

Employment, Learning, Skills and Community PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report Q4

Reporting Period: 1st January to 31st March 2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the final quarter of 2023 / 24 for service areas within the remit of the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023 - 24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy & Performance Board i.e.
 - Employment, Learning and Skills
 - Library and Culture and Leisure Services
- 1.3 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

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

2.2 Employment, Learning and Skills

- Ways to Work gap SIF funding ceased on the 31st March 2024, to be replaced by ULSPF funding
- Local Skills Improvement Plan – official launch took place in Q4. St Helens Chamber were leading on this on behalf of the other Liverpool City Region local authorities; however, they went into administration in March 24.
- 1st social value meeting held between Tarmac and Halton Borough Council (Employment, Learning & Skills & Procurement) to agree KPIs and targets to be achieved in relation to the 10-year Highways & Maintenance contract that has been awarded.
- 1st meeting took place of the Environment & Economy Directorate Communications Group, chaired by the DM Employment, Learning & Skills – remit of the group is to put a plan in place to support improved communications across the Directorate, with representation from a cross section of teams.
- The ELS Division successfully retained its Matrix Accreditation status.

Community & Environment

2.3 Culture - Brindley Theatre

The Brindley Team won the 2024 'Customer Service Excellence Award' at the Celebrating Success Awards in March.

2.4 Community Centres

The Old Police Station room rentals remain 100% after one group vacated a room in March another tenant was ready to take over the space. Ditton Community Centre have had interest in a permanent booking which can potentially generate £8400 per year. All Community Centres continue to provide free tea and coffee on Wednesday afternoons which help those in need, we plan on introducing a game of Bingo on these afternoons at Grangeway and Upton Community Centres to bring people together to support the lonely and isolated.

2.5 Library Service

Changing Places facility completed at Halton Lea Library.

Ditton Library pc replacement is now at the snagging stage and the roll out to Widnes Library has begun.

The success of Halton Bereavement Café pilot project has led to the continuation for the next twelve months in the first instance. The project is a joint collaboration between Halton Libraries, Halton and St Helens Voluntary Action and Halton Cancer Support.

The continued popularity of Dungeons and Dragons at Halton Lea has led to the introduction of this weekly club at Widnes Library.

Warm Welcome Coffee morning initiative over the winter period is now continuing as weekly free sessions at each library site due to popularity and customer demand.

February half term saw 540 free packed lunches distributed to children through all four library sites.

Following external funding we implemented Aspen an enhanced library catalogue aiding user discovery to libraries wide range of online resources and other materials.

2.6 Leisure

Construction of Halton Leisure Centre is progressing well and in line with the programme.

Changes made to the access control measures at Kingsway has resulted in capturing more visitors, 32% increase on previous year. Total visits recorded through Brookvale and Kingsway sites 475,283.

App launched. Lots of interactions and communications. It is now the main way to sign up for a membership 79% of memberships sold in March came from the App.

Following a review of fees and charges the admission and membership for Halton Leisure Card holders has been reduced. It is hoped that this widens the access to Leisure Centre, making it affordable for those in receipt of certain benefits.

3.0 Emerging Issues

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

Employment, Learning & Skills

3.2 Employment, Learning & Skills

- From 24/25 Ways to Work will be funded through UK Shared Prosperity Funding. Previous local residents who were eligible for support under European Funding will no longer be eligible as the focus for the funding is on those residents who are economically inactive, rather than unemployed.
- Changes in funding for some employment programmes from 24/25 will happen - this will require a review of the Halton People into Jobs service to account for changes in funding.

Community & Environment

3.3 Culture Services

Brindley Theatre

The start of the new extension works have been delayed until the end of May/early June.

3.4 Community Centres

No emerging issues have been identified.

3.5 Library Service

The temporary funded position of Activities Co-ordinator is at implementation stage of offering additional services targeting chronic loneliness.

3.6 Leisure

Halton Leisure Centre has some smaller room areas than Kingsway. The service has drafted a programme of use and is working with its current users to accommodate them or find alternative provision.

