media relating to various issues such as asylum seekers and refugees and the High Court's ruling on the definition of a "woman", under the Equality Act 2010. These were acknowledged, however, Members were reminded that it was not the Council's role to respond to comments on social media.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Councillor Teeling declared a pecuniary interest in the following item; her sister worked as an agency nurse across various care homes.

Councillor Bramwell declared a pecuniary interest in the following item; her daughter was employed as a Social Worker by Halton Borough Council.

SAF8 COUNCIL WIDE SPENDING AS AT 31 JANUARY 2025

The Board received a copy of a report, which was presented to the Council's Executive Board on 13 March 2025. The report outlined the Council's overall revenue and

capital spending position as at 31 January 2025, together with the latest 2024/25 outturn forecast. The report also described the reasons for key variances from budget.

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

RESOLVED: That the Councilwide financial position as at 31 January 2025, as outlined in the report, be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.01 p.m.

REPORT TO: Housing and Safer Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 16 September 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**

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Housing & Safer Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 16 September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Adults

PORTFOLIO: Health and Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Homelessness Working Party – Review of Homelessness Services and Recommendations

WARD(S) Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present a summary of recommendations relating to the Homelessness Working Party's review of Halton's Homelessness services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) the Board approves the recommendations outlined in section 3.5 of this report.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 A Homelessness Working Party was established by Councillor Marie Wright to bring Officers and Members together in order to increase the understanding amongst Members regarding homelessness in the borough and make any necessary recommendations for change.

- 3.2 The Working Party has provided Members the opportunity to gain an understanding of Homelessness in Halton, the current service offer, pressures, data and how resources are mobilised to provide quality services that support some of the most vulnerable adults in the Borough.

3.3 Scope of the Review

- Councillors to visit services to understand current service provision in relation to homelessness
- Councillors to review the performance of current homelessness services, including the views from people who use services
- Councillors to review the remit of the Homelessness Forum, regularity of meetings and associated attendees
- Councillors to review current governance/reporting lines for homelessness data and regularity of reporting

- Councillors to review data on the number of empty homes in the Borough and plans around their use
- Councillors to review current numbers of rough sleepers within the borough and provision of services to support rough sleepers
- Councillors to review the monitoring arrangements for commissioned and grant-funded Homeless services
- Councillors to understand current homelessness service offer and gaps in services
- Councillors to review the funding position for homelessness services including budget, spend and variance

3.4 A separate **appendix** accompanies this report and contains an overview of the findings from the review.

3.5 **Recommendations**

Through considering the findings of the review, Members propose the following recommendations for action:

Recommendation	Recommendation Description
Governance	Propose a single reporting line for the scrutiny of homelessness performance, via the relevant Policy & Performance Board to enable Member oversight and Member direction of Homelessness in the borough.
Governance	Propose a 6-monthly cycle of reporting of homelessness data and service development activity to the relevant Policy & Performance Board.
Governance	Establish links with Halton BC's corporate Housing Strategy development work regarding understanding proposals for the use of empty homes within the borough.
Governance	Clarify governance and reporting lines for the following closely linked priorities which are currently separate to homelessness: Housing; Refugees & Asylum Seekers; Community Safety.
Governance	Establish greater contact with Halton Housing around repeated Homelessness issues and establish a regular flow of reporting to the relevant Policy and Performance Board especially around empty properties in the borough.

Homelessness Forum	Agree the remit and regularity of Homelessness Forum meetings and associated attendee list.
Service Offer	Understand any gaps in current homelessness services e.g. Grangeway Court Supported Accommodation for Families and consider options for increased provision.
Service Offer	Consider options for the development of the dedicated Rough Sleeper supported accommodation in the borough.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places duties on Local Authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness.

4.2 The delivery of Homelessness services within the borough aligns to the local Homelessness Strategy and associated Delivery Plan.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Financial implications have been identified, due to the reliance upon hotel usage in order to meet current levels of demand, which has a significant impact upon local budgets.

5.2 Any recommendations for improved service provision will require Councillors and Officers to understand more fully the resourcing and financial impacts of any proposals.

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

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

Homelessness services support many local people to access suitable housing to meet their housing needs, promote stability and offer wrap-around support to enable people to improve their health and wellbeing, resulting in greater independence.

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

Through Social Value initiatives, homelessness organisations invest in and give back to our local community, ensuring opportunities to build a strong sustainable local economy. This includes employment opportunities and apprenticeships.

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

There is dedicated homeless provision for families with children and

young people to enable children and young people to grow in a stable and settled environment.

There is a designated youth officer within the Housing Solutions Team, who works directly with young people, to address their needs and refer into the relevant services.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Homelessness provision strengthens families and communities and provides support to people who are more likely to experience poverty, inequality and vulnerability.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Homelessness services support people to play their part through the choices they make about their home, e.g. through recycling, opportunities such as gardening and general upkeep of public spaces within temporary accommodation settings, all of which can continue when people move on to their own home.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Homeless provision helps prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping within the borough.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Risk Analysis will be required in relation to any specific recommendations for change that are identified from this work.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Many of Halton's homelessness organisations exist to support vulnerable, diverse and disadvantaged cohorts of the community. These services are fully inclusive and offer equal access to all local people who find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

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

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.



HOMELESSNESS WORKING PARTY

REVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS - FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MAY 2025

Background

A Homelessness Working Party was established by Cllr Marie Wright to bring Officers and Members together in order to increase the understanding amongst Members regarding homelessness in the borough and make any necessary recommendations for change.

The Working Party has provided Members the opportunity to gain an understanding of Homelessness in Halton, the current service offer, pressures, data and how resources are mobilised to provide quality services that support some of the most vulnerable adults in the Borough.

Scope of the Review

The following areas were identified to be included in the scope of the review:

1. Councillors to visit services to understand current service provision in relation to homelessness;
2. Councillors to review the performance of current homelessness services, including the views from people who use services;
3. Councillors to review the remit of the Homelessness Forum, regularity of meetings and associated attendees;
4. Councillors to review current governance/reporting lines for homelessness data and regularity of reporting;
5. Councillors to review data on the number of empty homes in the Borough and plans around their use;
6. Councillors to review current numbers of rough sleepers within the borough and provision of services to support rough sleepers;
7. Councillors to review the monitoring arrangements for commissioned and grant-funded Homeless services;
8. Councillors to understand current homelessness service offer and gaps in services;
9. Councillors to review the funding position for homelessness services including budget, spend and variance.

FINDINGS

1. **Councillors to visit services to understand current service provision in relation to homelessness**

A number of Councillors visited some local homeless services. After visiting the services, Councillors fed back their initial thoughts on the services visited.

Grangeway Court (Supported Accommodation for Families)

The Councillors thought that Grangeway Court was not fit for purpose and conditions were not up to standard and require improvement.

Brennan Lodge (Homeless Hostel, Widnes)

The Councillors thought that Brennan Lodge was a brilliant place, the rooms are sparse but the support was very good and the staff were welcoming and helpful.

Halton Lodge (Homeless Hostel, Widnes)

The Councillors thought that Halton Lodge was similar to Brennan Lodge but on a larger scale, the rooms are sparse and some re-decorating was needed but the support was very good and again, the staff were welcoming and helpful.

Columba Hall

The Councillors found a lack of supervision at Colomba Hall, with one member of staff doing an 8 hour shift and no weekends. Councillors asked what would happen in an emergency situation.

Nightstop

The Councillors thought that Nightstop was very impressive and thought that the aftercare for the residents and workers was very good.

2. **Councillors to review the performance of current homelessness services, including the views from people who use services**

Officers provided a presentation to Councillors which sets out the performance of the current commissioned homelessness services within the borough. This presentation also captures the views of people who are currently using these services.



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There are three main contracts which are commissioned i.e. have been through a formal procurement process based on the value of the service/contract.

The presentation provides an overview of each service and sets out the value of each commissioned service and the duration of each contract.

The performance data contained within the presentation is based on annual data and there may be some variation each quarter.

Performance data is reviewed on a quarterly and annual basis.

The data presented includes referral activity, an overview of the needs of the service users using each service, case study examples and an understanding of the outcomes achieved by users of the commissioned services.

3. Councillors to review the remit of the Homelessness Forum, regularity of meetings and associated attendees

Officers informed Councillors that the Homelessness Forum was initially held quarterly, but due to the decrease in services and lower attendance it was agreed that the Forum would change to meeting annually. The group can review the membership and frequency of meetings and amend as necessary.

Officers and Councillors discussed that there is an opportunity to explore the viability of a quarterly Forum for Councillors and Officers and then an Annual Forum where other people are invited, including Service Users and residents.

The Homelessness Forum group's membership is open and includes internal and external agencies, Councillors, homelessness managers and officers, statutory agencies including Adult & Children's Social Care, Police, Registered Social Landlords, Supported Housing Providers, Voluntary Sector, Home Office, SERCO, British Red Cross, Youth Council. Other Councils within the Liverpool City Region are often invited so they can look at commonality and shared practice.

The purpose of the group is to review and have oversight of homelessness within the borough. The methods the group uses includes sharing best practice, working with other organisations, identifying common areas of improvement, identifying and developing innovative methods of reducing homelessness, sharing statistical information, identifying common trends and exploring potential funding options for quality assurance.

4. Councillors to review current governance/reporting lines for homelessness data and regularity of reporting

Officers provided a presentation to Councillors which describes the current governance arrangements for Homelessness. Data is currently presented on a quarterly basis to Health Policy and Performance Board (HPPB).

Some information is also shared at Community Safety Partnership. Priorities which are currently separate to homelessness: Housing;

Refugees & Asylum Seekers; Community Safety Gypsy Traveller sites are currently subject to separate reporting lines.



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5. Councillors to review data on the number of empty homes in the Borough and plans around their use

Councillors were provided with information on the number of homes which are empty across the borough, which currently stands at approximately 800 homes. There are often many reasons why homes are vacant and this can include, for example, properties awaiting refurbishment or repairs, properties under private ownership, properties undergoing sale or being prepared for rental.

Councillors proposed stronger links should be made with Registered Social Landlords around repeated Homelessness issues and the status and re-use of empty homes. Councillors proposed that this information is reported to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board on a regular basis.

Councillors also requested information on the number of empty houses that have been bought by SERCO that are being used to house Asylum Seekers/Refugees within the borough. Officers advised that when SERCO first came on board, they had a quota. SERCO have now met that quota and therefore will not be purchasing any additional properties. The Council has regular meetings with SERCO and has developed a process for the purchase of a property which involves the Housing Solutions team undertaking a postcode check to check there is no element of risk, including anti-social behaviour.

It was discussed that the Council's corporate teams are currently working to develop a Housing Strategy for the borough. Adult Social Care is represented on this group and this participation will inform the development of the strategy. The Council's plans to make use of any empty homes will fall within the remit of the new Housing Strategy. It was discussed that it would be beneficial for links to be made in terms of reporting lines for the Housing Strategy and its links with Homelessness. A members seminar planned for June for all members of the Council will focus on the emerging housing strategy and this will include empty homes and possible options.

Councillors wanted to understand the number of applications for properties within the borough that are subject to applications made by people who live outside of the borough. Data was provided to show this, indicating the number of applications made via Property Pool Plus (PPP) for Halton properties and the location of the person applying for a property in Halton. The data shows that there were 135 applications for Halton properties from people who were living outside of the borough.



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Councillors also wanted to understand how many Halton residents have applied for properties outside of the borough. This would assist Councillors in understanding the how many people have applied for a property within the borough as well as those applying to leave Halton and take up a property outside of the borough. However, it is not possible to ascertain this data as Halton residents would need to apply directly to the Housing provider and this data is unknown to the Council.

