

Environment and Urban Renewal PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report

Reporting Period: **Quarter 2 – 1st July 2021 to 30th September 2021**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the second quarter of 2021 / 22 for those service areas within the remit of the Environment and Urban Renewal (E&UR) Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2021 / 22 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board i.e.:
 - Development & Investment Services
 - Open Spaces and Waste and Environmental Improvement
 - Highways, Transportation & Logistics and Physical Environment
- 1.3 The emergence of the global COVID19 pandemic early in 2020 has had a significant and unavoidable impact upon Council services the full extent of which is yet to become known. The Council, along with key partner agencies, has prioritised its resources upon mitigating the serious risks to public health, the protection of vulnerable residents, and the social cohesion of the local community. In developing appropriate responses to emerging national and local priorities this situation is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future.
- 1.4 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 7 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

There have been a number of developments within the Directorate during the period which include:-

External Funding / Regeneration

REGENERATION NON TOWN CENTRES

2.1 External Funding

Funding Secured - £12,567m – this includes two grants of £6 million and £6.5 million respectively that the team secured from the European Social Fund on behalf of LCR for employment support schemes

Bids Submitted – to the value of £1m; this includes a Changing Places Toilets bid of £195,000 from HBC, developed in conjunction with Property Services

Draft Bids – bids in progress to the value of £6m

Pipeline Projects – projects being supported but not yet at bid stage to the value of £19m

Monitored Projects – bids being monitored to the value of £41m, including now the £23m Town Fund for the development of Runcorn Old Town

New funding enquiries for this quarter – 11

Developed a Strategic Funding Matrix which will include the key funds being released as part of the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, for example, Levelling Up. The Matrix will be used to monitor progress on each fund, as well as helping to ensure Halton doesn't miss out on any key funding.

The Team is also supporting the development and monitoring of the National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant for Celebrating Halton's Heritage which is programme being run as part of Halton's Borough of Culture year. The Team is also supporting the planning of the Borough of Culture handover to Knowsley in November 2021 and the LCR Cultural Awards to be held at Cronton Playhouse in March 2022.

The Team supported the last round of ESF Community Grants and three grants were funded in Halton to the value of £60,000.

Sci-Tech Daresbury

- Construction of Project Violet is continuing to programme due to complete in November 2021.
- Overall occupancy is now at 95% and we continue to see strong interest in the available space on campus.
- The JV are progressing the masterplan for the wider development of the campus.

Murdishaw

- The project groups continue to progress activities focussed on environmental improvements, the local centre and the bungalows. The Steering Group has met twice. A Community Design Team of residents meets regularly to progress suggestions for the local centre project.
- Onward Homes hosted a consultation event to share the proposals for 130 bungalows on the estate. Onward are in the process of applying for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund for the retrofit programme (external insulation) but have also proposed improvements including pitched roofs, windows and other external works.

3MG

- Alstom have been extending their facility including an additional rail siding.
- Warburton's opened on 6 September 2021.
- 3MG has been identified as a Tax Site in the LCR Freeport bid. This would provide additional incentives for developers to build at 3MG.
- CDP are working up a planning application to be submit before Christmas.

Priory Meadow

- Executive Board approved the disposal of priory meadow and instead of taking a land receipt we would take gifted homes.
- A Solicitor experienced in gifted homes contracts has been appointed to advise the Council.
- Homes England have been asked to expedite the clawback which is on the site.

Foundry Lane

- Cityheart Ltd appointed as Development Partner January 2021 following open procurement process.
- Development Agreement being drawn up (detailed Heads of Terms agreed).
- Outline Planning Consent in place.
- Advanced negotiations underway with LCR Combined Authority regarding Brownfield Land Fund application.
- Phase 1 scheme design and associated Full Planning Consent current practical priority.

Astmoor

- SIF application to the CA for £110k re site investigation studies on 5 HBC owned sites that includes 4 handback sites being utilised.
- The Council has gone to the market to seek a Joint Venture partner to deliver the Astmoor Masterplan via a Competitive Procurement with Negotiation (CPN) route. Appointment anticipated January 2022. (Ongoing legal advice being sought from Sharpe Pritchard LLP).
- Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme in operation.

2.2 Green Growth Programme

In July 2021, utilising an existing Regeneration Officer post (within the established structure), a Green Growth Project Officer was appointed. The role was created in recognition that the next decade is likely to see to an unprecedented period of public and private investment to support the de-carbonisation of the UK economy. This will require significant investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation. Investment Halton can be ready to secure.