Latest research, highlights, adults from the most deprived socio-economic groups are less likely to be active, as are children from less affluent families. People aged 16-34 have seen activity levels drop over the past few years and this has been exacerbated by the pandemic. More recently, those enjoying taking part has also fallen. People need more support, in their locality, to help them move more.

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 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>






5.0 Performance Overview

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

Employment, Learning & Skills

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective: To facilitate & create employment To deliver a range of local/national externally funded employment programmes to increase the number of unemployed and economically inactive Halton residents to gain employment. To support local employers with sourcing local people for local jobs.
EEP 01	Employment Learning and skills

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
To deliver year 3 of the Supported Internship programme by September 2023		Year three of the programme is underway, with 6 interns currently on programme.
To achieve the required outputs and customer service standards on the DWP/G4S Restart Programme contract to cease the Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP by June 2023		There has been an increase in performance against customer service standards on the DWP/G4S Restart Programme contract. However, due to a lack of referrals to the programme the required outputs have not been achieved this quarter therefore HPIJ will remain on Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP.
To review HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy and implement improvements by June 2023 .		Staffing issues has meant the HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy review has not yet taken place
Implementation of new contracts within required deadlines (UKSPF/Home Office Refugee Programme if contracts secured) by July 2023 .		The WHP Pioneer contract went live in Sep 2023.
To deliver a Pathways to Teaching programme, which will create adult learning tutor employment opportunities by September 2023		Year two of the programme underway, with 45 trainee tutors on programme across the Liverpool City Region (last year 34 completed). Funding provisionally secured for next year to continue the project.

Ref	Objective: To promote access to learning to those who need it most To provide a curriculum offer designed on intent, which is effectively marketed and implemented and has maximum impact on Halton's adult residents.
EEP 02	Employment Learning and skills

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
To deliver an Adult Learning Marketing Strategy by April 2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Complete – strategy has been developed and implemented. Performance against targets reported at half termly Quality, Income and Marketing meetings.
To review the Quality Assurances processes within the Adult Learning Service by July 2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Complete – new QA processes in place from September 2023 for the start of the academic year.
To review the adult learning tutor contracts by July 2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full time / Fractional Contracts reviewed and approved by Steering Group. Sessional tutor contracts being finalised by HR. On track for completion before July 2024.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Community Services

Community Services

Ref	Objective
CE 01	To manage a successful Theatre for the benefit of Halton residents and the sub region.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed
Programming report to Executive Board July 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed

Ref	Objective
CE 02	Develop a new library strategy for 2023-2028.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed
Programming report to Executive Board September 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed

Ref	Objective
CE 03	To improve the access to affordable fitness and health facilities through the provision of leisure centres and sports development services.





Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
New Halton Leisure Centre to Open Spring 2025	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Works have progressed well this quarter. The envelope/roof works marginally behind programme due to the extremely wet weather. However, good progress on the internal works, second fix MEP activities have commenced. Boarding works are significantly progressed, and screeding works are complete. Works to the substation continue with Scottish Power. Monthly updates and social value reports are available on the Active Halton website
New Leisure Management System to be operational by November 2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tender due to be published in April 2024

CE 04	Increase the occupancy levels at the Old Police Station
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Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Improve the accessibility of the building June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Works completed
Negotiate with new tenants to secure a tenancy agreements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed 100% occupancy

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/ 23	Actual 2022/ 23	Quarter 4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Direction of Travel
CE LI 01	% occupancy of tenants at Old Police Station	93%	100%	100%			MP took vacant space. Now at 100% occupancy.
CE LI 02	Brindley - Total number of tickets sold	74,962	100%	82,360			Ticket sales increase linked to large increase in Hire books and the return to pre covid ticket sale levels.
CE LI 03	Brindley - Total number of days Hired days	182	100%	213			Large increase in Hirer books.
CE LI 04	Brindley - Total number of Council Promotions	120	100%	120			Figures in line with expectation.
CE LI 05	Footfall for all libraries: Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library	Total 320,600	Total 320,600	Total 326,406			83,599 across all libraries in quarter 4 – an improvement on quarter 3. Exceeded year-end total
CE LI 06	Library Digital issues	1,350,119	1,500,000	3,908,339			1,022,771 for quarter 4. Exceeded year-end total
CE LI 07	Library Issues in branch: Ditton Widnes Runcorn Halton Lea	Total 203,595	Total 203,595	Total 210,501			49,310 in quarter 3. Exceeded year-end total