6. **Councillors to review current numbers of rough sleepers within the borough and provision of services to support rough sleepers**

Officers provided a presentation to Councillors which included statistics on the number of Rough Sleepers within the borough. Between April 2024 and September 2024 there were 19 verified Rough Sleepers.



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Changing Lives provide a Crash Pad service for Rough Sleepers at Halton Lodge Hostel, Runcorn. This provides temporary supported accommodation for up to 5 days. The Council is working with Changing Lives to increase this service from 3 to 6 spaces via additional funding to assist with refurbishment within Halton Lodge. The refurbishment will ensure that there are separate facilities for males and females.

There are two properties in Market and Lacey Street for Rough Sleepers who are ready for move-on accommodation, but not yet ready to live independently without support. A support officer from Changing Lives will work with people within these properties to support their readiness for their next move-on into independent accommodation. People can stay in the Market and Lacey Street accommodation for up to 2 years, with outreach support provided by Changing Lives during their residency.

7. **Councillors to review the monitoring arrangements for commissioned and grant-funded Homeless services**

Councillors were provided with the details of the services which are commissioned and those which are grant-funded.

Both commissioned and grant-funded services are monitored on a regular basis, at least quarterly, annually and more frequently if required.

Monitoring activity is generally proportionate to the contract value, with commissioned services being subject to pre-determined monitoring requirements which are set out in tender processes.

Performance requirements for commissioned services are ‘triangulated’ and include data, outcomes and case studies to provide a balanced and in-depth view of how a service is performing.

Services are expected to adhere to strict reporting deadlines and must adhere to the Council's policies regarding information governance and the security of personal data captured and stored.

From time to time monitoring requirements may change in light of any changes to national legislation or local policy.

Grant funded services may be subject to specific reporting requirements as set out by the central government departmental funding body e.g. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Annual performance data was shared with Councillors, to provide an overview of current monitoring activity and performance.



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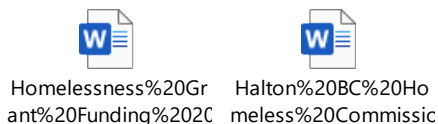
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8. Councillors to understand current homelessness service offer and gaps in services

Officers presented to Councillors, an overview of the current service offer for homelessness within the borough, including which services are commissioned and services which are grant-funded, alongside services which are currently based within the borough that the Council currently does not commission or grant-fund.

Councillors reviewed current homelessness service provision in relation to supply and demand and have acknowledged that there is a particular shortfall in the current provision of supported accommodation for families, with demand outstripping supply. This leads to the use of other, more expensive options for temporary accommodation such as hotel use and one-off spot purchasing of temporary accommodation. These options often do not lead to positive outcomes and can be more costly in terms of additional on-costs, such as costs for meals and transport for families placed in temporary accommodation outside of the borough.

Part of the site at Grangeway Court has been identified for refurbishment in relation to 12 vacant units on the site. There are plans to bring the units back into use. Executive Board has recently approved the expenditure for the refurbishment of the vacant units. Once the refurbishment has been completed, the site will be reopened as dedicated accommodation for families and for Domestic Abuse provision, both of which are currently lacking within the borough.



9. Councillors to review the funding position for homelessness services including budget, spend and variance

Officers provided Councillors with funding information in relation to both grant-funded homelessness services and the funding of homelessness services that are currently commissioned by the Council.

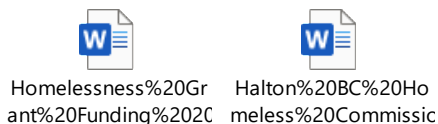
It was noted that for the financial year 2025/2026 the Council has received an uplift through the **Prevention of Homelessness Grant** of £200,000, making the total funding amount £547,000.

The **No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)** funding is to help Asylum Seekers that are contacting the Council for support, by providing accommodation for 2 weeks to allow them to access services and make an application to the Home Office for Refugee status.

The **Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI)** funding has stayed the same at £139,000 which will continue to fund existing Rough Sleeper services in the borough. Changing Lives are providing a Crash Pad service which is being re-modelled to increase the Halton Lodge Crash Pad service from 3 to 6 spaces. Through the RSI funding, Whitechapel provide an Outreach and Move-on process. There are two properties in Market and Lacey Street, predominately for Rough Sleepers who are ready for move on. An outreach support officer will work with people to support their move on into independent accommodation. People can stay in the Market and Lacey Street accommodation for up to 2 years with outreach support.

The Council has received **Winter Pressure Funding** of £400,000 which will help fund an Immigration Officer working within the Daresbury Hotel and Trinity Space, and also a Landlord Accreditation Officer which will complement the work that Environmental Health will be doing with the Renters Reform Bill. The Council is also looking at additional support for clients moving into social housing whereby the Council will assist with the first week's rent, as this is often a barrier for clients moving into new accommodation.

The Council is aiming to work with a number of landlords to create a **Private Leasing Scheme** and have them issue assured shorthold tenancy for 12 months or more. The Council would assist with the rent in advance and pay up to 12-months rent for those clients. The Council would pay the fees up-front and claim the costs back through the discretionary housing payments so there is no delay for the landlords.



RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the Homelessness Working Party's review of Homelessness within the borough, the following recommendations have been identified:

Recommendation	Recommendation Description
Governance	Propose a single reporting line for the scrutiny of homelessness performance, via the relevant Policy & Performance Board, to enable Member oversight and Member direction of Homelessness in the borough.
Governance	Propose a 6-monthly cycle of reporting of Homelessness data and service development activity to the relevant Policy & Performance Board.
Governance	Establish links with Halton BC's corporate Housing Strategy development work regarding understanding the status of, and proposals for the use of empty homes within the borough.
Governance	Clarify governance and reporting lines for the following closely linked priorities which are currently separate to homelessness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing; • Refugees & Asylum Seekers; • Community Safety
Governance	Establish greater contact with Registered Social Landlords regarding repeated Homelessness issues and establish a regular flow of reporting to the relevant Policy and Performance Board - especially regarding empty properties in the borough.
Homelessness Forum	Agree the remit and regularity of Homelessness Forum meetings and associated attendee list.
Service Offer	Understand any gaps in current homelessness services e.g. Grangeway Court Supported Accommodation for Families and consider options for increased provision.
Service Offer	Work alongside Officers regarding the development of the dedicated Rough Sleeper supported accommodation in the borough.

-End-

REPORT TO: Housing and Safer PPB

DATE: 16th September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Public Health

PORTFOLIO: Housing and Environmental Sustainability

SUBJECT: Improving Housing Standards in the Private Rental Sector: The Renters' Rights Bill

WARD(S) Borough wide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the current measures in place to enforce standards in the Private Rental Sector and the new measures proposed in the Government's Renters' Rights Bill.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 There has been a steady increase in the number of private rental properties in the borough in recent years. The 2011 census reported that 11% of households were in the private rental sector. This rose to 14% by the 2021 census. A 2024 study by Metastreet, a housing research consultancy commissioned by the Council, estimated that there are 11,486 dwellings in the private rental sector which represents 19% of the borough's housing stock.

Table 1. Number of households & dwellings by tenure 2011, 2021 & 2024 (Source: ONS & Metastreet 2024)

Tenure	2011 (Households)	2021 (Households)	2024 (Dwellings)
PRS	5,753	8,063	11,486
Social	13,441	13,619	14,122
Owner Occupation	34,118	34,269	35,062
Totals	53,312	55,951	60,670

- 3.2 These figures reflect national factors including the cost of living and the lack of available social rental properties. This mean many households who are unable to buy their own home have little choice but to rent privately.

- 3.3 The 2024 Meta Street study predicted that around 4000 properties in the private rental sector in Halton had at least 1 serious housing hazard.
- 3.4 The Council's Environmental Health team received 172 complaints about housing conditions in the previous year. This indicates there is currently significant under reporting of housing conditions by tenants in the private rental sector. It is hoped that the measures set out in the renters rights' bill will provide greater protection for tenants and make them more confident to report property defects. Further measures to proactively improve standards in the private rental sector will be set out in the Council's housing strategy which is currently undergoing consultation.
- 3.5 Houses in Multiple Occupation form part of the private rental sector. Houses with 5 or more tenants require a license. There are currently 127 licensed HMO's in the borough. The Council know of an additional 73 smaller HMO's that do not require a license. The full number of smaller unlicensed HMO's is unknown as there is currently no requirement for the landlord to notify the Council. It is acknowledged that there are concerns amongst the public and elected members about HMO's. However, they do provide a valuable contribution to the housing market providing much needed accommodation for single person households. The recent Housing Needs Assessment identified that 35% of households in the private rental sector are single person households. Further potential measures to control HMO's will be set out in the Council's housing strategy which is currently undergoing consultation.
- 3.6 The policy section below will set out the current law and policy in place to help the Council enforce property standards and protect tenants. The report will then go on to set out the changes expected in the Governments forthcoming renters rights' bill. It is anticipated these measures will significantly strengthen protection for tenants alongside a longer term aim to raise standards in private rented accommodation.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Current Housing Standards Provisions**

4.1.1 **Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS)**

The scheme applies to all private rental properties including HMO's. It is used by local Councils to assess the impact on the health, safety and welfare of tenants from 29 specified hazards that may be present in a property. Examples include, damp and mould, excess cold and fire safety. If any of these hazards are present, they are assessed to determine if they are category 1 or category 2. Category 1 hazards pose a serious risk to the health and safety of the occupants, and a local authority is under a duty to take appropriate enforcement action. Category 2 hazards are less serious, and a local authority has discretion to determine if enforcement action is required.

4.1.2 In addition to the HHSRS landlords are required to:

- Inspect and maintain the gas installation.
 - Inspect and maintain the electrical installation.
 - Provide smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
 - Provide an Energy Performance Certificate before the property is let.
- Properties must have a minimum energy efficiency rating of E.

4.1.3 **Mandatory HMO Licensing**

HMO properties with 5 or more residents must be licensed and comply with a number of mandatory conditions relating to standards and amenity. These include room space standards, the provision of adequate kitchen and bathroom facilities and fire safety precautions. All HMOs must also comply with the HHSRS. The Council has adopted a set of amenity standards setting out in detail the standards that HMOs must meet in order to obtain a license.

4.1.4 **Enforcement powers**

The current law provides the Council with a range of enforcement powers to protect tenants and ensure landlords comply with their duties. These include improvement notices, prohibition notices and civil penalty notices. The Council also has powers to investigate and take action against illegal eviction and harassment. As a last resort the Council can also prosecute landlords for serious or persistent offending.

4.2 **Renters' Rights Bill**

The Government have announced a number of significant measures to strengthen the rights of tenants and improve standards in the private rental sector. The measures are being progressed through Parliament in a bill known as the "renters' rights bill". The bill is due to receive Royal Assent and become law this Autumn 2025. However, the government have indicated that implementation will be phased over a number of years. The known implementation timetable will be set out below alongside a summary of the measures.

4.2.1 **End of "no fault" evictions.**

The government have announced their intention to provide greater security to tenants in the private rented sector by ending "no fault" evictions. Currently a landlord can issue a "section 21 notice" providing the tenant with two months notice of eviction without having to cite a reason. Once the new law comes into force landlords will only be able to seek possession of the property for a number of existing specified reasons, e.g. serious rent arrears, anti social behaviour or property damage. A landlord will still be able seek possession of a property in order to sell it. However, they will not be able to relist it for rent for a period of 6 months. It is currently unclear what impact the end of no-fault evictions will have. It could lead to an increase in attempts at illegal evictions or landlords may seek possession of the property by claiming one of the legitimate reasons.

