

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	16 th November 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Community & Sport
SUBJECT:	Community Centres Annual Report for 2019/20
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To provide Members with information on the Council’s Community Centres Service for the period 1st of April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

2.1 Members consider and comment upon the report.

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Community Centres Service provides for the management and delivery of services from five buildings; Castlefields, Ditton, Grangeway, Murdishaw and Upton. The Centres deliver programmes of community activity, varying models of community cafés and service outlets, for example, Children’s Centre, youth centre and day services. The Centres provide a community hub, a central point at the heart of the communities within which they are located for residents to enjoy chosen activities and receive services in their neighbourhoods. They are based in deprived wards in the Borough and are well utilised.

3.2 **Service Performance**

3.2.1 Summary of Performance

This section of the report provides a summary of overall service performance. Detailed performance data for each individual centre is set out in section 4.

3.2.2 Centre Usage

The information set out below shows that the Centres are very well used with significant attendances each year;

- 2015/16 - 313,582 Attendances
- 2016/17 - 315,736 Attendances
- 2017/18 - 319,101 Attendances
- 2018/19 - 321,466 Attendances
- 2019/20 - 313,227 Attendances

It should be noted that the attendance information set out above is that which is captured from 'formal' usage of the facilities and services at the Centres. It does not include the level of 'drop in' usage, such as individuals using the community library or café facilities, as this is difficult to capture. If this information was available, it would significantly increase the above figures.

Members are advised that the decrease in attendance numbers in 2019/20 compared to recent years is considered to be solely attributable to a reduction in centre usage during February and March 2020; as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. As early as mid-February, attendances began to reduce across all centres and continued to decrease further as we entered March. There were no attendances after 20th March when all centres were closed to the public. Prior to February, tracking of user numbers showed that attendance figures were favourable in comparison to previous years and at that time it was considered that overall attendances would be higher than in 2018/19.

3.2.3 Centre Operating Costs

Details of the net operating costs for the Centres for the past five years is set out below;

2015/16 Net operating costs - £206k (inclusive of £370k income)
2016/17 Net operating costs - £151k (inclusive of £371k income)
2017/18 Net operating costs - £117k (inclusive of £392k income)
2018/19 Net operating costs - £170k (inclusive of £434k income)
2019/20 Net operating costs - £195k (inclusive of £432k income)

Reducing operational costs and increasing income have been key areas of focus for the service and this has helped to see net operating costs for the centres reduce greatly over recent years. In 2019/20, the £25k increase in net costs is largely attributable to a loss of income due to the reduction in bookings during February and March and an increase in premises related costs across all sites; due to an increase in business rates and utility costs. Additional costs incurred in maintaining services during periods of long term staff absence at two centres was also a factor.

4.0 COMMUNITY CENTRE PROFILES 2019/20

The following section contains key performance indicators to illustrate performance at each Centre. The section includes a number of graphs that demonstrate the 'direction of travel' on performance over a three year period. The 'all service average' refers to the average for all of Halton's five Centres.

One of the performance indicators detailed below is 'Operational Recovery'. This indicator measures the percentage of operational expenditure (including support charges) that is recovered by venue income.

4.1 Castlefields Community Centre

4.1.1 Castlefields has seen a slight decrease in attendance and opening hours during 2019/20; broken down as follows:-

Total annual opening hours	3,281
Total aggregate hours main room hired	2,452
Total aggregate hours other rooms hired	4,853
Total attendance main room	36,681
Total attendance other rooms	30,823
Total other attendance	9,882
Total attendances	77,386

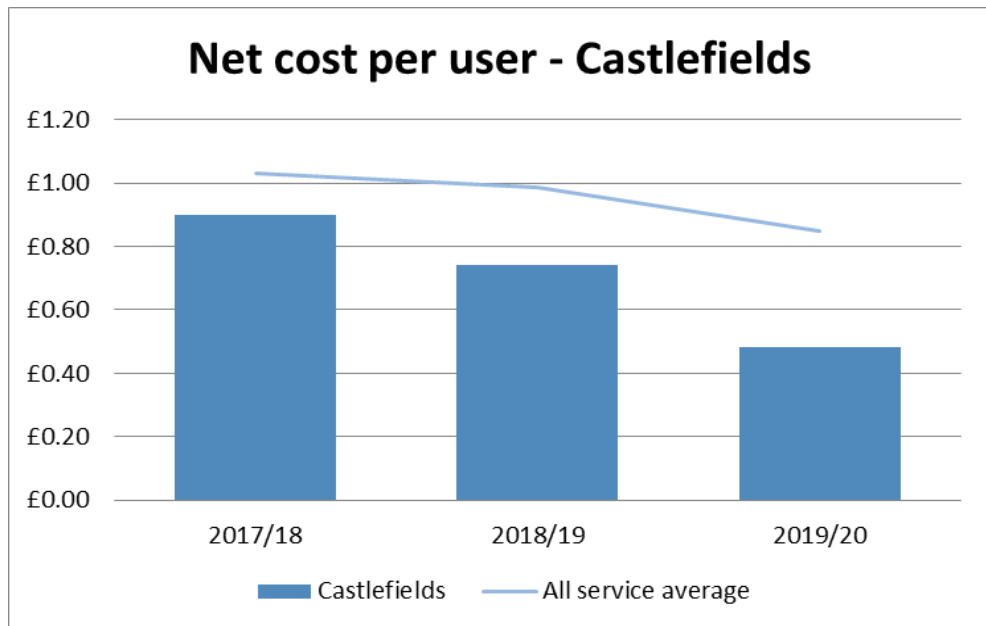
The previous year's attendance was 78,042.

