

## Corporate Services – Chief Executive's Directorate Quarter 4

Reporting Period: 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> March

### 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 2024/25 for service areas within the remit of the Corporate Policy and Performance 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, 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

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

Milestone	Progress Q4	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 financial year ending 31 March 2025 is 93.98% which is 0.17% up on the 2023/24 collection rate.</p> <p>The figure of 93.98% is the highest collection rate % since 2021/22 and is the first year since 2013/14 (when council tax reduction scheme was introduced), that the collection rate</p>


		<p>for the current year is an improvement on the previous 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. £2.615m (14.85%) has been collected in relation to previous year debt. This is an improvement of £0.332m compared to prior year debt collected in 2023/24</p> <p>No comparable 2024/25 council tax collection information has yet been published to compare the Council's in-year performance against.</p> <p>For 2023/24 the Council's in-year council tax collection rate was 93.78% 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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<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
<b>FS02</b>	<b>Higher proportion of business rates income due for the year to be collected compared to previous year</b>


<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
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 financial year ending 31 March 2025 is 98.74% which is 2.05% higher than the collection rate at the same point last year.</p> <p>£2.257m has been collected in relation to previous year debt.</p> <p>No national comparable 2024/25 business rate collection information</p>

		<p>has yet been published to compare the Council's performance against.</p> <p>As at 31 December 2024 the collection rate for Halton (84.53%) was the highest recorded collection across north west authorities.</p>
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<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priority 4 - Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
<b>FS 03</b>	<b>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.</b>

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary																				
On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target		<p>Q4 2023-24 22.65 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>Processing new claims performance has improved by over 3.5 days compared to Q4 last year, and the main reason for this is Benefits staff doing regular overtime to maintain good performance.</p> <p>Q3 2024-25 New claims processing figures for a number of the Greater Manchester Councils</p> <table><tr><th>Council</th><th>Processing days</th></tr><tr><td><b>Halton</b></td><td><b>19</b></td></tr><tr><td>Blackpool</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>Bolton</td><td>28</td></tr><tr><td>Cheshire East</td><td>21</td></tr><tr><td>Salford</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>Stockport</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>Tameside</td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>Warrington</td><td>34</td></tr><tr><td>Wigan</td><td>12</td></tr></table>	Council	Processing days	<b>Halton</b>	<b>19</b>	Blackpool	11	Bolton	28	Cheshire East	21	Salford	30	Stockport	14	Tameside	22	Warrington	34	Wigan	12
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<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
<b>FS 04</b>	<b>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.</b>

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary																				
On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target		<p>Q4 2023-24 9.23 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>Processing changes in circumstances has improved marginally compared to Q4 last year. To maintain this level of performance has involved staff working regular overtime.</p> <p>Q3 2024-25 Changes in circumstances processing figures for a number of Greater Manchester Councils (latest figures available).</p> <table><tr><th>Council</th><th>Processing days</th></tr><tr><td><b>Halton</b></td><td><b>9</b></td></tr><tr><td>Blackpool</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>Bolton</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>Cheshire East</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Salford</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Stockport</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>Tameside</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>Warrington</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>Wigan</td><td>3</td></tr></table>	Council	Processing days	<b>Halton</b>	<b>9</b>	Blackpool	6	Bolton	12	Cheshire East	2	Salford	3	Stockport	11	Tameside	23	Warrington	7	Wigan	3
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<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priority Two - Building a strong, sustainable, local economy
<b>FS 05</b>	<b>Ensuring 90% of all suppliers' invoices are paid within 30 days, including those which are disputed invoices.</b>

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
On a quarterly basis, the proportion of suppliers' invoices paid within 30 days will be assessed		92.10% of the Council's supplier invoices for the 2024/25 financial year were paid within 30 days. The performance figure includes disputed invoices. The comparative performance figure for 2023/24 was 90.39%


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

Milestone	Progress Q4	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		Total outstanding historic debt stood at £17,460,981 as at 31 March 2024. By 31 March 2025, 68.43% of this debt had been collected.  The collection rate for historic debt was 64.92% at the same point last year.  The total amount written off during 2024/25 was £272,956. This was largely due to a recent review of the debts with Legal Services, which identified a number of debts over seven years old which could not be recovered.


