

Environment & Regeneration Performance Monitoring Report - Quarter 3

Directorate: Environment & Regeneration

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

Period: Quarter 3- 1st October – 30th December 2025

1.0 Introduction

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

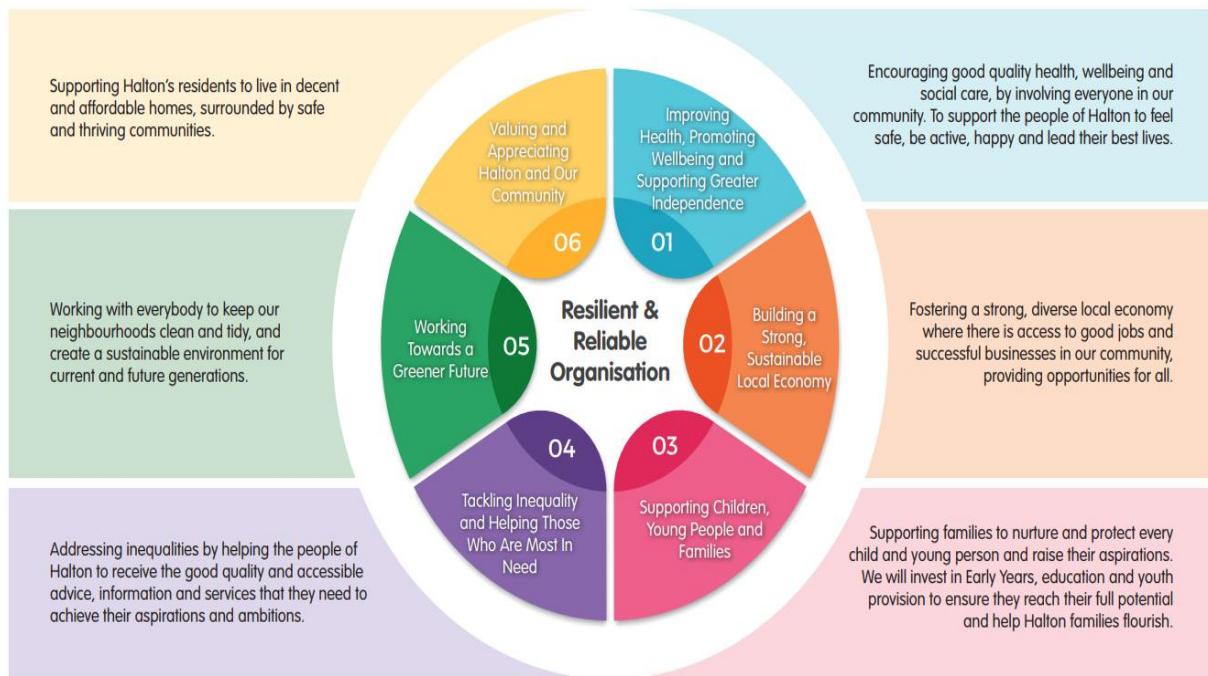
3.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Progress Against Objectives / Milestones

Appendix 2: Explanation of Symbols

Appendix 3: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Appendix 4: Financial Statement



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 Q3	Supporting Commentary
Deliver Widnes Town Centre UKSPF funded by March 2026.	✓ In Progress	Spend has continued in Q3 however we are expecting the majority of the spend to be in Q4. New Street art project – Artists appointed and engagement work completed. Music Trail – Likely to be completed for a launch March 2026. Enhancement Study – team appointed and work has started. Widnes Road Public Realm – new street furniture ordered with installation early 2026.

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 early 2026 with commissioning to follow. Creative and Digital Skills Centre 57 59 due to complete summer 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 due to start onsite early 2026 Enterprise centre not yet in contract Deadline for spend has been extended to March 2028 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.	 	Completed and approved by respective stakeholders including the Council's Executive Board.

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

Milestone	Progress Q3	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 JV has now secured almost £20m funding from the CA for both buildings that form Violet Phase 2.
Make the CPO to bring forward circa 30 acres of future development land by January 2026	 	Continue to work with the JV and legal advisors to compile the necessary documentation to make a CPO, including seeking Legal Counsel.

