

Education, Inclusion & Provision Department

Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2025

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employees	7,449	7,592	(143)
Agency - covering vacancies	0	271	(271)
Agency - addition to establishment	86	25	61
Premises	14	11	3
Supplies & Services	3,793	3,854	(61)
Independent School Fees	10,410	10,410	0
Schools Contingency	441	441	0
Transport	43	60	(17)
Schools Transport	2,356	3,118	(762)
Early Years Payments	12,320	12,320	0
Early Years Pupil Premium	257	257	0
Commissioned Services	1,918	2,116	(198)
Inter Authority Special Needs	1,415	1,415	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	112	176	(64)
Capital Financing	3,200	3,033	167
Total Expenditure	43,814	45,099	(1,285)
Income			
Fees & Charges Income	-440	-451	11
Government Grant Income	-8,442	-8,442	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	-27,114	-26,963	(151)
Inter Authority Income	-274	-274	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-1,717	-1,718	1
Schools SLA Income	-518	-478	(40)
Transfers from Reserves	-176	-596	420
Total Income	-38,681	-38,922	241
Net Operational Expenditure	5,133	6,177	(1,044)
Recharges			
Premises Support	344	344	0
Transport Support	528	738	(210)
Central Support	1,605	1,605	0
Asset Rental Support	2,514	2,514	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0
Net Total Recharges	4,991	5,201	(210)
Net Departmental Expenditure	10,124	11,378	(1,254)

Financial Position

Net departmental expenditure is £1.254m over budget at the end of 2024/25. Throughout the year it had been forecast to be over budget by approximately £1.240m at year end. The main variances being school transport and staffing.

Employee Expenditure

Employee expenditure, including agency staff, is £0.353m over budget at year end. There are a number of vacant positions across the department some of which are filled by agency staff, at a cost of £0.271m for the year.

The employee overspend is largely due to two services, Psychology and SEN Assessment, posts were previously funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The Department for Education recently advised that these costs cannot be DSG funded because they do not meet the grant conditions. Therefore this cost has fallen upon the Council's budget at a cost of £0.860m.

Agreed departmental savings of £0.080m for the SEN Assessment Team detailed in Annex A have not been achieved for the same reason above.

The forecasted overspend for employees has decreased by £0.094m since the last reporting period due to a review of some services resulting in some posts being deleted and others being identified as eligible for grant funding.

Schools Transport

Schools Transport is the main budgetary demand pressure for Education, Inclusion and Provision. The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils with transport. This is split into two main areas of SEN pupils attending In Borough and out of Borough Schools.

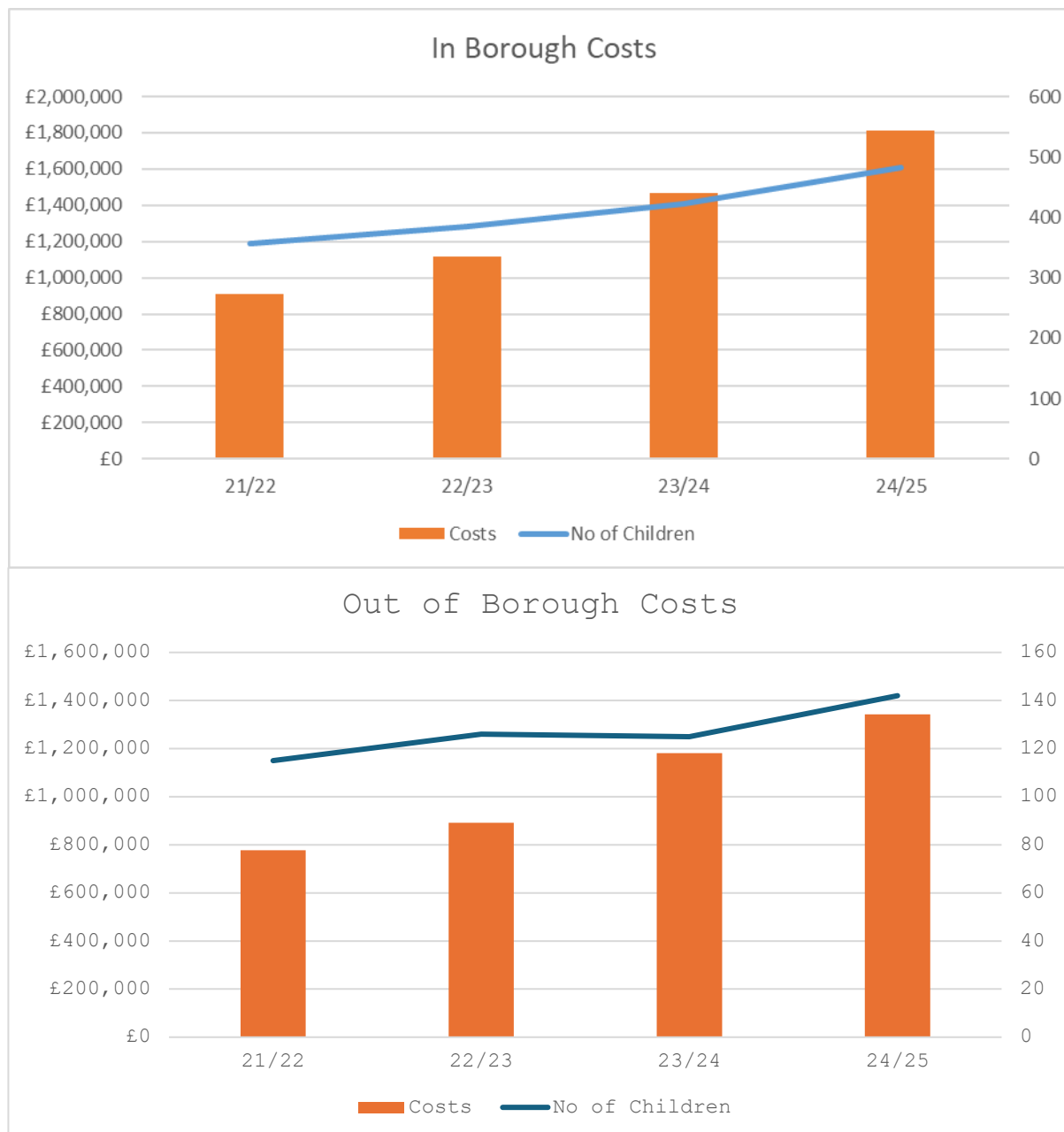
The table below illustrates the split between the two areas, and how each areas spend compares to the budget.