4.2.2 **Tenancy agreements**

New laws will end assured short term and fixed term tenancies. Instead, all tenancies will become periodic and will last until the tenant chooses to end the tenancy, or until the landlord seeks eviction for one of the valid reasons set out above. All tenancies must last for a minimum of 12 months instead of the current 6 month term. These measures will provide further security of tenants.

4.2.3 Unfair and discriminatory letting practices.

New laws will prevent unfair and discriminatory letting practices. Landlords and managing agents will no longer be able to invite rental bidding. Properties must be let for the advertised market rent. Landlords and agents will no longer be able to ask for more than the first months rent in advance. Landlords and agents will not be able to unfairly discriminate against tenants for example those in receipt of benefits or families with children.

4.2.4 Unfair rent increases

The law will prevent landlords imposing unfair rental increases. Landlords will only be able to raise rent once within a 12 month period. The rent after any increase should not exceed the current market rate. Unfortunately, unlike the other provisions which can be enforced by the Council, the onus will be on the tenant to refer any unfair rental increase to the new Private Sector Landlord Ombudsman.

4.2.5 Private Sector Landlord Ombudsman

The government will create a Private Sector Landlord Ombudsman to consider and resolve disputes between landlords and tenants. It will be a legal requirement that all landlords sign up to the Ombudsman scheme. Landlords will be required to pay a fee for registration. Landlords who operate through a managing agent will also be required to register. It will become an offence for landlords to let a property if they have not first registered with the landlord ombudsman. The ombudsman will consider complaints made by tenants about their landlord's actions or behaviour. Tenants can raise a complaint for free. The ombudsman can require landlords to issue an apology, provide information and take remedial action.

4.2.6 Private sector landlord database.

All landlords will be required to register themselves and each of their properties on a private sector landlord database. It will be an offence for landlords to rent a property unless they and the property are registered. Local authorities will enforce these provisions and will be able to issue civil penalties of between £7000 and £40,000 for noncompliance. Landlords who register will receive comprehensive advice and guidance on their legal responsibilities. The Council will have access to this database which will provide far greater insight into the location, number and distribution of private rental properties including smaller unlicensed HMOs. The database will assist the Council with any enforcement action by enabling the Council to easily identify the landlord responsible for any property.

4.2.7 **Implementation timeline: tenancy reform, ombudsman and database**

The government have not provided a specific timescale for implementation of these provisions. The guidance appears to suggest implementation will be as soon as possible after Royal Assent; however, the guidance also acknowledges that landlords will need time to adjust to the requirements. Therefore, these provisions are unlikely to take effect until sometime during 2026.

4.2.8 **Awabbs Law**

The case of Two Year old Awabb Ishak has had a profound impact on housing standards and the Government's approach to regulating the social and private rental sectors. Awabb died in December 2000. The coroner ruled his death was due to prolonged exposure to mould spores caused by damp and mould in the social rented property he shared with his parents in Rochdale.

4.2.9 In 2023 the previous governments announced it would introduce "Awabbs Law" in order to prevent similar deaths in the future.

4.2.1 The law which comes into force in October 2025 will require social landlords to fix dangerous damp and mould conditions within a set time limit. They will also need to respond to emergency repairs within 24 hours.

4.2.1 The current Government have announced that the renters' rights bill will extend Awabbs law to the private rented sector, however the proposal will be subject to consultation therefore there is currently no implementation date.

4.2.1 **Decent Homes Standard**

2 The Decent homes standard currently applies to the social rented sector. The Government is currently consulting on amendments to the Decent Homes Standards. The Government have announced that it is their intention, through the renters' rights bill, to extend the Decent Homes Standard to the Private Rental Sector.

4.2.1 The updated Decent Homes Standard will contain 5 Criteria. The Government will provide further detailed guidance on each criteria.

4.2.1 **Criteria A**

4 Property must be free of Category 1 Hazards when assessed against the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme – see 4.1.1.

4.2.1 **Criteria B**

5 Homes meet a reasonable state of repair.

4.2.1 **Criteria C**

6 Homes to have reasonably modern facilities and services.

- 4.2.1 Criteria D
7 Homes to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

- 4.2.1 Criteria E
8 Home to be free of Damp and Mould

The government have announced that reforms to the Decent Homes Standards will not be introduced until 2035 or 2037. The government state this to provide landlords with clarity on the long-term future of regulation.

4.2.19 **Minimum Energy Efficiency Measures**

In addition to the reforms set out in the Renters' Rights Bill the Government is currently consulting on amendments to the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards for rental properties. It is currently a legal requirement that all rental properties meet an energy efficiency standard of E. Landlords must ensure the property they rent has an energy performance certificate. It is illegal to rent a property that does not achieve a minimum rating of E. The Government are consulting on raising the minimum standard to C by 2030.

4.3 **Enforcement and Investigatory Powers**

The Government have announced that the measures will be underpinned with a robust enforcement framework. Local Council's will be able to issue civil penalty notices of between £7000 and £40,000 for breaches of the requirements. These powers will be in addition to existing powers within housing legislation such as improvement notices and prohibition notices.

4.3.1

The government have also announced that Councils will be provided with investigatory powers modelled on those powers provided to Trading Standards teams. Housing Standards enforcement work is currently undertaken by the Environmental Health Team within the Public Protection and Regulatory Services Division. The Trading Standards service also sits within this division enabling a co-ordinated approach to enforcement and investigations.

4.4 **Support for Tenants and Landlords**

The Environmental Health Team will continue to work alongside the Council's Housing Solutions Team to ensure a co-ordinated approach to regulating the private rental sector and implementing the renters' rights bill. The Housing Solutions Team will continue to advocate for tenants in both the private and social rented sectors and liaise with landlords to prevent homelessness and illegal eviction. Responsible landlords will be encouraged to join a new landlord accreditation scheme. Cases relating to property standards or that require enforcement or investigation will be referred to the Environmental Health Team.

4.5 **Boroughwide Housing Strategy**

These new national provisions will be implemented alongside any actions to implement the boroughwide housing strategy. At the time of writing this report a stakeholder consultation on the draft housing strategy has concluded, with the formal consultation anticipated to commence in late August 2025 and conclude in October 2025. The result of this consultation will be incorporated into the final version. It is anticipated the strategy will be presented to Executive Board for approval in October 2025. The Housing Strategy sets out how the Council will work with key partners to ensure all residents have access to healthy, affordable and sustainable homes.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is difficult to assess the full financial and resource implications at this stage without further detailed guidance and a clear implementation timeline from Government. The Government have indicated that local authorities will receive new burdens funding to assist with implementation, however so far no details of funding have been provided. The Government also intend Councils to retain any sums recovered through civil penalty notices. Until a clear picture of compliance rates emerges it is difficult to assess how much income from non-complaint landlords will be achieved. If rates of non-compliance with the new requirements are high current resources are unlikely to be sufficient and additional resources will be required.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The new renters' rights bill provisions, alongside the borough's housing strategy, are intended to provide safe healthy and sustainable homes to ensure residents can live independently for longer in their own home.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The provisions of the renters' right bill aim at addressing problems with the current private sector letting market. Addressing these issues through tenancy and rental reforms will ensure tenants and responsible landlords are protected from the activities of irresponsible and unfair letting practices.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The new renters' rights bill provisions, alongside the borough's housing strategy, are intended to provide safe healthy and sustainable family homes. Children are more vulnerable to respiratory illnesses caused by damp and mould growth and will benefit from the proposals set out in the bill and the decent homes standard.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The renters rights' bill provisions, alongside the borough's housing strategy, will ensure those who are unable to buy their own property, or

secure a housing association home, will be provided with the same protections as social landlord tenants. Tenants in the private sector will benefit from more secure tenure and will be protected from unfair and discriminatory rental practices.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Provisions within the renters rights bill and the housing strategy are aimed at improving the environmental sustainability of homes through improved energy efficiency. The government is currently consulting on increasing the minimum energy efficiency standard for private rental properties to Band C by 2030.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Providing more secure tenancies, and improved property standards, will enable tenants to remain within their established communities near family, schools and their place of work, and avoid the upheaval caused by short term tenancy agreements and no fault evictions.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 As set out in the finance section above there is a risk current resources will not be sufficient to implement these proposals if rates of non-compliance are high. The Government have indicated additional financial resources will be made available however no detail has been provided. Without clear guidance and an implementation timeline from Government it is not possible to fully assess the risk from these measures.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 The provisions in the renters' rights bill are intended to address discriminatory rental practices and ensure that tenants in the private rental sector are provided with the same rights and protections as tenants in the social rented sector.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Improving the energy efficiency of homes to reduce fossil fuel consumption reduces greenhouse gas emissions. There are provisions within the renters' rights bill and the decent homes standards to improve energy efficiency of homes whilst ensuring homes have adequate thermal comfort.

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

'None under the meaning of the Act.'

REPORT TO:	Housing and Safer Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	16 th September 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Community Safety
SUBJECT:	Emergency Planning
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an annual report to the board on the Emergency Planning function and the work programme for the period 2024/25.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Emergency Planning Team

Emergency Planning is a team within Community Safety & Protection. The team consists of an Emergency Planning Manager and two Emergency Planning Officers.

3.2 Statutory Duties

Halton Borough Council, as a Local Authority, has a 'Statutory Duty' to comply with the following legislation:

- Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004.
- Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations (CoMAH) 2015.
- Pipeline Safety Regulations (PSR) 1996.

3.3 Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004

The Act divides local responders into 2 categories, imposing a different set of duties on each. Category:1 organisations are at the core of the response to the majority of emergencies (e.g. Emergency Services, Local Authorities, NHS England).

- 3.4 As a Category:1 Responder, Halton Borough Council is subject to a full set of 'civil protection statutory duties' and is required to:

- Assess the 'risk of emergencies' occurring and use this to inform contingency planning.
- Put in place Emergency Plans.
- Put in place Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements.
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public regarding civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to 'warn, inform and advise' the public in the event of an emergency.
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination.
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.

Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations regarding Business Continuity Management.

3.5 Response

In an emergency, the local authority works with other emergency responders to mitigate the impacts on the local population, taking a leading role in humanitarian assistance and recovery.

3.6 HBC has a 'Major Emergency Plan' in place to enable the activation of an effective, scalable and coordinated response to the declaration of a Major Incident or Major Incident Standby.

3.7 As part of the council's Emergency Planning arrangements there is a 24/7/365 emergency response rota in place. The rota includes an Emergency Planning Officer / Tactical Officer (Head of Service) and Strategic Officer (Director / Strategic Director / CEX) on call at any one point in time. This enables the council to respond appropriately to major incident/standby in partnership with the Cheshire Resilience Forum (CRF) as part of the CRF Major Incident Response Principles.

3.8 Responder Training

The Emergency Planning (EP) team delivered a number of training sessions for all Council responding officers to attend in 2024/25. The EP team also held two 'Exercise Responder Sessions' with all on call officers invited to participate in.

3.9 The EP Team hold a record of attendance of both training and exercising. 84% of on-call senior officers attended the HBC Responder Training over the last 15 months facilitated by the EP team.

3.10 Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations (COMAH) 2015

COMAH applies mainly to the chemical industry, some storage activities, explosives and nuclear sites and other industries, where a threshold quantity of dangerous substances identified in the Regulations are kept or used. The COMAH Regulations requires the authority to prepare adequate Emergency plans to deal with the off-site consequences of possible major accidents at 'Upper Tier' sites.