**Operational HR Division, Chief Executives Delivery Unit**

**Key Objectives / milestones**


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

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
24/25 -12.5 FTE days average lost		3.03 Q1 3.69 Q2 3.68 Q3 3.79 Q4  14.19 days for 2024/2025

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
<b>CXDU 02</b>	<b>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.</b>

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Improve the Employer value proposition of HBC to Attract and retain talent and become an Employer of choice. 24/25 – turnover 13% stability 88%		Q4 - Turnover 19.28%  Stability 85.74% Turnover: 442 leavers / 2293 employees * 100 = <b>19.28%</b>  Workforce Stability: 2057 employees 12m in post / 2399 employees * 100 = <b>85.74%</b>

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
<b>CXDU 03</b>	<b>Reduce flexible workforce (agency) spend and deployment across the organisation</b>


Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
24/25 – 11m		Q1 - £3,397,163.09 Q2 - £3,988,737.08 Q3 - £3,880,592.64 Q4 - 3,449,278.64

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
<b>CXDU 04</b>	<b>To increase the number of post filled 1<sup>st</sup> time</b> <b>To reduce the proportion of vacancies required advertisement</b>

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
<b>To reduce the proportion of vacancies required advertisement</b> 24/25 – 13.5%		Q1 – 14% Q2 – 6% - significant decrease from Q1 of readvertisements Q3 – 7% - Slight increase from quarter 2 however still over target Q4 – <b>9%</b>
<b>To increase the number of post filled 1<sup>st</sup> time</b> 24/25 – 80%		Q1 – 90% Q2 – 94% - increase from Q1 Q3 - 93% - Slight increase from quarter 2 Q4 - <b>75%</b>


## Key Objectives / milestones

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

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
2023 saw the delivery of the initial Microsoft M365 E5 platform – 2024 continues to deliver updates with key technical partners.		<p>The delivery of M365 has been a colossal undertaking, delivering a step change in the way the authority delivers technology to the end user. This undertaking has also crossed over the Customer Journey Transformation project delivering positive change to the end user experience linked to this change over to the Microsoft cloud. This programmes Phase 1 objective is the full transformation from legacy telephony and contact centre systems to modern, integrated communication and data infrastructure.</p> <p>It includes decommissioning outdated hardware, implementing new cloud-based contact centre solutions, 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 will not only link to Ai driven technologies but will link</p>


		<p>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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<b>Corporate Priority</b>	
<b>ICT 02</b>	<b>LD2 Security Incidents across each reporting quarter</b>

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
The software packages and monitoring solutions will be in place by the 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter 2024. Work is underway with Emergency planning in terms of communicating the implication of loss and the need for business based resilience plans.		We will be talking about ERP over the coming months – Enterprise Resource Planning. 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.


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

Milestone	Progress Q4	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 <sup>st</sup> contact for those services that will allow.		<p>33'004 individual call contacts across Quarter 3</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 and 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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<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priority 4 - Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need
<b>ICT 04</b>	<b>LD4 Number of resolved contacts – One Stop Shop's</b>

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
The partnerships within the shop's continue 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		31'722 individual face to face interactions across Quarter 4 The Customer Journey transformation strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to enhancing the full customer journey.


<p>services available and looking to partner with key external agencies.</p>		<p>By 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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**Key Objectives / milestones**


<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
<b>LD 01</b>	<b>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</b>

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Revised Constitution to be approved by Annual Council each May		Revised Constitution will be submitted to Council for approval in May.


<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
<b>LD 02</b>	<b>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</b>

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Inductions to be completed by June following election and offer of MAPs to be monitored on a quarterly basis		No induction necessary as no election. No MAPs completed in Q4, Jan – March 2025. A new Member Development Plan has been drafted and is awaiting approval from the Member Development Group to be sent out to all Members.

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
<b>LD 03</b>	<b>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.</b>

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
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







<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priorities 1 - 6 Building a Resilient and Reliable Organisation
<b>LD 04</b>	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


<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
<p>On a quarterly basis, the average processing times will be compared to the target:</p> <p>Adults – 1 issued</p> <p>Children's – 13 cases issued</p>		<p>For adult work, it's not care proceedings, it is a welfare application in the court of protection. Once all finalised papers are received the target is to file applications within 5 working days. The target time is longer because there are not admin' resources and one full time solicitor in the team.</p> <p>Care cases have reduced in line with the plan to reduce the number of care issues being issues.</p>

### Catering Stadium & Registration Services







#### Key Objectives / milestones

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	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 <b>The DCBL Stadium</b>
<b>ERD 39</b>	<b>Provide affordable space for business, community, cultural and recreational activities to take place.</b>

	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Meeting space occupancy levels %	 	<p>Meeting space occupancy in Q4 is <b>54%</b> which shows an increase of <b>35.25%</b> from the same period in the previous operating year of <b>18.75%</b>.</p> <p>During Q4 occupancy in the Stadium's suites for conferences and functions was <b>51.5%</b> compared to <b>48.80%</b> in the same period last operating year representing a <b>4.40%</b> increase.</p>
Sports hall occupancy levels %	 	<p>Sports hall occupancy has increased in the Q4 period to <b>61.5 %</b> in comparison to <b>30.7%</b> in Q4 2024.</p>
4g pitch occupancy levels %	 	<p>The facility is well used which is demonstrated in the occupancy data showing a <b>75.8%</b> take up of available slots, this represents an increase on the same quarter in 2024 which was <b>69.7%</b></p>