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/ 23	Actual 2022/ 23	Quarter 4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Direction of Travel
CE LI 08	Footfall for Leisure Centres: Brookvale Kingsway	188,937 205,344	100% 100%	202,521 272,762			Access controls have been improved. Also increases in membership numbers across the year and swimming service has been stabilised with new instructors qualified and working within the centres
CE LI 09	Sports Development - community bookings at Frank Myler	n/a	1,500	1,590			Some classes have folded. Community classes continue to be impacted by cost of living and other issues.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget at 31 March 2024

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employee Related Expenditure	5,611	5,453	158
Repairs & Maintenance	2,034	2,149	(115)
Premises	161	158	3
Energy & Water Costs	1,781	1,560	221
NNDR	738	635	103
Rents	195	297	(102)
Economic Regeneration Activities	19	15	4
Security	551	625	(74)
Supplies & Services	445	429	16
Supplies & Services - Grant	597	597	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	168	168	0
Capital Finance	60	60	0
Transfer to Reserves	592	592	0
Total Expenditure	12,952	12,738	214
Income			
Fees & Charges Income	-1,146	-1,210	64
Rent - Commercial Properties	-878	-847	(31)
Rent - Investment Properties	-44	-39	(5)
Rent - Markets	-831	-802	(29)
Government Grant	-1,260	-1,260	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-718	-718	0
Schools SLA Income	-299	-264	(35)
Recharges to Capital	-305	-324	19
Transfer from Reserves	-1,566	-1,566	0
Total Income	-7,047	-7,030	(17)
Net Operational Expenditure	5,905	5,708	197
Recharges			
Premises Support	2,006	2,006	0
Transport Support	23	25	(2)
Central Support	1,710	1,711	(1)
Asset Rental Support	1,266	1,266	0
Recharge Income	-7,728	-7,728	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,723	-2,720	(3)
Net Departmental Expenditure	3,182	2,988	194

Comments on the above figures

Budget monitoring is undertaken on a monthly basis with budget holders to ensure that unapproved overspends are avoided, developing action plans to achieve efficiencies and address areas of budget pressure.

Finance works closely with the department to manage and analyse underspending to identify potential savings that could help meet current and future years' priorities.

Comparison to Previous Quarter

Economy, Enterprise & Property's outturn has reduced from a projected £0.397m under budget at Quarter 3 to £0.194m under budget at financial year end. There are two reasons for this.

A rent review was carried out for Rutland House. As the rent review was later than the time frame specified in the lease agreement, the review was backdated to 2017 which incurred a cost £102k which was not projected in quarter 3.

The final quarter of the year witnessed an increase in the repairs and maintenance programme.

Supporting Information

The Department consists of 154fte of which 66fte are core funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.134m, by carefully monitoring the accounts the department has used grant/external funding where possible to try and relieve the pressure on the core Council budget. Various projects have been identified and staff time has been charged accordingly. The Department has also delayed the recruitment of vacancies to help achieve a balanced budget. As a result, the employee expenses this year is £0.158m under budget at financial year-end.

As inflation is running much higher than originally predicted at the time of budget setting, the department will be expected to absorb any price increases that may arise from within the budget allocations made. This is proving difficult for repairs and maintenance due to the continued increase in the price of materials. The Repairs and Maintenance programme is constantly under review to keep within budget. However, the final quarter of the year has seen an increase in urgent repairs and maintenance, as a result the budget is £0.115m over budget. There is a risk that this budget will remain volatile in financial year 24/25 and will need to be reviewed on a regular basis.