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

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Undertake public consultation on Draft Borough wide Housing Strategy by August 2025	 	full public consultation exercise was undertaken for six weeks from 3rd October until 16th November. A Corporate decision was taken to move the Housing Strategy Public Consultation to the Autumn. At Full Council meeting on the 3 rd December, the Council approved the revised Housing Strategy.
Agree Housing Delivery Plan for Halton with SPP partners by March 2026.	 	On Target. The Council has submitted sites for inclusion within the Liverpool City Region Housing Pipeline. Sites align with the approved Liverpool City Region SPP Business Plan.
Sign Development Agreement with Halton Housing Trust for Runcorn Waterfront Development by December 2025	 	Heads of Terms Agreed. Formal Exchange anticipated March 2026 to align with Halton Housing governance and approvals processes.
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 Q3	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	 	The business team have delivered 5 sector network events and 10 workshops, engaging with 58 unique businesses, 18 Liverpool City Region partners and 8 students to create an environment for collaboration and stimulating growth. The team have an Economic Forum and Marketplace planned for 26th January 2026.
Provide specialist business support to 20 Halton Businesses by March 2026	 	The business team have completed specialist support to 21 businesses with a further 4 businesses currently receiving specialist support. The total amount of hours completed through support are 378 with a further 183 hours of support committed.

Provide a series of workshops to support 10 business start ups by March 2026	 	The business team have provided 1 workshop and 1 to 1 support to 8 entrepreneurs to assist them to start their business. In addition, the team have attended 9 1 to 1 drop-in sessions with HPIJ, offering advice and support and have attended 2 jobs fairs. The business team have provided intensive 1 to 1 support to 46 entrepreneurs to assist them to be enterprise ready and will continue to support new enquiries until March 2026.
The business Investment and growth team will identify and account mange 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	 	The business team continue to meet with local businesses, including through the CA's Key Account Management process. Work is ongoing to develop a list of priority companies for ongoing support.

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 Q3	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.	 	4 courses delivered in Qtr. 3 with 17 people attending and 100% positive feedback. Training is free and there are a number of 'no shows' each time so Team is considering delivering via a webinar approach.
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. 'Supertracker' being developed for the Division to record all funding applied for, secured, gap funding etc.
Support 6 grant funding submissions per quarter – 3 internal and 3 external and monitor the success rate.		The team received 19 requests for funding support in the quarter. 17 bids were submitted – 14 external and 3 internal. 7 of these are

		pending, 3 were unsuccessful and 7 successful to the value of £407,121.
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 Sept 2025, projects largely on track. Qtr. claims due Jan 26.

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 Q3	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; monthly review meetings diarised. Update presentation mid-Jan to Exec Director; series of focus groups and an online survey to be delivered in Jan/Feb. 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.	 	Home Grown in Halton campaign delivered in July/August showcasing food/drink offer in Halton; second campaign Look Up Halton in Sept-Oct delivered as part of Heritage Open Days 25 showcasing Halton's architecture; third campaign being developed for Jan-Mar 26 Wish You Were Here campaign linking with the Culture26 programme and comprising an A-Z of Halton poster and postcards
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 submitted to ACE Place Partnership programme for £120k - unsuccessful Dec 25; bid to NLHF for £220k submitted Nov 25 – outcome due Feb 26. Match funding being sought from various sources - £25k received from Ineos Energy from Waste Fund.

Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future. Property Services
ERD 10	Reduce Carbon Emissions from the Council's Property Portfolio

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Deliver the solar connection to the Leisure Centre by March 2026		Works now out to tender with a return date on 21 st January. Works unlikely to start on site prior to June 2026. This is due to delays associated with capacity within the procurement team.
Carry out decarbonisation measures on a minimum of 2 buildings to produce carbon emission reductions to contribute towards 1.5% by March 2026	 	<p>Contractor appointed for the Picow Farm decarbonisation works, RIBA stage 4 design work currently being completed with a view to starting on site in the New Year subject to Executive Board approval if necessary.</p> <p>Rooftop solar project approved for St Patrick's Care home and the Frank Myler pavilion, contractor appointed for phase one works, start on site anticipated prior to March.</p> <p>Runcorn Town Hall and Kingsway Learning Centre decarbonisation works currently out to tender via Liverpool City Region Net Zero hub.</p>