Customer satisfaction % of 4/5 star reviews.		<p><b>97%</b> of returns rated the stadium in terms of 'Quality of Venue' between 4 and 5 stars.</p> <p><b>94%</b> of returns rated the stadium in terms of 'Quality of Catering' between 4 and 5 stars.</p> <p><b>97%</b> of returns said they would likely or very likely use the stadium again.</p>
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<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. <b>Registrars</b>
<b>ERD 40</b>	<b>Provide accessible and efficient Registration Service to Halton residents.</b>

<b>Milestone: Quarterly updates on progress and annual performance data statistics to be reported to the relevant PPB</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Births (or declarations) within 5 working days of request	 	100% achievement, national benchmark is 95%. Appointment availability monitored to ensure births registered within required timeframe.
Deaths (or declarations) within 2 working days of request	 	99.05% achievement, national benchmark is 95%. Appointment availability monitored to ensure deaths registered with required timeframe
Waiting times - % of customers seen early, on time or within 10 minutes of their appointment time.	 	98.56% achieved, national benchmark is 90%




## Property Services

### Key Objectives / milestones

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	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. <b>Property Services</b>
<b>ERD 11</b>	<b>Rationalise the Council's main office accommodation to deliver revenue savings.</b>

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Exec Board approval to vacate the Municipal Building and progress with associated works – June 24.		Whilst formal approval to vacate the Municipal Building has not been obtained, Members are in general supportive of the proposal to reduce accommodation and costs. We are currently looking at an alternative option for creating a 'Head Office' for Widnes, an outline feasibility is planned to be delivered in early May. Once this is completed further discussions will take place with Members to seek agreement on a way forward.
Agreement to revised officer to desk ratio – September 24		The agreement to the reduced officer to desk ratio is tied into the accommodation strategy so will be included in a report in due course once Members have agreed on the most appropriate option.
Complete options appraisal for Widnes office to present to members by March 25		See above
Agreed approach to provision of HBC staff accommodation by March 25		See above

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. <b>Property Services</b>
<b>ERD 12</b>	<b>Reduce Carbon Emissions from the Council's Property Portfolio</b>

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q4</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Deliver the leisure centre by Feb 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2025.		The leisure centre was delivered slightly ahead of programme and opened to the public on February 10th
Commence works on site at St Pat's & St Luke's by December 2024.		The scope of works has been reduced due to budget pressures, and we are now working on a reduced scheme. An application for grant was unsuccessful which has impacted on the available budget.
Ensure year on year reduction in carbon emissions from the Council's property portfolio. Baseline at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023 - 6096 tonnes. target 3% after year 1, 5% reduction after year 3.		Emissions from Council buildings at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 were 5593 tonnes, an 8.2% reduction from the previous year.

## 4.0 Financial Statements

### Finance Department

#### Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2025

	Annual Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	6,969	6,846	123
Insurances	975	958	17
Supplies & Services	410	564	(154)
Rent Allowances	35,500	35,500	0
Concessionary Travel	1,748	1,872	(124)
LCR Levy	1,748	1,748	0
Transfer to Reserves	0	37	(37)
Bad Debt Provision	77	-7	84
Non HRA Rent Rebates	70	49	21
Discretionary Social Fund	106	12	94
Discretionary Housing Payments	300	275	25
Household Support Fund Expenditure	2,475	2,475	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>50,378</b>	<b>50,329</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-335	-348	13
Burdens Grant	-60	-91	31
Dedicated schools Grant	-144	-144	0
Council Tax Liability Order	-581	-664	83
Business Rates Admin Grant	-157	-157	0
Schools SLAs	-312	-307	(5)
LCR Reimbursement	-1,748	-1,748	0
HB Overpayment Debt Recovery	-400	-198	(202)
Rent Allowances	-34,700	-33,909	(791)
Non HRA Rent Rebate	-70	-63	(7)
Discretionary Housing Payment Grant	-300	-277	(23)
Housing Benefits Admin Grant	-498	-489	(9)
Housing Benefits Award Accuracy	0	-12	12
Universal Credits	-5	0	(5)
Household Support Fund Grant	-2,475	-2,523	48
VEP Grant	0	-7	7
CCG McMillan Reimbursement	-87	-92	5
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-185	-495	310
Transfer from Reserves	0	-172	172
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-42,057</b>	<b>-41,696</b>	<b>(361)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>8,321</b>	<b>8,633</b>	<b>(312)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	377	377	0
Transport Support	0	0	0
Central Support	2,365	2,365	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-6,031	-6,031	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-3,289</b>	<b>-3,289</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>5,032</b>	<b>5,344</b>	<b>(312)</b>

### **Comments on the above figures**

The Finance outturn shows net spend being £0.312m above the approved budget for Finance Department. The change from previous month 10 position (forecast £0.095m underspend) is due to the adverse Rent Allowances net effect of £0.791m.

