

Environment & Regeneration Performance Monitoring Report - Quarter 2

Directorate: Environment & Regeneration

Departments: **Community & Environment, Planning & Transportation, Economy, Enterprise & Property Services**

Period: Quarter 2- 1st July – 30th September 2025

1.0 Introduction

This quarterly performance monitoring report covers the **Environment & Regeneration Directorate's** second quarter period up to 30th September 2025.

It describes key developments and progress against 'key' milestones and performance indicators for the service in line with the Corporate plan.

2.0 Data Quality Statement

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data.

Where data has been estimated, it has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use, this has been clearly annotated.

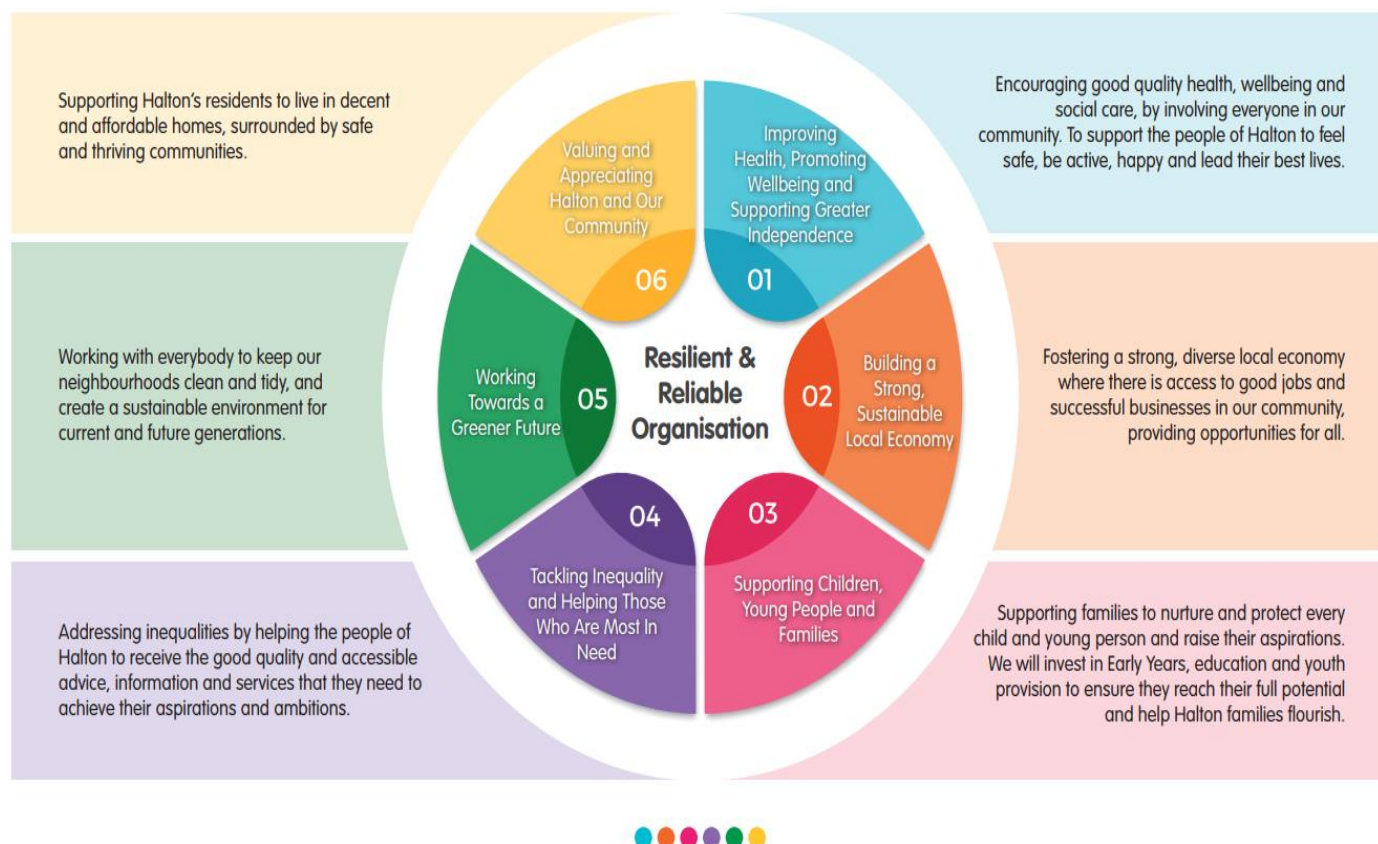
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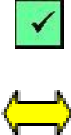
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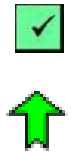
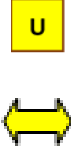
Appendix 1: Progress Against Objectives / Milestones

Corporate Priority	Priority 2 – Building a strong sustainable local economy. Regeneration
ERD 01	Deliver key regeneration programmes and work with partners to increase social and financial investment.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Deliver Widnes Town Centre UKSPF funded by March 2026.	 	Spend has started slowing in Q2, we are expecting most of the spend to be in Q4. New Street art project – First round selection completed, round 2 underway to select winning commission. Music Trail – in house work continues and external contract in place.

		Enhancement Study – team appointed and work has started. Widnes Road Public Realm – new street furniture selected.
The following Runcorn Town Deal funded projects to be completed or in contract by March 2026 – Creative and Digital Skills Centre, Health and Education Hub, Unlock Runcorn, Rutland Street, Connectivity Project, Enterprise Centre.		Health and Education Hub is due to complete later this year with commissioning to follow. Creative and Digital Skills Centre 57 59 due to complete March 26 Creative and Digital Skills Centre 63 65 not yet in contract Unlock Runcorn not yet in contract Rutland Street planning due for submission by March 26 Connectivity not yet in contract Enterprise centre not yet in contract Deadline for spend has been extended to March 2027 by Government
Submit Runcorn Regeneration plan by December 2025 following further guidance from government being signed off by Runcorn Neighbourhood Board, Stakeholders and Executive Board.		Work is ongoing, a paper is going to Executive Board in October and the Board is on track to approve and submit The Regeneration Plan by the deadline.