4.1.2 Category of usage is at Castlefields broken down as follows:-

Youth & Children	5,743
Lifelong Learning	5,048
Health & Healthy Living	36,765
Arts Development	14,903
Sports Development	5,957
Statutory Agencies	2,907
Events	6,063
Total	77,386

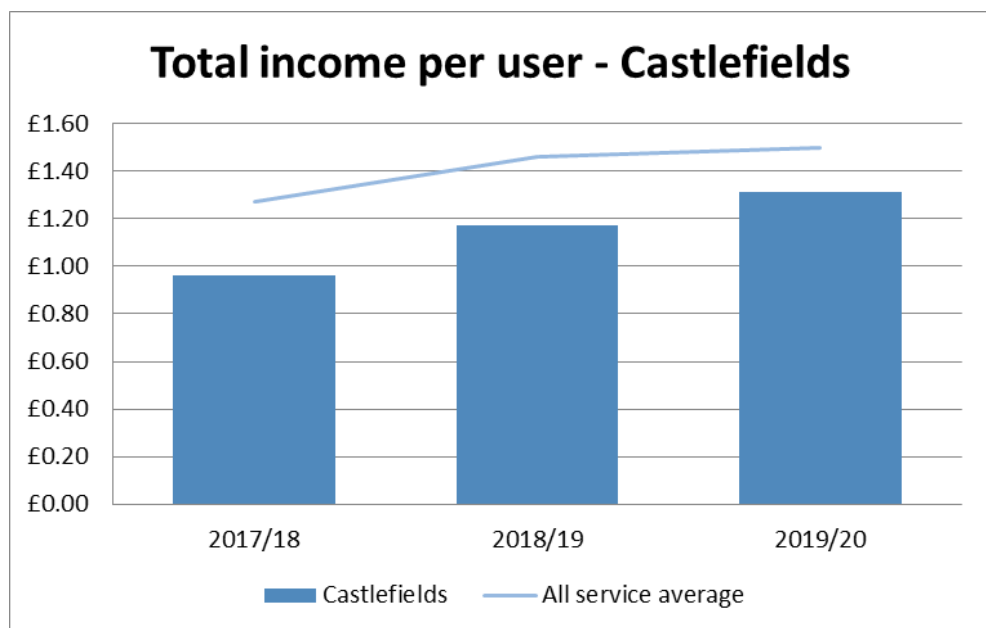
4.1.3 Castlefields Direction of Travel Indicators

Castlefields Net Cost Per User



The net cost per user has decreased to £0.48 from £0.74. The all service average is £0.85. The improvement at Castlefields has seen the Centre become the joint highest performing of Halton's community centres with this indicator.

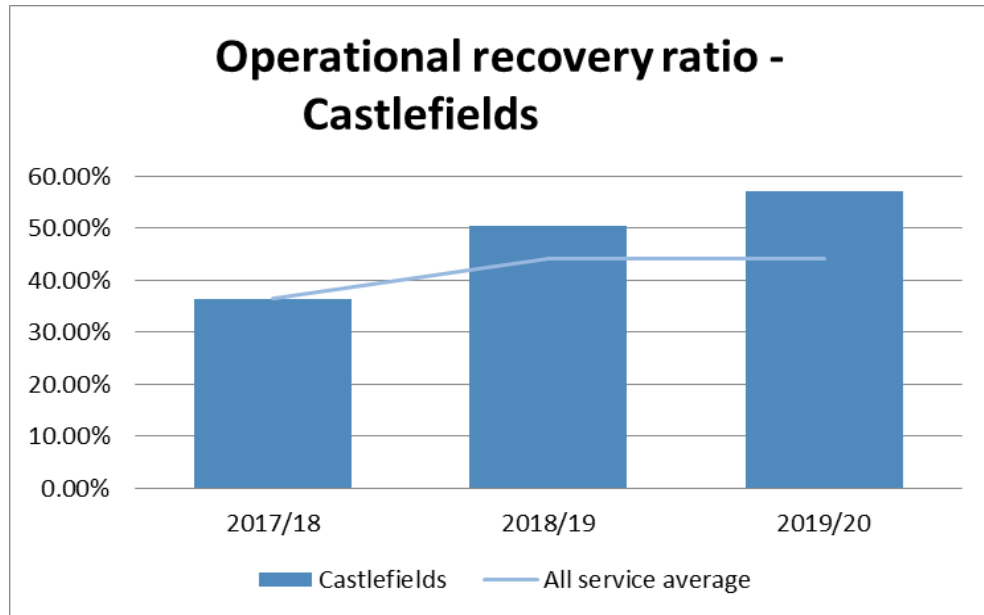
Castlefields Total Income Per User



The income per user has increased from £1.17 in 2018/19 to £1.31 in 2019/20. The all service average has also increased during 2019/20 to £1.50. With an increase this operating year of £0.14 per user, Castlefields is closer to achieving the all service average and has improved from being the lowest performer in this indicator in 2018/19.

Castlefields Operational Recovery

Operational recovery is a calculation of usage, costs and income.



Castlefields operational recovery ratio has increased for the second successive year; from 50.46% in 2018/19 to 57.07% in 2019/20. The service average is 44.25% meaning that Castlefields has strengthened its position as the highest performer for this indicator and is still achieving the highest operational recovery out of Halton's five community centres.

4.2 Ditton Community Centre

4.2.1 Ditton's total attendance has fallen from 71,008 in the previous operating year, which is also attributable to a reduction in usage of some of the smaller hireable spaces. A breakdown of Ditton's usage for 2019/20 is set out below;

Total annual opening hours	3,921
Total aggregate hours main room hired	1,638
Total aggregate hours other rooms hired	4,284
Total attendance main room	21,440
Total attendance other rooms	38,767
Total other attendance	8,215
Total attendances	68,422

The previous year's attendance was 71,008.