Concessionary Travel had previously forecast an underspend of £0.006m but due to adjusted tariffs being applied and backdated charges incurred the final overspend is £0.124m in year.

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 meant a reduction from the underspend position reported at month 10 from £0.209m to £0.017m




Despite an increase in budget in 2024/25, Rent Allowances continue to be an area of concern, due to the increased costs of supported accommodation the expenditure cost is higher than the income received from DWP. This should ideally net to zero, however, Housing Benefit will only support up to a nominal figure for non-registered providers after which, 60% will come from housing benefits and the remaining 40% is up to the Council to support.

Supplies and services net spend is £0.154m above budget, £0.137m is due to the Business Rates team engaging with Inform CPI Ltd (Analyse Local) who specialise in identifying new business rate premises that have not been included within the rating list. Whilst there is no budget for this expenditure, the exercise has generated a net yield for the year of £1.089m in additional business rates income. Annually the net increase in billed business rates as a result of the exercise will be in excess of £0.5m.

Reimbursement & Grant Income has significantly increased due to receiving unbudgeted income of £0.200m from Natwest purchase card rebates and an anticipated increased in procurement card income.

## Approved 2024/25 Savings

### FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
F9	Internal Audit	300	Restructure in light of potential retirements over the next two years within the Internal Audit Team.	0	50		No official changes made yet
F13	Discretionary Support Scheme	221	Review the roles, procedures and structure of the team.	25	0		On track
F17	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	40		On track
Total Finance Department				65	90		

## Chief Executive's Delivery Unit

### Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2025

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	3,304	3,398	(94)
Employees Training	99	69	30
Apprenticeship Levy	300	326	(26)
Supplies & Services	391	340	51
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4,094</b>	<b>4,133</b>	<b>(39)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-223	-211	(12)
Schools SLA Income	-565	-529	(36)
Transfer from Reserves	0	-5	5
Reimbursements & Grant Income	0	-5	5
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-788</b>	<b>-750</b>	<b>(38)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>3,306</b>	<b>3,383</b>	<b>(77)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	174	174	0
Transport	0	0	0
Central Support	1,209	1,209	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-3,573	-3,573	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-2,190</b>	<b>-2,190</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,116</b>	<b>1,193</b>	<b>(77)</b>

### Comments on the above figures

As at 31 March 2025 the net spend position for the department is £0.077m over the approved budget for the year.

Forecasted salary costs have increased since the last reporting period as costs initially identified under the Transformation programme have had to be realigned back to the service.

The School SLA Income has reduced as some schools have become academies and are not buying back Council services. This shortfall in income is currently being offset by an underspend against supplies and services.

### Capital Programme 2024/25

	2024/25 Revised Allocation	Actual Spend to 31 March 2025	Allocation remaining
	£000	£000	£000
Transformation Programme	3,740.0	3,202.1	537.9
<b>Chief Executives Delivery Unit Total</b>	<b>3,740.0</b>	<b>3,202.1</b>	<b>537.9</b>

## ICT and Administration Department

### Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2025

	<b>Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Actual Spend £'000</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend) £'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	5,596	5,285	311
Supplies & Services	921	1,174	(253)
Capital Finance	100	43	57
Computer Repairs & Software	1,576	1,483	92
Communication Costs	13	175	(162)
Premises	159	137	23
Transport	3	2	1
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>8,367</b>	<b>8,298</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges	-1,056	-1,167	111
Schools SLA Income	-646	-571	(75)
Reimbursements & Grant Income	0	-30	30
Transfer from Reserves	0	-148	148
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-1,703</b>	<b>-1,916</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>6,664</b>	<b>6,383</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	603	603	0
Transport Support	19	19	0
Central Support	2,380	2,380	0
Asset Rental Support	1,494	1,494	0
Support Costs Income	-11,222	-11,222	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-6,726</b>	<b>-6,726</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>-62</b>	<b>-343</b>	<b>282</b>

### Comments on the above figures

At the end of the 2024/25 financial year net spend for the ICT and Administration Department will be under the approved budget by £0.282m

In previous years, a significant budget pressure for the department has been the administrative staff. Now that the service has been disaggregated the burden is no longer pooled within the department but across the Council.