- 3.11 The COMAH Regulations 2015, places 'nine' industrial sites within Halton as 'Upper Tier' sites. These plans are reviewed and validated as part of the Emergency Planning work programme.
- 3.12 All 'Upper Tier' COMAH sites are required to produce both an 'Internal' and 'External' Emergency COMAH Plan. The 'Internal' Plan is produced by the operator and the 'External' Plan is produced in partnership between Halton Borough Council and the Operator(s).
- 3.13 Due to the complexity and interconnectivity of the six operators at the Runcorn COMAH site, the External COMAH Plan is tested/validated on an annual basis. This is a recommendation by the Competent Authority and has been implemented for a number of years.
- 3.14 **Exercises in 2024/25**
- Exercise Halton 18 - Major live exercise delivered – 30th May 2024
 - Exercise Iconichem 5 - Major live exercise delivered – 17th October 2024.
- 3.15 External Plan updates:
- Univar - Published May 2024
 - RSCO – Published Feb 2025
 - Iconichem – Published June 2025
- 3.16 **Business Continuity Arrangements**
- All services in the Council are responsible to produce and for the content of their service business continuity plans & arrangements.
- 3.17 In November 2024 the EP team facilitated a Business Continuity exercise with a focus on a loss of IT. Following the exercise the EP team launched a new Business Continuity template for all services to complete and held workshops in support of this piece of work.
- 3.18 The EP Team hold a record of all completed service plan updates

which inform the Corporate Business Continuity Plan, updated by the EP team accordingly on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer.

3.19 Rest Centres

There are a number of pre-identified Council owned venues across the borough that can be activated as a Rest Centre if required during an incident.

3.20 The EP Team have engaged on a recruitment process for volunteer rest support staff (HBC Employees) and facilitated rest centre training during 2024/25.

3.21 Training is ongoing with a Council rest centre exercise scheduled for September 2025.

3.22 Boards and Meetings

Emergency Planning are represented on a number of multi-agency boards and meetings including Halton Events Safety Advisory Group, Creamfields Safety Advisory Group & Liverpool John Lennon Airport Safety Liaison Group.

3.23 Emergency Planning are key members of a number of Cheshire Resilience Forum groups including Delivery Board, Industrial Issues and Tactical Contest.

3.24 Partnership Working

Emergency Planning arrangements for Cheshire are governed by Cheshire Resilience Forum. The EP team actively work with the forum to ensure risks are understood and appropriate measures are in place and reviewed regularly.

3.25 Devolution

The Cheshire Resilience Forum (CRF) consists of the four Cheshire local authorities; Cheshire West & Chester, Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington.

3.26 The Cheshire and Warrington devolution deal is an agreement between the UK government and the local authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington to create a Mayoral Combined Authority.

3.27 Halton is a key member of and works in close collaboration with the CRF particularly given HBC's alignment with the Police and Fire authorities. These arrangements have worked well in the past and Halton is currently assured this will continue. The detail will need to further be understood in due course and reported.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None to report.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None to report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Emergency Planning arrangements and preparedness to respond to major incidents supports residents and enables the community to have awareness and appropriate responses.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

A safe Halton supports the business sector and economic growth. The emergency planning function liaises with the private sector to ensure statutory requirements are met, a significant contribution to sustaining businesses in the local economy.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Emergency Planning response arrangements are universal and consider the needs of different cohorts of residents.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Emergency Planning response arrangements include supporting the Boroughs vulnerable residents in a major incident situation.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The team seeks opportunities in its working practice and procurement measures to support delivery of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Emergency Planning response arrangements include supporting the Boroughs vulnerable residents in a major incident situation.

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 A failure to comply with statutory requirements as set out in 3.2 could incur legal action against the Council and significant reputational harm.

7.2 A failure to adequately work to understand risk, ensure preparedness, contingency and response arrangements also has the potential for severe legal sanctions for the Council.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None to report.

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**

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

REPORT TO:	Housing and Safer Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	16 th September 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Community Safety
SUBJECT:	Counter Terrorism
WARD(S)	Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update the board on the role of Prevent and the work undertaken for the 2024/25 operating year and first quarter of 2025/26.
- 1.2 To update the board on the current actions HBC are taking in regard to the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board approves the action HBC is taking in regard to the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Statutory Duties

Section 26 of the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the Act) places a duty on certain bodies ("specified authorities" listed in Schedule 6 to the Act), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

- 3.2 The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also known as Martyn's Law, introduces new legal duties for those responsible for certain public premises and events to improve preparedness and protection against terrorist attacks. This includes local authorities, who play a key role in implementation and oversight of the legal duties.

3.3 **Prevent**

Prevent is a national programme that aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It works to ensure that people who are susceptible to radicalisation are offered appropriate interventions, and communities are protected against radicalising influences.

3.4 As part of the Liverpool City Region, Liverpool City Council's Prevent Team work and engage with Halton and the other city region local authorities to support the delivery of Prevent as they are a Home Office funded area. Halton does not receive any dedicated or additional funding to deliver the required approaches.

3.5 The Emergency Planning Manager within the Community Safety & Protection service, is currently the Prevent lead and point of contact with the Home Office, supported at a strategic level by the Director of Community & Greenspaces

3.6 **Prevent Benchmarking Process**

Each benchmark reiterates key information set out in the Prevent duty guidance and illustrates how local authorities can put it into practice when fulfilling the Prevent duty.

3.7 These benchmarks do not constitute legal requirements and not satisfying a benchmark does not in itself mean that there has been a failure to fulfil the Prevent duty.

3.8 The Home Office tests out compliance with the benchmarks as part of its annual assurance programme to monitor the delivery of Prevent. The benchmarking process focus' on:

- multi-agency partnership group
- local risk assessment process
- partnership plan
- referral pathway
- training programme
- reducing permissive environments
- communications and engagement
- channel panel

3.9 Assessing either 'not met', 'met' or 'exceeded'.

3.10 The Home Office wrote to the Chief Executive Officer in May 2025 to advise Halton met all the criteria for the annual Prevent benchmarking exercise for 2024/25.

3.11 Multi-agency Partnership Group

Halton has a multi-agency Prevent Delivery Group (PDG) established which meets quarterly and all specified authorities are represented. The Director of Community and Greenspace Chairs the meeting.

3.12 Local Risk Assessment Process

The risk assessment template has been revised so that there is now a clear link from the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) to the risks detailed in the risk assessment.

3.13 Partnership Plan

The Prevent action plan has been updated and demonstrates a direct connection to the risk assessment and CTLP. The action plan is discussed at quarterly PDG meetings and is a live document.

3.14 Referral Pathway

There is an internal share point site that includes instructions for Council staff on how to make a Prevent referral. The national referral form is used, and referrals are directed to CTPNW and to social care if the individual is under 18 years.

3.15 Training Programme

There is an internal Prevent share point site available to all council employees containing links to the Home Office Prevent e-learning.

3.16 Management Team have recently agreed to add the Home Office Prevent Awareness Training to be mandatory for all Council Employees. Work is ongoing to add the training to the e-learning staff training portal to launch early autumn 2025.

3.17 A tiered training plan has been produced that sets out the different staff roles and levels of Prevent training required in the local authority, for example with frontline social care staff receiving more in-depth training such as the Home Office face-to-face training.

3.18 The Council is proactive in pursuing additional training opportunities available including training offered by the Liverpool Prevent team, Department for Education and Police who have presented to Members, Headteachers, Safeguarding Leads, Council Social Care staff and the Halton Refugee and Asylum Seeker multi-agency forum.

3.19 A Council Officer Prevent working group has been established to

audit Prevent activity across the local authority.

3.20 Reducing Permissive Environments

The Council has Prevent Duty Guidance available for staff working within the authorities' venues for hire. The venue hire guidance is available on the Council's share point page and circulated to venue management and staff.

3.21 The Prevent Lead is co-developing with the Council's Legal Services a front facing guidance document to be circulated to all licensed premises within the borough.

3.22 The Council's IT Data & Security Team have been working with Policing colleagues to ensure mechanisms to block access to terrorist related websites on the HBC IT network are in place for all users with a corporate log in, schools and public access IT such as libraries. The Council also has an appropriate IT acceptable use policy in place for staff with a corporate log in those accords to the requirements.

3.23 Communications & Engagement

A communication mechanism to circulate Home Office Prevent updates and training offers from Liverpool has been established with PDG members.

3.24 A counter terrorism Members awareness session was delivered in November 2024 in partnership with Liverpool City Council.

3.25 The Councils Emergency Planning Team incorporated Prevent on its annual awareness session for Members in July 2024 and a paper and presentation on Prevent was delivered to the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board by the Prevent Delivery Group Chair in November 2024.

3.26 The Council Officer Working Group will capture any Prevent activity taking place across the borough and communications and engagement activity will be reviewed in line with this.

3.27 Partnership working with the Liverpool City Council and Police has resulted in increased engagement with schools, elected members, social services and community groups over 2024/25. Ongoing partnership working will ensure this continues.

3.28 Halton participates in Prevent awareness week each October in collaboration with Liverpool who leads and co-ordinates the overall programme for the city region.

3.29 Channel Panel

Channel Panel is a multi-agency safeguarding programme under the Prevent strategy, designed to support individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

- 3.30 A fully established Channel process is in place across Halton, Chaired by the Executive Director of Adult Social Care with the Executive Director Environment & Regeneration being Vice-Chair.
- 3.31 **The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025**
The Act often referred to as PROTECT is commonly known as Martyn's Law. It is designed to improve public safety requiring certain premises and events to prepare for potential terrorist attacks.
- 3.32 Purpose: -
- enacted in response to domestic terror attacks and inquiries like the Manchester Arena Inquiry.
 - Aims to enhance protective security and organisational preparedness across the UK.
- 3.33 Scope: -
- Applies to public premises and events where large numbers of people gather.
 - Establishes a tiered approach **standard duty premises** 200 – 799 people. **Enhanced duty premises/qualifying events** 800+ people
- 3.34 Requirements: -
- **Standard duty premises** must notify the Security Industry Authority (SIA), implement public protection procedures i.e. evacuation, lockdown, communication protocols; no physical upgrades are required.
 - **Enhanced duty premises/events** must implement additional protection measures to reduce vulnerability and harm. Document procedures and designate a senior responsible officer individual and submit plans to the SIA.
- 3.35 Enforcement: -
- The SIA will act as the regulator providing guidance and support, investigate non-compliance, impose penalties (up to £18 million or 5% of global revenue and restrictions for serious breaches
- 3.36 An officer working group is established and chaired by Head of Service for Stadium and Markets. The objectives of Protect Duty working group are:
1. Deliver on the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act
 2. Assessing the impact of the legislation on the Council
 3. Explore the resource requirements based on the requirements.

- 4. Maintain oversight on all Statutory Protect Duty requirements
- 5. Work collaboratively on the Councils PROTECT action plan and situational risk assessment.

3.37 **Protect**

HBC has engaged on the offer from Counter Terrorism (CT) Police to deliver training for council employees. Facilitated by the Emergency Planning Team, a number of sessions have taken place including SCan Customer Facing which was attended by over 80 employees from across a number of services in the authority and SCan training for CCTV operatives.