Corporate Priority	Priority 2 – Building a strong sustainable local economy Regeneration
ERD 02	Support development & growth at Sci-tech Daresbury

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Assist JV to secure £9.5m funding from the CA by July 2025 for Project Violet Phase 2 and commence delivery by March 2026		The CA Investment Panel approved the Full Business Case for the Lab Building, and the grant funding agreement is currently being drafted. The Strategic Outline Case for the second building has also been approved and will now proceed to a Full Business Case.
Make the CPO to bring forward circa 30 acres of future development land by January 2026		Documentation for the CPO is being progressed.

Corporate Priority	Priority Six – Valuing and Appreciating Halton and our Community Regeneration
ERD 03	Providing new homes that meet Halton’s needs.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Undertake public consultation on Draft Borough wide Housing Strategy by August 2025		On Target. The Council are currently working with SPP Partners on submitting sites for inclusion within the Liverpool City Region Housing Pipeline. This work commenced in June 2025 and should conclude in November 2025. Sites will align with the approved Liverpool City Region SPP Business Plan.
Agree Housing Delivery Plan for Halton with SPP partners by March 2026.		On Target. The Council are currently working with SPP Partners on submitting sites for inclusion within the Liverpool City Region Housing Pipeline. This work commenced in June 2025 and should conclude in November 2025. Sites will align with the approved Liverpool City Region SPP Business Plan.
Sign Development Agreement with Halton Housing Trust for Runcorn Waterfront Development by December 2025		On Target.
Complete Phase 1 Housing delivery of 63 houses (30 shared ownership and 33 for social rent) at Foundry Lane by November 2026.		On Target. Handover of first completed homes anticipated in May 2026, followed by all homes completed by November 2026.

Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy Business Investment & Growth
ERD 04	To provide support to all Halton’s businesses and encourage start-ups.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Deliver key sector network events (including Green, Logistics and Advance Manufacturing) and workshops to create an environment for businesses to come together to collaborate and create Growth. Target to engage 160 unique businesses 25/26	 	Delivered 2 Green Growth and 2 Logistics networks 2025/26. To date 58 unique businesses have engaged in these events. Looking ahead, a series of business support workshops and drop-in sessions are scheduled to run from October 25 through to March 26.

		Additionally, planning is underway for an Economic Forum, which is scheduled to take place in January 2026.
Provide specialist business support to 20 Halton Businesses by March 2026	 	Diagnostics have been undertaken for 21 Business's (1/4/2025-30/9/2025) and one-to-one specialist business support has been referred to 21 businesses, 3 of these have been fully completed and 18 are currently ongoing. There has been a total of 95 new enquires (1/4/2025-30/9/2025) for business support under the UKSPF programme. Under the previous UKSPF Programme 2023-2025, 67 companies were supported in total, with 24 supported in Q4 of 24/25.
Provide a series of workshops to support 10 business start ups by March 2026	 	There are currently 32 enquiries for start-up support and initial advice has been provided to 32 individuals. In depth support has been provided resulting in 5 start up to date with future workshops planned. Under the previous UKSPF programme, 15 business start-ups were supported following a series of workshops.
The business Investment and growth team will identify and account manage the 50 local priority companies ensuring that they meet each of the businesses on one occasion during the financial year to provide relevant signposting and support	 	Work is ongoing to identify the top 50 companies through a number of metrics. The team continue to key account manage and meet with local businesses.

Corporate Priority	Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence Programmes Office
ERD 05	Maximise new external funding opportunities and effectively manage and monitor existing funding programmes

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Deliver 4 training sessions to internal and external partners during 25/26 to upskill colleagues in bid-writing and monitoring. Target is to upskill 20 people throughout the year.	 	The Programmes Office suite of 4 training courses was delivered to internal and external partners in April/May 25 with 15 people attending them; the Training Programme will be repeated in October and November 25 and

		bespoke sessions for whole organisations are also being offered.
Complete and maintain a Regeneration Pipeline Tracker and liaise with CA colleagues to ensure Halton's key projects are profiled. Moving 10 projects through the discover stage each year.	 	Regeneration Pipeline tracker established – being used to pilot Phase 1 of the new Project Management System. Phase I has been reviewed and agreed changes being implemented. Programmes Office has begun to set up meetings with relevant CA colleagues in order to co-ordinate pipelines across housing, regen, transport etc.
Support 6 grant funding submissions per quarter – 3 internal and 3 external and monitor the success rate.	 	8 bids submitted in Qtr. 2 worth £1,080,500
Submit successful (no clawback) bi-annual claims to Government for the Town Deal Programme and quarterly to the CA for UK Shared Prosperity Programme.	 	Successful Town Deal performance report submitted May 2025; no issues or clawback from MHCLG; no claim required Nov 2025 – next claim due May 26. Successful UKSPF claims submitted end June 2025; current Qtr. claims with internal audit and CA for consideration.

Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
	Visitor Economy
ERD 06	To commission and deliver a Place-making Strategy for the borough to incorporate Visitor Economy, Inward Investment and Regeneration opportunities to highlight Halton as a great place to live, work, invest, study and visit.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Commission the production of Place-Making Strategy by December 2025 following a workshop with key stakeholders and approval from Executive Board by March 2026	 	Place Strategy commissioned Sept 2025; inception meeting held and monthly review meetings diarised. Final strategy due March 26.
Deliver the Destination Halton Marketing programme, including Visit Halton and Marketing Halton to March 2026 with 3 campaigns throughout the year with key themes.	 	<i>Home Grown in Halton</i> campaign delivered in July/August showcasing food/drink offer in Halton; second campaign <i>Look Up Halton</i> in Sept-Oct delivered as part of Heritage Open Days 25 showcasing Halton's architecture; third campaign being developed for Jan-Mar 26. Seasonal blogs completed for Spring, Summer, Autumn.