The energy costs budget increased significantly in 2023/24, as costs have not risen as much as expected the department is £0.221m under budget. It is worth mentioning that costs are still £0.501m higher than 2022/23, which is an increase of nearly 50%.

This financial year has witnessed an increase in security costs. This is due not only to inflation, but the need for additional security in Halton Lea, due to anti-social behaviour. The need for security at all locations is reviewed on a regular basis and if necessary, advice is provided from the Police.

As in previous years, and the long recovery from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the financial challenges of commercial property rent continue to present a significant financial challenge, though the third and fourth quarter of the year has seen an increase in the amount of commercial property income. This is due to agency staff within Asset Management being able to focus on rent reviews and licence fees. There is also a focus within the team to fill the vacant properties within the portfolio. The budget reveals that the income target for commercial properties. was not achieved by £0.031m. Although this is offset by the reduction in vacant properties reducing the level of business rates payable by the Council.

Due to adverse trading conditions in the retail sector which have been made worse due to inflation and increased utilities costs, the department is projecting to under achieve on market rental income targets this budget year. The occupancy rate is approximately 89%. We have seen a uplift of rental income in the final quarter of year. This could be due to the promotion of the service.

The School Cleaning Service Level Agreement (SLA) is not covering its costs this year due to the need to employ agency staff to cover sickness and leave and the pay award. The demand for the service is also decreasing as schools move to Academies. A review of the service provided is currently being conducted.

Approved 2023/24 Savings

Please see Appendix A for details of progress towards achieving budget efficiency savings agreed by Council in February 2023.

Project Title	2023/24 (Outturn)		
	2023/24 Capital Allocation	Actual	Total Allocation Remaining
	£'000	£'000	£'000
3MG	24	16	8
Murdishaw	30	8	22
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	32	32	0
Equality Act Improvement Works	289	289	0
Property Improvements	269	269	0
Waterloo Building Runcorn	109	109	0
Woodend Unit 10 Catalyst Industrial Estate	204	204	0
Police Station Demolition	406	406	0
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2,471	1,310	1,161
Runcorn Station Building Development	80	30	50
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	82	30	52
Runcorn Waterfront Residential	291	22	269
Changing Places	212	188	24
Runcorn Town Deal	2,303	1,829	474
Totals	6,802	4,742	2,060

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Capital Projects as of 31 March 24

3MG - The substantive programme for 3MG in terms of land disposals is now 90%+ complete with up to 900,000 square foot of development in the pipeline some of which will require professional support over the coming years which will continue this as an ongoing project.

Murdishaw – HBC supported the capital works to the former Youth Centre/Boxing Club which has been brought back in to use as the Tea Tree Café, a community project supported by Onward Homes. The funding was provided to match fund Onward Homes contribution. A programme of improvements to the external facilities at Murdishaw Community Centre is currently being priced.

Kingsway Learning Centre - The works to upgrade the public address system are now complete.

Equality Act Improvement Works - All works included in the programme for 2023/24 have been completed.

Property Improvements - All works included in the programme for 2023/24 have been completed.

Waterloo Building, Runcorn -The demolition works are complete, there will be some retention monies due for payment next year circa £3k.

UKSF – Halton submitted an Investment Plan to the CA for three strands of its UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme – Town Centres; Local Culture, Arts and Heritage; Green, Resilient, Safe Communities. This amounts to £608k up to March 2025 and is a mix of capital and revenue.

Woodend Unit 10 - The works are complete, and the tenants have moved in however the new gas connection is still outstanding and is due to be completed soon. This is not affecting the office space as the gas heating is just to the main warehouse area.

Police Station demolition - The demolition works were completed some time ago. The overage payment has now been made.

Foundry Lane – Foundry Lane is moving to a crucial stage with reserved matters to enable the beginning of construction on the site. Planning permission has been approved to allow the construction company to start on site in the near future.

Changing Places - The works are complete, the final facility at Victoria Park has yet to be registered, this will be due very soon.

Runcorn Town Deal - Work continues to develop and deliver all Runcorn Town Deal projects by March 2026.