- 3.38 Other services such as the Stadium & Leisure Services have also engaged directly with CT Police regarding advice and training for staff.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The new legislation will impact on local policy in terms of premises and events. This will be reviewed and relevant policies identified and amended.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None to Report

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Community Safety & Protection functions directly impact on generating a cleaner and safer Halton. How residents feel about where they live impacts on their behaviours and resilience contributing to strong, vibrant communities.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

A safe Halton supports the business sector and economic growth.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The impacts are universal across all cohorts to facilitate safe environments for all accessing venues and events.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Community Safety response arrangements include supporting the Boroughs vulnerable residents in a major incident situation.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The team seeks opportunities in its working practice and procurement measures to support delivery of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

- 6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**
Community Safety response arrangements include supporting the Boroughs vulnerable residents in a major incident situation.
- 7.0 Risk Analysis**
- 7.1 Accountability and enforcement for PROTECT will be with the Security Industries Authority.
- 8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**
- 8.1 None to report.
- 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**
- ‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

REPORT TO: Housing and Safer Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 16th September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety

SUBJECT: Community Safety Division - Enforcement & CCTV Update

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an annual update to the board on progress and the work programme for Environmental Enforcement & CCTV service areas of the Community Safety & Protection Division.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The report provides an update on the ongoing efforts to address environmental crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) within the community, and the role and effectiveness of closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems in deterring crime, gathering evidence, and improving public safety.
- 3.2 While environmental crime and ASB continues to be a persistent challenge for communities and local authorities, this report details the progress made in utilising our designated powers, effective partnership working alongside other strategies, to mitigate its impact and foster safer environments.
- 3.3 **Environmental Crime & Waste Enforcement**
The Environmental Enforcement Team consists of one Principal Enforcement Manager, two Enforcement Officers, one Anti-Social Behaviour Officer and currently there is a two year fixed term pilot resourcing two Neighbourhood Patrol Officers to August 2026. The permanent is at full establishment, however, there are some ongoing step-up secondments whilst the Enforcement and CCTV Manager post is recruited to and one NPO is currently vacant.
- 3.4 During the operating year 2024/25 the enforcement team have been involved with investigating 295 incidents ranging from a single

refuse sack in an entry to fly-tipping of large amounts of building waste. Other investigations include green waste etc. dog fouling complaints, littering complaints, storage and management of commercial waste generated from business premises, incorrect/nuisance storage of waste receptacles, waste being stored on private land, and other forms of environmental crime.

- 3.5 As a result of these investigations and carrying out interviews under caution in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), Officers have been able to take 335 actions including, the issuing of fixed penalty notices (61), issuing of statutory notices (27), the issuing of advisory and warning letters (233) and securing 14 convictions in Magistrates Court against offenders resulting in a criminal record for each offender and financial penalties totalling £10,272.
- 3.6 This work will align with emerging work on waste and recycling including behaviour change and the borough needing to do more recycling.
- 3.7 A pilot of Neighbourhood Patrol Officers has been established providing two officers patrolling the borough enforcing PSPO for dog control and tackling littering offences. The initiative commenced in September for a period of two years supported by external funding. An initial piece of work was auditing signage across the borough to ensure correct signage to support compliance and enforcement, this identified updated signage at sites across the borough. The NPO's also took the opportunity to be visible and engage positively with residents ahead of direct enforcement.
- 3.8 In practice, the initiative has been challenging, initially recruitment was unsuccessful, it took some time to secure two employees into the posts and staff absence and retention have also been challenging resulting thus far in minimal impact. Further recruitment is underway and the initiative will be evaluated with wider consideration of potential approaches.
- 3.9 For the year ahead the team will be looking at increasing community engagement in order to increase awareness of waste related crime. The team have developed a calendar of campaigns around general waste management, householders responsibility, registration of carriers. The team will take an active role in engaging with private landlords in the Borough to ensure compliance with waste presentation and collection procedures at their tenanted properties.
- 3.10 The team are also progressing arrangements for multi-agency roadside checks with the Police, VOSA, Court Bailiffs and HM Revenue and Customs. These have proved very successful in the past with vehicles being seized, arrests being made and FPN's being issued. Details will be shared during the 2025/26 operating

year.

3.11 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

The ASB service consists of one ASB Officer, that covers the whole of the borough. This post was vacant for a lengthy period however, an officer is now established in the role and has developed positive working relationships with our Community Safety partners including the Boroughs Registered Social Landlords, Local Policing Units, Cheshire Fire & Rescue, Adult & Children's Safeguarding teams and the Domestic Abuse team, pooling resources and subsequent powers in order to deal with a wide array of Anti-Social Behaviour.

3.12 In the operating year 2024/25 the service dealt with one Anti-social behaviour case review.

3.13 As an average there are ten open cases being supported by the ASB Officer. The service has also recently secured funding from the Police and Crime Commissioners' Office, as part of a wider Cheshire project, to utilise the services of Remedi, one of the UK's leading facilitators of Restorative Justice services across the youth and adult criminal justice arena who will be offering a mediation service for those cases that meet the threshold agreed through the Problem Solving Group.

3.14 The Council's Enforcement & CCTV Manager provides lead officer support to Halton Problem Solving Group, multi-agency officer sub-group to the Boroughs statutory Community Safety Partnership, Safer Halton which meets monthly to review problem matters to the borough to set out collaborative approaches and agree resources to tackle, manage, mitigate and resolve significant community safety issues in Halton.

3.15 In the next operating year, the ASB Service will be rolling out of a referral process to the Boroughs larger RSL's for the use of Community Protection Warnings and Notices to enable them to manage small scale ASB within their communities.

3.16 CCTV

The service is 24/7 365 days of the year. It has experienced some staff turnover during the operating year with four new Operators joining the team helping to ensure that the service is fully operational. Not only is this imperative for public safety reasons but also ensures that the team can meet the requirements of the Service Level Agreement that is in place for the monitoring of the Mersey Gateway Network.

3.17 The service continues to play a key role in assisting the emergency services in keeping our communities and residents safe. During the 2024/25 operating year the team were involved in **389** persons being detained and stop searched, **153** persons being arrested,

assisted in locating **16** missing persons, and **67** concerns for safety. The Operators have also worked alongside the Police providing observations and intel in relation to numerous operations which has also seen the seizure of a number of illegal e-bikes and e-scooters removed from Halton's streets and the perpetrators dealt with accordingly by the local policing units.

- 3.18 In the next 12 months we will be reviewing our CCTV service with the long-term goal of being able to offer a 24/7 surveillance monitoring service to external users and businesses within the Borough. This will not only contribute to tackling crime & disorder whilst supporting residents to feel safe but would present us with a potential opportunity to generate a revenue stream to the service. There is also a wider work programme in its infancy to future proof the service and ensure a co-ordinated approach to the Councils CCTV needs.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council is required to ensure compliance with the Surveillance Camera Commissioner arrangements set out in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council have agreed investment into the CCTV service to enable a work programme to invest, advance and future proof the service.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Enforcement and public surveillance tackle anti-social and criminal behaviours and provides reassurance to the Boroughs residents. How residents feel about where they live impacts on their behaviours and resilience contributing to strong, vibrant communities.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

A safe Halton supports the business sector and economic growth. The CCTV function provides surveillance across the Borough, this provides re-assurance and support to businesses, retailers, and service providers.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The function includes the Boroughs Community Safety Partnership, a multi-agency approach to services to support a safer Halton including anti-social behaviour; this work focusses on seeking proactive measures along with partner agencies to provide

diversionary activities, deter criminal behaviours and risks of exploitation.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Positive enforcement activities and anti-social behaviour (ASB) interventions can significantly contribute to tackling inequality and supporting vulnerable individuals. By addressing ASB, communities can create safer and more inclusive environments, particularly for those most at risk of experiencing its negative impacts. Effective ASB strategies, including early intervention programs, support services for victims, and community engagement, can help reduce the disproportionate burden of ASB on marginalised groups.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The division seeks opportunities in its working practice and procurement measures to support delivery of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The divisions functions aim to address community concerns whilst delivering service for vulnerable residents and working to improve behaviours to improve resident's experiences of where they live.

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 Failure to tackle environmental crime, support victims of ASB, facilitating multi-agency responses and adequately provide public surveillance would directly impact the quality of the borough's environment, criminal activity thus impacting the investment proposition and civic pride.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The services are universal. There is focus with marginalised communities to support access to services and respond to cultural and faith needs.

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

'None under the meaning of the Act.'

REPORT TO: Housing and Safer Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 16th September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety
Housing and Environmental Sustainability

SUBJECT: Performance Management Reports for Quarter 1 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 first quarter period to 30th June 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:
- Community Safety & Protection
 - Risk & Emergency Planning
 - Drug & Alcohol Action
 - Domestic Violence
 - Housing
- 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 first quarterly 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.

Housing and Safer – Priority Based Monitoring Report Q1

Reporting Period: 1st April to 30th June

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the first quarter of 2025 / 26 for service areas within the remit of the Housing & Safer 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.
- Community Safety & Protection
 - Risk & Emergency Planning
 - Drug & Alcohol Action
 - Domestic Violence
 - Housing
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 5 of this report.
- 1.4 Corporate Priorities



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

Plan on a Page



2.0 High Priority Equality Actions

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

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









3.0 Performance Overview








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

Community Safety & Protection







Key Objectives / milestones

Corporate Priority	Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Community Safety & Protection
ERD 31	Deliver the statutory requirements and services that support victims of Domestic Abuse as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021



Milestone:	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Number of referrals into the Domestic Abuse Service for support to victims.	 	There have been 521 referrals received in Q1, this is an increase of 60 referrals from Q4 (461)
Number of days cases are open.	 	In Q1 average cases open for 27 days, marginal increase since Q4 (24) and impacted by complexity of cases
Number of cases closed.	 	In keeping with a slightly higher number of referrals, 96 cases closed in Q1 which is slightly higher than Q4 (89)
Repeat referral rate.	 	Q1 referral rate is 50% , no significant change from Q4 (49%)

Number of referrals into the Domestic Abuse Service for perpetrators	 	Q1 received 35 referrals, an increase from 22 in Q4; this could be reflective of increased awareness of the perpetrator offer
Number of days cases are open.	 	Q1, 39 days, a reduced case length from 53 in the previous quarter which enables increased service capacity
Number of cases closed	 	Q1 14 cases closed, an increase from 7 in the previous quarter
Repeat referral rate	 N / A	Q1 9% referral rate; incomparable to Q4 where the offer had recently commenced


Corporate Priority	Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Community Safety & Protection
ERD 32	Ensure preparedness and risk and resilience in Emergency Planning for Halton as set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Milestone:	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Delivery of two COMAH exercises per year to ensure the boroughs nine COMAH sites complete an exercise every 3 years	 	<p>Exercise Lanxess 4 was delivered in May and followed by a multi-agency debrief; the exercise report was published in June 2025.</p> <p>Annual meeting with the competent authority (EA/HSE) took place in June with no concerns raised for HBC.</p>
Number of Emergency Planning training sessions delivered to ensure responders are equipped to deliver effective responses to major incidents and standby ensuring that the Council has robust preparedness.	 	<p>Several senior officers took part in Exercise Lanxess 4 in May 2025.</p> <p>3 training sessions delivered in Q1</p> <p>1 bespoke training session delivered in Q1.</p>
100% responders attending training sessions	 	Since 2024/25 into Q1 2025/26 - 84% of Responding Officers attended training.



Corporate Priority	Priority Five - Working Towards a Greener Future Community Safety & Protection
ERD 33	To work towards a cleaner, greener Halton applying statutory powers as set out in the Environment Protection Act 1990 & Environment Act 2021

Milestone:	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Issue a minimum of 15 fixed penalty notices (FPN's) per quarter		Q1 total is 9 ; reduced staff capacity has impacted on the number of FPN's issued in the first quarter. However, the service anticipates achieving the annual target as it experiences seasonal variation.
Achieve minimum of three prosecutions for environmental crime per quarter.		<p>Q1 total 0; there are 3 cases pending listing at Court by the Magistrates. There are also 5 files in progress for offences committed in this quarter.</p> <p>With the number of cases ongoing and those awaiting listing the service anticipates the annual target of 12 prosecutions will be met.</p>

Corporate Priority	Priority Six - Valuing and Appreciating Halton and our Community Community Safety & Protection
ERD 34	To co-ordinate an effective Community Safety Partnership, Safer Halton as set out in Section 6 Crime & Disorder Act 1998 placing the duty on responsible Authorities


Milestone:	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Overall crime figures for Halton		Total crimes recorded across Halton in Q1 2,850 compared to the same quarter in the previous year (April to June 24), this is a 11.9% decrease (3,235 offences/-385 offences).