Secure £300k in external funding by March 2026 to support the delivery of Culture26, including an Arts Council bid and an NLHF bid themed on Lewis Carroll.	 	Bid to be submitted to ACE Place Partnership programme for £120k and bid to NLHF for £220k - both to be submitted in October 25. Match funding being sought from various sources.
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Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. Property Services
ERD 10	Reduce Carbon Emissions from the Council's Property Portfolio

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Deliver the solar connection to the Leisure Centre by March 2026		The tender documentation for the project will be going out for pricing within the next few weeks. The procurement process inclusive of the tender evaluation will likely mean that the project won't be completed by 31 st March, however it is hoped the scheme will be on site by then.
Carry out decarbonisation measures on a minimum of 2 buildings to produce carbon emission reductions to contribute towards 1.5% by March 2026		The decarbonisation works at Picow Farm Depot have been tendered and a preferred contractor has been appointed. A design meeting has been held with the contractor, and they are now tasked with refining the design to meet our specific needs. The current programme for Picow is that works will be complete by 31st March 2026. The decarbonisation works at Runcorn Town Hall and Kingsway Learning Centre are currently out to tender in conjunction with other buildings within the City Region. These projects will be delivered later in 2026/27.

Corporate Priority	Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. Priority Six - Valuing and Appreciating Halton and our Community Planning & Development
ERD 11	Create and maintain statutory plans, generated through community consultation, that guide decisions on future development proposals and address the needs and opportunities of the area

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Delivery of the DALP during the plan period (2037)		Ongoing data collection indicates that the DALP is meeting most of policy requirements however a full analysis cannot be made until March/April 2026
Publication of the LCR LTP4 in 2025		The LTP4 (LCR) is due to go out to public consultation in Q3, I would assume the Document will be published towards the end of Q4.

Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong Sustainable Local Economy. Planning & Development
ERD 12	Providing new homes that meet Halton's needs

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Number of homes granted planning permission		Between 1 July 25 –30 Sept 6 planning applications were approved; most of these applications were for change of use.
Number of annual completions of market and affordable homes		The Housing AMR states the number of Net homes built in 24/25 was 387.

Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong Sustainable Local Economy. Planning & Development
ERD 13	Provide an efficient Planning service that supports business investment in Halton

Milestone:	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
60% major determined within 13 weeks (or agreed extension)	 	100% 4 applications determined within agreed extension of time
70% minor application determined in 8 weeks (or agreed extension)	 	100% 14 applications determined within agreed extension of time

70% other application determined in 8 weeks (or agreed extension)	 	100% 62 applications determined within agreed extension of time
30 number of applications per development management (DM) officer.	 	Average of 25 per officer

Corporate Priority	Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. Logistics
ERD 14	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Review roll-out of bus franchising in neighbouring boroughs.		Ongoing discussions taking place with the Combined Authority to clarify Halton's involvement with the LCR franchising model.
Undertake preparations for franchising Halton's network including route design, identifying a timetable and frequencies.		As above.

Corporate Priority	Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. Logistics
ERD 15	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Within available budgets, ensure all areas of Halton have access to a bus service	 	All areas of Halton are covered by a minimum of 1 bus service per hour.
Monitor the punctuality of bus services <i>Baseline 96%</i> <i>Target 97%</i>	 	95% - 2% increase in bus service punctuality from previous quarter. Closure of Halton Lea North Bus Station necessitating major diversion has impacted services, alterations to timetables has lessened the impact. Ongoing liaison with operators.

Monitor the cost of bus fares in Halton	 	£2.00 flat fare across the LCR.
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Corporate Priority	Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. Logistics
ERD 16	Maintain Corporate Fleet Availability

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Provision of transport arrangements as requested by Council services:		100%, including two spare vehicles
- Refuse collection vehicle fleet availability - Daily delivery of community meals - Service users transported – children - Service users transported - adults	   	6,932 meals delivered, numbers are decreasing due to cessation of the service. Transport on in-house fleet (passenger journeys): Adults 7052, Children 8057. Q1 figures were not recorded, these were Adults 6801 trips, Children 10329 trips.

Corporate Priority	Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Logistics
ERD 17	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Monitor uptake of travel training and report.	 	16 referrals during the reporting period with 13 individuals (81.25%) taking up the travel training offer, this has increased from the previous quarter. 41 individuals have taken part in weekly classroom-based sessions, 24 have taken part in weekly outdoor practical group sessions, this has increased from the previous quarter. 15 individuals have taken part in 1-2-1 ITT sessions in the same time period.