The main pressures faced by the ICT and Administration 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.

There was a significant favourable shift from previous quarter due to proportionate invoice timing adjustments to reflect the in year expenditure, £0.442m against Computer Repairs & Software and also £0.167m for Supplies and Services

With a number of agency staff across the Council, ICT and Administrative Services are recharging licence costs for non HBC staff to their respective departments as the costs are not held within the initial contracts with suppliers such as Microsoft, this should help budget holders more readily see the impact agency staff are having on the Council's finances as there is not just the direct fees to be considered, there is strain on a number of other services and existing contracts which do come at additional costs.

There has been a substantial increase in postage costs £0.176m as well as communication costs £0.162m for BT & Vodafone quarterly bundle charges

There has been a increase in income due to Cyber Assessment Framework payments which had not been foreseen. Income will be expected to reduce in the forthcoming finance years by the decommissioning of Youth Justice System ICT service provided.

The transfer of reserves of £0.148m income was the Cyber Support Fund which will not be rolled forward.

### **Capital Expenditure**

	2024/25 Revised Allocation	Actual Spend to 31 March 2025	Allocation remaining
	£000	£000	£000
IT Rolling Programme	1,026.9	921.6	105.3
<b>ICT Total</b>	<b>1,026.9</b>	<b>921.6</b>	<b>105.3</b>

## Legal and Democratic Services Department

### Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2025

	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual Spend</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend)</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	1,557	1,542	15
Agency Related Expenditure	0	881	(881)
Supplies & Services	364	323	41
Civic Catering & Functions	23	18	5
Legal Expenses	218	493	(275)
Transport Related Expenditure	11	5	6
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,173</b>	<b>3,262</b>	<b>(1,089)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
School SLA's	-98	-77	(21)
Licence Income	-301	-296	(5)
Government Grant	-67	-67	0
Reimbursement & Other Grants	-115	-115	0
Fees & Charges Income	-74	-45	(29)
Transfer from Reserves	-27	-27	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-682</b>	<b>-627</b>	<b>(55)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>1,491</b>	<b>2,635</b>	<b>(1,144)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	53	53	0
Transport Recharges	0	0	0
Central Support Recharges	275	275	0
Asset Rental Support Costs	0	0	0
Support Recharge Income	-2,391	-2,391	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-2,063</b>	<b>-2,063</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>-572</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>(1,144)</b>

### Comments on the above figures

As at 31 March 2025 the departmental net spend is £1.144m over the approved budget for the year. Employee costs for the year are expected to marginally be below the approved budget (including staff payments for recent elections). This is a result of the number of vacancies that exist within the department but due to the demand on the service, 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 totalled £0.881m at the end of the financial year.

Within the forecast £0.275m overspend against budget of legal expenses, there is an estimated £0.357m costs relating to the contracting of barristers, most of which again, are due to the limited number of staff available to clear an increasing caseload.

**Approved 2024/25 Savings**

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

**LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
L4	Marketing, Design and Communications	45	Review the frequency of production of Inside Halton, as part of the wider consideration of the Council's communications strategy required for the Transformation Programme	15			Budget adjusted <u>inline</u> with the savings in the ICT department
Total Legal Services Department				15	0		

## COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE

### Revenue Budget as at 31st March 2025

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	16,534	15,726	808
Agency - covering vacancies	0	191	(191)
Agency - in addition to establishment	0	256	(256)
Premises	3,443	3,367	76
Supplies & Services	1,452	1,710	(258)
Hired & Contracted Services	1,636	1,617	19
Book Fund	128	134	(6)
Food Provisions	388	416	(28)
School Meals Food	1,107	1,236	(129)
Transport	117	121	(4)
Other Agency Costs	460	486	(26)
Other Expenditure	41	63	(22)
Waste Disposal Contracts	7,072	7,190	(118)
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	64	30	34
Grants to Norton Priory	174	174	0
Transfer to reserves	1,357	1,357	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>33,973</b>	<b>34,074</b>	<b>(101)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Sales Income	-1,389	-1,353	(36)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,771	-5,633	(138)
Rental Income	-235	-280	45
Markets Income	-910	-847	(63)
Government Grant Income	-2,034	-2,034	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-1,053	-1,053	0
School SLA Income	-553	-553	0
School Meals Income	-2,622	-2,622	0
Internal Fees Income	-322	-434	112
Capital Salaries	-173	-92	(81)
Transfers From Reserves	-421	-925	504
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-15,483</b>	<b>-15,826</b>	<b>343</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>18,490</b>	<b>18,248</b>	<b>242</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	1,675	1,675	0
Transport	2,257	2,295	(38)
Central Support	3,592	3,592	0
Asset Rental Support	2,845	2,845	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-843	-843	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>9,526</b>	<b>9,564</b>	<b>(38)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>28,016</b>	<b>27,812</b>	<b>204</b>

### **Comments on the above figures**

The net Departmental Expenditure has fallen £0.204m under budget at the end of the 2024/25 financial year. The position is £0.614m lower than forecast at month 10 and is due to several factors detailed below.