The purpose of Green Growth Programme is to provide a dedicated resource to develop a pipeline of externally focussed projects arising from UK Govt. and Liverpool City-Region net-zero carbon targets and associated strategies. By aligning with these strategies, such as the UK Govt. Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution will also help unlock funding and investment opportunities.

Sitting within the Employment, Enterprise and Property Department, the Programme will draw upon a small virtual team of skills including project management, external funding and business support. Projects will be aligned with existing regeneration, investment and development activities.

In particular projects will be brought forward through the delivery of the borough's major infrastructure and regeneration priorities as principally set out in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan. This includes supporting local business and not-for-profit (voluntary, community and faith sector) partners to directly benefit.

Business Improvement and Growth

2.3 Economic Assessment

An updated version of the economic assessment has been completed and is in the process of being consulted with partners. The main sectors of the report are summarised as follows:

1. Economic Vision for Halton
2. Population analysis
3. Labour Market and Skills analysis focusing on, Occupations Inactivity, Workless Households Highest Level of qualification Earnings Vacancies
4. Business Sector Analysis focusing on the sectors of Manufacturing Haulage Professional, Scientific and Health Arts, Leisure and Recreation. An assessment of the Business Stock, Starts and Success Business Survival
5. Impact of Future Developments

2.4 Trading On Grants

The a new grant scheme is in development which will be delivered as from October of this year concentrating on businesses emerging from the pandemic and providing support to enable them to grow and create jobs. They will be targeted at businesses who employ 10 or more full time staff and medium sized businesses. In previous rounds there was no support for medium sized businesses.

Please refer to Quarter 1 reporting for figures on previous grant schemes.

2.5 Business Engagement

A pilot programme of sector-focused business engagement is under development with a view to delivery taking place from quarter 3 2021 / 2022. The initial focus is Green Growth and Storage and logistics.

2.6 Business Growth Programme – Phase 2

Delivery of the Halton element of Business Growth Programme Phase 2 commenced in January 2019 and runs up to December 2021.

Halton Borough Council is contracted to deliver:-

Output	Figure
Company Receiving Support (C1) – revised by CA and reduced from 95 to 84 due to COVID lockdown impact	84
Jobs Created (C8) revised total – The CA are looking at more sustainability in the current climate	131

Performance Against Output Targets To Date

OUTPUT	FIGURE
Number of enquiries to date	205
Number of Businesses currently being supported (C1)	20
Number of Businesses supported and claimed (C1)	60
Potential businesses in pipeline for support	8
Total Number of enquiries come through but have been withdrawn due to the following reasons:	117
• Not eligible – 17	
• Not engaging – 90	
• Unsuitable - 10	

2.7 Regeneration Town Centres

An announcement was made 15th July 2021 and Runcorn will receive up to £23.6million for the seven projects included in it Town Investment Plan subject to the business cases being approved. Runcorn Town Board agreed the funding Heads of Terms on 4th August 2021 and there is now 12 months to work up green book compliant business cases for each one of the projects. The long stop date for submission is 4th August 2022 and Government will release funding once the project business case has been agreed and signed off.

The overarching aim of the Towns Fund is to drive the sustainable economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth through investment in regeneration, skills and enterprise infrastructure and connectivity projects. The seven projects included in the Runcorn Town Investment Plan were:-

- Runcorn Station Quarter
- Unlock Runcorn
- Brindley Theatre Enhancement
- Town Centre New Homes
- High Street Connectivity
- Health and Education Hub
- Creative and Digital Skills Centre.

Amion have been commissioned to review each of the projects to identify potential issues and challenges faced by each project in producing a robust, fundable business case. The project-specific issues and recurring themes across the programme have been reported to the Runcorn Town Investment Board. Commissioning of further work is now required to support the business case development of each of the projects.

Asset Management

Completion 28 June 2021 of the disposal 4/5 Dock Road Widnes by way of land lease (omitted from the Q1 report)

Completion 8 September 2021 of disposal of land to Aldi at Green Oaks Way Widnes

Settlement of the overage payment under the lease to Carpenters (formerly LPW Technology Limited) at Venture Fields Widnes

Highways, Transportation & Logistics and Physical Environment

2.7 Structures

Concrete repairs at Hutchinson's Sidings Bridge were completed in early September. This concludes the Council's LGF1 programme of major maintenance works for the Silver Jubilee Bridge complex. A final Project Change Request has been submitted to the Combined Authority to agree programme and financial changes for 2021/22. These matters have already been agreed in principle.