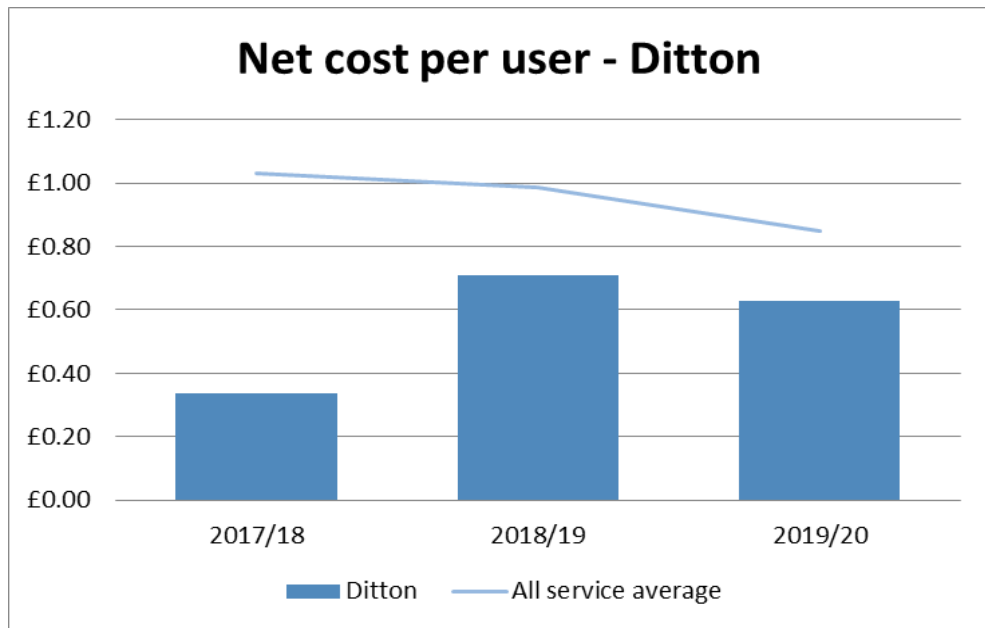
4.2.2 Category of usage at Ditton is broken down as follows:-

Youth & Children	15,265
Lifelong Learning	5,368
Health & Healthy Living	20,203
Arts Development	20,826

Sports Development	1,947
Statutory Agencies	3,038
Events	1,775
Total	68,422

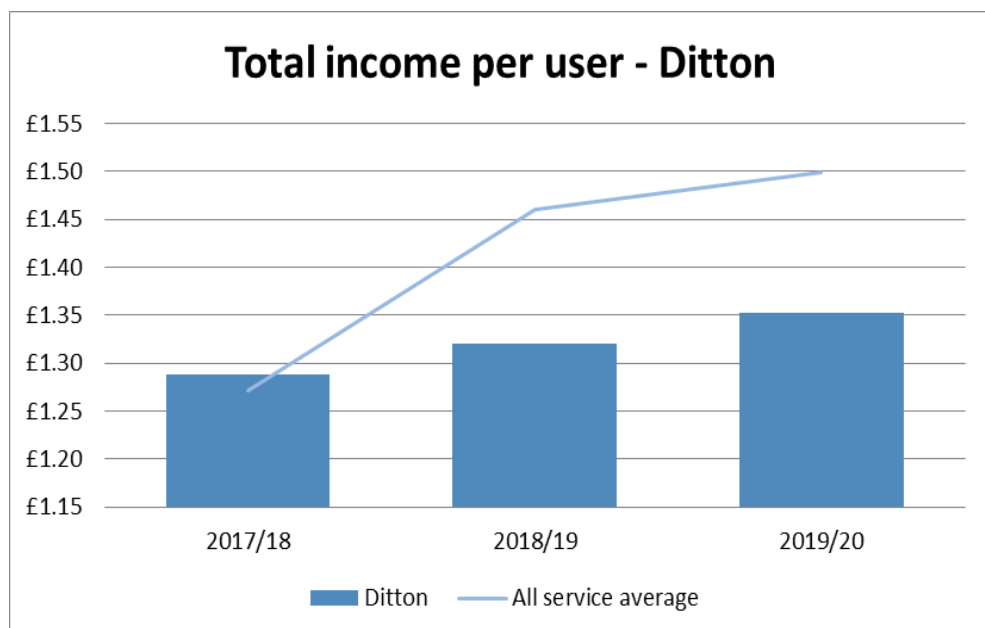
4.2.3 Ditton Direction of Travel Indicators

Ditton Net Cost Per User



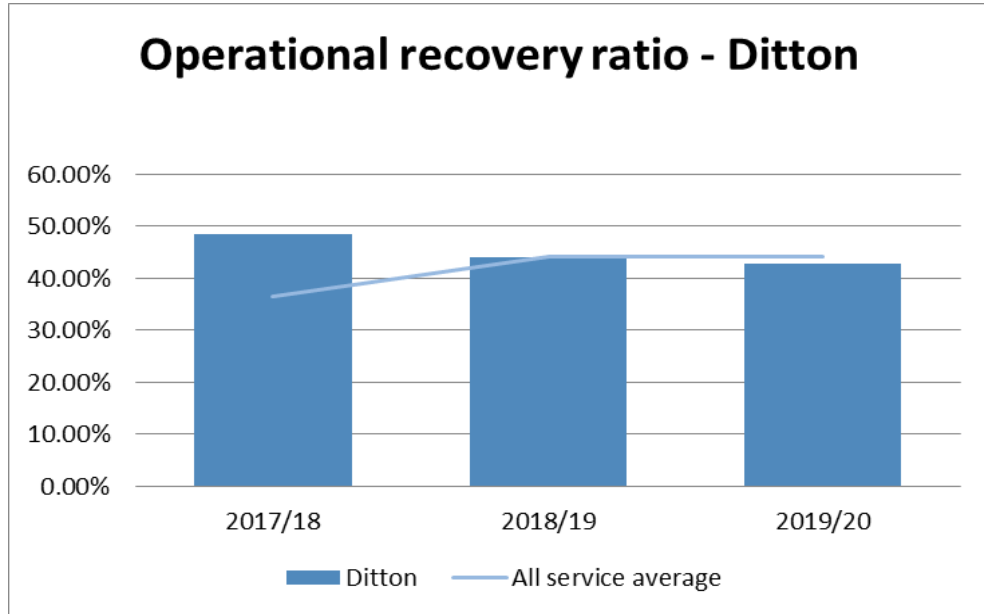
The net cost per user is £0.63. This represents a decrease from £0.71 in 2018/19 and is consistent with the picture across the service; represented on the chart above with a decrease in the all service average.

Ditton Total Income Per User



Albeit marginally, Ditton has continued with the trend of increasing income per user. In 2019/20 the income per user was £1.35; an increase of £0.02. The service average across the five centres is £1.50.