The largest shift from month 10 is in regards to Waste Disposal Contracts, which has seen a drop from a forecasted £0.284m underspend against the budget profile to £0.118m overspend. The invoices for these contracts are typically received very late after expenditure has been incurred so it can be difficult to forecast and within recent years the performance has been well within the budget. However, costs have risen by at least 25% which is producing a significant budget pressure due to the monetary value of the contracts. There is central government initiative to incorporate food waste recycling into all waste provisions across the country, there is scope to drive down these costs in subsequent financial years as when sorted at source, the processing costs are reduced. There is potential for reconciliation adjustments to be received in 2025/26 which may result in the annual cost being closer to the budget, but at this stage, the costs have risen above the approved budget.

Fees and Charges has also seen a significant change from that reported in Month 10. The change from £0.183m overachieved to £0.138m underachieved is due to a larger than expected portion of the funds received within the 2024/25 period relating to subsequent financial years.

Transfers From Reserves has also seen an increase as more funds were identified for utilisation against community and library services, releasing £0.505m of funds in comparison to the £0.202m in Month 10. Work will be carried out in 2025/26 to continue to identify opportunities such as this to help alleviate revenue budget pressures.

The largest contributor to the underspend continued to be spend on employees within the department, seeing £0.808m under the approved budget profile by the end of the financial year. There have been several restructures taking place across the Department in this financial year, in order to facilitate these, a number of vacancies have been held vacant whilst waiting for the new structure to be implemented. These will continue to be held into the 2025/26 financial year. Offsetting this however, is agency spend within the Department which reached £0.447m for the 2024/25 financial year. As the Department offers a number of front-line services, including waste collections, in order to continue operations in the event of staff sickness, there is a reliance on agency to reduce the impact on residents within the borough.

Spend on premises costs is £0.076m under budget in 2024/25, a slightly improved position from month 10. Halton Leisure Centre is now open, and this facility will have lower building costs as there is little requirement for repairs and maintenance in comparison to the previous site. The premises costs of Kingsway Leisure Centre were a significant budget pressure for the department so the Council should start to see the benefits of increased revenue, and lower maintenance costs with the newer site. This has been built into the approved budget for 2025/26 so it is unlikely that there will be an underspend within the next financial year.

Supplies and services is showing an overspend of £0.258m which is a budget pressure throughout the Department, and is primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years, if the Council were to contain these costs within the budget profile there would be a reduction in the service provided.

The overall budget underspend of £0.205m for the department is largely contained to this financial year and not expected to continue into 2025/26. The budget for 2024/25 was set including a full year for the Kingsway Leisure Centre and School Meals service, next year does not include these, so the Council is likely to see expenditure and income more in line with the approved budget profile, there may be some temporary relief from vacancies as restructures are underway, and where possible, opportunities to identify available reserves will continue. However, due to the size of the waste disposal contracts, should there be any further increases even by a small percentage, any identified savings will be quickly offset.

### **Budget Savings**

#### **COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT**

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
COMM3	Sport & Recreation	471	Restructuring the roles and responsibilities of the Sports Development Team	36	0		✓ Phase 1 of the restructure is underway with subsequent phases to occur within the next financial year.
COMM5	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.	0	12		✓ The cessation of the service is complete.
<b>Total Community &amp; Environment Department</b>				<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>		

## Capital

	2024/25 Revised Allocation	Actual Spend to 31 March 2025	Allocation remaining
	£000	£000	£000
Stadium Minor Works	30.0	37.8	(7.8)
Halton Leisure Centre	8,997.0	8,897.3	99.7
Children's Playground Equipment	67.8	48.0	19.8
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340.0	0.0	340.0
Upton Improvements	13.0	0.0	13.0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12.0	0.0	12.0
Open Spaces Schemes	600.0	591.7	8.3
Runcorn Town Park	468.6	18.1	450.5
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,933.5	90.9	1,842.6
Pickerings Pasture Cafe	503.0	33.8	469.2
Replacement Cremator Widnes	308.0	325.9	(17.9)
Litter Bins	20.0	20.0	0.0
<b>Community and Greenspaces Departmental Total</b>	<b>13,292.9</b>	<b>10,063.5</b>	<b>3,229.4</b>

Halton Leisure Centre is now open so the costs will begin to wind up for this project, there will be some slippage into next financial year for any remedial works but the majority of work on the site is complete. Due to staffing issues several projects have had delayed starts so allocations will need to be carried through to the next financial year.