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Corporate Priority	Priority Five - Working Towards a Greener Future Highways
ERD 18	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Identify a pipeline of infrastructure schemes according to need / policy drivers	 	Current pipeline of schemes identified historically and funding via CRSTS1 is available and secured. Work has started on following 5 year Capital Programme April 2027- March 2032 known as TCR.
Securing funding for infrastructure schemes in the pipeline	 	5 year Capital Programme April 2027- March 2032 known as TCR - work has started on outline pipeline programme over Summer 2025 including movement through funding gateway process. Work is ongoing securing funding from Active Travel England etc. to progress design development work and deliver smaller on-site active travel schemes (e.g. North Albert Road, Runcorn High St)

Corporate Priority	Priority Five - Working Towards a Greener Future Highways
ERD 19	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Secure funding for highway maintenance to protect the asset		None in the period.
Update and monitor a highway asset management plan		Ongoing
Deliver highway improvement and maintenance schemes	 	Following the retirement of one of our long standing highways inspectors we have managed to attract 9 applicants for the role and are currently working through the shortlisting process. Adverts to recruit 2 Senior engineers

		close in mid-October. Alternative methods of schemes delivery are currently being discussed. Major refurbishment works to the northern busway viaduct at Runcorn Shopping City commenced on site in September. The expected duration of the works is 6 months.
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Corporate Priority	Priority One – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence Traffic
ERD 20	Deliver travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Programme of education relating to road safety		Parking Campaigns for 2 consecutive weeks outside Moore, Moorfield, Pewithall, Westfield Warrington Road Nursery – in September a 4 week parking campaign with police presence outside the Grange. Vulnerable user's road safety day with Fire Service at Costa Runcorn. Fire Station Open Day Impairment / Drug Drive. Junior Safety Officer Launch Night 80 year 5 pupils Power Two Wheeler campaign – attended Biker Night Monday 22nd Sept engaged with 90 riders and handed out half price Bikesafe Vouchers with Fire & Police Annual Refresher Training Road Safety Day at Warburtons educating drivers Planning for the Cheshire wide (CRSG) Darker Nights campaign – Halton is the Lead Launch planned for 27 Oct in Victoria Park, key target audience pedestrians – young people but engaging with all and a message to parents to ensure their children are following “Be Bright, Be Seen” A media campaign is underway with the Communications Team and paid adverts have been devised with LA's and partners contributing.
Safety cameras and speed indication devices	 	One new SiD has been supplied using PCC funds and is operational at a new site. Two SiDs have been repaired – Bluetooth issues with one, solar panel problems with the other. All fixed camera sites still being operated by CRSG are

		functioning and red-light camera at Watkinson Way is working well.
Analysis of collision sites		Collision analysis complete, a number of sites selected for accident remedial works
Road safety audits for new schemes	 	None in the period.

Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 27	Provide a clean, safe, and attractive environment

No comparable data for 23/24 LAMS inspections across parks and public open spaces were introduced in June 2024 after testing completed in Q1.

Milestone:	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Environmental standards to be measured using the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Land Audit Management System (LAMS) system scoring. Ensure that inspections of sites across the Council's Parks and Public Open Spaces are carried out bi-monthly throughout the year with results uploaded to APSE for benchmarking purposes. Quarterly target 120 inspections	 	144 inspections completed in Q2:- July = 53 August = 46 September = 45 97.22% graded as A/B acceptable, this is comparable with the recorded A/B standards in Q1 (97%)

Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 28	Provide clean, safe and attractive Cemeteries

No comparable data for 23/24 LAMS inspections across parks and public open spaces were introduced in June 2024 after testing completed in Q1.

Milestone:	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Environmental Standards to be measured using the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Land Audit Management System (LAMS) system scoring Ensure that inspections across the Council's four Cemeteries are carried out bi-monthly throughout	 	43 inspections were carried out in Q2 Quarter July = 23 Aug = 10 Sept = 10

the year with results uploaded to APSE for benchmarking purposes. Quarterly target 50 cemetery inspections.		Target not met due to staff absence experienced during two months of the quarter period. 88.37% graded as A/B (acceptable) which is below the A/B standards recorded in Q1 (95%)
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Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 29	Safety within Parks and Open Spaces

Milestone:	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Ensure the safety of play equipment on Council managed sites across the borough by carrying out regular inspections and carrying out any remedial works required. Target to carry out 1,000 inspections quarterly.	 	The Council is responsible for 42 playgrounds, 37 MUGGAS and 5 boulders, which are inspected weekly. 1,128 safety inspections on all play areas were carried out in Q2, an increase of 65 inspections compared to Q1. Following the inspections, it was identified that 100 interventions were required to carry out safety, repair or improvement works. This is an increase from the 52 interventions required in Q1. The cost of interventions was £1,540 (parts and materials only – does not include staff costs). <i>NB direction of travel n/a as uncontrollable impacts from inspections</i>

Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 30	Increase the Council's recycling rate and reduce the amount of waste produced per household

Milestone:	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
600kgs of waste produced per household per year.		Q2 (308.31kgs)

		Waste production is subject to seasonal variation. This is an estimated figure, but it does show that household waste levels per household are lower than those in Q2 in the previous year (314.07 kgs) but higher than the estimate in Q1 (155kgs).
To achieve the national 44.4% average of waste recycled	 	Q2 (38.5%) This is an estimated figure, but it does show that recycling levels are marginally lower than in Q2 in the previous year (38.7%) and lower than Q1 (39.6%) In terms of the target to achieve the national recycling rate average, it is unlikely that this will be met in 2025/26. However, the Council's plans for both service redesign, the introduction of planned new recycling services, together with enhanced communication and behaviour change initiatives, will help the Council work towards improving recycling performance and the future achievement of this target.
To reduce the levels of waste contamination in blue recycling bins.	 	2,523.32 tonnes of material collected in blue bins in Q2; this compares to 2,474.23 tonnes in Q1 737.78 tonnes of contamination (non-target material) in Q2; this compares to 758.10 tonnes in Q1 29% of contamination in blue bins in Q2; this compares to 31% in Q1 £73,844.86 costs to dispose of contaminated material in Q2; this compares to £75,877.91 in Q1 Whilst this is an improved picture the aspiration for the direction of travel is to significantly improve recycling rates and reduced contamination. <i>NB This is a new indicator, and Members will be provided with quarterly updates on progress with helping to reduce contamination levels.</i>
Implementation of weekly food waste collections to all households in Halton from April 2026. Target Milestones: 1. Procurement of fleet and receptacles Q1 25/26.		Orders placed for the delivery of food waste vehicle fleet and caddies.