Ditton Operational Recovery



Ditton has continued with a further dip with this indicator reducing from 44.17% in the last operating year to 42.72%. The service average is 44.25%

4.2.3 Grangeway Community Centre

4.3 Grangeway has two distinct areas; the community centre and the 'hub', where youth provision is delivered. A service level agreement for exclusive use for the hub was in place in 2019/20. The two each make up approximately 50% of the overall site. In terms of data collection, only usage for the community centre is collated as usage in the youth area is outside of Centre Manager's control and this needs to be taken into account when considering the usage figures.

4.3.1 The overall usage of Grangeway in 2019/20:-

Total annual opening hours	3,685
Total aggregate hours main room hired	1,789
Total aggregate hours other rooms hired	3,695
Total attendance main room	29,853
Total attendance other rooms	33,227
Total other attendance	8,690
Total attendances	71,770

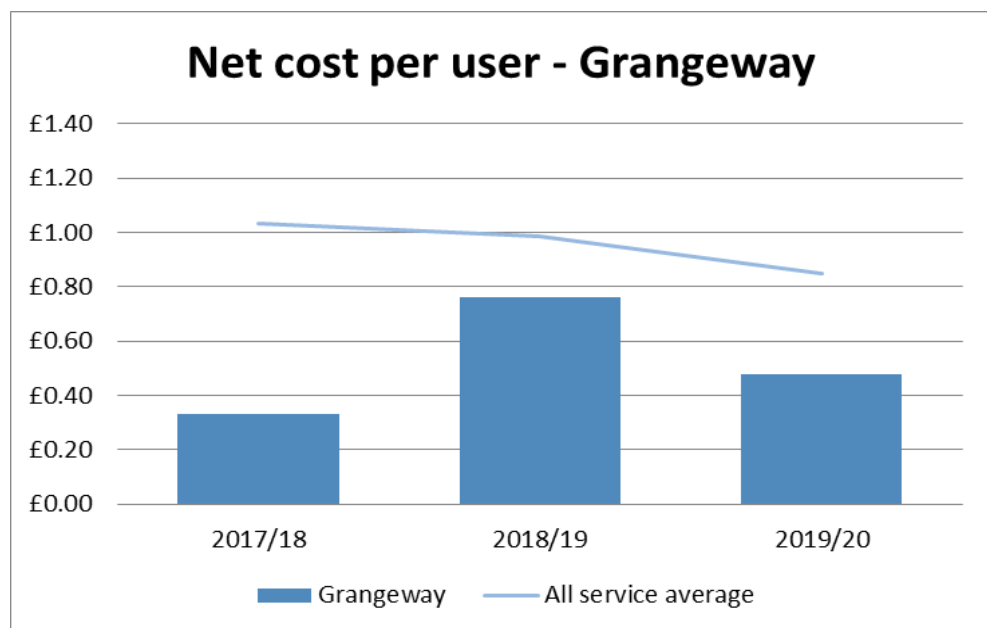
The previous year's attendance was 73,717.

4.3.2 Category of usage at Grangeway is as follows:-

Youth & Children	16,259
Lifelong Learning	1,767
Health & Healthy Living	13,908
Arts Development	9,858
Sports Development	18,272
Statutory Agencies	9,903
Events	1,803
Total	71,770

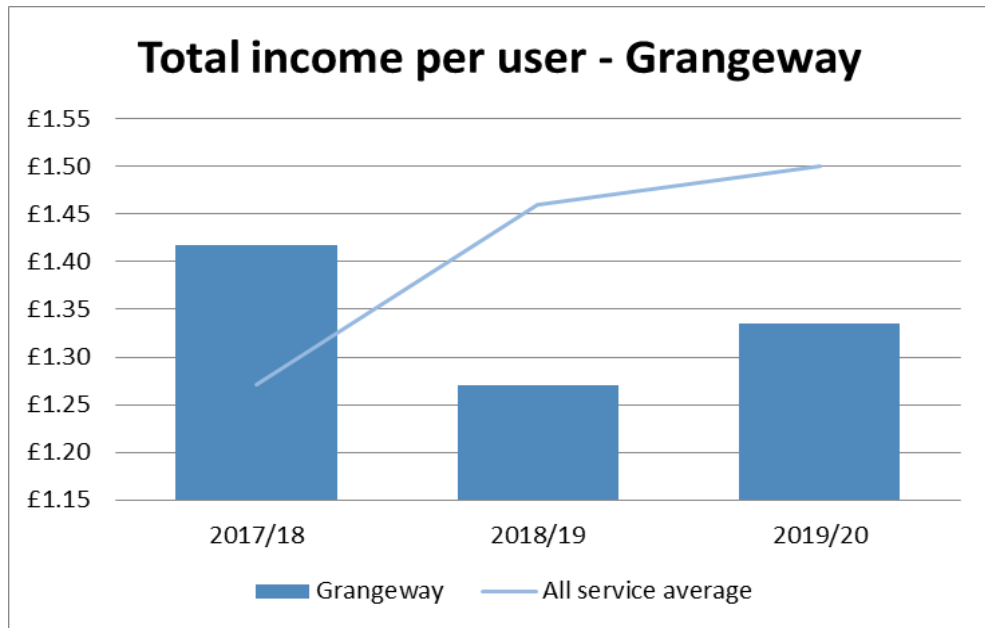
4.3.3 Grangeway Direction of Travel Indicators

