



Corporate and Inclusion Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 2 September 2025 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

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

Interim Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Ged Philbin (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Chris Carlin	Labour
Councillor Sian Davidson	Reform UK
Councillor Rosie Leck	Labour
Councillor Geoffrey Logan	Labour
Councillor Tony McDermott	Labour
Councillor Katy McDonough	Labour
Councillor Angela McInerney	Labour
Councillor Chris Loftus	Labour
Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh	Labour

***Please contact Isabelle Moorhouse on 01515113979 or
isabelle.moorhouse@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 4 November 2025***

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

Part I

Item No.	Page No.
1. MINUTES	1 - 6
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion and 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.

CORPORATE AND INCLUSION POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate and Inclusion Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 3 June 2025 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Philbin (Vice-Chair) - in the Chair, Carlin, Davidson, Leck, Logan, McDermott, A. McInerney, C. Loftus and N. Plumpton Walsh

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Gilligan and McDonough

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Butler, E. Dawson, P. Garnett, H. Hamlett, C. Hill, M. Reaney, G. Tootle and C. Westwood.

Also in attendance: None

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

		<i>Action</i>
CS1	MINUTES	
	The Minutes from the meeting held on 21 January 2025 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CS2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CS3	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
	The Board was presented with the minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio, which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of the Board.	
	Members requested an update on the cessation of school meals and queried if there were still any schools who had not made alternative arrangements for the provision of school meals.	
	Members also questioned if assets such as cash registers and kitchen equipment were transferred to the new	

catering providers.

Officers agreed to provide Board Members with updates to these queries in due course.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

CS4 ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

The Board considered a copy of the Annual Report from the Chair of the Corporate & Inclusion Policy and Performance Board for 2024/25. 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.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be noted.

NB: Councillor Sian Davidson declared a disclosable pecuniary interest for the following item due to a family member being in receipt of pension benefits.

CS5 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND – PROGRESS UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Director of Finance, which outlined the final spend position regarding the delivery of the Government's Household Support Fund for the period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.

A spending plan (tranche 6) had been prepared and was attached as Appendix A. It was noted that £100,000 had been allocated to the Discretionary Support Scheme within the Benefits Division to process applications. As per Government guidance, it was intended to cover a wide range of low income households in need, including families with children, pensioners and people with disabilities.

Appendix B of the report contained detailed information relating to spending for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 (tranche 7). This included expenditure from partner organisations including Halton Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB); Widnes Foodbank; Runcorn Foodbank; Holiday Activity Food Programme; Affordable Warmth – Energy Projects Plus; and Halton Voluntary Action.

A Board Member raised a concern regarding the withdrawal of funding for the CAB and queried if they still had capacity. Officers confirmed that their funding was topped up in tranche 6 and no objections had been received to date.

RESOLVED: That the Board note:

- 1) the final position regarding the Household Support Fund for the period 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025; and
- 2) the spending plan for the Household Support Fund for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.

CS6 CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT 1ST APRIL 2024 TO 31ST MARCH 2025

The Board was provided with a report from the Corporate Director – Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, which presented details of health and safety management within the Authority from 1 April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

The report highlighted health and safety incidents that had taken place over the past 12 months and as a result of those incident, proposed actions for the future. In addition, the report included information around the number of actual near misses, accidents that had resulted over 7 day absences, together with significant accidents.

The following information was also highlighted from the report:

- Reportable and significant accidents for employees were at a total of 10; a rise of 1 across all directorates;
- Near miss reports had fallen from 3 to 0;
- Two additional categories had been added to the report i.e. threats of violence and sexual harassment;
- 28 violent incidents had been reported; a rise of 7;
- Schools had reported 6 verbal threats, 33 physical incidents and 1 threat of violence. Members were reminded that these figures did not include academies or free schools; and
- The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (also known as Martyn's Law) received Royal Ascent 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 updates would be included in future reports.

Members raised concerns that health and safety information and data regarding violent incidents, involving staff and pupils, was not readily available from Academy Trusts. Members were advised that despite various requests to the Academy Trusts, the Local Authority (LA) did not have access or receive reports regarding health and

safety or information relating to accidents or incidents. It was agreed that attempts would continue to be made to find a solution to this issue.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted including the recommendations and actions for 2025/26.

Corporate
Director - Chief
Executive's
Delivery Unit

CS7 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 4 OF 2024/25

The Board received the Performance Management Report for Quarter 4 of 2024/25. The reports related to the following functional areas which reported to the Board and detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets, and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period:

- Finance;
- Operational HR Division, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit;
- ICT and Administrative Support;
- Legal and Democracy;
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services; and
- Property Services.

Members were reminded that in September 2024, the Council entered into a joint venture with Commercial Services Group, a company wholly owned by Kent County Council. Connect2Halton, a council-owned company, was dedicated to recruiting employees. Members were reassured that this arrangement would be reviewed and monitored to determine its impact and any changes would be reported to the Board in due course.

In relation to one of the Council's milestones to vacate the Municipal Building, it was noted that a Member Working Group (led by Councillor Thompson) had been set up to look at this piece of work, however, this was currently on hold. Councillor Leck questioned who the Members of this group were and how could others feed into the debate. It was agreed that concerns would be fed back to the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, and an update would be provided in due course.

RESOLVED: That the 2024/25 quarter 4 performance management report be noted.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

CS8 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.

Councillor Logan requested that the consideration be given to keep the Children's Centre at Windmill Hill open. It was agreed that the request would be taken forward with the Director of Education, Inclusion and Provision and the Board would be updated in due course.

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

Director -
Education,
Inclusion and
Provision

CS9 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- 1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption

outweighed that in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CS10 EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITION: STAFF UNPAID LEAVE

The Board received a report from the Corporate Director – Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, which outlined a proposed scheme for a Christmas closure, which utilised a variation of the previously proposed 4 days unpaid leave arrangements.

The report outlined the process which was undertaken, including the staff consultation and discussions with Members and Trade Unions. The outcome determined that a Christmas closure was preferred.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the report and consider the proposed scheme for a Christmas closure; and
- 2) endorse the recommendations to Executive Board for approval.

Corporate
Director - Chief
Executive's
Delivery Unit

Meeting ended at 8.03 p.m.

REPORT TO: Corporate & Inclusion Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 2 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: Corporate & Inclusion Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 2 September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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

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

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

None.

5.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None.

5.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None.

5.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None.

5.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None.

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

None.

6.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 None.

7.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

8.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX 1**Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Corporate & Inclusion Policy and Performance Board****EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2025**

EXB3	DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF
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The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented three applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, for consideration.

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

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

RESOLVED: That

- 1) discretionary rate relief for any new applications received during 2025/26 be awarded at the rates approved on 25 February 2025 for the renewal of existing awards, as outlined in paragraph 3.5;
- 2) the application for discretionary rate relief from the Cathie Stankevitch Foundation in respect of Unit 9, Foundry 10, Waterside Lane, Widnes with effect from 1 July 2024 be approved at 10%;
- 3) the application for discretionary rate relief from The Autism Wellbeing Project in respect of Suite A8, The Business Hub, Simms Cross, Widnes Road, Widnes with effect from 14 March 2025, be approved at 75%; and
- 4) the application for discretionary relief from The Autism Wellbeing Project in respect of Suite B2, The Business Hub, Simms Cross, Widnes Road, Widnes with effect from 14 March 2025, be approved at 75%.

EXB4	DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 4 2024-25
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The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director – Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets

for the fourth quarter period to 31 March 2025, for the Children and Young People Directorate; and the Enterprise, Community and Resources Directorate.

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

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

EXB5	2024/25 SPENDING AS AT 31 MARCH 2025
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The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position for the 2024/25 financial year.

A summary of spending against the Council's revenue and capital net spending position for 2024/25 was presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and these provided detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms net spending as at 31 March 2024 was £16.073m over budget. This was an improvement from the forecast outturn position of £18.906m reported at the end of January 2025. Whilst an improved position, given the scale of the budgetary overspend the Council would need to access the exceptional financial support provisionally approved by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 24 February 2025.

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Council's 2024/25 outturn position as presented in the report be noted;

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

EXB11	PART 2 ITEM: EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITION: STAFF UNPAID LEAVE
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The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director Chief Executives Delivery Unit, that provided details on a proposed scheme for a Christmas closure utilising a variation of the previously proposed four days unpaid leave arrangement.

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2025

EXB15	COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 31 MAY 2025
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The Board received a report from the Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 31 May 2025 together with a 2025/26 forecast outturn position.

A summary of spending against the Council's revenue budget as at 31 May 2025 was presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and these provided detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms net revenue spending as at 31 May 2025 was £1.1m over budget.

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

RESOLVED: That

- 5) Executive Directors continue to implement the approved 2025/26 saving proposals as detailed in Appendix 3;

- 6) 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; and
- 7) 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.

EXB16	HEALTH AND LEISURE IN HALTON
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, that requested the Board to consider the relationship between increasing the cost of the local authority leisure facilities to residents and the potential impact on health inequalities in the borough. The Board was also asked to consider if it wished to subsidise leisure activities for certain groups in the borough. Options for how this could be implemented were outlined in the report together with a request from Halton Walking Football Club.

As health is the number one priority for Halton it was proposed that a temporary subsidy be put in place as stated in the report to allow existing groups to continue to be active but with the following recommendations.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) as being active is a key factor to promoting health and wellbeing in the borough the full subsidy amount should be allocated by contribution from Public Health;
- 2) to ensure fairness and consistency all groups who meet the criteria as set out in the report will receive a standardised 50 per cent discount; and
- 3) the Portfolio Holder for Employment Learning, Skills and Community Portfolio Holder be regularly updated on the status of discussions with the groups in receipt of the subsidy and the nature of support being provided by Sports Development. This ensures transparency and accountability whilst tracking progress toward the goal of enabling groups to become self-sustaining.