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 Q3	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 Q3	Supporting Commentary
Number of homes granted planning permission		In Q3 there have been 4 planning applications granted which total 42 dwellings.
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 Q3	Supporting Commentary
60% major determined within 13 weeks (or agreed extension)	 	100% 3 applications determined within agreed extension of time
70% minor application determined in 8 weeks (or agreed extension)	 	100% 8 applications determined within agreed extension of time
70% other application determined in 8 weeks (or agreed extension)	 	98% 39 applications determined within agreed extension of time out of 40
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 Q3	Supporting Commentary
Review roll-out of bus franchising in neighbouring boroughs.	U	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.	U	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 Q3	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>	✓ ↑	97% - 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.

Corporate Priority	Priority Four - Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need. Logistics
ERD 16	Maintain Corporate Fleet Availability

Milestone	Progress	Supporting Commentary
-----------	----------	-----------------------

	Q3	
<p>Provision of transport arrangements as requested by Council services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuse collection vehicle fleet availability • Daily delivery of community meals • Service users transported – children • Service users transported - adults 	  	<p>100% vehicle fleet availability, including two spares.</p> <p>4929 Meals delivered, numbers are decreasing due to cessation of the service.</p> <p>Transport on in-house fleet (passenger journeys): Adults 6,854, Children 11,771. Adults similar to Q2, Children greatly increased as Q2 included school summer holidays.</p>

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 Q3	Supporting Commentary
Monitor uptake of travel training and report.	 	<p>17 referrals during the reporting period with 9 individuals (53%) taking up the travel training offer, this has decreased from the previous quarter.</p> <p>0 individuals have taken part in weekly classroom-based sessions nor taken part in weekly outdoor practical group sessions; this is due to a heavier concentration during the quarter on travel training delivery. 18 individuals have taken part in 1-2-1 ITT sessions in the same time period; this has increased from the previous quarter.</p>

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 Q3	Supporting Commentary

Identify a pipeline of infrastructure schemes according to need / policy drivers	 	As per last quarter. 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	 	As per last quarter. 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 Q3	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	 	<p>We have successfully recruited 2 new Highway Inspectors who are due to attend Highway Inspector Training early Feb. Adverts to recruit 2 Senior engineers in mid-October were unsuccessful and have been readvertised over Xmas. Alternative methods of schemes delivery are currently being discussed.</p> <p>The major refurbishment works to the northern busway viaduct at Runcorn Shopping City that commenced on site in September are progressing well. The expected duration of the works is 6 months.</p>

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 Q3	Supporting Commentary
Programme of education relating to road safety	 	8 sessions working with KS1s 10 sessions working with KS2 pupils Road safety education training delivered to Engineering students 459 children received Bikeability training Campaigns: Morrisons Widnes, Cronton College, Aldi Widnes, Asda Widnes Adults, same as above SCP Staff, Site Visits & T&P counts Generation of Priority List
Safety cameras and speed indication devices	 	One new SiD has been supplied using PCC funds and is operational at a new site. Two SiDs are undergoing repairs – 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 Q3	Supporting Commentary
Environmental standards to be measured using the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Land Audit Management System (LAMS) system scoring.		122 inspections completed in Q3

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		
--	---	--

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 Q3	Supporting Commentary
Environmental Standards to be measured using the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Land Audit Management System (LAMS) system scoring		20 inspections were completed in Q3, the significant reduction is due to unforeseen staff absence with reduced capacity.
Ensure that inspections across the Council's four Cemeteries are carried out bi-monthly throughout the year with results uploaded to APSE for benchmarking purposes. Quarterly target 50 cemetery inspections.		

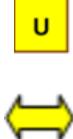
Corporate Priority	Priority Five – Working Towards a Greener Future Environment Services
ERD 29	Safety within Parks and Open Spaces

Milestone:	Progress Q3	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. Members are advised that data was only available for the period up to 12 th December (10 days of the month). Up to this date within the quarter, 848 safety inspections were due, with 879 inspections on all play areas being carried out.