Runcorn Station Development





A Cost Estimate Summary Report was produced by Network Rail providing two options as a way forward, Option 1 a full scope of works (costing £1.5m for GRIP 3 validation and surveys and GRIP 4 outline design, approvals and close down), option 2 a phased approach (costing £480k, which is the total amount of development funding that we have available)

It was decided to progress with the full scope of works so not to delay the programme further and potential for increased costs between stages

A meeting with the LCR CA Capital Development Team took place to review Gateway 3 criteria to allow the project to access capital funding earlier in order to commit to full scope of works for outline design stage. Gateway criteria evidence has been submitted to LCR CA for review.

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EEP1	Capital Works Team	N/A	Increase the level of fee income by increasing the percentage charged or charging by time, including those works not currently charged for.	10	0	0		On target.
EEP4	Cleaning Services – Council Buildings	580	Review cleaning arrangements, with a focus on only emptying bins and cleaning toilets daily.	0	100	0		Until the accommodation review is complete, only limited savings will be made in 2024/25
EEP2	Caretaking & Security Services	641	A review and restructuring of caretaking arrangements.	0	52	0		Restructure will take place in 24/25. It is anticipated the full saving will not be met in year.
			Reduce security cover at Halton Lea to provide opening/closing and then static guarding 7.00am to 7.30pm Monday to Friday, and 9.30am to 3.00pm on Saturdays to cover the opening hours of Halton Direct Link.	35	0	0		

EEP5	Corporate Buildings	927	Generate additional rental income by providing additional office space for external organisations at Rutland House, by letting out the remaining three floors.	120	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP6	Facilities Management	165	Restructure the team in light of an expression of interest for retirement.	44	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP8	Technical Support & Market Team	392	Restructuring of the team	98	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
Total Economy, Enterprise & Property Department				307	152	0		

COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE**Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employees	16,785	16,064	721
Premises	3,913	3,321	592
Supplies & Services	1,446	1,740	(294)
Hired & Contracted Services	963	1,121	(158)
Book Fund	140	140	0
Food Provisions	371	353	18
School Meals Food	1,965	2,221	(256)
Transport	117	123	(6)
Waste Disposal Contracts	6,885	5,623	1,262
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	170	142	28
Grant to Norton Priory	174	174	0
Other Agency Costs	498	477	21
Other Expenditure	61	79	(18)
Transfers to Reserves	459	459	0
Total Expenditure	33,947	32,037	1,910
Income			
Sales Income	-1,305	-1,244	(61)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,099	-5,248	149
Rental Income	-213	-236	23
Government Grant Income	-1,132	-1,135	3
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-876	-912	36
School SLA Income	-2,061	-2,081	20
School Meals Income	-3,576	-3,427	(149)
Internal Fees Income	-418	-406	(12)
Capital Salaries	-166	-96	(70)
Transfers from Reserves	-78	-78	0
Total Income	-14,924	-14,863	(61)
Net Operational Expenditure	19,023	17,174	1,849
Recharges			
Premises Support	1,825	1,825	0
Transport	2,046	2,087	(41)
Central Support	3,856	3,856	0
Asset Rental Support	3,006	3,006	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-540	-540	0
Net Total Recharges	10,193	10,234	(41)
Net Departmental Expenditure	29,216	27,408	1,808

Comments on the above figures

The net departmental expenditure is £1.808m under budget at the end of the 2023/24 financial year. Spend on employees is £0.721m under the annual budget. Management-level restructures have taken place across the Department during the year, with further a further restructure taking place within the Community Safety Division, and another underway within the Stadium and Catering Division. In order to facilitate these restructures, posts have been held vacant on a temporary basis, leading to a reduction in costs. There have also been difficulties recruiting to certain roles due to a lack of qualified applicants, which has led to some posts being vacant for longer than planned.

Spend on premises costs is £592k under budget in 2023/24. The Department was provided with an increase of £1.2m in utility budgets for 2023/24, based on an estimated increase in energy bills, however, the actual increase in costs was not as high as anticipated. Additionally, £0.126m of credits for prior-year gas costs were received by the Department following a reconciliation of energy bills which has increased the level of the underspend significantly. This underspend is unlikely to occur in future years as utility budgets have been reduced for 2024/25.