Grangeway Net Cost Per User



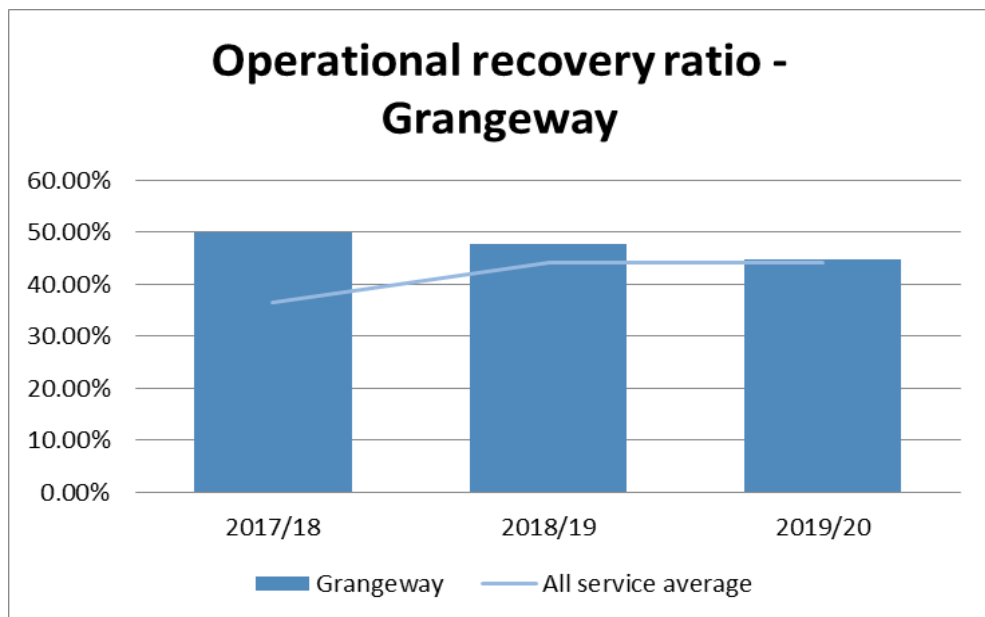
The net cost per user at Grangeway has decreased from £0.76 in 2018/19 to £0.48; remaining lower than the service average of £0.85. Grangeway has remained one of the two the best performing of Halton's community centres with this indicator; sharing the position this year with Castlefields.

Grangeway Total Income Per User



Grangeway has experienced an increase in income per user from £1.27 in 2018/19 to £1.33 in 2019/20. The service average is £1.50.

Grangeway Operational Recovery



Grangeway has continued to see a decrease in operational recovery, with the recovery ratio falling from 47.77% in 2018/19 to 44.75%. However, it remains marginally higher than the service average of 44.25%.

4.4 Murdishaw Community Centre

4.4.1 Murdishaw Community Centre has a variation in its governance model compared to Halton's other four centres. This centre was developed in partnership with Riverside and Liverpool Housing Trust and has a Board of Directors with a company limited by guarantee. Four local Councillors currently sit on the Board. This distinct governance model enables the centre to apply for charitable funding.

4.4.2 The overall usage of Murdishaw in 2019/20:-

Total annual opening hours	2,972
Total aggregate hours main room hired	1,244
Total aggregate hours other rooms hired	3,720
Total attendance main room	13,153
Total attendance other rooms	7,069
Total other attendance	3,729
Total attendance	23,951

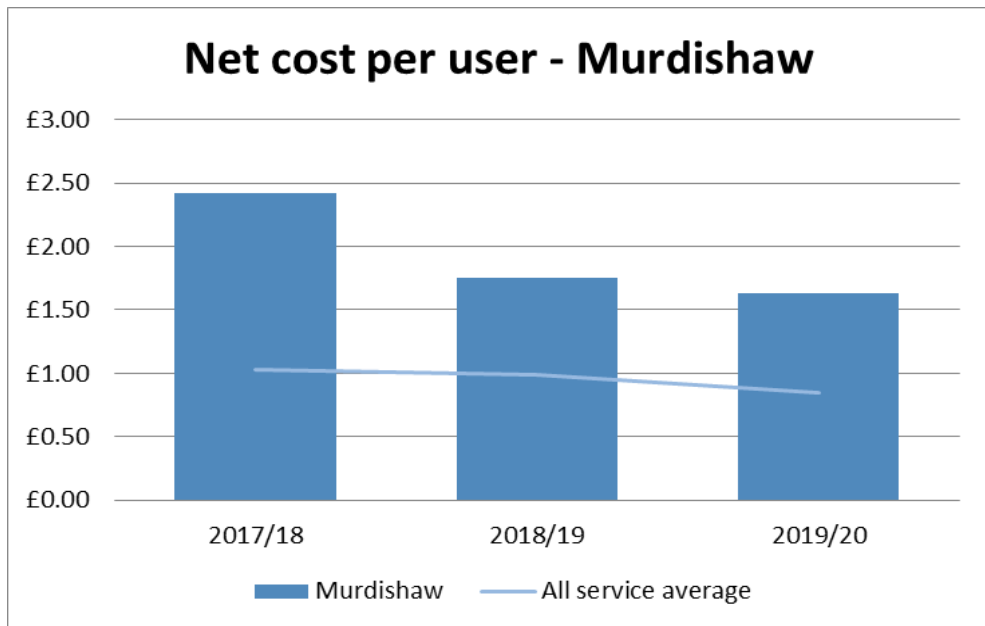
The previous year's attendance was 26,550.

4.4.3 Category of usage at Murdishaw in 2019/20 is broken down as follows:-

Youth & Children	2,639
Lifelong Learning	2,113
Health & Healthy Living	9,207
Arts Development	1,445
Sports Development	1,278
Statutory Agencies	6,569
Events	700
Total	23,951