		<p>Following the inspections, it was identified that 39 interventions were required to carry out safety, repair or improvement works. This compares to 100 in Q2.</p> <p>The cost of interventions was £1,050 (parts and materials only – does not include staff costs).</p> <p><i>NB direction of travel n/a as uncontrollable impacts from inspections</i></p>
--	--	---

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 Q3	Supporting Commentary
600kgs of waste produced per household per year.	 	<p>Q3 (451.93 kgs)</p> <p>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 Q3 in the previous year (468 kgs).</p>
To achieve the national 44.4% average of waste recycled	 	<p>Q3 (36.8%)</p> <p>The need to improve recycling levels is being included in the ongoing review of Environment Services.</p> <p>This is an estimated figure, but it does show that recycling levels are marginally higher than in Q3 in the previous year (36.5%)</p> <p>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.</p>

<p>To reduce the levels of waste contamination in blue recycling bins.</p>		<p>2,485.43 tonnes of material collected in blue bins in Q3; this compares to 2,411.26 tonnes in Q2</p> <p>687.47 tonnes of contamination (non-target material) in Q3; this compares to 660.92 tonnes in Q2</p> <p>28% of contamination in blue bins in Q3; this compares to 27% in Q2</p> <p>£68,808.89 costs to dispose of contaminated material in Q3; this compares to £66,151.17 in Q2</p> <p>Whilst this is not an improved picture the aspiration for the direction of travel is to significantly improve recycling rates and reduce contamination.</p>
<p>Implementation of weekly food waste collections to all households in Halton from April 2026.</p> <p>Target Milestones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procurement of fleet and receptacles Q1 25/26. 2. Household collection timetable designed Q3 25/26. 3. Resident communication and engagement framework mobilised by Q3 25/26. 	 	<p>Orders placed for the delivery of food waste vehicle fleet and caddies.</p> <p>Work programme mobilised for route optimisation and household collection schedules.</p>

4.0 Financial Statements

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget at 30 Nov 25

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	3,915	3,314	3,134	180	250
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	206	(206)	(270)
Repairs & Maintenance	1,700	1,262	1,262	0	0
Premises	174	136	137	(1)	(2)
Energy & Water Costs	1,075	560	506	54	80
NNDR	647	647	676	(29)	(29)
Rents	157	118	117	1	1
Economic Regeneration Activities	3	3	8	(5)	0
Security	508	257	256	1	3
Supplies & Services	578	317	317	0	(1)
Supplies & Services - Grant	1,040	485	485	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	72	35	35	0	0
Capital Finance	22	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	9,891	7,134	7,139	(5)	32
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-398	-272	-308	36	89
Rent - Commercial Properties	-929	-572	-571	(1)	4
Rent - Investment Properties	-38	-26	-25	(1)	(1)
Government Grant	-1,118	-1,119	-1,119	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-203	-172	-172	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-55	-55	-58	3	3
Recharges to Capital	-367	-158	-158	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-564	-535	-535	0	0
Total Income	-3,672	-2,909	-2,946	37	95
Net Operational Expenditure	6,219	4,225	4,193	32	127
Recharges					
Premises Support	2,738	1,826	1,826	0	0
Transport	26	17	17	0	0
Central Support	2,878	1,918	1,918	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-9,342	-6,228	-6,228	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,696	-2,467	-2,467	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,523	1,758	1,726	32	127

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 £0.127 million at year-end.

This 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 estates surveyors, recruitment has proven to be fruitless, and these are covered by agency staff but with no overall impact on the staffing budget. The successful appointment of Project Managers marks a significant step forward and is has resulted in no more reliance on agency staff in this area. Agency staffing costs are currently projected at £0.270m for this financial year however the vacancies are budgeted at £0.250m. 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 and reduced capital receipts. 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 November, total costs stood at £0.154m, rising to £0.202m 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 £0.080m. However, this projection may be reduced if energy usage increases e.g. 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, as long as no large emergency repairs are necessary.