Corporate Priority	Priority Two - Building a Strong Sustainable Local Economy. Community Safety & Protection
ERD 35	Ensure a fit for purpose surveillance service that contributes to tackling crime & disorder whilst supporting residents to feel safe in the borough.

Milestone:	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Minimum of 80% of public surveillance cameras to be fully operational.		In Q1, 75% of cameras were fully operational however, it is worth noting that 86% of what are classified as priority one cameras where fully operational during this period.
Minimum of 90% fully operational control room weeks		In Q1, 91% achieved.





Housing – Planning & Development



Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong Sustainable Local Economy. Planning & Development
ERD 12	Providing new homes that meet Halton's needs

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Number of homes granted planning permission		The Planning Policy team submits quarterly reports to Government (DELTA) and have recorded the following for April to June 2025 – 360 units
Number of annual completions of market and affordable homes		Indicative number of market and affordable homes total 60 affordable homes of various types 348 market housing

Housing – Homelessness

Corporate Priority	Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need Community Safety & Protection
ASC objective 6	Annual review of the Homelessness Strategy to determine if any changes or updates are required

Milestone:	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Number of homeless presentations made to the Local Authority for assistance, in accordance with Homelessness Act 2017 (Relief, Prevention, Homeless, Advice)	 	<p>2024/25 Actual = 3988 2025/26 Target = 4500 2025/26 Q1 = 961</p> <p>Q1 data stats broken down as follows; Presentations = 961 Relief = 217 Main duty = 164 Prevention = 307 Advice = 273</p> <p>There continues to be an increase in homelessness nationally. Halton has seen an increase in family presentations, due to no fault S21 notice seeking possessions, placing additional pressure upon temporary accommodation providers. The main emphasis is placed upon prevention, and many clients are prevented from homelessness after the officers have provided advice and assistance and prevention incentives available to resolve the identified issues.</p>
Local Authority accepted a statutory duty to homeless households in accordance with homelessness Act 2002 (Number)	 	<p>2024/25 Actual = 911 2025/26 Target = 1500 2025/26 Q1 = 164</p> <p>There has been an increase in the homelessness acceptance duty. This is partly due to the increase in no fault eviction notices and affordability, whereby, the rents charged are far greater than the awarded local housing allowance.</p>

		Accommodation continues to be a barrier, especially for families
Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation (Hostel, Bed & Breakfast)	 	<p>2024/25 Actual = Hostels = Single 1260 Families = 210 Hotels = Single 21 Families = 56</p> <p>2025/26 Target = Hostels 2500 combined Hotels 150 combined</p> <p>2025/26 Q1 = Hostels Singles = 321 Families = 70 Hotels Singles = 7 Families = 11</p> <p>Due to the increase in homelessness this has placed additional pressure upon temporary accommodation providers, resulting in many clients being placed temporarily in hotels.</p> <p>There continues to be an increase in families presenting as homeless, for the above stated reasons. The service has a robust process in place to transfer families from hotels into commissioned services as quickly as possible, with concerted efforts being made to increase both temporary and long term accommodation provision</p>

4.0 Financial Statements

COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE

Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2025

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

Comments on the above figures

Net spend against the Community and Greenspaces department is forecast to be £0.134m over the approved budget profile by the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

Employee spend continues to be an area providing underspend for the department into the new financial year, forecast spend being £0.580m under the approved budget profile. There continue to be vacancies held for restructures taking place contributing to the underspend. However, due to the nature of the services within this department, agency and service expenditure will also rise in order to facilitate the very visible services provided to the residents of Halton.



In previous years Waste Disposal Contracts have contributed to an underspend for the department, however, due to the rise in costs last year, it is unlikely to see an underspend going forward. 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.


Estimated spend on premises costs is forecast to be £0.139m over budget in 2025/26. Premises costs have been built into the 2025/26 budget for Halton Leisure Centre, which did provide an underspend in the previous financial year. Higher stadium utility costs were offset from this and therefore will continue to be a budget pressure this year. There is more focus on internal services that can be provided (See £0.155m overachieved Internal Fees Income at outturn), and should this continue it can be utilised to offset the premises costs going forwards.

Supplies and Services is forecasting an overspend of £0.176m 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.

One of the key pressures within the 2025/26 financial year, as Halton Leisure Centre is a new site there is potential that it does/does not meet budgeted expectations and could have significant impacts on the outturn position.

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	0	100		Green waste charges have been increased to £50.

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		
		by neighbouring councils.				
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		

Adult Social Care**Revenue Operational Budget as at 31 May 2025**

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

Comments on the above figures

The above information relates to Adult Social Care, excluding Community Care and Care Homes. Net Department Expenditure, is currently £0.055m under budget profile at the end of the second period of the financial year.

Current Expenditure projections indicate a balanced budget at the end of the financial year.

Employee Related Spend

The projected full-year cost is above the annual budget by £0.265m. The unbudgeted agency costs are in respect of covering vacant posts, particularly in terms of front-line Care Management and Mental Health Team posts. Due to ongoing and increase in vacancies, there has been an increase in Agency staff use, with the continued use of these Agency staff members being forecasted until the end of the financial year. Agency expenditure across the division as a whole at the end of May 2025 stood at £0.280m, with a full-year spend of £1.567m projected.

Supplies and Services related spend

The projected £0.052m full-year spend above budget relates to an increased volume of caseload in respect of Deprivation Of Liberty Standards (DoLS) assessments. Spend to May 2025 was £0.018m with total spend for the financial year forecast at £0.215m, in line with the previous financial year's spend.

Transport related spend

Transport and transport recharge costs were substantially above budget in the previous financial year. A review of costs, and apportionment of recharged costs between Children's and Adults Services is ongoing.

Housing Strategy related spend

Housing Strategy initiatives included in the report include the Rough Sleeping Initiative and the Homelessness Prevention Scheme. The Homelessness Prevention scheme is an amalgamation of the previous Flexible Homelessness Support and Homelessness Reduction schemes, and is wholly grant funded. It is assumed that unspent funding is carried forward to the following financial year.

Income

Income for the Department as a whole is over budget profile by £0.009m with a projected under achieved target at the end of the financial year being £0.108m. The main areas making up the projected under achievement of target income are Community Meals and Telehealthcare.



2025/26 Savings

Progress against 2025/26 approved savings for the Adult Social Care Directorate are included at Appendix A.

2025/26 Adult Social Care Directorate Savings

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		
Housing Solutions	474	Remodel the current service based on good practice evidence from other areas.	125	0	u	Currently Under Review
Voluntary Sector Support	N/A	Review the support provided by Adult Social Care and all other Council Departments, to voluntary sector organisations. This would include assisting them to secure alternative funding in order to reduce their dependence upon Council funding. A target saving phased over two years has been estimated.	100	0	✓	Achieved
Community Wardens/Telecare Service		Community Wardens/Telecare Service – a review will be undertaken of the various options available for the future delivery of these services, with support from the	0	280	u	Currently Under Review

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




5.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

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

Direction of Travel Indicator

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

REPORT TO: Housing & Safer Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 16 September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Finance Director

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Councilwide Spending as at 31 May 2025

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report the Council's overall revenue spending position as at 31 May 2025, together with the latest 2025/26 year-end outturn forecast. In addition, details of the 2024/25 year-end outturn position are also provided for information.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That;

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 10 July 2025 the Executive Board received the report shown in the Appendix. This presented details of Councilwide revenue spending by each Department as at 31 May 2025 along with forecasts to year-end, and outlines the reasons for key variances between spending and budget.
- 3.2 Given the scale of the Council's current financial challenges, Executive Board requested that a copy of the report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board for information.
- 3.3 A Councilwide monitoring report is presented to Executive Board every two months and the attached report covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 May 2025. Given it is early in the financial year, the report focused solely upon revenue spending by each Department, however, subsequent reports will also include spending against the capital programme.
- 3.4 Within the report, Appendix 1 provides a Councilwide summary of revenue spending, while Appendix 2 presents details relating to each Department. In addition to spending as at 31 May 2025, the latest year-end forecasts of variances between revenue spending and budget are provided.
- 3.5 The Executive Board also received on 12 June 2025 a report of the 2024/25 Councilwide outturn, which can be accessed via the following link;

<https://members.halton.gov.uk/documents/s79891/202425%20Spending%20as%20at%2031%20March%202025.pdf>

The final 2024/25 year-end outturn variances have been included in Appendix 1 below, by way of comparison to the current year's figures.

- 3.6 Appendix 3 indicates progress with implementation of previously approved budget savings for 2024/25 and 2025/26. Appendix 4 presents an update of the budget risk register.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

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

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

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

- 5.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

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

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

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 There are a number of financial risks within the budget. However, the Council has internal controls and processes in place to ensure that spending remains in line with budget as far as possible.

- 6.2 A budget risk register of significant financial risks is maintained and is included at Appendix 4 of the attached report.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 None.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None

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

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

APPENDIX

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 10 July 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Finance

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: 2025/26 Spending as at 31 May 2025

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

3.0 RECOMMENDED: That;

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Revenue Spending

- 3.1 Appendix 1 presents a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 31 May 2025 and Appendix 2 provides detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms, net Council spending as at 31 May 2025 is £1.073m over budget. The outturn forecast for the year estimates that net spending will be over budget by £6.185m if no corrective action is taken.
- 3.2 The forecast position is of great concern and action to reduce net spend must be taken immediately. Without action being taken the Council will

not be in a position to provide a balanced budget by financial year-end and will further add to borrowings which will need to be taken through Exceptional Financial Support (EFS).

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

3.10 In setting the 2025/26 budget, inflation of 2% was provided for the pay award. Based on the initial 3.2% pay offer to Trade Unions it is now clear that budgetary growth for the pay award is insufficient, it is currently forecast the additional cost of the 3.2% pay offer will add approximately £1m to the Council's running cost for the year. This additional cost is included within the reported forecast position for the year.

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

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

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

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

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

Revenue - Operational Spending

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

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

(i) Children and Families Department

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

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

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

Employee Expenditure

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

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

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

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

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

Supplies and Services

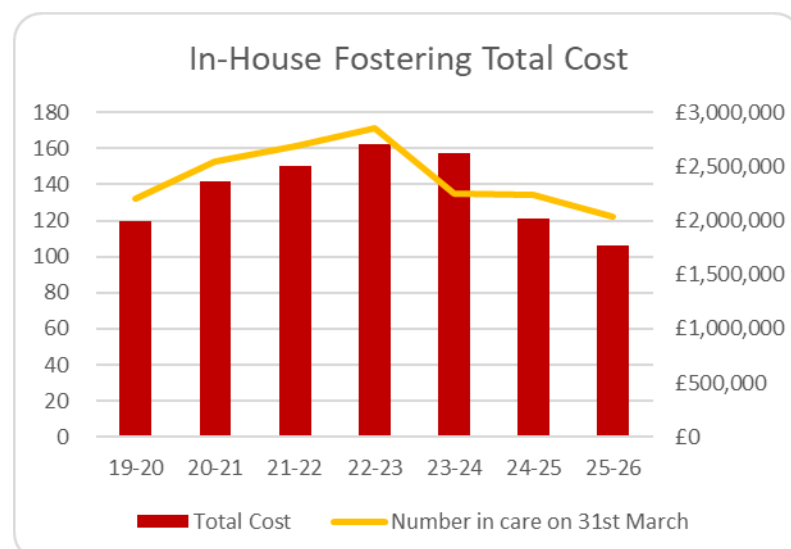
Supplies and services expenditure is forecast to be £1.057m over budget profile at the end of the financial year. Supplies and Services is diverse and covers a number of areas including nursery fees, consultancy, translation costs, equipment and support provided to young people.