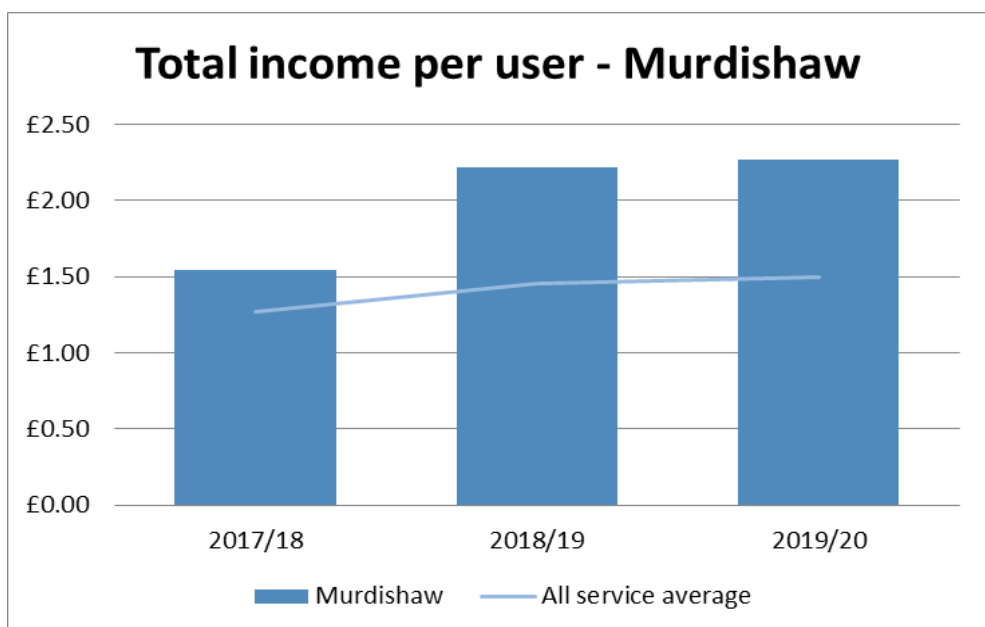
4.4.4 Murdishaw Direction of Travel Indicators

Murdishaw Net Cost Per User



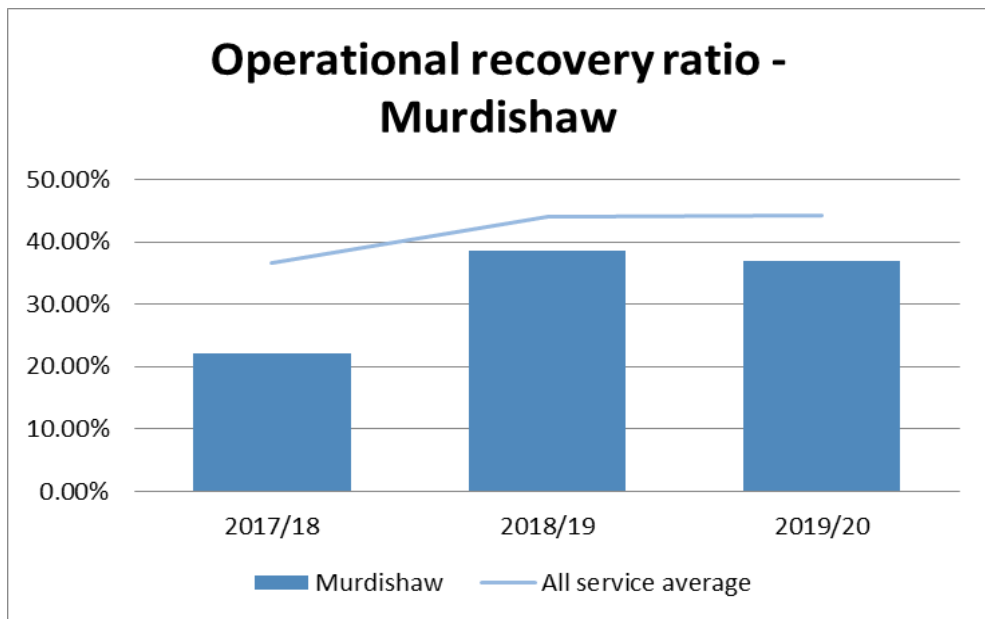
Having previously identified this indicator as a key area of focus in 2017/18, it is positive to see a continuation of the improvement trend and a further reduction in net cost per user at Murdishaw; falling from £1.75 in 2018/19 to £1.63. Whilst this continues to represent a step in the right direction, it will remain an area of focus moving forward as it remains higher than the service average of £0.85.

Murdishaw Total Income Per User



The income per user at Murdishaw has continued to increase, from £2.22 in 2018/19 to £2.27. The service average is £1.50. As in previous years Murdishaw continues to be the highest performer of Halton's five community centres for this indicator.

Murdishaw Operational Recovery



Murdishaw has experienced a marginal reduction in operational recovery from 38.66% in 2018/19 to 36.91% in 2019/20. Whilst this is disappointing, it does represent an improvement from 22.11% in 2017/18 and would likely have seen an improvement on 2018/19 had attendances and income in February and March not have reduced so significantly. Nonetheless, the service average is 44.25% and therefore improving the operational ratio at Murdishaw remains a key objective.

4.5.1 Upton Community Centre

4.5.1 Upton is the only community centre with a Sports Hall which attracts sports teams from the local and wider community. In addition to senior block booking sessions there are a number of junior football teams using the centre which results in high demand for the hall space.

4.5.2 Upton's annual usage in 2019/20 is broken down as follows:-

Total annual opening hours	3,531
Total aggregate hours main room hired	1,986
Total aggregate hours other rooms hired	4,227
Total attendance main room	24,963
Total attendance other rooms	38,405
Total other attendance	8,330
Total attendance	71,698

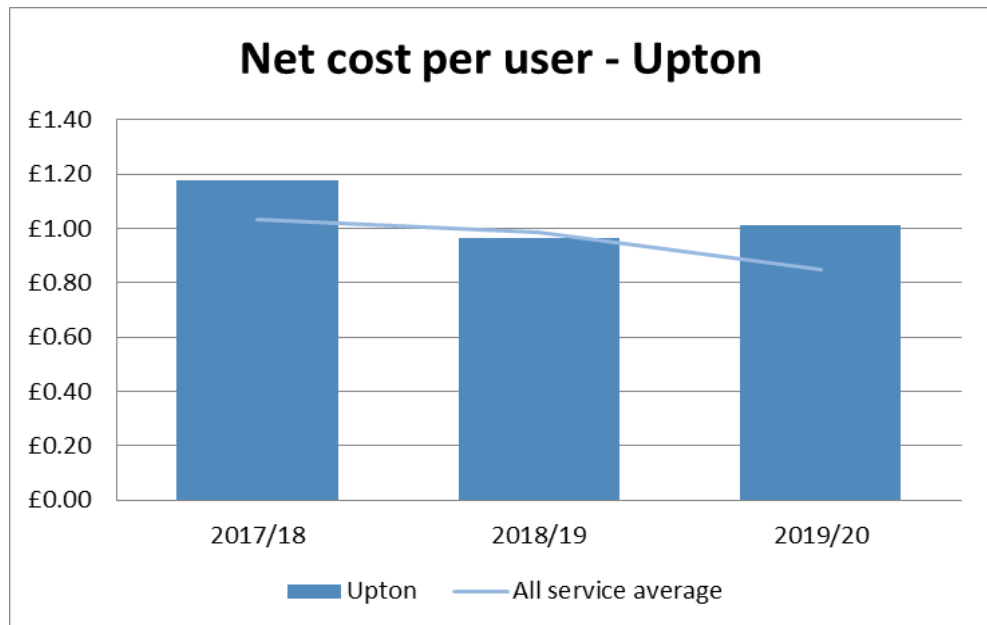
The previous year's attendance was 72,159.