REPORT TO: Corporate & Inclusion Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 2 September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Interim Chief Executive

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Staff Survey 2025 – the next steps

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide a summary of the key results of the recent Staff Survey and to outline the next steps.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) Corporate PPB endorses the approach outlined.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 It is worth noting that many different sources state that a good survey response rate, (i.e. above the average), would be anything above 25%. The 2025 Staff Survey attracted 634 responses – over 25% of the workforce.

3.2 Staff Survey Summary:

- Satisfaction levels with overall experience of working for HBC:
 - Very Satisfied: 21%
 - Fairly Satisfied: 57%
- Awareness of the Corporate Plan:
 - Strongly agree: 24%
 - Agree: 52%
- Awareness of the Values Framework:
 - Strongly agree: 33%
 - Agree: 51%
- Behaviours which still require improvement as a council:
 - Listening to and acting on feedback: 59%
 - Building relationships and inclusion to work well together: 48%
 - Trust & Respect: 39%

- Driving positive change: 37%
- Demonstrating strong leadership: 35%
- Acting with integrity and behaving responsibly: 21%
- Proud to work for Halton Borough Council:
 - Strongly agree: 24%
 - Agree: 46%
- Concerns about the future of the organisation:
 - Strongly agree: 21%
 - Agree: 42%
- 81% felt that they can strike a good work/life balance
-
- Meeting rooms – 44% felt that meeting rooms are readily available when required; whereas 29% disagreed.
- Working with Councillors:
 - 32% felt that Councillors and officers worked well together; whereas over a third (36%) didn't know. (It is likely that this response comes from employees for whom there is no requirement within their role to work with Councillors)
 - 20% felt that Cllrs had a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of council officers.
- Nearly half (47%) felt that the Council is a place where they can progress.
- Communication - 58% felt that they were well informed on what is going on in the council.
- 82% felt that a culture of equality, diversity & inclusion is encouraged.
- 68% would like to stay working for the Council for the next 3 years.
- 7% want to leave the Council as soon as possible.

Summary Presentation: this is a short presentation, highlighting **some** of the themes from the results:

<https://my.visme.co/view/q6yevp7e-staff-survey-2025>

3.3

Lessons learnt:

Efforts were made to encourage a high survey return, however the Council's Management Team would have liked this to be higher.

Where possible, the reasons that people didn't return the survey will be explored prior to the next survey, to try and obtain an even greater response rate.

3.4 Feedback from Management Team:

This report was presented to the Council's Management Team on August 5th 2025. Observations were as follows:

- In general terms there was an 80% positive response for most questions asked, which was encouraging.
- It is difficult to ascertain whether these are the same respondents in each question, however it could be a useful exercise to try and delve a bit further to see if any conclusions could be drawn.
- A specific breakdown of results for each Directorate would prove useful (this has been completed).
- The summary results are to be shared with all relevant Council Trade Unions.
- The results of other recent staff surveys, such as those within Adult Social Care and Children's Services, should be incorporated into ongoing analysis.
- Survey findings are to be shared with the workforce, together with planned intentions during September.

3.4 Next Steps:

1. Responses provided in the spaces for free text comments within the survey will need to be analysed.
2. The Corporate Workforce Board is to draw up an Action Plan, implement and monitor. This will take place from September 2025 onwards.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any subsequent plans, policies or procedures which might arise from the Action Plan will support the Corporate Plan going forward.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There may be financial implications in the future, depending on the actions taken as a result of the further analysis and the resulting Action Plan implementation.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The survey has addressed all 6 priorities through the questions posed; however it is unclear at this stage just how many of these

priorities will be impacted purposely until the Action Plan has been agreed and implemented.

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

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 No known risks are associated with this report.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be conducted if any new policies are required as a result of the Staff Survey findings or actions.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None at this stage.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Corporate and Inclusion Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 2nd September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Interim Chief Executive

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

WARD(S) Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the Board of the recently developed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) the Board approves the Policy (Appendix 1.0).**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In 2023, the decision was made to forego a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy in the format of a 30+ paged document, and to present our EDI commitments and aims in Halton Borough Council's EDI Vision and Objectives, as well as the EDI Action Plan. That decision came about due to low interaction and viewing figures of the previous Policy document.

3.2 It has since become apparent that some form of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is still needed. As a local council, Halton Borough Council (HBC) is liable to receive Freedom Of Information requests, some of which have been EDI focussed and around what information and guidance we publish for:

- a) our workforce
- b) the public

3.3 The establishment of the HBC Corporate Staff Network Groups (SNGs) has also emphasised the need to have the EDI Policy in the format of an informative document. Members of the SNGs are keen to know how they, and others who possess the same Protected Characteristic(s), will be supported at work.

- 3.4** As a public sector body, HBC has specific equality duties that require us to, in the exercise of our functions and decisions, have due regard to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity
 - Foster good relations
- 3.5** One of the tangible ways to show our compliance is through the physical form of a Policy.
- 3.6** It is for these reasons that we are therefore wanting to implement the accompanying Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- 3.7** The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy sets out how Halton Borough Council meets its duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. In detail, it covers our vision and commitments, the roles and responsibilities of employees and elected members, and managers; the Protected Characteristics and how HBC supports them specifically, our training and development available to all HBC colleagues, and how we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty by carrying out Equality Impact Assessments. The Policy also highlights schemes we have in place to advance equality of opportunity, like the Staff Network Groups and Reverse Mentoring.
- 3.8** The Policy will be in place as a source of information for employees and managers.
- a) Employees can learn and understand how they will be supported
 - b) Managers can learn and understand what support they can offer their employees, and be supported in doing so
- 3.9** For specific queries that may not have been covered within the Policy, there is signposting on where and from who more information can be found.
- 3.10** To ensure the Policy is as accessible as possible, the document has been formatted in a specific way. The page colour, font size and type, line spacing, and the alignment have all been chosen to provide accessibility, especially for people with neurodiversity and colour blindness. In the reviewing process, the document was also listened to through Immersive Reader to ensure those using this feature or similar (e.g. screen readers) would have the information relayed to them correctly.
- 3.11** If the implementation of this Policy is approved, we would also like to display the same information within the document on the intranet, to provide a slightly more interactive version for

colleagues. This would be located under the newly added Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section on the Organisational Development page of the intranet. The aim is to achieve more engagement, which usually comes on the back of more interactive content.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** This EDI Policy will work alongside many of the HR Policies, including Bullying and Harassment, and Flexible Working. The content will inform on and act as a source of guidance in the reviewing/ developing of any new and existing HR Policies, especially those relating to specific Protected Characteristics, i.e. pregnancy policies.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Implementing this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy should have no negative financial implications.
- 5.2** With our commitments and our expectations of our workforce clearly defined, the Policy should contribute towards a decrease in successful harassment, discrimination (direct or indirect), or bullying claims made by employees, equating to fewer financial repercussions.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

There are some Protected Characteristics, such as Disability including Neurodiversity, that require reasonable adjustments to enable employees to achieve their full potential. Enforcing and promoting the allowance of these reasonable adjustments could: improve health for those with medical conditions by allowing them to adapt their working conditions as needed, promote wellbeing through the reassurance that as an organisation we are willing to work with colleagues to accommodate their needs, and support greater independence in carrying out their role.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None at this time.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

This EDI Policy applies to Halton Borough Council's workforce, meaning Children and Young People within Halton won't be affected directly by the Policy. However, as the commitments, expectations and support detailed within centre around the Protected Characteristics, one of which being Age, Children and Young People could be affected indirectly. As our commitments

and values are instilled in colleagues through the Policy, they will be able to apply that way of working in their roles, some of which will be focussed around supporting children, young people and families.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Having the EDI Policy in place will clearly outline the Council's responsibilities and expectations of its workforce in working towards our EDI Objectives. With each of the Protected Characteristics, and the support we provide each of them, defined, the Policy can act as a first port of call on how to tackle inequality within the workforce. The Policy should help guide colleagues on what they may be able to do, either as a manager, or an employee, to support the advancement of EDI within the Council.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None at this time.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The Policy highlights the importance of recognising the benefits of a diverse workforce and community, and the different talents and perspectives those from different backgrounds can bring to the table. Those same diversities and talents will be found in Halton and its communities, meaning if the Policy can instil those values into our employees about our workforce, those same mindsets should be applied when colleagues work in our service delivery areas.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 By agreeing the implementation of the EDI Policy, the risk of non-compliance within the Public Sector Equality Duty will be greatly reduced.

7.2 Setting out our expectations and commitments when it comes to EDI and how it is incorporated in our workforce and the delivery of our services will reduce the risk of discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 As stated within the body of the Report.

8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to support the Policy.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Not applicable.

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

10.1 Equality Act 2010

Halton Borough Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy June 2025



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1.0 Introduction

This Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy, sets out how Halton Borough Council meets its duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Equality – Equality means ensuring people are treated fairly, giving them equitable access to information, opportunities, services, and employment.

Diversity – Diversity is about recognising, acknowledging, and respecting differences within our community and our workforce, and that people have different needs based on protected characteristics, some of which they share with others.

Inclusion – Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued, especially those who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised.

2.0 Our Vision and Commitments

At Halton Borough Council, our vision is simply to do all within our power to create, promote and sustain an equitable society and environment that fosters positive interactive relationships where people are treated with respect, dignity and fairness.

The Council seeks to create and promote a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued. At HBC we are all accountable for upholding an environment that is accessible and welcoming to all, as well as doing our bit to continue to work towards achieving our [EDI Objectives](#).

We are committed to seeking to employ a workforce that reflects the diverse community that we serve and are part of, as well as providing equality of opportunity. We will work to ensure that our employees, Elected Members, and service users are treated fairly and are not subjected to unlawful discrimination by the Council on the basis of their Protected Characteristic.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Officers
- Council Members
- Organisations HBC has procured
- Contract workers
- Volunteers
- Students

This policy covers **all** of Halton Borough Council's **functions** and **policies**.