2. Household collection timetable designed Q3 25/26. 3. Resident communication and engagement framework mobilised by Q3 25/26.		Work to begin designing new food waste collection rounds commenced in Q1 and is on-going.
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4.0 Financial Statements

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget at 30 Sept 25

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	3,864	2,456	2,331	125	251
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	172	(172)	(259)
Repairs & Maintenance	1,687	877	877	0	0
Premises	174	136	137	(1)	(1)
Energy & Water Costs	1,043	393	346	47	93
NNDR	647	647	635	12	12
Rents	157	80	79	1	1
Economic Regeneration Activities	43	8	8	0	0
Security	508	82	84	(2)	(4)
Supplies & Services	516	261	261	0	0
Supplies & Services - Grant	772	272	272	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	72	29	29	0	0
Total Expenditure	9,483	5,241	5,231	10	93
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-407	-203	-239	36	72
Rent - Commercial Properties	-906	-352	-351	(1)	(1)
Rent - Investment Properties	-38	-19	-18	(1)	(1)
Government Grant	-854	-705	-705	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-149	-149	-149	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-55	-48	-48	0	0
Recharges to Capital	-260	-47	-47	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-574	-522	-522	0	0
Total Income	-3,243	-2,045	-2,079	34	70
Net Operational Expenditure	6,240	3,196	3,152	44	163
Recharges					
Premises Support	2,738	1,369	1,369	0	0
Transport	26	13	13	0	0
Central Support	2,878	1,439	1,439	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-9,342	-4,671	-4,671	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,696	-1,850	-1,850	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,544	1,346	1,302	44	163

Comments on the above figures

Finance maintains regular communication with the department to monitor and analyse expenditure, helping to identify potential savings that can support both current and future priorities. In today's climate of tight budgets, achieving these efficiencies is more important than ever.

The latest report indicates that the department is projected to be under budget by £0.163 million at year-end. This improved forecast is largely due to increased income from fees and charges, following the reconciliation of service charge invoices, as well as a review of repairs and maintenance spending throughout the year.

Supporting Information

Maximising grant funding remains a key priority, supported by diligent account monitoring and careful planning. Specific projects have been identified, with staff time allocated to ensure delivery aligns with funding objectives. Compliance with grant conditions is maintained at every stage, and this focused approach will continue throughout the year.

Maintaining a fully staffed team is essential to fulfilling statutory and contractual obligations and driving forward the borough's regeneration agenda. Despite the introduction of a market supplement, recruitment for key roles, particularly surveyors, recruitment continues to be challenging due to a limited pool of qualified candidates. On a positive note, the successful appointment of Project Managers marks a significant step forward and is expected to reduce reliance on agency staff, helping to manage costs more effectively. Agency staffing costs are currently projected at £0.259 million for this financial year. These roles are critical to the delivery of regeneration activity. Without them, there is a risk of project delays, which could impact future revenue from business rates and council tax. Where possible, staffing costs are recovered through capital budgets and external funding streams.

The financial impact of vacant properties across the borough continues to present a significant budgetary challenge. In addition to the loss of rental income while these properties remain unoccupied, further costs are incurred for utilities, repairs, and ongoing maintenance. As of the end of July, total costs stood at £0.136 million, rising to £0.154 million over the past two months. To help reduce these expenses, it is essential to accelerate leasing activity or explore interim uses, such as short-term rentals or community-based initiatives, that could generate income and offset costs. However, several properties are currently in poor condition and will require refurbishment before they can be considered for letting.

Despite a notable rise in energy costs over recent years, the department is currently forecasting a year-end underspend of £0.093 million. However, this projection may be reduced if energy usage increases, particularly as more staff return to the office or if demand rises due to seasonal temperature fluctuations.

The Repairs and Maintenance programme is subject to ongoing review to ensure expenditure remains within the allocated budget. It is projected that costs will be contained within budget for the remainder of the financial year. Regular monitoring will continue to ensure early identification of any emerging pressures, allowing for timely intervention and mitigation where possible.

Approved 2025/26 Savings

Please see Appendix A for details of progress towards achieving budget efficiency savings agreed by Council in March 25.

Capital Budget at 30 Sept 25

	205/26 Original Allocation	2025/26 Revised Allocation	Cumulative Actual Spend to 30 Sept 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 30 Nov 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026	Allocation remaining	2026/27 Forecast Allocation
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Equality Act Improvement Works	303.5	303.5	0.0	150.0	236.0	303.5	0.0	300.0
Foundary Lane Residential Area	3,520.9	3,520.9	878.0	1,020.9	1,200.0	3,520.9	0.0	0.0
Property Improvements	231.1	231.1	111.2	133.2	153.6	231.1	0.0	200.0
Town Deal	21,823.1	18,949.5	4,986.3	8,663.1	11,300.7	13,210.2	5,739.3	2,873.6
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	101.2	101.2	0.0	20.0	55.0	102.2	-1.0	0.0
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	82.0	82.0	4.2	33.3	56.4	82.0	0.0	0.0
Changing Places	17.0	17.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.0	0.0	0.0
Kingsway Centre Demolition	708.0	708.0	293.0	438.0	488.0	538.0	170.0	0.0
Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet	2,200.0	2,200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,200.0	0.0	0.0
Astmoor Masterplan	81.6	81.6	0.0	0.0	30.0	81.6	0.0	0.0
Sci-tech Daresbury - CPO	3,000.0	3,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,000.0	0.0	0.0
Warm Homes Plan	0.0	587.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	587.6	0.0	0.0
Total Economy, Enterprise & Property	32,068.4	29,782.4	6,272.7	10,458.5	13,519.7	23,874.1	5,908.3	3,373.6

Comments on above figures

Foundry Lane

The development at Foundry Lane continues to progress at pace, with several key milestones achieved over the past two months. On-site operations remain well-coordinated and steady, keeping firmly on track to deliver this exciting new housing scheme.