General inspections to the Council's bridges are substantially completed (and will be during Q3). Arrangements are being made for Principal Inspections to be undertaken during Q3 and Q4.

Preparatory arrangements are underway for the next maintenance interventions within the SJB complex and across the Council's bridge stock.

Highway Schemes and Maintenance

Progress on Active Travel and Maintenance schemes update included in appendix 1. Works on Runcorn Station Quarter ongoing.

2.8 Highway Development

Work continues on the teams other statutory roles, including supporting development process from Local Plan to construction, in addition to the supporting scheme funding and development, on behalf of the Council as Highway Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority functions/schemes. This includes a consultation for a second phase of on street Electric Vehicles charging points currently ongoing.

All Highways teams are commissioning/supporting commencement of business case/design work for East Runcorn Connectivity scheme (A558 duelling etc.).

Open Spaces and Waste and Environmental Improvement

2.9 Waste Management

National 'Recycle Week' took place between the 20th and 26th September. This year's theme was "Step It Up" - focusing on messages around Climate Crisis. The Council supported the campaign by providing information and advice in 'The Newsroom' on our website and posting daily messages on the Council's social media platforms. The messages focussed upon the significant reduction in CO2 emissions that can be achieved from recycling and the positive effect upon climate change that can be achieved as a result. Information and advice was also provided in respect of the materials that can and cannot be recycled through the Council's blue bin scheme in order to help increase the quantity of recyclables collected and also to improve the quality of the material collected in order to help reduce 'contamination' levels.

2.10 Open Spaces

RSQ Piazza – The new public realm / open space is on programme and should be substantially completed by January 22.

Town Park – The Holt Lane entrance improvement works are due to commence on site in November. The next phase of path improvements (Palacefields Avenue side) are due to be tendered before the end of the year.

Runcorn Hill – The replacement footbridge over the cove walk is due to be installed this month.

Arley Woodland Park – Phase 1 boundary improvements and signage are currently being installed on site.

Runcorn Cemetery – The Seafarers Memorial garden and Covid Memorial are completed and officially open.

3.0 Emerging Issues

3.1 A number of emerging issues have been identified during the period that will impact upon the work of the Directorate including:-

Regeneration / External Funding

3.2 External Funding Team

The Team is currently supporting the following:

- Seeing an increase in requests for support for capital schemes now that community groups are starting to meet again
- Researching and maintaining a Strategic Funding Matrix of key large-scale funds that HBC may consider bidding for
- Leading on rollout of Activity Plan and Monitoring for Welcome Back Fund (ERDF)
- Continuing the monitoring of the Ways to Work ESF Programme
- Supporting a SIF bid for a Hydrogen project in partnership with Ineos.
- Continuing to support Halton's Borough of Culture Programme, including the evaluation of this and future legacy planning

3.3 Asset Management

Enforcement on Empty Properties (Council tax Liabilities) – working with colleagues in Finance to recover outstanding Council Tax by application to the Courts to take possession and dispose of the property. The properties are vacant and have a legal charge against the owner.

Ending commercial lease by forfeiture for rent arrears – the moratorium preventing landlords to forfeit a commercial lease and bring it to an end for non-payment of rent has been extended by the Government to 25 March 2022.

Government have announced commitment to a binding arbitration process to rent arrears disputes where arising from the Covid pandemic. The process may impact on the approach the Council takes towards recovering rent arrears from its commercial tenants.

3.4 Planning and Policy

The Inspectors response to the Local Plan will contain modifications required to make the Plan capable of being found sound. A formal round of public consultation on these modifications is required.

Planning Application Statistics (Q1 21 – 22):

Total Applications Received: (Includes those Withdrawn and Returned) 160	
Applications Decided 178	Applications On-Hand (Undecided) 188
Pre-Applications Received 33	Pre Applications Closed 38

N.B. There are certain applications (such as tree preservation orders) that are not counted in the statutory CLG speed of processing statistics. This accounts for the difference between the figures reported above and the figures given for PPT LI 04.

The Major applications determined in Q2 2021/22 are shown in Appendix A

4.0 High Priority Equality Actions

4.1 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.