4.0 Equality Act 2010 and the General Public Sector Equality Duty

As a public sector body, HBC has specific equality duties that require us to, in the exercise of our functions and decisions, have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

The [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) provide a legal framework to protect people from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in the workplace and wider society.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is the responsibility of all HBC employees. We are all accountable for upholding an environment that is accessible and welcoming to all, as well as doing our bit to continue to work towards achieving our EDI Objectives.



5.1 Employees' and Elected Members' Responsibilities:

- Read, understand and practically apply this policy alongside the relevant Dignity at Work, and the Code of Conduct documents.
- Challenge and report unacceptable behaviour in a safe manner via one of the outlined routes and in accordance with the Dignity at Work, and the Code of Conduct documents. Both formal and informal routes are covered in these policies and procedures.

5.2 Managers' Responsibilities:

- Set a good example by treating all members of the Council with dignity and respect and challenging unacceptable behaviours
- Ensure all employees are aware of this Policy and know how to report discrimination, harassment or bullying, and that reporting incidents does not result in victimisation;
- Present their employees with information (or knowledge about where to find such information) about employee rights as defined within the scope of the Council's policies
- Deal with complaints fairly, equitably, thoroughly, confidentially and within the agreed timescales.

6.0 Protected Characteristics

Protected characteristics are specific traits or characteristics that are safeguarded by law to ensure equitable treatment for all individuals.

The nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Disability, which includes neurodiversity
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

- Pregnancy and Maternity/Paternity
- Race, which includes colour and nationality – citizenship, ethnic or national origins
- Religious Belief, which includes not having one
- Sex



At HBC, we also recognise two extra Protected Characteristics, and they are:

- Carers – those with caring responsibilities for another person(s), outside of a standard parental role
- Socio-economic status

6.1 How HBC supports the Protected Characteristics:

Sexual Orientation – HBC does not discriminate against anybody based on their sexual orientation. This includes, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, and other sexual orientations not listed.

- HBC will work towards enabling employees at all levels in the workforce to feel safe in being open about their sexuality if they wish to do so.

Age – HBC does not discriminate against anybody based on their age.



Disability, which includes neurodiversity – HBC does not discriminate against anybody based on their disability and/or their neurodiversity.

- The Council has been recognised as a Level 3 Disability Confident Leader.
- The Council understands and acknowledges that employees with disabilities and neurodiversity may require reasonable adjustments to allow them to achieve their full potential. Where practically possible in relation to delivery of council services and functions, managers are expected to work with employees to accommodate the reasonable adjustment(s) needed.

Gender Reassignment – HBC does not discriminate against anybody in regards to gender reassignment. This includes those considering going through reassignment, those in the process of undergoing reassignment, or those who have already gone through reassignment, whether that was before or during their employment at HBC.

- HBC will work towards enabling employees at all levels in the workforce to feel safe in being open about their gender identity if they wish to do so.

Marriage and Civil Partnership – HBC does not discriminate against anybody based on their marital status or whether or not they are in a civil partnership with another person.

Pregnancy and Maternity/Paternity – HBC does not discriminate against anybody in regards to pregnancy or their maternal/paternal status.

- Unfavourable treatment of a woman because of her pregnancy or maternity leave during ‘the protected period’ is unlawful pregnancy and maternity discrimination.
- The protected period starts when a woman becomes pregnant and continues until the end of her maternity leave, or until she returns to work if that is earlier.
- Pregnancy and maternity are not protected directly under the harassment provisions. However, pregnancy and maternity harassment would amount to harassment related to sex.



- Decisions on applications for Parental, Carer, or Adoption leave are based on clear, fair, and justifiable criteria set out within Halton Borough Council's Employment Policy.
- Parental, carer, and adoption leave decisions and arrangements are free from bias linked to sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- All of HBC's policies regarding pregnancy, maternity and paternity can be found under the HR Policies section (9.0).

Race – HBC does not discriminate against anybody based on their race. This includes colour and nationality – citizenship, ethnic or national origins.

- HBC is a proud member of the Liverpool City Region Race Equality Hub. Building upon the City Region's reputation for social justice and equality, the Hub's primary purpose is to:
 - Tackle systemic injustice and inequality.
 - Drive forward positive and sustainable change for our Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic employees and residents.
 - Work in partnership with public, private and 3rd sector employers, to encourage and support them to do the same.

Religious Belief(s) – HBC does not discriminate against anybody based on their religious beliefs. This includes philosophical belief and not having a belief.

- HBC will work towards enabling employees at all levels in the workforce to feel safe in being open about their faith, religion, or belief systems if they wish to do so.
- The Council will address any issues raised by an employee regarding religious observance as soon as possible.
- The Council understands and acknowledges that there are times when employees' religious observances require fasting and prayer during working hours. Where reasonable and practically possible in relation to delivery of council services and functions, managers are expected to agree to employees' requests for time off for religious festivals and to pray at work.



- Employees are also encouraged to be respectful of individuals who are fasting during periods of religious observance such as Lent, Ramadan, or Yom Kippur.

Sex – HBC does not discriminate against anybody based on their sex.

- To see the Equality and Human Rights Commission interim update on the Supreme Court Ruling regarding the Protected Characteristic of Sex, please click [here](#).

Carers – HBC does not discriminate against anybody regarding their caring status. Carers are those with caring responsibilities for others, outside of a standard parental role.

Socio-economic status – HBC does not discriminate against anybody based on their socio-economic status.

7.0 Work Attire

Halton Borough Council does not discriminate against any protected characteristics in relation to their attire, relating to religions, sexuality, gender or disability. The Council will address any issues of discrimination raised by an employee regarding attire as soon as possible.

8.0 Training and Development

Halton Borough Council uses training and development as a key element to integrate equality, diversity, and inclusion within the organisation.

As well as in-person training, delivered either in-house or by a reputable external training provider, HBC has 16 e-learning modules centred around EDI to give employees chance for continual learning, enrichment and growth. We review the modules regularly, and work with our Staff Network Groups to update and improve the learning. [Click here](#) to see the modules. Lunch and Learn sessions are held around matters regarding the Protected Characteristics, e.g. anti-racism, LGBTQIA+, etc. with guest speakers who have lived experience educating our workforce.

9.0 HR Policies

For Halton Borough Council's relevant Human Resources Policies, please click [here](#).

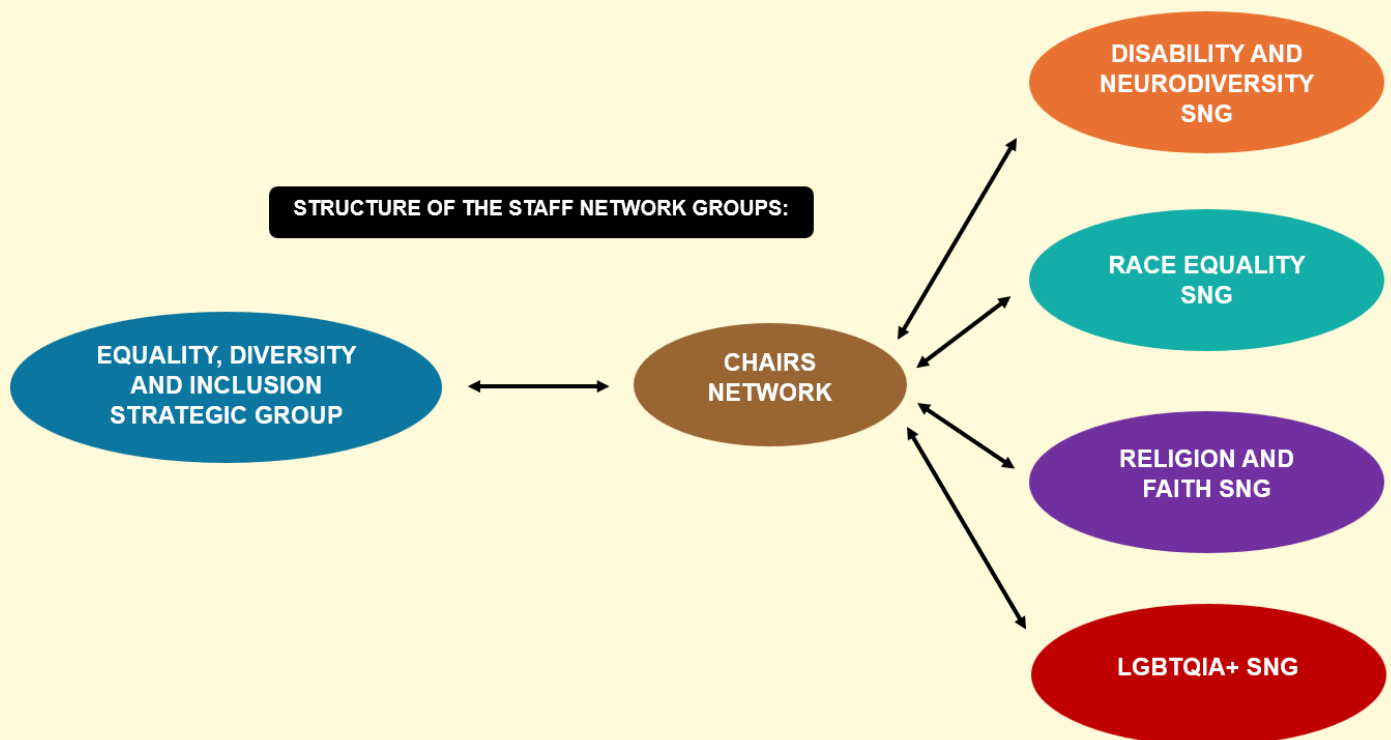
These include Bullying and Harassment, Flexible Working, and more, all of which work alongside and support this EDI Policy.

10.0 Staff Network Groups

The EDI Corporate Staff Network Groups (SNGs) have been created so that Halton Borough Council employees have a safe place to engage in a confidential and welcoming environment with others who share their Protected Characteristics. Members support, respect and encourage one another to share experiences and feel connected.