All remaining homes scheduled for completion by 26 November.

To maintain momentum, outline planning permission has now been submitted for Phase 2, ensuring the next stage of development can move forward without delay.

Sci-Tech Daresbury Project Violet

The LCR CA have approved the full business case for the lab building and the grant funding agreement is currently being drafted. The second building which was initially expected to be office space is currently being reviewed as a potential second lab construction, with an outline business case being prepared for the CA. The current programme anticipates tendering the project and contract award in late 2025 and construction commencing in July 2026.

Property Improvements

Various works undertaken as and when required, works ongoing, the budget will be spent at year end

Changing Places

Works complete, all retention monies to be paid.

Town Deal

All Town Deal funded projects are progressing at different stages of work.

The Brindley extension started on site August 2024. Estimated date for completion is April 2026. RIBA stage 4 of the Brindley Green has started following submission of the planning application.

The youth centre -part of the Creative and Digital Skill centre - started September 2024, with the new build now well advanced with interior work now taking place. The roof of the wintergarden is now in place. Completion is expected March 2026.

The Health Hub started work on site April 2025, after the library vacated to temporary location. The construction work is expected to be completed November 2025 followed by commissioning by the NHS. The Runcorn Street art was delivered in May 2025. A celebration event was held 26 July. This project is completed

The construction of the Temple Hall started March 2025, with foundation complete. All steelwork is up, and block walls erected, with outer skin of brick work progressing well. Practical completion is expected by the end of 2025.

The construction of two canal trip boats has been ordered at a boatyard in Liverpool, with one boat having been launched in Runcorn on the canal 26 July.

The over 55s apartment block Mercia House is under construction at High Street has now all doors and windows in, and external brickwork is well advanced. Legacie are preparing for the external landscaping.

HBC has entered into a pre-construction service agreement with F Parkinsons through a design and build route for the Enterprise Facility.

Design work progresses on the remaining projects.

Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition

The demolition works are now complete.

UKSPF

New reduced allocation for 25/26 which is for town centre improvements.

Sci-tech Daresbury Project – CPO

The JV continues to develop the required documentation to make the CPO in order to secure land for the delivery of the Sci-Tech Daresbury masterplan. It is anticipated that the CPO process will run during 2026 with funds only required at the conclusion of that project or shortly after. The majority of spend is potentially in 26-27 at the earliest

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT
APPENDIX A

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
Asset Management		Accelerate the lease or sale of surplus land, non-operational buildings, surplus space within building, etc. to either generate lease rentals or capital receipts to help fund capital schemes and thereby reduce future capital financing costs.	0	100	U	It is not expected this saving will materialise in the current year.

COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE

Revenue Budget as at 30th September 2025

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	15,451	7,788	7,486	302	603
Agency - Covering vacancies	20	12	12	0	0
Agency - In addition to establishment	16	16	199	(183)	(274)
Premises	3,304	1,562	1,609	(47)	(93)
Supplies & Services	3,659	1,514	1,639	(125)	(249)
Transport	117	66	83	(17)	(33)
Extended Producer Responsibility	500	0	0	0	0
Other Agency Costs	454	209	228	(19)	(39)
Other Expenditure	187	13	13	0	0
Waste Disposal Contracts	7,121	1,125	1,133	(8)	(16)
Transfers to Reserves	1,091	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	31,920	12,305	12,402	(97)	(101)
Income					
Sales Income	-1,359	-687	-691	4	8
Fees & Charges Income	-6,300	-3,622	-3,709	87	174
Rental Income	-1,118	-465	-428	(37)	(73)
Government Grant Income	-5,210	-1,319	-1,319	0	0
Reimbursement & Other Grant Income	-871	-371	-371	0	0
SLA Income	-23	0	0	0	0
Internal Fees Income	-216	-39	-129	90	179
Capital Salaries	-236	-15	0	(15)	(31)
Transfers From Reserves	-619	-4	-4	0	0
Total Income	-15,952	-6,522	-6,651	129	257
Net Operational Expenditure	15,968	5,783	5,751	32	156
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,657	829	829	0	0
Transport Support	2,433	1,270	1,312	(42)	(84)
Central Support	4,297	2,148	2,148	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-843	-422	-422	0	0
Net Total Recharges	7,743	3,825	3,867	(42)	(84)
Net Departmental Expenditure	23,711	9,608	9,618	(10)	72

Comments on the above figures

Net spend against the Community and Greenspaces department has seen an improvement to the net outturn position since the previous report at 31st July 2025. The forecasted outturn is now expected to fall £0.72m under the approved budget profile (in comparison to £0.123m overspend previously forecasted). Employee spend continues to be an area providing underspend for the department into the new financial year, forecast spend being £0.603m under the approved budget profile. There continue to be vacancies held for restructures taking place contributing to the underspend. However, as a result of this, in order to facilitate the very visible services provided to the residents of Halton, both Agency and Supplies & Services expenditure is forecasted to be (£0.274m and £0.249 respectively) above the approved 2025/26 budget.

Estimated spend on premises costs is forecast to be £0.093m over budget in 2025/26. The Stadium utility costs are notably higher than the available budget and will continue to be a budget pressure this year. There is more focus on internal services that can be provided (See £0.179m forecast overachieved Internal Fees Income), and should this continue it can be utilised to offset the premises costs in subsequent financial years.