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

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

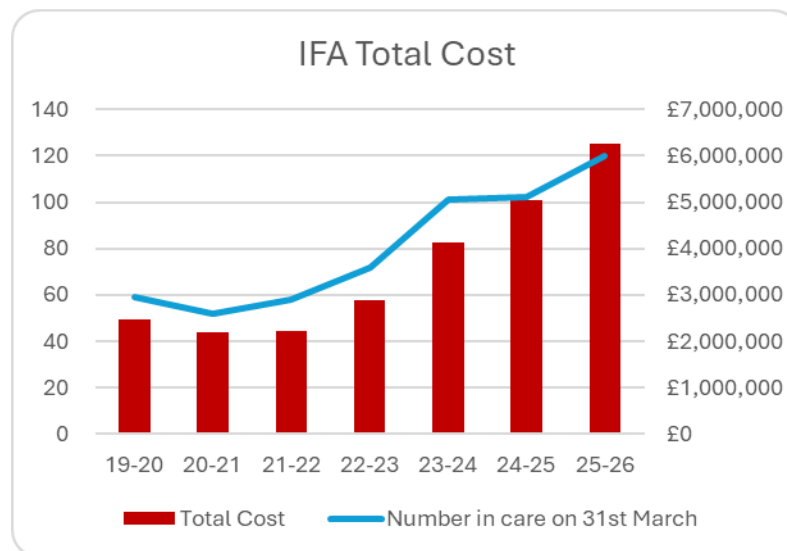
Fostering

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



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

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



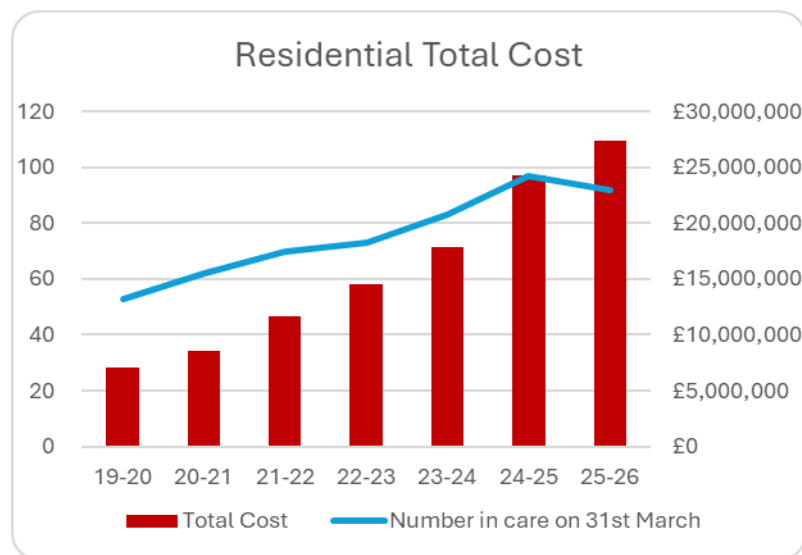
Residential Care

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

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

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

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



(ii) **Adult Social Care Directorate**

Community Care

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

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

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

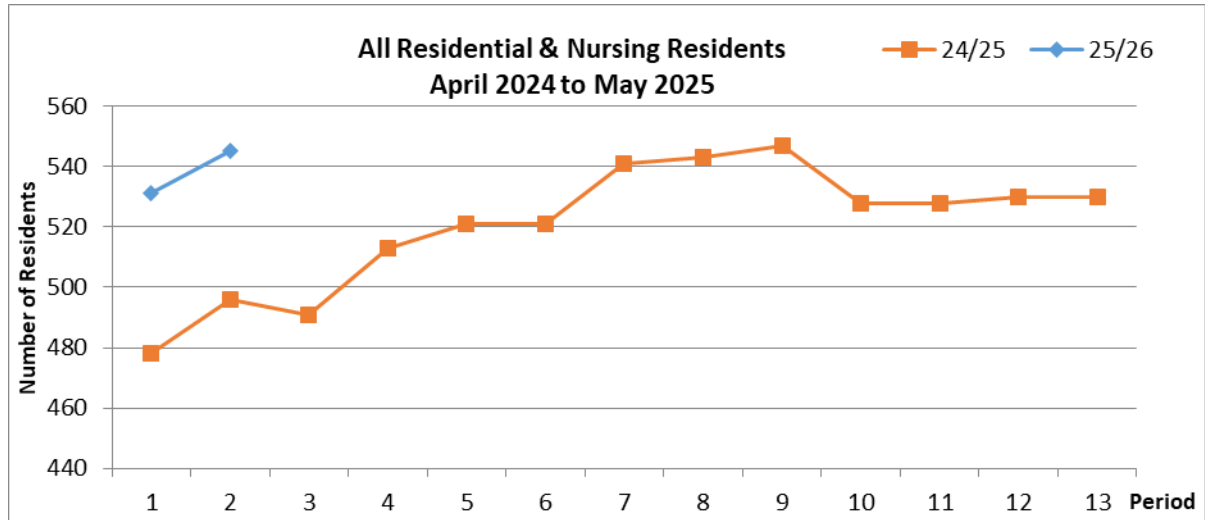
- Reduction of 1 to 1 packages of care if health’s responsibility
- Review 15 minutes packages of domiciliary care to identify medicine prompts which are health’s financial responsibility
- Ensure assessments carried out on discharge from hospital are complete and appropriate
- Maximise internal care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

Residential & Nursing Care

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

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

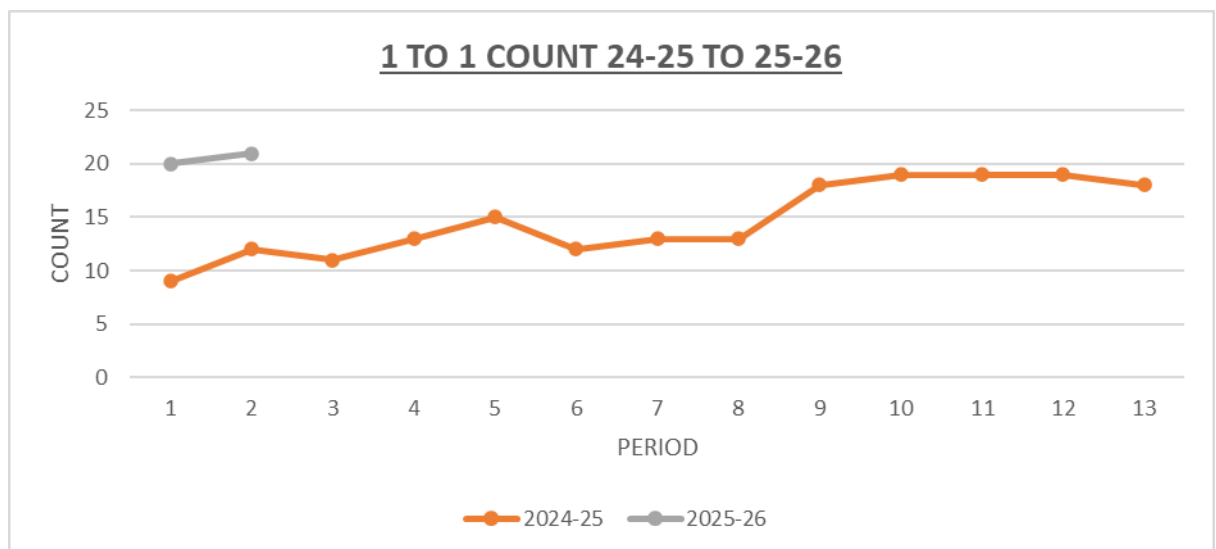
The graph below illustrates the demand for all residential and nursing placements.



1 to 1 Support In Care Homes

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

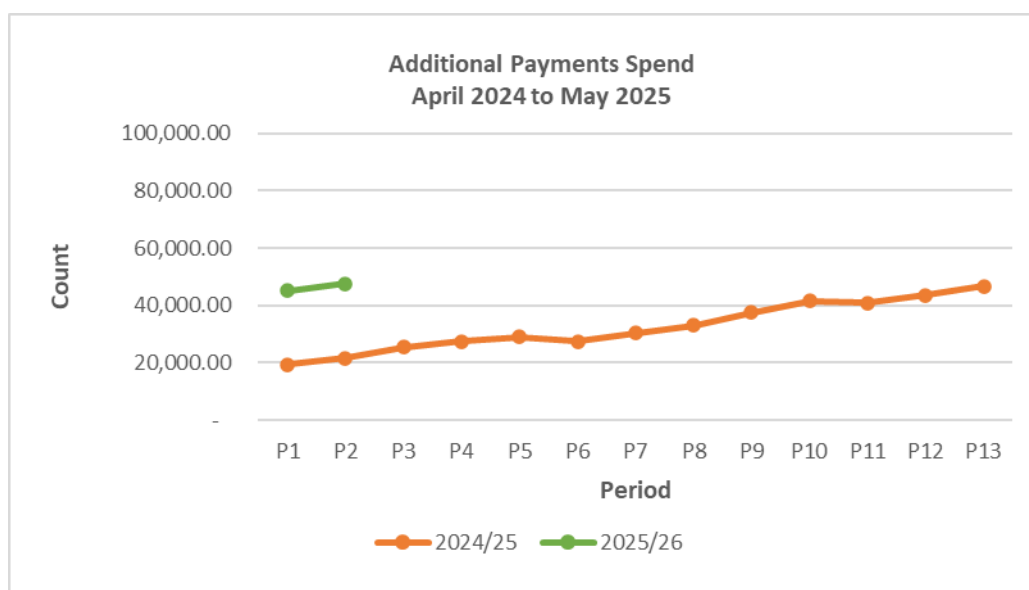
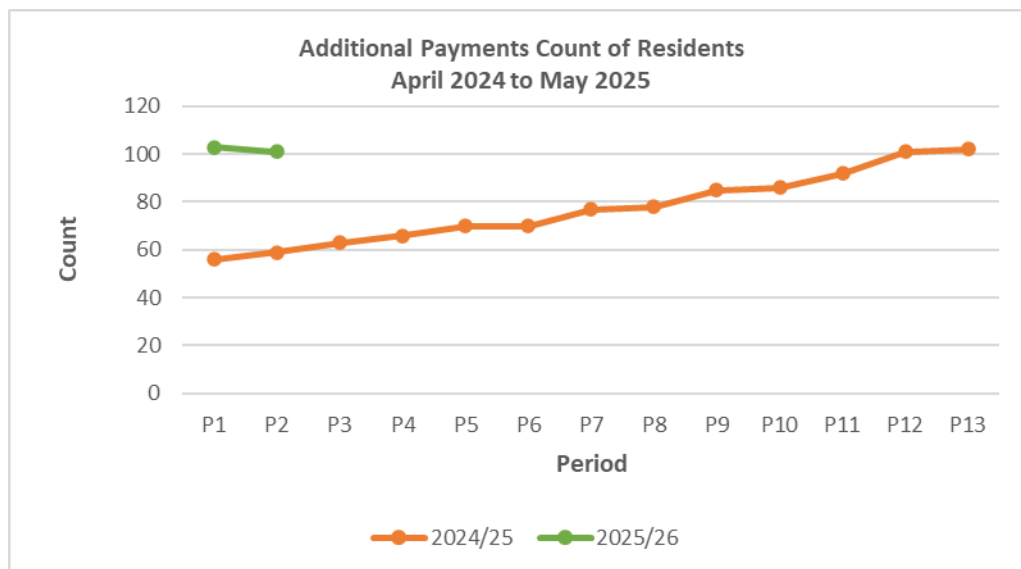
The graph below shows the count of service users receiving 1 to 1 care by period and clearly demonstrates an increase, particularly compared with the same period last year rising from 12 to 21. This is an increase of 75%.



