

REPORT TO: Local Economy Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 16th June 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Employment, Learning, Skills and Community

SUBJECT: Halton Leisure Centre

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To receive a presentation providing an overview of the activities and operations at Halton Leisure Centre since its opening on 10th February 2025.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS: That the report and presentation be noted

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Construction of Halton Leisure Centre was completed as scheduled and transferred to the Council's ownership on 6th January 2025. The centre opened to the general public on 8th February 2025.
- 3.2 The facility provides a high-quality asset for residents and staff. The new leisure centre has seen an increase in users and membership, achieving approximately 1,000 new members since opening which has increased monthly direct debit revenue by circa £30,000 per month. The footfall during February was averaging 6,000 visits a week, with high demand for tours. The high usage has continued with 21,978 visits in March and 20,685 in April.
- 3.3 As may be anticipated with any new facility the customer feedback has been mixed whilst snagging and teething issues are worked through however, it is mostly positive. Customer feedback has been received specifically on pool design, sports hall, changing rooms and programme of use. The majority of customers, specifically those transferring from Kingsway have adjusted to the new site and many are utilising the new app to gain access to the activity areas.
- 3.4 There remain some glitches with the leisure management system, however, once identified the queries/issues are being responded to and resolved swiftly.
- 3.5 A new building, plant, equipment and technology, has required staff

training, new systems of work, and policies and procedures to be developed.

- 3.6 Some elements of delivery have been staggered and are still developing. The café opened in April and soft play is anticipated to commence by the end of May 2025 when access control measures are in place.
- 3.7 There is ongoing dialogue with Wates, the construction company with a defect reporting system implemented now the site has moved beyond the snagging phase. Bi-weekly meetings are in place to manage and progress any outstanding defects.
- 3.8 The Active Halton App is being used frequently by the majority of customers. App uptake has increased from 3364 users (Kingsway) to 8377 at present. Use off the app has reduced costs associated with supplying plastic cards. The App has been refreshed, and content is updated regularly.
- 3.9 A change in the Halton Leisure Card eligibility age from 60 to 65 years was implemented on 1st April 2025, 1,000 cards have been issued, the majority of card holders have purchased a bronze membership.
- 3.10 Halton's new leisure centre, unlike the previous building complies with school's requirements for swimming. There are 8 schools now utilising the pool with a further 2 due to start in September and others registering an interest in booking lessons from September.
- 3.11 Recovering service costs through the year is dependent on a number of factors, including:
 - Demand – Will change year on year and could be determined by a number of drivers such as weather, economy, regional and national events, demographics etc.
 - Competition – There is a strong competitive market. Costs within the private sector are generally lower than in the public sector, for example employee terms and conditions.
- 3.12 Budgets are robustly managed and reviewed and service budget recovery is included in performance monitoring.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The provision supports Halton residents to be active directly contributing to all of the Councils priorities and the One Halton Health & Wellbeing Strategy [One-Halton-strategy.pdf](#)

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Councils internal audit are scheduled to review financial

management systems within the new centre once all areas are fully operational.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

There is increased importance on participation in physical activity for the prevention of ill-health and the need to break down barriers to accessing physical activity. Programme and prices are set to provide opportunities for all. "Every £1 spent on sport and physical activity generates almost £4 in return across health and wellbeing, strengthening communities and the national economy." (Sport England)

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Halton leisure centre is an integral part of the infrastructure that supports the delivery of sport which contributes to the attractiveness of the borough, access to high quality assets and Halton's economy.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Physical activity can improve people's lives physically, mentally and socially. Learning to swim at a young age can reduce the risk of drowning by up to 88% and develop social skills and psychological benefits.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Sports facilities offer a varied programme of use, supporting the wider agenda of access to opportunities and improving life chances.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Halton Leisure Centre is a greener cleaner facility adopting green technologies, including air source heat pumps.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The role of Councils is vitally important in the provision of health and wellbeing services. Creating greater cooperation between agencies to embed a shared vision enabling communities to be physically active is imperative to address inactivity and ill health and generate improved outcomes.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None to report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are discounted rates for residents in receipt of certain benefits to support residents from the most deprived areas and/or from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in being active.

- 8.2 The new centre includes a changing village, changing places facility, inclusive toilets/changing rooms, pool pod, lifts, these facilities and others promote accessibility and inclusion to ensure the time a customer spends at site is relaxed and enjoyable.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Leisure centres are 'energy hungry' facilities and represent a significant opportunity for the Council to take a meaningful step in reducing carbon footprint and optimise buildings with energy efficiency measures. Air source heat pumps have been installed in Halton Leisure Centre. EV car charging points are available in the car park. Energy saving measures such as PIR LED lights, non-concussive taps on sinks and showers are a feature in the centre.

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

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.