The current four SNGs at Halton Borough Council are:

- Disability and Neurodiversity
- Race Equality
- Religion and Faith
- LGBTQIA+



10.1 Purpose of the Staff Network Groups



10.2 Chairs' Network

The Chair of each of the SNGs form a Chairs' Network. The Chairs' Network is in place to discuss any intersectional trends and commonalities, as well as any independencies of each of the SNGs.

The members of the Chairs' Network sits on the EDI Strategic Group to relay any feedback and points the Group should know, including actions raised at the SNGs.

The Chairs then report back to the SNGs on matters discussed at the EDI Strategic Group.

10.3 EDI Strategic Group

The Strategic Group provides confidence that, throughout the organisation, actions are being taken in relation to the improvement and promotion of EDI, both in respect of the workforce and the development of services.

The Group, and its members, are there to offer support and guidance to each of the SNGs as and when needed.

For any more information regarding the Strategic Group or the Staff Network Groups, please contact our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Liz Morton - liz.morton@halton.gov.uk

11.0 Reverse Mentoring

Reverse Mentoring enables people in senior positions to learn and understand issues from the perspective of employees from under-represented groups. At the same time, employees are exposed to new ideas, experiences, and networking opportunities. The key role of the mentor will be to provide an insight into the difficulties and barriers they may have faced and could still be facing within their roles.



Reverse Mentoring provides a safe space to allow under-represented groups to share their lived experiences whilst working for the Council. This is your opportunity to offer insights to our senior management team, and help enrich our workforce.

11.1 Reverse Mentoring Guide

11.2 Reverse Mentoring Aims:

- Help improve diverse mind-sets in middle and senior leaders
- Promote discussion on how staff feel about EDI
- Building and sharing on existing successes
- Help challenge engrained views on what talent looks like

11.3 Benefits for the Mentor (underrepresented colleagues):

- Access to a wealth of experience for their self-development
- Increases confidence/personal profile
- Builds their relationships network
- Gains insight into our organisation
- It's an opportunity to be seen and heard

11.4 Benefits for the Mentee (senior colleagues):

- Provides insight into potential cultural barriers for under-represented groups and to consider any necessary Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) improvements and support to employees
- Reflection on the impact of their own leadership style upon others
- Understanding and appreciation of the impact of Inclusive Leadership



12.0 Equality Impact Assessments

We continue to undertake equality analysis and use our equality impact assessment process to inform the development of our policies, procedures and service provision.

Equality impact assessments are carried out when a new policy, procedure or service is being developed or significantly changed, and where a service review is taking place, or where a potential inequality has been identified.

Assessments include evidence-based analysis of equality impacts across the Protected Characteristics covered by the Equality Act and on carers and socio-economic status.

12.1 Equality Impact Assessment Guidance Note

13.0 EDI Frequently Asked Questions

To view the Frequently Asked Questions relating to EDI, please click [here](#).

These are to assist both Halton Borough Council's employees and its managers.

14.0 More Information

For any queries regarding the contents of this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, please contact our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Liz Morton –

liz.morton@halton.gov.uk

REPORT TO:	Corporate & Inclusion Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	2 nd September 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Corporate Director, Interim Chief Executive's Delivery Unit
PORTFOLIO:	Corporate Services
SUBJECT:	Performance Management Reports for Quarter 1 of 2025/26
WARD(S)	Boroughwide

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:
- Finance
 - Operational HR Division, Interim Chief Executives Delivery Unit
 - ICT and Administrative Support
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
 - Property Services

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Departmental objectives provide a clear statement on what services are planning to achieve and to show how they contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. Such information is central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

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

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

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

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None identified.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

Corporate and Inclusion Policy and Performance Board – Quarter 1

Reporting Period: 1st April – 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 Corporate & Inclusion Board.
- 1.2 It covers key priorities for development or improvement in the various functional areas reporting to the Board in relation to the Council's priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency i.e.:
 - Finance
 - Operational HR Division, Interim Chief Executives Delivery Unit
 - ICT Infrastructure
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
 - Property Services
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 5 of this report.

1.4 Corporate Priorities



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

Plan on a Page



2.0 High Priority Equality Actions

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

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


3.0 Performance Overview

- 3.1** Key Performance Indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate.
- 3.2** It should be noted that given the significant and unrelenting downward financial pressures faced by the Council there is a requirement for Departments to make continuous in-year adjustments to the allocation of resources in order to ensure that the Council maintains a balanced budget.
- 3.3** Whilst every effort continues to be made to minimise any negative impact of such arrangements upon service delivery they may inevitably result in a delay in the delivery of some of the objectives and targets contained within this report.

Finance


Key Objectives / milestones

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
FS01	Higher proportion of council tax income due for the year to be collected compared to the previous year


Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the in-year collection rate will be compared to the same point of the previous year		<p>Council tax collection for the period ending 30 June 2025 is 27.37% which is 0.04% up on the same period for last year.</p> <p>Debt relating to previous years continues to be collected, the Council utilises powers through charging orders and attachment to earnings/benefits to secure debts. £1.060m has been collected in</p>

		<p>relation to previous year debt, equivalent to 5.42% of outstanding debt as at 31 March 2025. This is an improvement of £0.263m compared to the same period in 2024/25.</p> <p>For 2024/25 the Council's in-year council tax collection rate was 93.98% which compares to the national collection rate of 95.9%. Council tax collection rates are impacted by deprivation, where it is evidenced the higher the deprivation the lower the collection rate. Despite this Halton outperforms a number of unitary and met authorities who have a lower deprivation ranking.</p>
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Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
FS02	Higher proportion of business rates income due for the year to be collected compared to previous year

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the in-year collection rate will be compared to the same point of the previous year		<p>Business rate collection for the period ending 30 June 2025 is 31.95% which is 0.62% lower than the collection rate at the same point last year.</p> <p>Despite the collection rate being lower on the same point last year it is worth noting 2024/25 collection rates were the highest in over a decade. The collection rate at 30 June 2025 remains high and is the second highest collection rate over the past decade.</p> <p>£0.344mm has been collected in relation to previous year debt.</p>

Corporate Priority	Priority 4 - Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
FS 03	Reducing the average time for processing new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims by 1 day, compared to the previous year, to an average of 21.65 days.


Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the same quarter last year (Q1 2024/25 20.83 days).		<p>Q1 2025-26 27.26 days Q4 2024-25 18.97 days Q3 2024-25 18.94 days Q2 2024-25 19.58 days Q1 2024-25 20.83 days</p> <p>The new claims processing figures for April 2025 and May 2025 were 28.93 days and 30.62 days respectively. In June 2025 the new claims processing figure was 21.76 days. It is anticipated that future monthly performance will be similar to the June 2025 figure. The Benefits Service staffing is currently depleted, with two Benefit Officers on maternity leave and there are three Benefit Officer vacancies. Appointments have been made for these vacant posts and the new staff will be taking up their positions in August 2025.</p>

Corporate Priority	Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
FS 04	Reducing the average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction by 1 day, compared to the previous year, to an average of 8.55 days.


Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the same quarter last year (13.70 days).		<p>Q1 2025-26 14.30 days Q4 2024-25 9.16 days Q3 2024-25 12.19 days Q2 2024-25 15.62 days Q1 2024-25 13.70 days</p>

		<p>As we only have figures for quarter 1 it is too early to state with any certainty whether we will match last years (2024/25) figures. The Benefits Service staffing is currently depleted, with two Benefit Officers on maternity leave and there are three Benefit Officer vacancies. Appointments have been made for these vacant posts and the new staff will be taking up their positions in August 2025.</p>
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Corporate Priority	Priority Two - Building a strong, sustainable, local economy
FS 05	Ensuring 90% of all suppliers' invoices are paid within 30 days, including those which are disputed invoices.

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the proportion of suppliers' invoices paid within 30 days will be assessed		<p>As at the end of Quarter 1, 90.93% of the Council's supplier invoices paid this financial year were settled within 30 calendar days of receipt. This figure reflects the Council's continued commitment to prompt payment practices and supports positive working relationships with suppliers.</p> <p>It is important to note that this performance metric includes all invoices, including those subject to disputes or delays due to queries.</p>


Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
FS 06	Higher proportion of historic sundry debt to be collected compared to the same point the previous year




Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the collection rate for the total outstanding historic debt (balance as at the previous year-end) will be compared to the same point the previous year		<p>As at 31 March 2025, the total outstanding historic debt stood at £19,407,241. By 30 June 2025, 53.22% of this debt had been successfully collected, reflecting a strong start to the financial year and a significant improvement in recovery efforts.</p> <p>This marks a significant improvement in performance compared to the same point last year, when the historic debt collection rate was 38.26%. The increase reflects the positive impact of enhanced debt recovery efforts, including the appointment of a new external debt collection provider, improved management information, and a more targeted approach to addressing aged debt.</p>

Operational HR Division, Interim Chief Executives Delivery Unit





Key Objectives / milestones

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
CXDU 01	Reduction in Sickness absence across the Council - Review and amend policy to focus on attendance, train and empower managers to apply procedure timely.

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Reduce the sickness absence days FTE average across the Council by March 2026		3.57




Total 14.19 days for 2024/2025.		Q4 2024/25 - 3.79 Q1 2024/25 – 3.03
Reduce the average cost of absence across the council by March 2026	 	£1,561.79 Q4 2024/25 - £1,232.50 Q1 2024/25 - £1,129.98

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
CXDU 02	Promote increased stability of the workforce across the organisation - Improve the Employer value proposition of HBC to Attract and retain talent and become an Employer of choice.

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Improve turnover rate with a target of 13%		17.32% Q4 2024/25 - Turnover 19.28%
Workforce Stability: 87.12%		Q1 2025/25 Turnover 15.29% There is no cost associated with this as data does not take into account level and salary of leavers and starters. Calculated at Turnover: No leavers/No employees * 100
Improve workforce stability rate with a minimum 88% target	 	85.73% Q4 2024/25 Stability 85.74% Q1 2024/25 stability 87.12%

		<p>There is no cost associated with this as data does not take into account level and salary of leavers and starters</p> <p>Calculated at: No employees 12m in post/No employees * 100</p>
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Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
CXDU 03	Reduce flexible workforce (agency) spend and deployment across the organisation

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Reduce agency costs across organisation by March 2026	 	<p>Total Spend £3,281,700.32</p> <p>Off contract - £427,705.57 On contract - £2,853,994.75</p> <p>Q4 2024/25 -£3,449,278.64</p> <p>Q1 2024/25 - £3,397,163.09</p>
Reduce agency usage by March 2026		<p>2488 total placements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2189 Agency placements • 299 Casual placements

ICT


Key Objectives / milestones

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
ICT 01	LD1 Average availability of the Council's M365 Systems 24/7 - 365.


Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
2023 – 2026 is seeing the delivery of the Azure and Microsoft M365 E5 platforms – through 2025 the teams continue to deliver updates with key		This programmes Phase 1 objective has been the full transformation from legacy telephony and contact centre systems to modern,

<p>technical partners, new integrated systems and further deployments of Cloud and on-premise deliveries as part of this major technology change programme.</p>		<p>integrated communication and data infrastructure.</p> <p>It includes decommissioning outdated hardware, Cloud application deployment, implementing new cloud-based contact centre solution, building a secure on-premise and hybrid data Lakehouse, and delivering a business intelligence platform that supports the Halton operational and strategic goals.</p> <p>These huge programmes of work will offer new and innovative platform technologies for the wider organisation to build upon this is not just a technical project set but a platform for the authority to innovate with process change and digital first strategies.</p> <p>The delivery of the new Telephony solution by September 2025 will not only link to Ai driven technologies but will link directly with the new CRM solution currently under development. Again, the new CRM solution will bring with it Ai technologies and developments such as citizen portals and a greater level of integrated services at the front end through the authority's web site and social media presences.</p> <p>As noted within the previous quarter the centralisation of the authority's data assets is again a major project that will allow the delivery of accurate live reporting as well as form the base for Ai into the future.</p> <p>Ai is a complex beast and not something the authority can afford to buy off the shelf not only because of the cost in monetary terms but the cost of accuracy and the delivery needs of the authority many will be impatient to implement pockets of Ai but the HBC technical strategy is clear our objective is to containerise specific Ai deliveries and deliver the Knowledge based systems first then moving onto the more complex capabilities of generative Ai.</p>
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Corporate Priority	
ICT 02	LD2 Security Incidents across each reporting quarter


Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
The software packages and monitoring solutions will be in place by the 2nd quarter 2025. This will include the delivery of DR and BCM opportunity through this new open-source platform. The Platform will be based upon a small proportion of paid for solutions with the balance based upon pure open-source technologies releasing further savings into the future.		<p>As above we discussed the centralisation of data in order to deliver a standardised reporting platform allowing live data to be reported against in some cases improving the authority's accuracy and future planning efforts. Added to this we will be replacing the ageing HR and Pay platforms and linking them to a new cloud-based Finance system this will be the same finance solution we have successfully hosted in partnership with the Liverpool City Region, Mersey Travel and Sefton MBC.</p> <p>This platform will form the new ERP base supported by the data project over the next 12 months. This needs to be noted that this project is a considerably complex and time-consuming effort and will be reported against over the coming quarters and into the next financial year.</p> <p>This platform is now under development and the POC will be deployed within August /September with the objective of live business solutions being deployed within September.</p>

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
ICT 03	LD3 Number of resolved customer contacts – Contact Centre

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the delivered process and the number of contacts will be reported with an objective of delivering contact through all digital means, reducing wait times and improving resolution at 1 st contact for those services that will allow. With the colossal amount of work being undertaken within this area through the delivery of the Sales-Force CRM, Ai and new Telephony that will now integrate with the new internal platforms and remove the old Skype telephony solution by October 2026.		<p>31,759 individual call contacts across Quarter 1</p> <p>For over 15 years, the council has relied upon an on-premise Skype for Business Telephony System supported by a contact centre solution that is now struggling with linking into the new technology platforms in the cloud both have more than served a purpose. The IT and Customer Service teams have operated and delivered high volume services through these technologies within the bounds of the austerity restrictions.</p> <p>Now, due to prolonged underinvestment and technical obsolescence, these systems are now failing and causing significant operational disruption.</p> <p>With this new phase of investment through the transformation programme and the increased IT capital programme, the Customer Journey and IT teams have embarked on a program to replace these outdated systems with the recently chosen contact centre telephony solution, that will be integrated with the Microsoft 365 Teams solution, also the IVR, to be linked to an interactive Ai driven bot to enhance customer service</p>

		<p>One that will potentially deployed for internal services.</p> <p>This transition is part of a broader program of technology development linked to the use of business analysis skills aimed at aligning technological solutions with business goals.</p>
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Corporate Priority	Priority 4 - Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
ICT 04	LD4 Number of resolved contacts – One Stop Shop's


Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
<p>The partnerships within the shop's continuing to increase at a pace and a programme of work linked to the Transformation programme owned by the department. This is currently under development to increase the levels of services available and looking to partner with key external agencies. Integration and an HBC staffing presence within the NHS Halton Health Hubs has been agreed with a 3rd quarter 2026 target for the Runcorn opening.</p>		<p>30,144 individual face to face interactions across Quarter 1</p> <p>The Customer Journey transformation strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to enhancing the full customer journey using personalised web portals, chatbots, mobile technologies, social media integration, and the latest AI and chat technologies. The goal is to seamlessly link the authority's contact centre and shops with these technologies, improving both face-to-face and digital customer experiences while ensuring accessibility for all, including those with limited access to technology. This strategy will also integrate with existing CRM and Office 365 technologies to improve internal and external client interactions from contact to resolution. Digital poverty remains an issue within Halton as it does in many areas across the Northwest new ways of interacting with this client base will be part of the customer journey programme, but the shops remain an essential aspect of the front door into the council for many.</p>

		<p>This programme of work will also be linked to a newly agreed partnership with NHS led Halton Health Hubs – discussions continue to evaluate the options for a presence within the new Runcorn Old Town hub and also to offer an NHS presence within the HBC locations. The management within this area are discussing options to increase the number of council services within the locations bringing services into the community on a face-to-face basis. Digital poverty and low digital skills make sure not all interactions can be digital.</p>
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Legal & Democracy

Key Objectives / milestones


Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
LD 01	To ensure that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information and are kept informed of changing legislation and responsibilities

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Revised Constitution to be approved by Annual Council each May		The revised Constitution was approved by Council in May


Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
LD 02	To provide efficient and effective Democratic Support Services that provides Elected Members, as key decision makers, with the necessary information, support and training opportunities to fulfil their individual potential and management and governance role effectively

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Inductions to be completed by June following election and offer of MAPs to be monitored on a quarterly basis		<p>The first meeting of the Member Development Group 2025/26 took place on Thursday 24th July 2025. At this meeting the Members discussed the new Councillor Development Plan. It was agreed that following the meeting the form would be emailed to all Members to complete and return by Friday 29th August 2025. On receipt of the forms meetings will be arranged, on Teams or face-to-face, to discuss the forms with Members and their training needs.</p> <p>With regard to training, during the Quarter 1 - 1st April – 30th June 2025, 28 Members have attended at least one training event = 51% of Members, and 9 have attended two or more training events = 16.6% of Members</p>

Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
LD 03	Ensure that prosecutions are carried out expeditiously by monitoring average time taken to issue from receipt of full instructions. The target is within 10 working days.

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target		All prosecutions have been issued under 10 working days from receipt of full instructions





Corporate Priority	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
LD 04	Ensure that care cases are carried out expeditiously by monitoring average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department. The target is within 3 working days



Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target: Children's – 24 cases issued		The target of issuing care proceedings within 3 days of all final paperwork being agreed and received, is being met.

Catering Stadium & Registration Services





Key Objectives / milestones


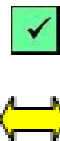
Corporate Priority	Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. Registrars
ERD 26	Provide accessible and efficient Registration Service to Halton residents.

Milestone:	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
95% of Births registered (or declarations) within 5 working days of request.	 	100% appointment availability - Appointment availability to be monitored to ensure that births are registered within the required timeframe. Registrar diary amended if required to allow registration to take place in a timely manner.
95% of Deaths registered (or declarations within 2 working days of request). <i>95% is national benchmark.</i>	 	99.21% Bank Holidays affected appointment availability. Appointment availability to be monitored to ensure deaths are registered within the required timeframe.



90% of customers seen early, on time or within 10 minutes of their appointment time.	 	100% of customers seen early, on time or within 10 minutes of appointment
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Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong Sustainable Local Economy. Widnes Market
ERD 36	Provide a variety of affordable trading spaces at Widnes Market

Milestone:	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Achieve a minimum of 80% indoor stall occupancy	 	<p>The market has a good trader occupancy rate, in Q1 82%, this is in an economy where many local markets are suffering from reduced trader numbers, with the national average of local market occupancy rates at 72% (in accordance with the 2023 survey from NABMA)</p> <p>Q1 2025/26 is down by 7% on the same period 2024/25, this is attributed to the retirements of traders and the reduction in stall sizes without a loss of trader.</p> <p>In addition and not included in the figures the market has supported 26 community stalls across the period.</p>
Achieve a minimum of 80% outdoor stall occupancy levels	 	<p>Widnes outdoor market regular trading days are Monday, Friday and Saturday with the Flea and Collectors market on Wednesday, the occupancy levels overall for established trading during Q1 2025/26 is 78.75% a slight reduction of 3.75% on the same period 2024/25.</p> <p>However, a combined flea and retail trading day was introduced on Thursdays in April 2022 and uptake on this day each week is low in comparison to established regular days which reduces the overall occupancy in terms of data analysis, however, operates at no additional cost to the Authority the combined occupancy of the</p>

		outdoor market is 70.75 which is up by 2.5% on the same period 2024/25.
Achieve minimum annual overall footfall of 585,000		<p>Overall footfall during the Q1 2025/26 period is 323,196.</p> <p>Overall visitor footfall is down by 7.25% on the same period as last year, the national average footfall across the markets and retail sector has reduced in the same period by 4.25%</p>
Strive for minimum 120% service budget recovery.		121.96% achieved in Q1, a new quarterly KPI, previous end of year was 125.86%

Corporate Priority	Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Six - Valuing and Appreciating Halton and our Community The DCBL Stadium
ERD 37	Provide affordable space for business, community, cultural and recreational activities to take place.