The overspend position against Stadium Minor Works and Replacement Cremator will be funded from the 2025/26 allocation being brought forward from 2024/25.

# **ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**

## **Revenue Operational Budget at 31 March 25**

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	5,264	4,778	486
Agency - covering vacancies	0	417	(417)
Repairs & Mainenance	1,746	1,831	(85)
Premises	167	160	7
Energy & Water Costs	1,258	1,132	126
NNDR	687	666	21
Rents	173	166	7
Economic Regeneration Activities	17	-4	21
Security	544	588	(44)
Supplies & Services	477	570	(93)
Supplies & Services - Grant	1,270	1,270	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	159	154	5
Capital Finance	0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	1,177	1,231	(54)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,939</b>	<b>12,959</b>	<b>(20)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Fees & Charges Income	-1,065	-1,175	110
Rent - Commercial Properties	-872	-900	28
Rent - Investment Properties	-38	-38	0
Government Grant	-2,652	-2,661	9
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-330	-387	57
Schools SLA Income	-221	-212	(9)
Recharges to Capital	-383	-383	0
Transfer from Reserves	-1,170	-1,170	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-6,731</b>	<b>-6,926</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>6,208</b>	<b>6,033</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Premises Support	2,074	2,074	0
Transport Support	28	28	0
Central Support	1,947	1,947	0
Asset Rental Support	1,154	1,154	0
Recharge Income	-7,927	-7,927	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-2,724</b>	<b>-2,724</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>3,484</b>	<b>3,309</b>	<b>175</b>

### **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 final outturn position shows the department is £0.175m under the annual approved budget.

### **Supporting Information**

The department consists of 139fte, of which 69fte are externally funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.126m.

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.

To fulfil statutory and contractual obligations and support the borough's regeneration, maintaining a complete staff is essential. However, the challenge of filling surveyor and project manager roles, even with a market supplement, has resulted in a lack of suitable candidates. Consequently, the engagement of agency personnel has been necessary, at a cost of £0.417m 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.

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, although a rent-free period was provided to secure lease completions, resulting in a £0.020m shortfall. The budget should be balanced for the financial year 25/26, providing there is no increase in inflation.

A reconciliation of service charges at Rutland House and the relocation of Connect to Halton to the Municipal Building have increased the fees and charges income. As a result, the department had an overachievement of income by £0.110m for the year.

A recent exercise was conducted to determine the costs associated with empty properties within the Borough. Consequently a new cost centre was established to monitor these expenses. In addition to the loss of rental income whilst the properties remain vacant, the Council also incur additional costs for utilities, repairs, and maintenance. As of the end of the financial year, the total costs related to these properties amount to £0.230m. To reduce the expenses 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.

The Department highlighted the necessity of expert advice to advance regeneration projects. Additionally, the change in Government highlighted the need for an up-to-date Housing Strategy for the Borough. Following a meeting with the Director of Economy, Enterprise, and Property, it was decided to use the Department's reserves to cover these one-off costs. Seeking external advice will assist with future grant funding requests from the LCR and Government, and enable the department to fulfil its obligations regarding the borough's regeneration strategy.

Whilst there has been a significant increase in energy costs over the last few years, it is anticipated that costs this financial year will be £0.152m lower than in 2023/24, representing a decrease of over 11%. The department spend is £0.126m under budget for 24/25.

Due to a delay in securing a new security contract, the current provider has been granted a one-year extension. At the end of 24/25 costs are £0.044m over budget. It has been agreed that departments will manage their own security budgets for 25/26 which will allow for tighter control of spend.

The Repairs and Maintenance program is under continuous review to ensure it stays within budget. This financial year is particularly challenging because the 2024/25 budget did not include an inflation adjustment and was further reduced by 10%. 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 was £0.085m over the approved budget for the year.



Similar to previous years, the school cleaning service's level agreement (SLA) is not meeting its financial targets due to the employment of agency for covering absences and leave, as well as the anticipated pay award. This service will no longer be offered from April 2025.