Additional Payments 2025/26

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

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

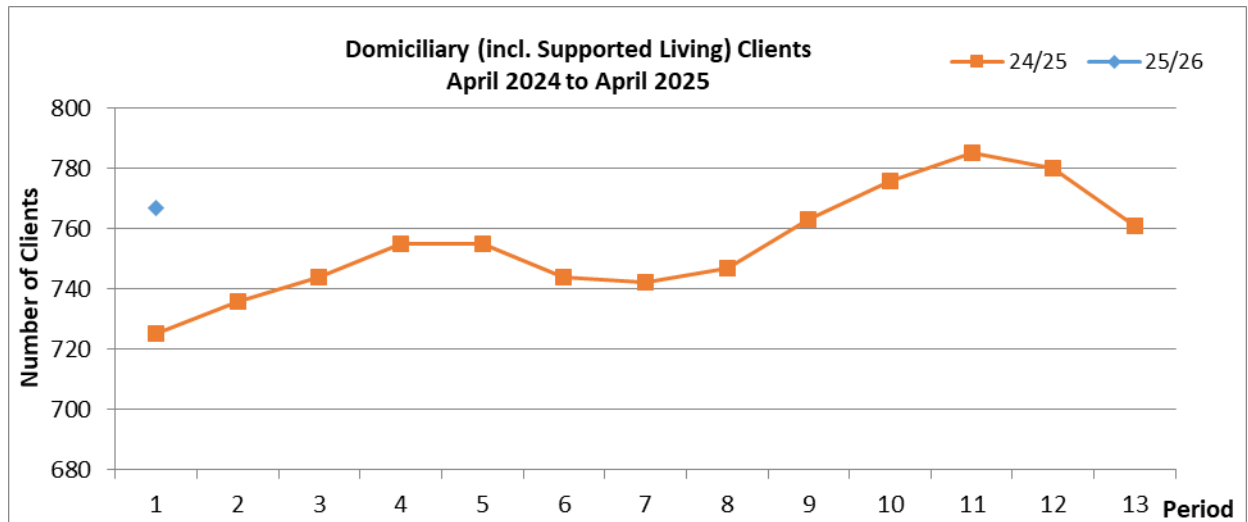


Domiciliary Care & Supported Living

There are currently 767 service users receiving a package of care at home, compared to the average in 2024/25 of 754, an increase

of 1.7%. However, compared with April 2024 the increase is 5.8%. The average cost of a package of care is currently £452.39 compared with £450.64 in 2024/25.

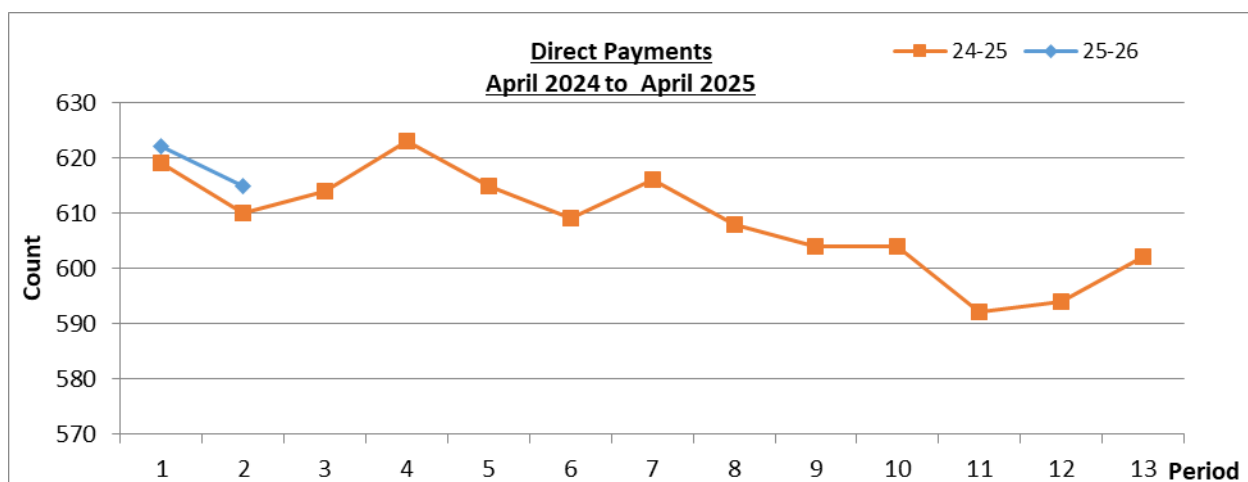
The graph below illustrates the demand for the service from April 2024 to April 2025.



Direct Payments

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

The graph below shows movement throughout the year.



Care Homes

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

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

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

Due to pressures with recruitment and retention in the sector, heavy reliance is being placed on overtime and expensive agency staff to support the care homes. At the end of May 2025 total agency spend across the care homes reached £0.585M, the cost of this has partially been offset by staff vacancies.

(iii) Education, Inclusion and Provision

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

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

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

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

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

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

(iv) Corporate and Democracy

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

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

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

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

Collection Fund

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

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

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

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

Review of Reserves

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

Reserves Summary

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

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

- 3.21 The above table shows the diminishing level of reserves available to assist with funding any future budget overspends and balancing future

budgets. Only the £5.149m of the General Fund could now be used for these purposes, as all remaining reserves are committed for specific purposes.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

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

5.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

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

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

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

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

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

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

Summary of Revenue Spending to 31 May 2025

APPENDIX 1

Directorate / Department	2024/25 Outturn (overspend) £'000	2025/26 Annual Budget £'000	Budget To Date £'000	Actual To Date £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	May 2025 Forecast Outturn (overspend) £'000
Adult Social Care	(546)	24,522	3,896	3,841	55	0
Care Homes	(1,283)	7,932	1,486	1,768	(282)	(794)
Community Care	(2,651)	27,061	3,004	3,506	(502)	(2,627)
Complex Care Pool	0	13,189	1,227	1,225	2	0
Adults Directorate	(4,480)	72,704	9,613	10,340	(727)	(3,421)
Finance	(312)	5,430	1,413	1,404	9	(113)
Legal & Democratic Services	(1,144)	-170	-60	0	(60)	(482)
ICT & Support Services	282	197	1,285	1,253	32	70
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	(31)	1,110	342	347	(5)	(21)
Chief Executives Directorate	(1,205)	6,567	2,980	3,004	(24)	(546)
Children & Families	(8,434)	53,903	4,939	5,378	(439)	(2,387)
Education, Inclusion & Provision	(1,254)	12,095	1,115	1,307	(192)	(1,239)
Children's Directorate	(9,688)	65,998	6,054	6,685	(631)	(3,626)
Community & Greenspace	204	23,602	1,170	1,212	(42)	(134)
Economy, Enterprise & Property	175	2,602	236	268	(32)	55
Planning & Transportation	280	9,256	449	561	(112)	(672)
Environment & Regeneration Directorate	659	35,460	1,855	2,041	(186)	(751)
Corporate & Democracy	(1,457)	443	574	129	445	1,860
Public Health Directorate	98	1,880	-1,759	-1,810	51	299
Total Operational Net Spend	(16,073)	183,052	18,808	19,890	(1,073)	(6,185)

Adult Social Care

APPENDIX 2

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

Care Homes

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

Community Care

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

Complex Care Pool

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

Finance Department

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

Legal Services

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

ICT & Support Services Department

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

Chief Executives Delivery Unit

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

Children & Families

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

Education, Inclusion & Provision

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

Community & Greenspaces

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

Economy, Enterprise & Property

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

Planning & Transportation Department

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

Corporate & Democracy

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




Public Health

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

Progress Against Agreed Savings




Appendix 3

Adult Social Care


Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Housing Solutions	474	Remodel the current service based on good practice evidence from other areas.	125	0		Currently Under Review
Voluntary Sector Support	N/A	Review the support provided by Adult Social Care and all other Council Departments, to voluntary sector organisations. This would include assisting them to secure alternative funding in order to reduce their dependence upon Council funding. A target saving phased over two years has been estimated.	100	0		Achieved
Community Wardens/Telecare Service		Community Wardens/Telecare Service – a review will be undertaken of the various options available for the future delivery of these services, with	0	280		Currently Under Review

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



Finance

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Internal Audit	300	Restructure in light of potential retirements over the next two years within the Internal Audit Team.	50	0		It appears unlikely that the proposed £50k budget saving will be fully realised this year, if at all
Council Tax	84	Increase the charges applied when a court summons is issued by 30% (£23), to achieve full cost recovery over the three year period.	40	0		Increase in costs to be applied from 2026/27.
Debt Management		Debt Management – undertake a review of debt management policies and procedures, in order to implement a more robust approach to debt management and debt recovery, considering options such as seeking payment in advance wherever possible, to improve cashflow and reduce the risk of non-recovery.	0	100		Currently part of workstream being undertaken by the Transformation Programme.
Total Finance Department			90	100		

Legal and Democratic Services

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

Children and Families Department

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



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


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

Education, Inclusion and Provision Department


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

Community and Greenspace Department


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

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


Economy, Enterprise and Property Department

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




Policy, Planning and Transportation Department

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

Public Health Directorate Department




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

Corporate and Democracy

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

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

		performance on the basis of outputs achieved.				
Total Corporate & Democracy			0	2,400		

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

2025/26 Budget Risk Register as at 31 May 2025

Appendix 4

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

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

					transformation costs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policy for voluntary severance scheme 						£0.200m saving included in 25/26 budget for savings from voluntary severance scheme.	
3	Savings not achieved	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget monitoring Contingency Rigorous process in approving savings. Review of savings at departmental and directorate level Monthly budget monitoring Medium Term Financial Forecast RAG monitoring of savings included in bi-monthly monitoring reports. Transformation saving targets reported monthly through Transformation Programme Board. 	4	2	8	RR/ED/SB/Directors	Monthly	<p>Savings for 2025/26 have been written into Directorate budgets.</p> <p>Budget savings monitored closely and if necessary offsetting savings sought.</p> <p>Transformation Programme Board meeting on monthly basis to discuss progress against programme.</p>	31/05/25

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

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

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

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

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

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

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Forecast Programme to replenish reserves. 						Reserves will need to be replenished within future budgets	
16	Budget Balancing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council has struggled to achieve a balanced budget position for a number of years. Forecast for current year is an overspend position of £19m. Reserves insufficient to balance current year budget. Council has been given approval in-principle for Exceptional Financial Support (day to day costs funded through capital borrowings) for 2024/25 and 2025/26. 	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current year budgets monitored on a regular basis. Forward forecasting through to March 2029 reported on a prudent basis. Regular conversations with DHLUC re Council's financial position. LGA to undertake a financial assurance review. Transformation programme in place. Financial Recovery Plan required to better inform how the Council will achieve future sustainable budgets. 	4	4	16	ED/SB	Ongoing	<p>Council has received in-principle agreement to fund day to day costs through Exceptional Financial Support.</p> <p>EFS covers a total of £52.8m over two years, split: 24/25 - £20.8m 25/26 - £32.0m</p> <p>Council utilised £10m of EFS in 24/25, below the approved amount.</p> <p>Financial recovery plan to be put in place to limit Council exposure to EFS and repayment of borrowings to date.</p>	31/05/25