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 Nov 25

Scheme Detail	2025/26 Original Allocation	2025/26 Revised Allocation	Cumulative Spend to 30 Nov 2025	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026	Allocation remaining
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Foundry Lane Residential Area	3,520.9	3,520.9	1,229.3	1,850.0	3,520.9	0.0
Property Improvements	231.1	231.1	121.7	153.6	231.1	0.0
Town Deal	21,823.1	13,210.2	6,294.6	9,550.0	13,210.2	0.0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	101.2	101.2	0.0	55.0	101.2	0.0
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	82.0	82.0	4.2	35.0	82.0	0.0
Changing Places	17.0	17.0	0.0	0.0	17.0	0.0
Kingsway Centre Demolition	708.0	708.0	438.3	488.0	538.0	170.0
Port of Weston	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet	2,200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Astmoor Masterplan	81.6	902.6	902.6	902.6	902.6	0.0
Sci-tech Daresbury - CPO	3,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Warm Homes Plan	0.0	587.6	0.0	0.0	587.6	0.0
Runcorn Town Centre Management	0.0	822.0	524.6	650.0	822.0	0.0
Widnes Town Centre Framework	0.0	200.0	53.0	100.0	200.0	0.0
Economy, Enterprise & Property Departmental Total	31,764.9	20,382.6	9,568.3	13,784.2	20,212.6	170.0

Comments on above figures

Foundry Lane

The Foundry Lane development is progressing at pace, with several key milestones achieved over the past two months. On-site activity remains well-coordinated and steady, keeping the project firmly on track to deliver this exciting new housing scheme. First handover is May 26 with all remaining Phase 1 homes scheduled for completion by November 26.

To maintain momentum, outline planning permission has now been submitted for Phase 2, ensuring the next stage of development can move forward. Site investigations are underway for Phase 2, with plans for a further land acquisition incorporated into the outline planning submission, scheduled for January.

Sci-Tech Daresbury Project Violet

The LCR CA has approved the business case for both buildings in Violet Phase 2, with the final panel sign off for the additional £7.5m funding anticipated in December. The Grant Funding Agreement for Innovation Zone funding is anticipated in January 2026. The project will then move through to procurement with an anticipated start on site in summer 2026. The Enterprise Zone capital allocation will likely be drawn down from summer 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 have now been 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 Late Spring 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. Completion is expected summer 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 in December 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 complete.

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 early 2026.

The construction of two canal trip boats was commissioned at a boatyard in Liverpool, with one boat having been launched in Runcorn on the canal 26 July. All December boat trips were sold out.

The over 55s apartment block Mercia House is under construction at High Street is well advanced with completion expected in April 2026. 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 was secured in early 2025.

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		It is not expected this saving will materialise in the current year.

COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE

Revenue Budget as at 30 November 2025

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	15,639	10,403	9,996	407	611
Agency - Covering vacancies	20	16	16	0	0
Agency - In addition to establishment	16	16	201	(185)	(272)
Premises	3,304	1,973	1,995	(22)	(32)
Supplies & Services	3,659	2,416	2,597	(181)	(272)
Transport	117	72	91	(19)	(28)
Extended Producer Responsibility	500	30	30	0	0
Other Agency Costs	454	287	275	12	17
Other Expenditure	187	102	99	3	4
Waste Disposal Contracts	7,121	2,867	2,906	(39)	(57)
Transfers to Reserves	1,091	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	32,108	18,182	18,206	(24)	(29)
Income					
Sales Income	-1,359	-931	-916	(15)	(23)
Fees & Charges Income	-6,300	-4,678	-4,806	128	192
Rental Income	-1,118	-632	-573	(59)	(88)
Government Grant Income	-5,210	-1,458	-1,458	0	0
Reimbursement & Other Grant Income	-871	-493	-493	0	0
SLA Income	-23	0	0	0	0
Internal Fees Income	-216	-98	-199	101	152
Capital Salaries	-236	-76	-67	(9)	(14)
Transfers From Reserves	-619	-4	-4	0	0
Total Income	-15,952	-8,370	-8,516	146	219
Net Operational Expenditure	16,156	9,812	9,690	122	190
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,657	1,105	1,105	0	0
Transport Support	2,433	1,714	1,781	(67)	(102)
Central Support	4,297	2,865	2,865	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-843	-562	-562	0	0
Net Total Recharges	7,743	5,122	5,189	(67)	(102)
Net Departmental Expenditure	23,899	14,934	14,879	55	88

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 30th September 2025. The forecasted outturn is now expected to fall £0.8m under the approved budget profile (in comparison to £0.72m underspend previously forecasted).

Employee spend continues to be an area providing underspend for the department into the new financial year, forecast spend being £0.611m 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 (£0.272m and £0.272 respectively) above the approved 2025/26 budget.

Estimated spend on premises costs is forecast to be £0.032m 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.