2024-25					
Area	Number of Users	Budget £000	Spend £000	Variance £000	Average Cost per User
In Borough	486	1826	1789	37	£3,728.22
Out of Borough	146	530	1329	(799)	£9,200.53
Total	632	2356	3118	(762)	

As at 31 March 2025 there were 632 service users, 8 more than previously reported in January 2025. The majority of which attend schools within the Borough, 486 compared to 146 out of the Borough. The out of Borough overspend is £0.799m at the end of the financial year. The demand for the School Transport service is increasing in line with the increasing number of pupils with SEN within the Borough.

In setting the 2025/26 budget, growth has been added to increase the annual budget to £2.995m, which this is still significantly short of projected spend of £3.648m. There is a consultation underway to review the home to school transport policy, with changes from the new academic year for new and existing service users.

The graphs below show the trend in the number of SEN children using this service and the associated costs.



It is worth noting that this situation is not unique to Halton and is a burden across all Councils nationwide.

Income

Income has overachieved due to a review of departmental earmarked reserves and £0.420m being released to the General Fund.

Transport Recharges

Transport Recharges overspent by £0.210m. As in previous reports, the increase in running costs continues to rise.

Approved 2024/25 Savings

Please see Appendix A for full details.

Capital Projects as at 31 March 2025

	2024/25 Revised Allocation £000	Actual Spend to 31 March 2025 £000	Allocation remaining £000
Childrens Directorate			
Capital Repairs	749.0	741.2	7.8
Basic Need Projects	0.0	0.0	0.0
SEND capital allocation	1,529.2	1,532.2	(3.0)
Family Hubs & Start for Life	110.4	112.8	(2.4)
Asbestos Management	0.0	2.9	(2.9)
Asset Management	0.0	23.6	(23.6)
Small Capital Works - Schools	0.0	54.9	(54.9)
Access Initiative	0.0	22.6	(22.6)
Grange BSF	0.0	49.3	(49.3)
Childrens Directorate Total	2,388.6	2,539.5	(150.9)

Comments on the Above Figures




There are a number of capital schemes where spend for the year exceeds the revised budget as reported to Executive Board on 13 March 2025. Where this is the case funding for overspend against allocation will come from external grant.

The main item of expenditure is in relation to SEND Capital Allocations. Many of the repairs and SEND works are completed over the summer holidays and are mainly complete. Some retentions will be due in 2025/26.

EDUCATION, INCLUSION AND PROVISION DEPARTMENT

Review of Agreed Savings

APPENDIX A

Ref	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EIP1	Education Psychology Service	339	There is excess demand from schools for the Education Psychology Service. The service is valued and there is opportunity to expand our offer and generate additional income.	52	0		
EIP2	SEN Assessment Team	82	Consideration will be given to funding the full service costs from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.	80	0		DSG funding removed as does not comply with grant conditions.
EIP5	Commissioning	148	Review with Health colleagues how the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Carers could instead be provided by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as they are commissioned by the Integrated Care Board.	148	0		To be reviewed.
Total Education, Inclusion and Provision Department				280	0		