4.5.3 Category of usage at Upton Community Centre is broken down as follows:-

Youth & Children	11,677
Lifelong Learning	4,912
Health & Healthy Living	32,878
Arts Development	3,570
Sports Development	13,197
Statutory Agencies	2,230
Events	3,234
Total	71,698

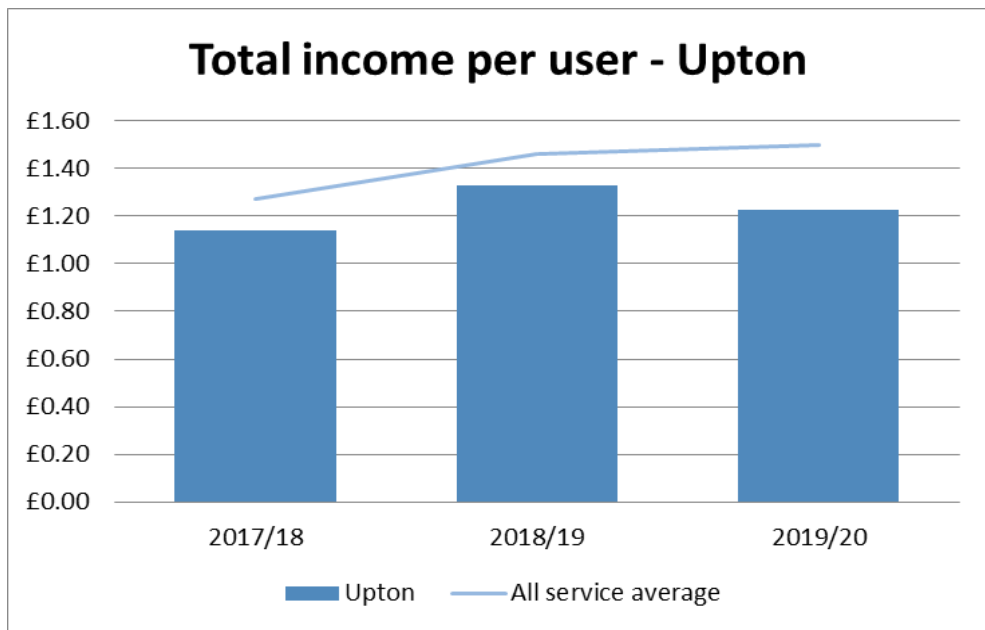
4.5.4 Upton Direction of Travel Indicators

Upton Net Cost Per User



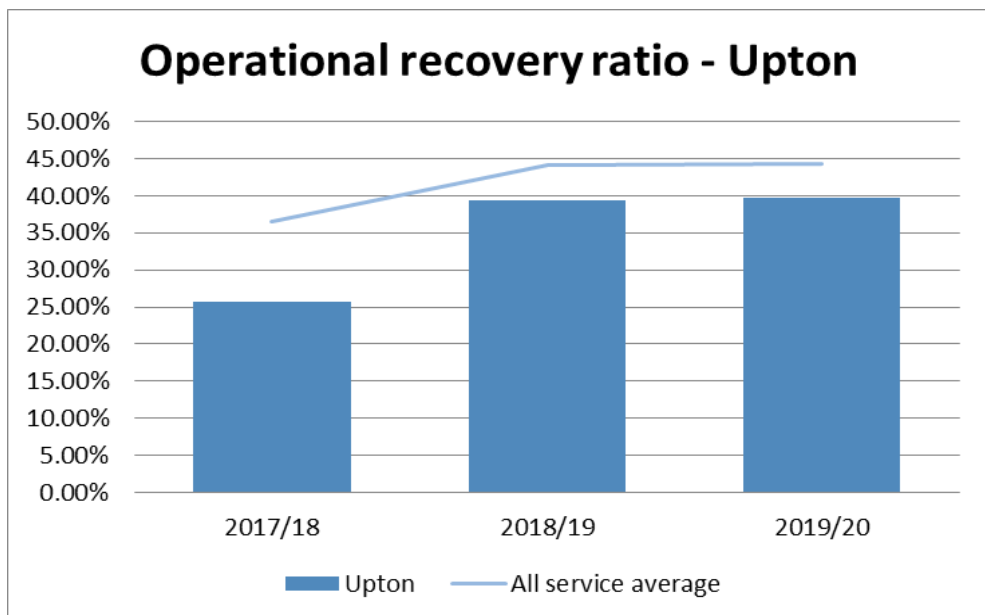
The net cost per user for Upton increased to £1.01 from £0.96 in the previous operating year; which is attributable to the reduction in attendances. The service average for 2019/20 was £0.85.

Upton Total Income Per User



Income per user at Upton decreased by £0.11 from £1.33 in 2018/19 to £1.22 in 2019/20. The service average increased to £1.50 which resulted in Upton falling further behind in this indicator. Increasing the income per user at Upton will therefore remain a key area of focus.

Upton Operational Recovery



In keeping with the service average, Upton has seen a marginal increase in this indicator with its operational recovery position improving from 39.3% in 2018/19 to 39.79% in 2019/20. Whilst this represents an improvement on previous operating years it still remains below the service average of 44.25% which means that this will also remain a key area of focus for Upton moving forward.