	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Achieve minimum 55% meeting space occupancy.		Q1 has seen an increase in usage of meeting space from 40% in Q1 2024/25 to 75% .
Achieve minimum 55% meeting space occupancy.		Q1 has experienced a decrease in conference space to 41.03% from 62.5% the same period in 2024/25. This can be attributed to some closures of the conference suites over the period for essential maintenance and supporting election arrangements.

Achieve minimum 55% sports hall occupancy	 	Sports hall occupancy has increased in the period to 64% in comparison to 26.9% in Q1 2024.
Achieve minimum 75% 4G pitch occupancy levels	 N / A	Winter occupancy commences in Q3, although the pitch is available for use outside of peak-season, this is low level and doesn't inform comparable data.
95% Customer satisfaction 4/5 star reviews	 	<p>100% of returns rated the stadium in terms of 'Quality of Venue' between 4 and 5 stars.</p> <p>71% of returns rated the stadium in terms of 'Quality of Catering' between 4 and 5 stars.</p> <p>78% of returns said they would likely or very likely use the stadium again.</p> <p>100% of customers would likely or very likely recommend the stadium to others. (1 star being very poor and 5 stars being excellent)</p> <p>Overall, 100% of customers rated the stadium very good or excellent.</p>
53% Service budget recovery annual target.	 N / A	47.06% achieved in Q1. A new KPI for this operating year hence, quarterly performance not previously detailed; end of previous operating year was 62.32% and the stadium experiences seasonal variations over the operating year.


Property Services

Key Objectives / milestones



Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. Priority Six - Valuing and Appreciating Halton and our Community. Asset Management & Valuation
ERD 07	Provide Support for the Council's Corporate Priorities through the Provision of Property Advice

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
To achieve full cost recovery for the service whilst providing support to departments with their property requirements.		Still rolling out this approach across the council services but a higher proportion of recharging is taking place and a reduction in resources has been implemented.

Corporate Priority	Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. Property Services
ERD 09	Rationalise the Council's main office accommodation to deliver revenue savings.

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Exec Board approval to rationalise the Council's accommodation and progress with associated works including the review of the desk ratio policy.		Report submitted to Executive Board for consideration.

Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. Property Services
ERD 10	Reduce Carbon Emissions from the Council's Property Portfolio

Milestone	Progress Q1	Supporting Commentary
Deliver the solar connection to the Leisure Centre by March 2026		Works ongoing in respect of getting out to tender for the solar farm. Anticipated tender date September 2025, actual connection to leisure centre likely to be after March 2026.
Carry out decarbonisation measures on a minimum of 2 buildings to produce carbon emission reductions to contribute towards 1.5% by March 2026		Proposed decarbonisation works at Picow Farm Depot currently out to tender, works should commence on site in Autumn, subject to costs being within the funding envelope. Rooftop solar installation works currently being priced up, with a view to getting three sites delivered prior to March 2026

4.0 Financial Statements

Finance Department

Revenue Budget as at 31 May 2025

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'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)

Comments on the above figures

Net spend for the Finance Department is forecast to be £0.113m above budget at financial year-end. This is largely a result in the shortfall of income against the rent allowances, a net effect of £0.684m. The Rental allowance income subsidy has been reducing year on year as Housing Benefit claimants are being transferred onto Universal Credit.

Concessionary Travel spend is forecast to be £0.091m under budget at the end of the financial year-end, this is based on an estimate of passenger numbers provided by concessionary travel partners.




Discretionary Social Fund has not been utilised over the recent years due to the increased funding option of Household Support Fund being used, the department is forecasting an underspend of £0.097m

Supplies and Services forecast overspend of £0.076m is due to bank charges, based on previous years expenditure and the increasing costs coming through Stripe / Worldpay and Merchant Acquirer price increases for card fee rates, more customers choosing card payment as their preferred payment. The business rates team are still engaging with Inform CPI Ltd (Analyse Local) who specialise in identifying new business rate premises that have not been included within the rating list.

There has been a reduction of insurance premiums through negotiating better terms/changing providers. Public liability claimant damages have significantly reduced from previous years however motor liability claims have increased and along with movement in insurance provision results in a underspend position of £0.169m.

Reimbursement & grant income has increased due to receiving unbudgeted income from Natwest purchase card rebates and administration income relating to Household Support Fund resulting in a favourable outturn position of £0.173m

Approved 2025/26 Savings

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		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 nonrecovery.	0	100		Is currently being reviewed by the Transformation team.
Total Finance Department			90	100		

Interim Chief Executive's Delivery Unit**Revenue Budget as at 31 May 2025**

	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)

Comments on the above figures

Currently the Interim Chief Executive Delivery Unit Department (CXDU) is projecting an outturn position of £0.021m over the approved budget for the year.

The forecast underspend against salary costs is due to unfilled vacant positions

However the Apprenticeship Levy budget is forecasting a £0.041m overspend as consistently incurring monthly costs of £0.031m against a £0.330m budget.

The School SLA Income has been reducing as some schools have become academies and are not buying back departmental service

ICT and Administration Department**Revenue Budget as at 31 May 2025**

	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

Comments on the above figures

It is currently forecast net spend for the department will be £0.070m below the approved budget at the end of the financial year.

The main pressures faced by the ICT Department is now in relation to the IT infrastructure, with the move to Microsoft 365, staff have been able to utilise much more efficient hardware. However, the software utilised by the new hardware is at a premium and will be a continuous pressure and the Council will need to react to as prices fluctuate. These pressures have been funded through an increase in budget provided and as such the current position is anticipating £0.160m underspend, these will be closely monitored throughout the year in case of an increase in forecast costs.

Supplies & Services is forecast to overspend £0.199m due to the Dell Technologies rental charges. There has been a substantial increase in communication costs resulting in a projected £0.092m overspend for BT & Vodafone quarterly bundle charges.

Schools SLA income is expected to reduce as more schools become academies and are declining in buying back departmental services.

Legal and Democratic Services Department**Revenue Budget as at 31 May 2025**

	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)

Comments on the above figures

As at the end of May 2025 the department is reporting a net overspend against budget. It is currently forecast that net spend for the department will be over the approved budget by approximately £0.482m at the end of the financial year.

Employee costs for the year are expected to exceed budget due to the Legal Services restructure creating additional posts which are in the process of recruitment. The Legal Services overspend is offset to an extent against the savings in Democratic Services due to a non-election year saving on election payments. As a result of the number of vacancies that exist within the department and work demand, agency staff are required to maintain the service. The main area of concern for the department is the volume of agency costs resulting from hard to fill vacant posts. These costs are expected to total £0.174m at the end of the financial year. Once finalised, the cost of the Legal Services staffing restructure will be funded through Council contingency, as agreed by Executive Board.

Legal expenses are forecast to be over the approved budget by £0.145m, largely as a result of the limited number of staff available to clear an increasing caseload. As recruitment is undertaken these costs are expected to slowly reduce. The impact of transformation and recovery work in Children Services, as well as alternatives to agency staff such as attractive market supplements should help drive down the overspend in the department.

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 by neighbouring councils.	0	100		Green waste charges have been increased to £50.
Area Forums		Area Forums – cease the funding for Area Forums.	0	170		Area forum budgets have been removed in 25-26
Total Community & Greenspace Dept			12	270		

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**Revenue Operational Budget at 31 May 25**

	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

Comments on the above figures

Finance communicates with the department on a regular basis to manage and analyse spending, identifying potential savings that could support current and future priorities. In an era of constrained budgets, achieving these goals is essential. The report forecasts that the department will be under the approved budget by £0.055m at year-end.

Supporting Information

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

To fulfil statutory and contractual obligations and support the borough's regeneration, maintaining a complete staff establishment is essential. However, the challenge of filling surveyor and project manager roles, even with a market supplement, continues to result in a lack of suitable candidates. Consequently, the engagement of agency personnel has been necessary, anticipated to cost £0.270m this financial year. Without these personnel, the borough's regeneration efforts would be hindered, potentially leading to a loss of business rates and council tax. Where possible, these costs are reimbursed through capital and external funding grants.

The recruitment of agency staff has increased commercial rental income by enabling the completion of pending rent reviews. All units at The Hive are now tenanted, which should result in this income budget being balanced for 25/26 providing there is no increase in inflation.

The costs associated with empty properties within the borough continue to be a budget pressure. In addition to the loss of rental income whilst the properties remain vacant, the department incurs additional costs for utilities, repairs, and maintenance. As of the end of May costs are £0.121m, although this does include annual NNDR charges so spend should not continue quite at this level. To reduce the expense, actions need to be taken to accelerate the leasing or explore temporary uses for properties, such as short-term rentals or community projects, which will generate some income and reduce costs. Some properties are in poor condition and require refurbishment before any letting could be considered.

Although the department has seen a significant increase in energy costs over the last few years, the department is forecasting that it will be £0.037m under budget by year-end.

The Repairs and Maintenance program is under continuous review to ensure it stays within budget. This financial year is particularly challenging because the 2025/26 budget did not include an inflation adjustment. An exercise was conducted with the service to distinguish between capital and revenue expenditures, and the budgets have been adjusted accordingly. Despite these adjustments, revenue expenditure is projected to exceed the budget by £0.098m by the end of the year.