Both Supplies & Services, and Hired & Contracted Services budgets show a significant overspend in 2023/24. This is a budget pressure throughout the Department and is primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years. Software and other essential licence costs now far exceed the budget available, with an overspend of £0.062m occurring in 2023/24. Difficulties in recruiting to some technical roles within the Brindley Theatre have necessitated a large increase in consultancy costs, with spend exceeding £0.074m, although this needs to be considered alongside an underspend on contracted staff.

School Meals food costs have been severely impacted by the high rate of inflation on food ideas during the last 12 months. Expenditure increased by 10% from 2022/23 despite a decrease in the number of schools which contract with the service.

Waste Disposal Contract costs are £1.262m under budget during 2023/24. £0.996m of this underspend relates to a refund received following Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority carrying out a reconciliation of the total contract costs for prior years across the Liverpool City Region. The percentage of contract costs charged to Halton has reduced in recent years, meaning that it is likely that this refund is a one-off occurrence. The remaining £0.266m of the underspend relates to 2023/24. Although costs did increase slightly from 2022/23, this increase was smaller than anticipated given current high levels of inflation.

Sales Income is £0.061m below the income target in 2023/24, primarily due to a shortfall in catering and bar sales at the Stadium. School Meals Income is also significantly under the budget target. 2024/25 is the final year of operation for the School Meals service, so this will cease to be a budget pressure in the medium- and long-term.

Fees and Charges income is £0.149m above the target budget in 2023/24. There were significant increases in the income generated by the Leisure Centres as the service continued to recover from the impacts of Covid-19. In addition to this, management have introduced new recruitment initiatives over the last 12 months which has led to an increase in the number of swimming instructors, allowing more income to be generated. Income at the Brindley also increased during the last financial year, with the theatre once again managing to cover its operating costs.

There was a shortfall of Capital Salary income in year, primarily due to difficulties recruiting to Landscape Architect roles. It is anticipated that income will increase in 2024/25 after a successful round of recruitment towards the end of 2023/24.

Inflationary increases in fuel and repair costs have resulted in an overspend of £0.041m on Transport Recharge budgets.

Capital Projects as at 31 March 2024

Project Title	2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000	Actual £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	34	31	3
Open Spaces Schemes	850	314	536
Children's Playground Equipment	107	107	0
Upton Improvements	13	0	0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12	1	11
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	0	340
Town Park	284	125	159
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,023	54	969
Pickerings Pasture Café	520	17	503
Litter Bins	20	20	0
Halton Leisure Centre	15,057	17,260	(2,203)
Brookvale Recreation Centre Pitch	28	13	15
TOTAL	18,288	17,942	346

Comments on the above figures

Stadium Minor Works

A stage, lighting equipment, and crowd barriers have been purchased in year, allowing additional events to be held at the Stadium.

Open Spaces Schemes

This covers a variety of smaller schemes which are all fully-funded from external sources. In 2023/24, projects included work on the Sankey Canal, improvements at Birchfield Gardens, and work on the dog exercise area at Hale Park.

Children's Playground Equipment

This is an ongoing project which includes spend on improvements within the Borough's playgrounds.

Town Park

The scheme includes the renewal of footpaths and landscape improvements within Town Park. The next phase of work is due to continue during 2024/25.

Spike Island / Wigg Island

Consultants have now been appointed and the scheme is underway.

Pickerings Pasture Café

Site investigation works are currently ongoing to inform the foundation design.

Halton Leisure Centre

Work on the new leisure centre has progressed well. The contractor is slightly ahead of schedule, which has caused the payments made in 2023/24 to exceed the original allocation, and it is anticipated that the building will be handed over to the Council in the final quarter of 2024/25. The additional expenditure in 2023/24 will be funded by a reduction in the anticipated expenditure during the next financial year.




Brookvale Recreation Centre Pitch

Work on the pitch is complete and the retention payment was made in 2023/24.





7.0 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.