### **Approved 2024/25 Savings**

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

## **ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**

### **APPENDIX A**

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EEP4	Cleaning Services – Council Buildings	580	Review cleaning arrangements, with a focus on only emptying bins and cleaning toilets daily.	100	0		A review of the cleaning service is underway with some positions removed from the structure. The full savings will not be achieved until the accommodation review is complete.
EEP2	Caretaking & Security Services	641	A review and restructuring of caretaking arrangements.	52	0		The restructure can now take place following the retirement of a member of staff. The full saving will not be made until financial year 25/26
<b>Total Economy, Enterprise &amp; Property Department</b>				<b>152</b>	<b>0</b>		

## **Capital Budget at 31 March 25**

	2024/25 Revised Allocation	Actual Spend to 31 March 2025	Allocation remaining
	£000	£000	£000
3MG	134.5	0.0	134.5
Sandymoor Open Spaces Improvements	0.0	2.9	(2.9)
Murdishaw redevelopment	21.2	21.9	(0.7)
Equality Act Improvement Works	93.2	89.7	3.5
Foundary Lane Residential Area	1,240.0	494.1	745.9
Town Deal	11,552.9	3,160.1	8,392.8
Property Improvements	460.5	627.4	(166.9)
Runcorn Station Quarter	76.0	76.0	(0.0)
Waterloo Building	75.0	4.5	70.5
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	178.2	236.7	(58.5)
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	268.7	186.7	82.0
Changing Places	24.1	7.0	17.1
Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet	0.0	0.0	0.0
Port of Weston	20.0	3.0	17.0
Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition	750.0	41.2	708.8
<b>Economy, Enterprise and Property Total</b>	<b>28,187.2</b>	<b>15,014.7</b>	<b>13,172.5</b>

## **Comments on above figures**

### **3MG**

3MG is in its final stages for development with HBC Field being finalised this year and developments for Liberty Park and the Mound not presently forthcoming.

### **Foundry Lane**

Resolving some of the site and financial issues remains the main focus of the work of this project in the quarter resulting in minimal expenditure with a view to being back on track in the next quarter. Work has now commenced on site.

### **Murdishaw**

The allocation has been brought forward to continue work to improve the amenity at Murdishaw Community Centre as part of the wider community project. Work has been completed to provide allotment space and further work is due to be undertaken to provide secure and accessible spaces, enhancing the allotment offer.

The improvements are part of the wider Murdishaw community regeneration scheme which has supported the delivery of the Tea Tree community café, improvements to bungalows on the estate and environmental improvements.

### **Sci-Tech Daresbury Project Violet**

Project Violet is currently being reviewed and a full business case is in development. As a result of increased costs, the development appraisal is being reviewed and the funding requirements being reviewed. The programme anticipates a procurement exercise in the next quarter and the revised delivery programme proposes a 26 month build with construction commencing in August 2025 and completion in Q4 2026.

**Waterloo Building** All works complete, site now sold.

**Equality Improvement Works** All budget has been spent, £200k allocated to The Brindley.

#### **Property Improvement**

The budget has been adjusted to accommodate two new unforeseen projects: replacing the platform lift at Kids Planet and fully refurbishing the public lift at Halton Lea.

#### **Changing Places**

Works all complete, grant money fully spent, some retention monies left to pay circa £5k.

#### **Runcorn Station Quarter**

The Runcorn Station Development Project will formally be passed over to the CA Rail team as a Merseytravel project from 30th September.

A final invoice is estimated to be submitted during quarter 3 2024 period for Network Rail Project Management fees.

This is estimated to be no more than £10k. Once this has been paid and claimed, the CA Investment Team will formally end Halton's GFA. Halton's role will continue as strategic partner and actively be involved in the design process.

#### **Town Deal**

Although at different stages work is progressing with all Town Deal funded projects. The Brindley started on site mid-August and the next phase of the Creative and Digital Skill centre started on site in September. The Health Hub design work is completed and the next stage is to tender the work. Design work progresses on the remaining projects.

#### **Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development**

A contractor for the demolition works was appointed in March 2024, with Planning Consent gained in May 2024. Following a period of services disconnections and liaison with Halton Housing (who's adjoining building Church Mansions is connected to Churchill Hall), the demolition works commenced in mid-July 2024. The main demolition works are now completed, with practical completion anticipated in mid-Oct 2024. This will bring to a close the Council capital element of the project. The Council continues to work on developing residential proposals for the site in partnership with Halton Housing, community consultation is anticipated in Winter 2024.

#### **Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition**

The demolition works are underway, following relocation of the Leisure Centre and period of decommissioning of the building.

#### **Port of Weston**

A outline business case has been developed and finalised which demonstrates the viability of the Port of Weston as a business location with a mixture of uses including high-barn warehousing and a business park. Within the quarter a full business case was starting to be commissioned with a view to carrying out a green book assessment to secure the funding for site purchase and development.




#### **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

Work has commenced at The Brindley. The allocation for the education room will be reflected in the forecast. The allocations for the High Street solar panels and Church Street works are projected for the end of the financial year.





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