Approved 2025/26 Savings

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

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX A

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

Capital Budget at 31 May 25

Scheme Detail	2025/26 Original Allocation £000	2025/26 Revised Allocation £000	31 May Actual Spend £000	31 July Forecast Spend £000	30 Sept Forecast Spend £000
Equality Act Improvement Works	300.0	303.5	0.0	75.0	75.0
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2,639.5	3,381.3	470.8	80.8	200.0
Property Improvements	200.0	231.1	33.7	39.4	39.4
Town Deal	7,190.4	10,091.0	1,384.0	500.0	3,000.0
Port of Weston	3,940.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet	2,200.0	2,200.0	0	0	0
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	0.0	82.0	0	0	0
Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition	0.0	708.0	11	139.4	558.0
Changing Places	0.0	17.0	0	17	0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	0.0	101.2	0	10	30
Total Economy, Enterprise & Property	16,469.9	17,115.1	1,899.3	166.4	588.0

Comments on above figures**Foundry Lane**

Work has commenced on site.

Sci-Tech Daresbury Project Violet

Project Violet is currently being reviewed and a full business case is in development. The programme anticipates a procurement exercise and the revised delivery programme proposes a 26 month build with construction commencing in August 2025 and completion in Q4 2026.

Property Improvements-

Various works undertaken as and when required.

Changing Places

Works complete, retention monies left to pay.

Town Deal

Although at different stages work is progressing with all Town Deal funded projects.

1. The Brindley extension started on site August 2024, with the new drainage in place, foundation put down, steelwork up and new floors put in.
2. The youth centre -part of the Creative and Digital Skill centre - started September 2024, with the new build now well advanced including all external facades, and most steelwork in the wintergarden in place.
3. The Health Hub started work on site April 2025, after the library vacated to temporary location. The steelwork for the mezzanine is up, following installation of drainage.
4. The Runcorn Street art was delivered in May 2025.
5. The construction of the Temple Hall started March 2025, with foundation now complete.
6. The construction of two canal trip boats is underway at a boatyard in Liverpool.
7. The over 55s apartment block under construction at High Street is now receiving doors and windows, and external insulation.
8. Design work progresses on the remaining projects

Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition

The demolition works commenced in Spring 2025, following relocation of the Leisure Centre and period of decommissioning of the building.

Port of Weston

This scheme is no longer going ahead.




UKSPF

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





5.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

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

Direction of Travel Indicator

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

REPORT TO: Corporate & Inclusion Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 2 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

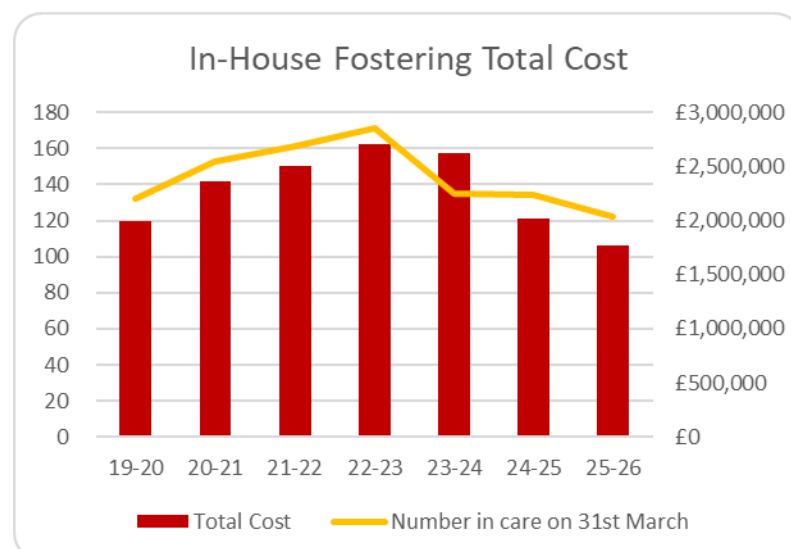
Supplies and services expenditure is forecast to be £1.057m over budget profile at the end of the financial year. Supplies and Services is diverse and covers a number of areas including nursery fees, consultancy, translation costs, equipment and support provided to young people.

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.

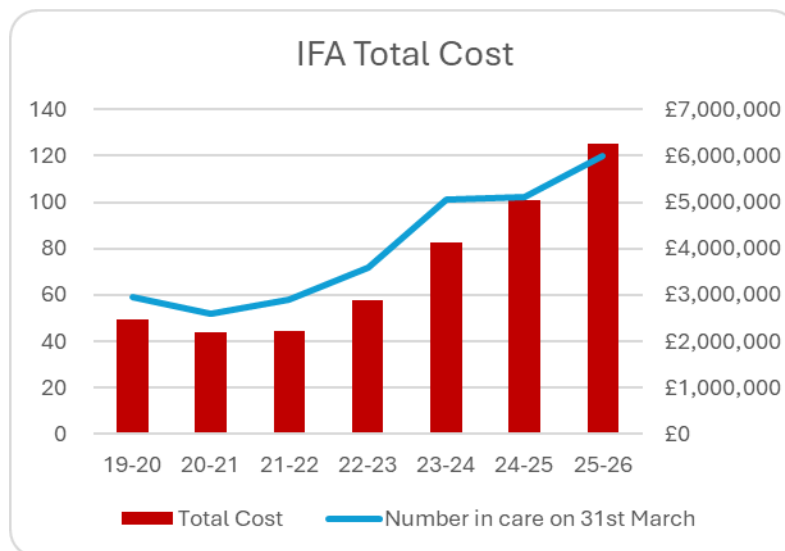
Fostering

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.



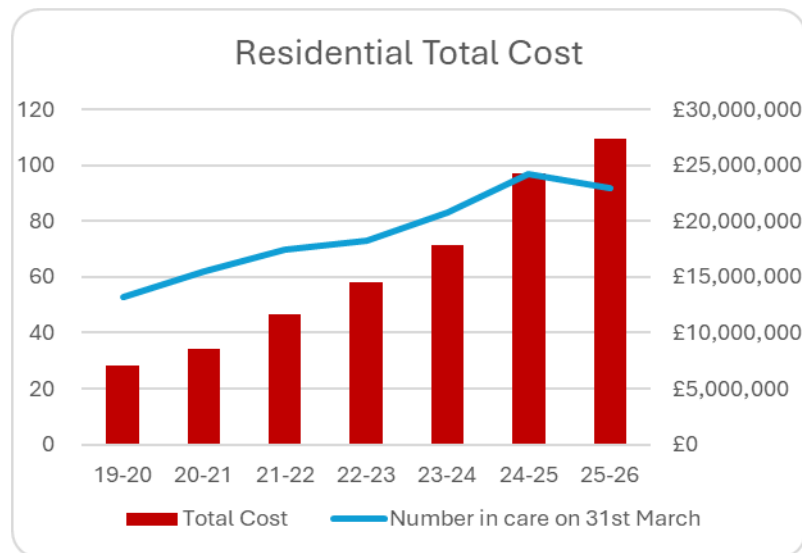
Residential Care

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:

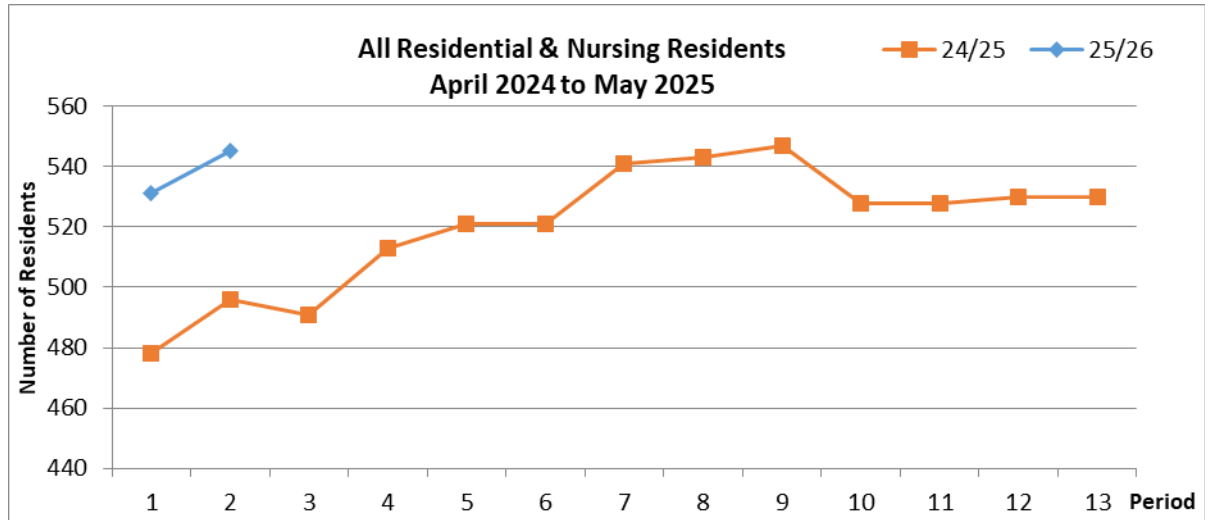
- Reduction of 1 to 1 packages of care if health’s responsibility
- Review 15 minutes packages of domiciliary care to identify medicine prompts which are health’s financial responsibility
- Ensure assessments carried out on discharge from hospital are complete and appropriate
- Maximise internal care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

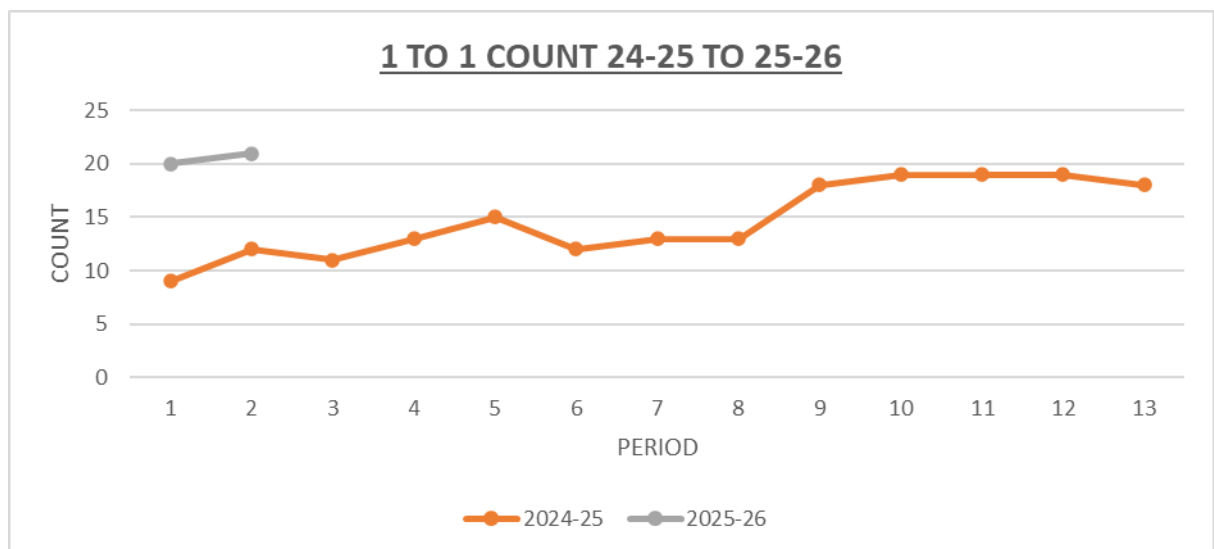
The graph below illustrates the demand for all residential and nursing placements.