Supplies and Services is forecasting an overspend of £0.272m 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. These invoices also are received several periods after the costs are incurred; therefore, 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 £0.219m. 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.

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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	0	100	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Green waste charges have been increased to £50.

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		
		basis with charges levied by neighbouring councils.				
Area Forums		Area Forums – cease the funding for Area Forums.	0	170	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Area forum budgets have been removed in 25-26
Total Community & Greenspace Dept			12	270		

Capital

Scheme Detail	2025/26	2025/26	Cumulative Spend to 30 Nov 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026 £000	Allocation remaining £000
	Original Allocation £000	Revised Allocation £000				
Stadium Minor Works	22.1	22.1	24.6	24.6	24.6	-2.5
Halton Leisure Centre	99.7	99.7	92.5	94.0	95.0	4.7
Children's Playground Equipment	67.8	67.8	52.5	60.5	65.0	2.8
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Upton Improvements	13.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	0.0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	0.0
Open Spaces Schemes	600.0	770.0	650.9	700.0	770.0	0.0
Runcorn Town Park	450.6	450.6	10.2	60.0	125.0	325.6
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,841.6	250.0	173.4	180.0	250.0	0.0
Pickerings Pasture Cafe	469.2	450.0	301.2	360.0	450.0	0.0
Cemetery Infrastructure work	469.1	469.1	10.5	207.0	410.0	59.1
Stadium Public Address System	810.0	346.0	34.9	286.0	346.0	0.0
Litter Bins	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0
Replacement Cremator	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Stadium Steelwork Repairs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Brindley Lighting	0.0	200.0	0.0	100.0	200.0	0.0
Homeless Accommodation Refurbishment	0.0	52.0	49.3	51.0	52.0	0.0
CCTV Infrastructure Works	0.0	105.0	1.2	50.0	105.0	0.0
Equality Act Improvement Works	303.5	303.5	17.7	150.0	303.5	0.0
Community and Greenspaces Departmental Total	5,518.7	3,630.8	1,418.9	2,323.1	3,241.1	389.7

There have been delays to capital projects starting within the last financial year due to staffing issues, so a number of schemes had been rolled into the 25/26 capital programme these works have begun, but again there will be a knock-on effect to 26/27 based on this, so the forecasted and revised allocations have been adjusted to reflect this. In regards to the cemetery infrastructure work there is potential to receive grant/external funding rather than rely on 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 30th November 2025

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,957	3,961	3,570	391	587
Efficiency Savings	-100	-66	0	(66)	(100)
Premises	188	122	100	22	34
Hired & Contracted Services	415	98	103	(5)	(8)
Supplies & Services	142	203	350	(147)	(220)
Street Lighting	1,643	479	527	(48)	(72)
Highways Maintenance - Routine & Reactive	1,803	781	1,142	(361)	(542)
Highways Maintenance - Programmed Works	812	574	153	421	632
Fleet Transport	1,467	921	927	(6)	(10)
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	14	9	4	5	8
Bus Support	506	587	587	0	0
Agency Related Expenditure	8	6	141	(135)	(202)
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	31	31	31	0	0
NRA Levy	75	74	74	0	1
LCR Levy	1,553	1,164	1,164	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	359	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	14,873	8,944	8,873	71	108
Income					
Sales & Rents Income	-97	-72	-64	(8)	(12)
Planning Fees	-798	-534	-750	216	324
Building Control Fees	-251	-167	-131	(36)	(55)
Other Fees & Charges	-971	-634	-1,166	532	798
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-174	-160	-160	0	0
Government Grant Income	-57	-57	-57	0	0
Halton Hopper Income	-15	-10	-7	(3)	(5)
Recharge to Capital	-119	0	0	0	0
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-1,553	-1,164	-1,164	0	0
Contribution from Reserves	-132	-157	-157	0	0
Total Income	-4,167	-2,955	-3,656	701	1,050
Net Operational Expenditure	10,706	5,989	5,217	772	1,158
Recharges					
Premises Recharges	739	493	493	0	0
Transport Recharges	808	517	517	0	(2)
Central Recharges	2,505	1,672	1,672	0	0
Asset Charges	918	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-6,347	-4,346	-4,502	156	234
Net Total Recharges	-1,377	-1,664	-1,820	156	232
Net Departmental Expenditure	9,329	4,325	3,397	928	1,390

Comments on the above figures

Financial Position

As of 30th November 2025 it is forecast net spend will be £1.390m 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.