Supplies and Services is forecasting an overspend of £0.249m which is a budget pressure throughout the Department, and is primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years. There is a risk if the Council were to contain these costs within the budget profile there would be a reduction in the service provided.

Historically, Waste Disposal Contracts had contributed to an underspend for the department, however, due to the rise in costs last year, expenditure is now likely to fall close to the approved budget profile. It is worth noting, as the size of the contracts are very large, small percentage changes to the invoices can have significant impacts on the outturn position of the department, and with invoices being received several periods after the costs are incurred, the outturn position may change throughout the year. Within 2025/26 there has been a budget line created for the Extender Producer Responsibility Scheme, this funding has been provided to manage packaging waste. In order to facilitate the scheme and ensure compliance, £0.500m has been forecasted to be utilised within the financial year, should there be any budget underutilised by 31st March 2026 this will require carrying forward into the 2026/27 financial year.

Income for the Community and Greenspaces Department is on track to be higher than the approved budget by £0.257m. The aforementioned internal fee focus by the Stadium is contributing to this as well as increasing usage of internal room hire across the buildings within the Department. The benefit of this income staying within the council rather than going to external suppliers is offset by some other income targets being unachievable. The main contributor to the overachievement however is with Halton Leisure Centre, income is remaining consistently high and forecasts have been adjusted as such to reflect this. In comparison to last financial year, the outturn income figure is expected to rise by approximately 99%.

There also continues to be pressures with the Brindley as the extension works are underway, income did fall within the previous financial year, and is currently forecast to do the same this year. Once the works are completed the income is likely to rise again, however, this will require close monitoring as the utility expenditure will also increase with the larger site.

APPROVED BUDGET SAVINGS COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			25/26 Agreed Council 01 February 2023 £'000	25/26 Agreed Council 05 March 2025 £'000		
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.	12	0		School meals service has ceased and is reflected in the 25/26 budget.
Green Waste		Green Waste – increase green waste charges from £43 to £50 per annum, to bring Halton onto a comparable basis with charges levied by neighbouring councils.	0	100		Green waste charges have been increased to £50.
Area Forums		Area Forums – cease the funding for Area Forums.	0	170		Area forum budgets have been removed in 25-26
Total Community & Greenspace Dept			12	270		

Capital

Scheme Detail	205/26 Original Allocation	2025/26 Revised Allocation	Cumulative Actual Spend to 30 Sept 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 30 Nov 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026	Allocation remaining	2026/27 Forecast Allocation
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Stadium Minor Works	22.1	22.1	24.6	24.6	24.6	24.6	-2.5	30.0
Halton Leisure Centre	99.7	99.7	89.3	86.8	88.8	90.8	8.9	0.0
Children's Playground Equipment	67.8	67.8	50.5	60.5	60.5	65.0	2.8	65.0
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Upton Improvements	13.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	0.0	0.0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	0.0	0.0
Open Spaces Schemes	600.0	770.0	564.5	600.0	650.0	770.0	0.0	600.0
Runcorn Town Park	450.6	450.6	0.0	0.0	60.0	125.0	325.6	280.0
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,841.6	250.0	152.5	170.0	180.0	250.0	0.0	1,591.6
Pickerings Pasture Cafe	469.2	450.0	110.3	175.0	300.0	450.0	0.0	19.2
Cemetery Infrastructure work	469.1	469.1	0.0	89.0	207.0	410.0	59.1	683.0
Stadium Public Address System	810.0	346.0	34.9	176.0	286.0	346.0	0.0	379.0
Litter Bins	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	20.0
Replacement Cremator	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Stadium Steelwork Repairs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	600.0
Brindley Lighting	0.0	200.0	0.0	100.0	150.0	200.0	0.0	0.0
Grangeway Court Refurbishment	0.0	52.0	8.0	10.0	16.0	52.0	0.0	948.0
CCTV Infrastructure Works	0.0	105.0	1.2	5.0	50.0	105.0	0.0	395.0
Total Community & Greenspaces	5,215.2	3,327.3	1,035.8	1,496.9	2,072.9	2,933.4	393.9	5,630.8

There were some delays to capital projects starting within the last financial year due to staffing issues. These are likely to be completed within the 2025/26 capital scheme. In regards to the cemetery infrastructure work there is potential to receive grant/external funding rather than rely solely on borrowing. The *replacement cremator* line is in relation to a cremator installed last year, however the contractors are requiring some additional works required to get it fully commissioned and proper emissions testing to be carried out. Management are currently reviewing options, where possible this will be funded from underspend from other schemes.

Planning, Provision and Transportation Department

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2025

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	6,070	2,865	2,669	196	392
Efficiency Savings	-100	-50	0	(50)	(100)
Premises	188	95	78	17	33
Hired & Contracted Services	415	79	76	3	7
Supplies & Services	135	82	229	(147)	(295)
Street Lighting	1,643	42	180	(138)	(275)
Highways Maintenance - Routine & Reactive	1,803	397	603	(206)	(412)
Highways Maintenance - Programmed Work	812	316	0	316	633
Fleet Transport	1,467	700	700	0	(1)
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	14	2	4	(2)	(3)
Bus Support	506	366	366	0	0
Agency Related Expenditure	8	0	0	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	31	31	31	0	0
NRA Levy	75	74	74	0	0
LCR Levy	1,553	776	776	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	359	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	14,979	5,775	5,786	(11)	(21)
Income					
Sales & Rents Income	-97	-49	-29	(20)	(40)
Planning Fees	-798	-557	-554	(3)	(5)
Building Control Fees	-251	-125	-105	(20)	(40)
Other Fees & Charges	-971	-626	-754	128	257
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-174	-75	-75	0	0
Government Grant Income	-50	-50	-50	0	0
Halton Hopper Income	-15	-8	-5	(3)	(6)
Recharge to Capital	-305	0	0	0	0
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-1,553	-776	-776	0	0
Contribution from Reserves	-132	-134	-134	0	0
Total Income	-4,346	-2,400	-2,482	82	166
Net Operational Expenditure	10,633	3,375	3,304	71	145
Recharges					
Premises Recharges	739	370	370	0	0
Transport Recharges	808	388	379	9	18
Central Recharges	2,505	1,255	1,255	0	0
Asset Charges	918	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-6,347	-3,249	-3,350	101	201
Net Total Recharges	-1,377	-1,236	-1,346	110	219
Net Departmental Expenditure	9,256	2,139	1,958	181	364

Comments on the above figures

Financial Position

As at 30th September 2025 it is forecast net spend for the year will be £0.364m under the approved 2025/26 budget.