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.

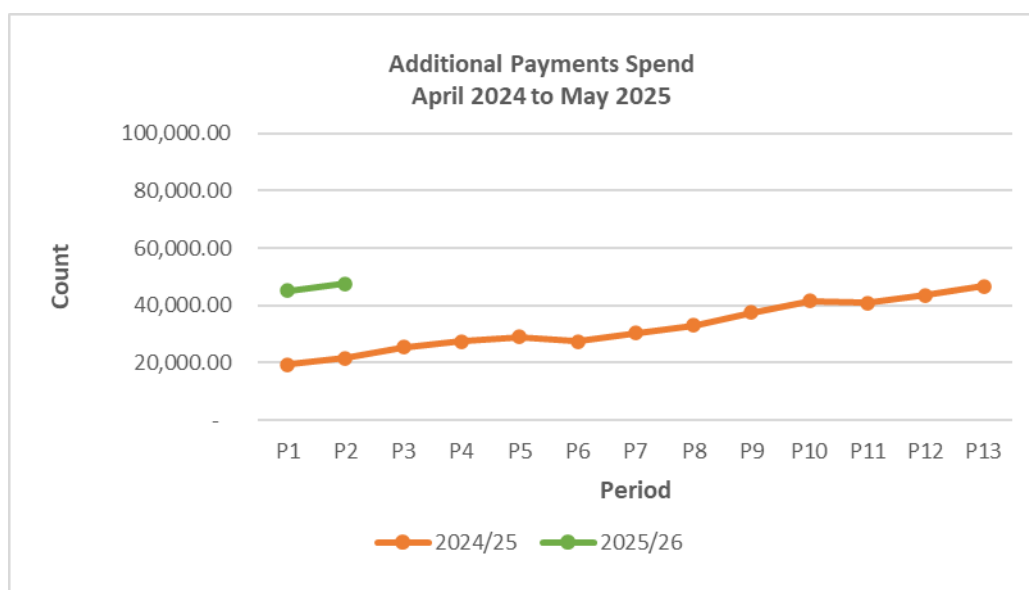
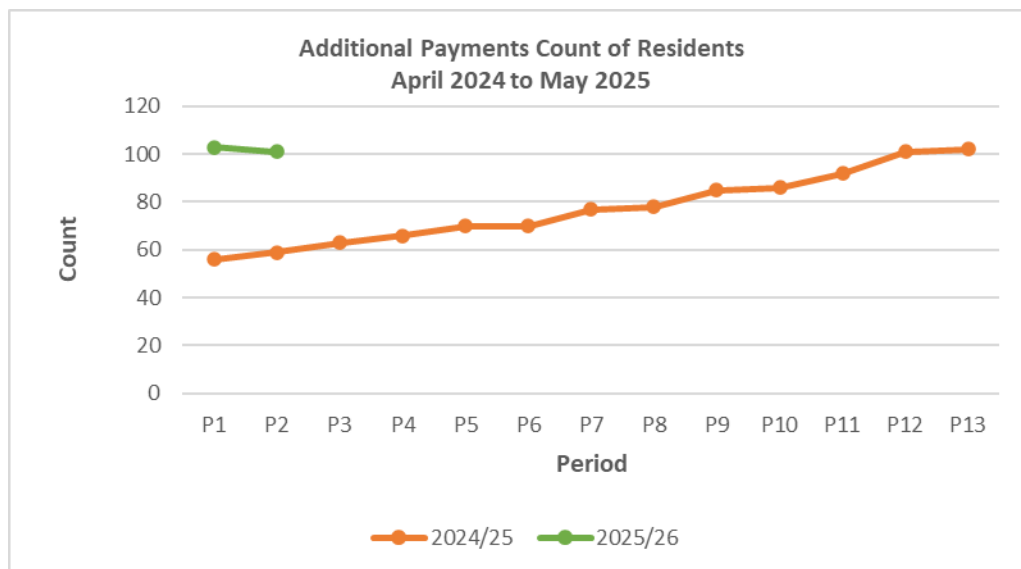
The graph below shows the count of service users receiving 1 to 1 care by period and clearly demonstrates an increase, particularly compared with the same period last year rising from 12 to 21. This is an increase of 75%.



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.

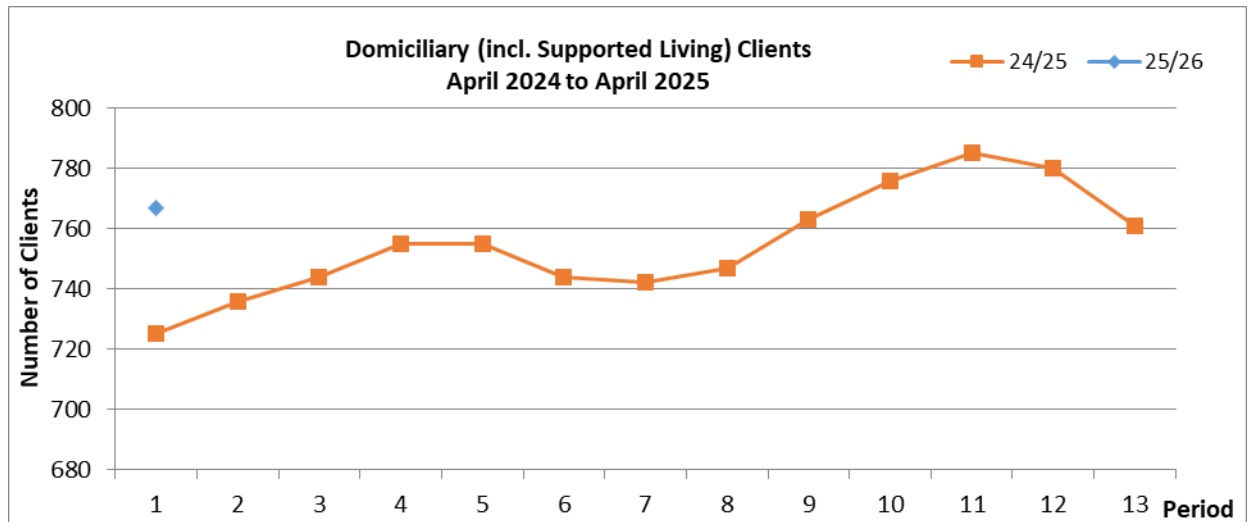


Domiciliary Care & Supported Living

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.

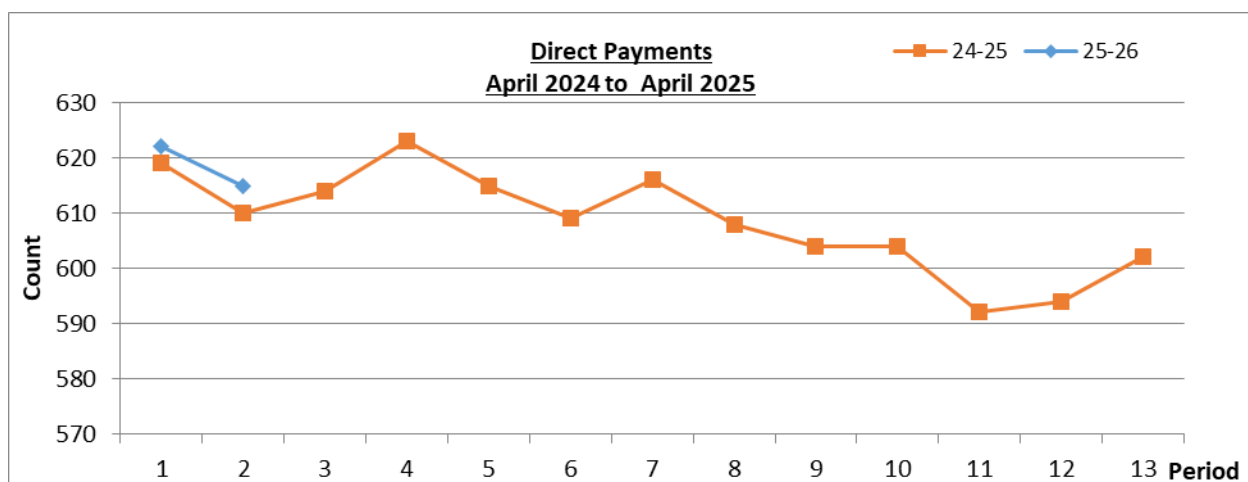
The graph below illustrates the demand for the service from April 2024 to April 2025.



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



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


		involved and cost of court proceedings, in order to reduce the current overspend and ongoing costs.				PLO process is proving effective for some families in diverting away from legal proceedings and safely maintaining children with parents, further exploration is taking place on the use of in house psychologists to undertake assessments in the court arena to further reduce court costs
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		<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		Currently part of workstream being undertaken by the Transformation Programme.

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

Symbol	Objective
	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