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

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

5.0 Performance Overview

5.1 The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that fall within the remit of the Board.

Development and Investment Services

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
EEP 02a	To prepare the Town Investment Plan Business Case(s) for Runcorn by 31st March 2022	
EEP 02d	To prepare a Halton Lea Investment Plan by September 2021	

Supporting Commentary EEP 02a

An announcement was made 15th July 2021 and Runcorn will receive up to £23.6million subject to the project business cases being approved. The funding Heads of Terms were accepted by the board on 4th August 2021 and the seven project business cases now need to be submitted by 4th August 2022.

EEP 02b

There has been progress towards developing the investment plan however, an approach to utilise external resources to mirror the Runcorn Town Deal investment plan has been agreed. LCR approval sought to utilise Town Centre Fund underspend for completion by December 2021

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 03	Commercial and investment portfolio – rent receivable against the budget to monitor receipt of income of rents and service charges.	Investment £39,325 Commercial £319,573	Investment £44,740 Commercial £609,270	Investment £22,150 Commercial £164,706	 27% of the target	
EEP LI 04	Occupancy rates of commercial and investment portfolio.	100 % Investment 90% commercial	100 % Investment 90% commercial	100 % Investment 90% commercial		
EEP LI 05	Occupancy of Widnes Market Hall.	93%	94%	97%		

Supporting Commentary

EEP L1 03

The income received has been affected by request from a number of occupiers for further rent holidays and non-payment of rent due to Covid situation. Asset management are working with colleagues in income recovery. The tenant of no 5 Granville Street has vacated and the unit is on the market. Other vacant units are, 6 Church Street Runcorn to be used for HPIJ and the former Frankie and Bennies unit at the Hive. It is unlikely that the units will be re-let until Q3. It is uncertain whether the income target will be achieved by Q4

EEP L1 04

There are 8 vacant properties which will be on the market or unable to market until refurbishment works e.g. 71 High St Runcorn or clarifying planning status e.g. the former bus depot Moor Lane Widnes have been completed.

EEP L1 05

The Market management team continue to proactively engage with potential traders as a result the current rate has gone up to 97% with only 5 stalls vacant.

Policy, Planning and Transportation

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
PPT 01	To deliver the 2019/30 LTP Capital Programme March 2022	

PPT 02	Ensure continued unrestricted availability of the Highway network and to allow future maintenance to be delivered on a steady state, lifecycle planned basis.	
PPT 03	Continue to maintain the Highway Authorities statutory duties in accordance with Section 41 and 58 of the Highways Act.	

Supporting Commentary

PPT 01

Sud North South Widnes route funded through LCRC is designed and work to be programmed to facilitate improved walking and cycling along a route including for Appleton Village/Fredrick Street junction and Birchfield road roundabout area. Works are due to commence for Active Travel schemes at Runcorn Busway to improve cycling links between Halton Hospital and Murdishaw Centre. Design work underway for cycle way routes from Murdishaw Centre to Castlefields and White House industrial estate. Works to take the current LCWIP design to construction have begun for the route from Runcorn Old town to Daresbury Sci Tech.

PPT 02

Surface dressing of carriageways completed during Summer 2021 with contractor RMS

- Derby Road, Warrington Road, Queensbury Way, and Moughland Lane, however due to weather extremes Clifton Lane, Rocksavage Way and Beechwood Avenue. Southern Expressway will be completed in Spring 2022

Carriageway Resurfacing design works in progress for Bridge Street, Norman Road, Runcorn Road, Prescot Road, Ditchfield Road, Leigh Avenue, Warrington Road

Footway Reconstruction Programme in design Elm Grove, Cherry Sutton, Ditchfield Road with carriageway resurfacing works programmed for February 2022

PPT 03

Ongoing highway safety inspection continuing to maintain a safe and serviceable highway.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
PPT LI 02	Net additional homes provided	97	552	N/A Monitored Annually	N/A	N/A
PPT LI 03	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	25	N/A		N/A	N/A
PPT LI 04	Processing of planning applications (%) as measured against targets for,					
	a) 'major' applications	100%	100%	100%		
	b) 'minor' applications	100%	96%	80%		
	c) 'other' applications	94.7%	98%	95.6%		
PPT LI 05	No. of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	28.8	N/A	26.2		
PPT LI 06	No. of children (<16) killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 year Av.)	4.2	N/A	4		