5.0 SERVICE SUMMARY

- 5.1 Overall, three of the key performance indicators have not continued to trend as positively as in previous operating years; with usage across the service down by 8,239 attendances, income across the service reducing by £1,851 and net operating costs for the service rising by £25k for the last operating year. However, it must be reiterated that a significant factor in this was the disruption to services in February and even more so March, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. Without this disruption in services, it is considered that all three indicators would have been more comparable to previous operating years and would have continued to show a positive trend.
- 5.2 Examples of Community Centre activities and events held in 2019/20 are contained within Appendix 1.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Community Centres provide a platform for intergenerational activity, community activity and youth service delivery. The centre data profiles show that 16.5% of usage across the five centres is youth related activity.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Community centres provide employment opportunities within the service, community delivery points for training and employment initiatives, volunteering opportunities and lifelong learning.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Community centres contribute to a whole area approach to health and wellbeing. They provide a nucleus to support community activity and access to services in neighbourhoods.

Community Centres make a significant contribution to this priority through the provision of community cafés, health based activity such as physical activity and health initiatives such as smoking cessation, breathe easy, stroke association, community gardening, healthy eating, cook & taste and weight management. Over a third of usage in community centres is directly health outcome related. Community Centres are SHOP (Safer Homes for Older People) and HELPS (Home Equipment at Low Price) outlets providing low cost safety equipment.

6.4 A Safer Halton

A sense of community and community connectedness reduces residents' fears of crime where they live. They are likely to feel a stronger sense of belonging and safety in an environment where the communities know each other, are active and there are established links to other stakeholders; like police, housing associations, community wardens, etc. Community Centres provide a community hub and platform for this. Community centres are safe, accessible facilities located in the heart of our communities. They serve both the local and wider community and promote participation, inclusion and cohesion. All centres are designated Emergency Rest Centres, Hate Crime Reporting Centres, designated Safe in Town facilities and Police Community bases.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Community Centres contribute to wider community initiatives and regeneration in the areas they are sited. There are numerous community gardening and local environmental projects across the service working jointly with key stakeholders and volunteers.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 Community centres provide cohesion to those communities that they serve. Accessing services and participating in community life contributes to residents' health and wellbeing by providing support, enhancing skills and building connected communities. Not providing community centres or reducing the services and activities provided through them could have a detrimental effect on current and potential future users and could result in poorly served and disconnected communities.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 None - The service is open and accessible to all Halton's residents.

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

10.1 None.

APPENDIX 1

Examples of Community Centre Activities and Events in 2019/20

Castlefields

- Following on from a number of successful events in 2018/2019, staff at the centre worked with partners to develop a programme of events for local residents. The programme included Science of the Circus in partnership with Daresbury Laboratories, an Easter Party, a Summer Fayre, a Creepy Crawly Show in partnership with Halton Brook Children's Centre, Halloween and Christmas parties and a character breakfast lunch during February half term. All of the events were well attended and had been scheduled to feature again at Castlefields in the following operating year.

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/children-roll-up-for-circus-workshop/>

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/come-and-meet-some-creepy-crawlies-here-in-castlefields/>

- For the first year, staff and volunteers hosted a Macmillan coffee morning which was well attended by local residents and helped raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/brewing-up-funds-for-macmillan-at-castlefields/>

Ditton

- Wonky Garden continued their hard work at Ditton and transformed some of the outdoor spaces at the centre; the allotment, community centre garden and children's centre crèche garden. The group of volunteers entered BBC's Britain in Bloom. Their hard work and effort was recognised with their gardens at Ditton and Grangeway Community Centres both featuring in an episode of the BBC's Britain in Bloom series.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0003wxy>

Grangeway

- Sure Start get together – 2019/20 saw a full programme of themed monthly activities at the centre hosted by HBC Sure Start to Later Life Team. The monthly 'Get Together' offered older people the chance to come to the centre to enjoy an afternoon of entertainment and an afternoon tea. The sessions were very well attended with more than 90 people attending each one.

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/we-are-bringing-a-little-wonderland-to-grangeway-and-upton/>

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/say-hi-de-hi-to-elvis-older-peoples-events-announced/>

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/hi-de-hi-lifes-a-beach-for-halton-residents/>

Murdishaw

- The centre continued to deliver a successful programme of events for local families throughout the year, with two highlighted below;

The Centre's tenth annual Halloween event on 31st October 2019 proved popular, with all 70 tickets being sold in the weeks prior to the event. There was music & games, with prizes awarded for best fancy dress and best pumpkin carved. The café was run by the Centre's own staff offering snacks and drinks; generating some additional income for the centre.

The Centre's annual Family Christmas Party was held on Wednesday 18th December 2019. 80 people were in attendance, with families enjoying live entertainment, music & games and a craft workshop before getting the chance to visit Santa in a grotto where children were given a small gift. The event was well received with many families taking the time to complete feedback cards.

Upton

- April 2019/20 saw Halton Community Centres team up with Daresbury Laboratory to run some science themed children's events. The sessions saw Doctor Ken teach children the Science of the Circus. The sessions were delivered at Upton and Castlefields Community Centres and saw over 200 children attend the four sessions. The sessions were well received and a similar event; Music to my Ears, was scheduled to take place later in the year.

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/children-roll-up-for-circus-workshop/>

- Following on from the success of a trial event in September 2018, 2019/20 saw the centre partner with the Sure Start to Later Life team to deliver a schedule of events each month between April and November 2019. Each event mirrored the event held at Grangeway Community Centre earlier in the month and provided older people from Widnes with the same opportunity and access to some live entertainment and an afternoon tea. The events were a success with more than 70 people in attendance each month.

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/we-are-bringing-a-little-wonderland-to-grangeway-and-upton/>

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/say-hi-de-hi-to-elvis-older-peoples-events-announced/>

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/somewhere-over-upton/>

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/hi-de-hi-lifes-a-beach-for-halton-residents/>

- December saw the centre host the annual pantomime organised by H.E.A.R.T.S dance and theatre school. The performance of Mother Goose was well received with over 1000 members of the local community attending across the six performances.