Therefore, there are a large number of vacancies across two divisions that have not yet been filled. The Highways restructure has been taken out of the projections from the last report to now, as it is unlikely that

it will be in place before March 26. Efficiency savings for PPT are not expected to be met and more information is provided about this further within 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 an essential 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 by 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. There has been an amendment to the projected spend figures as it was deemed the creditors from 24/25 financial year were overstated. This has brought the projected overspend down from around £0.275m at September 2025 to £0.072m now.

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 an ever-moving area and unlike earlier reports it is now expected to be over its income target. Following on from the 2024/25 financial year there is a downturn in the number of applications being received so there is some reliance on receiving planning applications from housing developers. 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 not achieve its income target as in previous years.

Fees and charges income is projected to overachieve its income target, but this is constantly in flux 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 8 months, due to the large number of housing developers requiring permission to install utilities. There are a number of reasons for the current over achievement of permit income, including:

- The number of permits being received has been higher than usual due to several companies carrying out fibre roll outs and upgrades. This seems to be coming to an end and the number of permits relating to fibre are most likely to severely decrease for the remainder of the year.
- As a result of the increased amount of works, this also increases potential for FPNs, S74 charges and defect charges to be issued against permits. As the number of works decreases, so will the associated charges.
- There is higher than usual income associated to traffic management due to the amount of works taking place since April.
- There are more inspections now than in previous years, which has increased income.

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

Planning, Provision and Transportation Department

Capital Budget as of 30th November 2025

Scheme Detail	2025/26 Original Allocation £000	2025/26 Revised Allocation £000	Cumulative Spend to 30 Nov 2025 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 Jan 2026 £000	Cumulative Forecast Spend to 31 March 2026 £000	Allocation remaining £000
Bridge and Highway Maintenance	839.2	839.2	181.2	510.2	839.2	0.0
Runcorn Busway	90.0	90.0	35.9	63.0	90.0	0.0
ATF3 Murdishaw to Whitehouse	757.0	757.0	538.3	647.7	757.0	0.0
ATF4 - Widnes Town Centre Accessibility	114.5	114.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	114.5
A56 Reconstruction	943.7	943.7	95.0	519.4	943.7	0.0
LCWIP phase 2 Daresbury	3,862	100	30.9	57.7	84.5	15.5
Pot Hole Funding	968	968	243.8	605.9	968.0	0.4
CRSTS	4,405	4,405	2,709.9	3,557.5	4,405.0	0.0
Street Lighting - Structural Maintenance	1,025.1	1,025.1	0.0	100.0	200.0	825.1
Street Lighting - Upgrades	728.4	728.4	0.0	50.0	50.0	678.4
East Runcorn Connectivity	5,851.7	14,442.2	6,283.7	10,363.0	14,442.2	0.0
Risk Management	712.9	120.0	23.0	23.0	23.0	97.0
Widnes Loops	0.0	0.0	65.1	65.1	65.1	-65.1
Fleet Replacements	4,482.0	2,500.0	1,070.1	1,785.0	2,500.0	0.0
Early Land Acquisition Mersey Gateway	210.0	80.0	49.4	73.0	80.0	0.0
Mersey Gateway Crossings Board	60.0	-226.7	-226.7	-226.7	-226.7	0.0
Highways and Transportation Departmental Total	25,049.8	26,886.8	11,099.6	18,193.6	25,221.0	1,665.8

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 budget has increased from the last report to now due to the increased spending and progression of the scheme. This now includes the full remaining CA grant and HBC match funding – any underspend this financial year will be moved into 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 Q4 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 A

Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
			24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
Highways		LED Advertising Screens – install LED advertising screens at appropriate locations within the Borough in order to generate advertising revenue. The estimated annual income is the Council's share of advertising revenue net of capital financing costs for the installations.	0	100		It is not anticipated that this income will be achieved this financial year as the LED screens are no closer to being installed.
Total PPT Dept			0	100		

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 is on course to be achieved.</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 uncertain or too early to say at this stage 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 will not be achieved 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.