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
PPT LI 07	No. of people slightly injured in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	219	N/A	212		
PPT LI 08	Damage to roads and pavements (% above intervention levels) repaired within 24 hours.	100%	100%	TBC	TBC	TBC
PPT LI 09	% of network where structural maintenance should be considered: a) Principal Roads b) Non-Principal Roads c) Unclassified Roads	TBC TBC TBC	TBC TBC TBC	TBC TBC TBC	TBC TBC TBC	TBC TBC TBC
PPT LI 10	The proportion of non-frequent scheduled bus services on time (%): a) Percentage of buses starting route on time b) Percentage of buses on time at intermediate timing points	Data unavailable	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
PPT LI 11	% of bus stops with Quality Corridor accessibility features. (No. of stops – 603)	79%	80%	TBC	TBC	TBC

Supporting Commentary

PPT L1 02/ PPT L1 03

Completions are monitored annually as at 31st March and reported in the first Quarter of each year.

PPT L1 04

The results for this Quarter are better than the same Quarter in the previous year.

The results for the last 6 months show Majors as 100%, Minors 90% and Others 95.8% which is improved compared to the same period last year and indicates that it is likely that targets for the year will be met or will at least be an improvement on the previous 12 months.

PPT L1 05

KSIs across all ages continue to fall

*Q1 figures, Q2 data not available from Cheshire Police

PPT L1 06

Welcome fall in Child KSIs

*Q1 figures, Q2 data not available from Cheshire Police

PPT L1 07

*Q1 figures, Q2 data not available from Cheshire Police

PPT L1 08 – PPT L1 11

Figures reported annually as at 31st March and reported in the first Quarter of each year.

Appendix A: Major Planning Applications Determined

REFVAL	PROPOSAL	ADDRESS	DECSN	DATEDECISS
20/00479/FUL	Proposed extension to existing warehouse, small two storey office extension for warehouse and canopy extension above loading doors at	Brenntag UK Limited Pickerings Road Widnes Cheshire WA8 8XW	PER	29/09/2021
21/00001/FUL	Proposed erection of three storey 20 bed specialist unit and 2 no. two storey 4 bed step down houses with associated parking and site improvements at	Former Greenoaks Farm Industrial Estate Warrington Road Widnes Cheshire WA8 0SY	PER	17/09/2021
21/00278/FUL	Proposed demolition of existing store and replacement by new food store with associated car parking, access, external plant and landscaping at	Aldi Foodstore Ltd Green Oaks Way Widnes Cheshire WA8 6UF	PER	03/09/2021
21/00356/FUL	Proposed industrial development comprising two warehouse buildings with B2 and B8 Use Classes and ancillary E(g)(i) Office space, including service yards, car parking, landscaping and associated access infrastructure at	Shell Green Bennetts Lane Widnes Cheshire WA8 0GW	PER	24/09/2021

Waste and Environmental Improvement

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
CE 03a	Manage greenspace areas as per the agreed specification - March 2022.	
CE 04a	Continue to deliver communications and awareness raising initiatives to ensure that participation with the Council's recycling services is maximised and that residents comply with the requirements of the Council's Household Waste Collection Policy - March 2022.	

Supporting Commentary

CE 03a

Despite on-going challenges the Open Space Service was able to deliver all works within the Council's agreed specification for green space management.

CE 04a

Covid 19 Restrictions have impacted upon the ability to deliver the full range of communications and awareness raising activity, such as householder engagement, school visits and roadshows. However, messages and advice about waste and recycling have been regularly posted on the Council's social media sites.

As per the Key Developments section of this report, a campaign to help increase recycling was carried out during National Recycling Week in September.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 05	Residual household waste per household.	625KG	625KG	340KG		
CE LI 06	Proportion of household waste recycled and composted.	39.3%	40%	43%		

Supporting Commentary

CE L1 05

This is an estimated figure which shows that household waste levels are slightly higher than in Q3 in the previous year. As previously reported, residual waste production has been higher than normal during the pandemic and it is unclear what impact this will have on the achievement of this annual target. (Note - This is a cumulative figure)

CE L1 06

This is an estimated figure and is subject to seasonal variation. It is unclear what impact the COVID 19 situation will continue to have on waste production for the remainder of the year and it is difficult to predict annual recycling performance at this stage and whether this target will be met.

7.0 Financial Statements

*Not available at this time

8.0 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.