Supporting Information

As in previous years budget holders are working closely with the Finance Officers to ensure a balanced budget is achieved. Wherever possible, capital expenditure is being prioritised to relieve pressure on the revenue budgets.

The projected figures in this report are very much subject to change as there is currently a major departmental staffing restructure in progress. It is anticipated that vacant posts will be filled from January onwards, but this is not certain. The previous period 4 report had this included from December. Figures will change in further reports depending on recruitment processes.

Efficiency savings for PPT are not expected to be met and more information is provided about this further down the report.

Supplies and services and contracted services are projected to be over budget as in previous years due to there being no budget for software licences, and maintenance of computer systems, yet these are a requirement for the department to carry out its day-to-day tasks.

The street lighting expenditure is projected to come in over budget. Various actions have been taken to decrease the amount of power being used such as lights being turned off 12am – 6am on some routes and around 98% of HBC owned street lighting stock of around 20,500 columns have been upgraded to LED. There is just some of the non-standard equipment left to upgrade. However, this has been offset a small amount by new developments that have become adopted and therefore added to the energy bill. This is being monitored as a budget pressure with managers.

Highways maintenance budgets are now projected to come in under budget. Capital funding is being utilised where appropriate. The report is again broken down into routine and reactive schemes and programmed works so the various areas can be looked at in more detail. Since the period 2 report it has been agreed that all expenditure against programmed works will cease, and alternative funding will be sourced if possible. This will in turn net off the projected overspend against routine and reactive works.

Planning income is again projected to be under achieved although is now looking better than in the period 4 report. Following on from the 2024/25 financial year there is a downturn in the number of applications being received. Although, Government increased planning fee rates towards the end of 2023/24 this has not offset the lack of large development agreements there has been in previous years. This forecast is based on the income that has been received so far, this financial year and what is likely to be achieved going forward. Building control income is projected to follow the same path.

Fees and charges income is projected to overachieve its income target, but this is an ever-changing area as it is fully dependent on the amount of permit applications etc that is received. It is anticipated that the high level of permit income that was seen in previous years will eventually drop off but for now has been consistent for the past 6 months.

Transport income recharges will be over on its income target, but these are offset by overspends in the other departments.

Approved 2025/26 Savings

Savings that were put forward for 2025/26 can be seen in Appendix A at the end of this report.

Risks/Opportunities

Across the whole department inflation has significantly driven costs up and every division is bearing the cost of this. The Highways / Traffic and Logistics divisions are seeing the largest impact of this when purchasing materials / fuel / parts for vehicles etc.

Capital Budget as at 30 September 2025

Scheme Detail	2025/26 Original Allocation £000	2025/26 Revised Allocation £000	Cumulative Spend to 30 September 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 30 Nov 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026 £000	2026/27 Forecast Allocation £000
Bridge and Highway Maintenance	839.2	839.2	167.0	419.6	629.4	839.2	0.0
Runcorn Busway	90.0	90.0	75.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	0.0
ATF3 Murdishaw to Whitehouse	757.0	757.0	465.0	757.0	757.0	757.0	0.0
ATF4 - Widnes Town Centre Accessibility	114.5	114.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
A56 Reconstruction	943.7	943.7	95.0	314.5	629.0	943.7	0.0
LCWIP phase 2 Daresbury	3,862	3,862	30.0	84.5	84.5	84.5	0.0
Pot Hole Funding	968	968	162.0	502.0	735.0	968.0	0.0
CRSTS	4,405	4,405	712.0	2,378.0	3,391.5	4,405.0	0.0
Street Lighting - Structural Maintenance	1,025.1	1,025.1	0.0	100.0	150.0	200.0	1,025.1
Street Lighting - Upgrades	728.4	728.4	0.0	50.0	75.0	100.0	528.4
East Runcorn Connectivity	5,851.7	5,851.7	5,327.0	5,851.8	5,851.8	5,851.8	5,851.7
Risk Management	712.9	120.0	23.0	53.0	83.0	103.0	729.9
Widnes Loops	0.0	0.0	65.0	65.0	65.0	65.0	0.0
Fleet Replacements	4,482.0	2,500.0	1,048.0	1,357.0	1,928.5	2,500.0	1,982.0
Total Policy, Planning & Transportation	24,779.8	22,204.9	8,169.0	12,022.4	14,469.7	16,907.2	10,117.1

Comments on the above capital figures

The East Runcorn Connectivity (ERC) scheme is on track and additional funding from LCR has been secured. It is projected that this scheme will finish late Q4 25/26 or early Q1 26/27.

The A56 project is in support of the new junction completion for the Redrow development which overlaps with the ERC scheme mentioned above. Progress has been slow on this scheme for various reasons and expenditure will increase into Q3 25/26.

LCWIP Phase 2 (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) Runcorn to Daresbury is currently underway on Long Benton Way. A change request has been accepted by LCR as expenditure is not projected to reach the original budget of £5.7m.

Appendix 2: Explanation 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	N / A	Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year.