

Public Document Pack



Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

Wednesday, 23 March 2016 6.30 p.m.
Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David WR'.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Bill Woolfall (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Mike Fry (Vice-Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Pauline Hignett	Labour
Councillor Valerie Hill	Labour
Councillor Chris Loftus	Labour
Councillor Andrew MacManus	Labour
Councillor Keith Morley	Labour
Councillor Pauline Sinnott	Labour
Councillor Gareth Stockton	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Andrea Wall	Labour
Councillor Geoff Zygadlo	Labour

*Please contact Gill Ferguson on 0151 511 8059 or e-mail gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Date Not Specified*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

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1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 23rd March 2015

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Community and Resources

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
- (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
- (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
- (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
- (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or

- Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chairperson will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

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

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 23 March 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the relevant Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None

5.4 A Safer Halton

None

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES – 14 January 2016

TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO

**EXB92 JOINT INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS
CONTRACT FOR LIVERPOOL CITY REGION**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which outlined proposals for the formation of a Joint Contract with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (CA), for the supply, installation and maintenance of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS).

With the formation of the CA, there had been a common desire to achieve efficiencies throughout the region. One of the first transport related opportunities had been identified as a Joint Contract for the supply, installation and maintenance of ITS. This would provide an opportunity for a consistent approach across the City Region. It was noted that a Joint Contract would cover the provision of a number of items, as set out in the report, and would also include an option for the provision of new installations and refurbishment of existing installations, where work was more substantial than routine maintenance.

Members were advised that Halton would lead on the procurement of the new contract with support from Sefton Borough Council. A Framework Agreement would be set up, so that contractual liabilities/responsibilities would be between the Contractor and each participating Authority directly.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board approves the continuation of current Officer discussions to develop a Joint ITS Contract for the Liverpool City Region, and that subject to a satisfactory conclusion to these discussions, Halton be party to the tendering process for the award of a new contract, with it leading on the procurement exercise; and
- 2) subject to a satisfactory tendering process, Halton becomes part of the Joint ITS Contract from 1

Strategic Director
-Community &
Resources

April 2017.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB93 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME - 2016 REVISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which sought approval of the proposed update to the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The LDS was the timetable for the production of Halton's Local Plan which set out how the Borough would develop over the next 15-20 years. The LDS identified the Planning Policy documents to be prepared with target dates for their production.

A provisional Halton LDS 2015 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. It was noted that the LDS was an essential tool in policy production as it allowed future participation to be scheduled in advance by stakeholders, industry and the public. Regular updates on the milestones in the LDS were published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Halton Borough Council Local Development Scheme 2016 Revision, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, shall have effect on and after 20 January 2016; and
- 2) any minor drafting amendments to be made to the document be agreed by the Operational Director, Policy, Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Physical Environment.

Strategic Director
-Community &
Resources

EXB94 JOINT VENTURE PROPOSAL

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, on a proposal for Halton Borough Council to enter into a joint venture arrangement to develop a Halton portfolio which included properties at Astmoor.

The Board was advised that Langtree would provide asset management and investment advice to a major

institutional investor with multi-let industrial assets across the North West. Having acquired a Runcorn multi-let portfolio, which included an estate at Astmoor, more assets in both Runcorn and Widnes were being sought, so as to benefit from the Mersey Gateway opportunities and the associated infrastructure improvements.

Initial actions would focus on the following areas:-

- Filling void space;
- Further acquisition;
- Repositioning; and
- Draw down of land released post Mersey Gateway completion.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the proposal to enter into a Joint Venture Arrangement with Langtree be agreed; and
- 2) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Physical Environment, be given delegated authority to conclude a Joint Venture with Langtree, on the terms set out in the report.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

EXB95 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE SIX LIVERPOOL CITY REGION AUTHORITIES AND WEST LANCASHIRE COUNCIL TO COMMISSION JOINT RESEARCH ON HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which sought approval for the Council to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), so as to commission joint research to quantify the need for additional housing and employment land across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and individual districts.

The Board was advised that the MoU sought agreement to work jointly to commission City Region-wide evidence base material on strategically important matters such as housing need and economic forecasting for the City Region. It was reported that this would assist the devolution process and improve strategic planning.

For the first time, strategic planning powers had been

devolved from Central Government under the recently agreed Devolution Agreement for the LCR. This would provide an opportunity to allow the commissioning of specialist research which was vital to the emerging strategic planning powers and the more immediate Local Plan preparation of a number of LCR partners.

RESOLVED: That authority be delegated to the Operational Director, Policy, Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Physical Environment, to agree a Memorandum of Understanding between the six Liverpool City Region authorities and West Lancashire District Council to commission research to quantify the need for additional housing and employment land across the City Region and for individual districts.

Strategic Director
-Community &
Resources

EXB96 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- (2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption

outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB97 INDUSTRIAL ESTATE DISPOSALS - OLDGATE, MARSHGATE AND DEWAR COURT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, on offers that had been received in respect of the disposal of Oldgate, Marshgate and Dewar Court Industrial Estates.

It was reported that a review of the three Council-owned industrial estates had been undertaken. The Member Asset Review Panel had considered a proposal to sell each of the estates at their meeting on 15 July 2015. The estates were subsequently marketed and the report contained details of the offers that had been received.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the disposal of the industrial estates to the company and for the sum as detailed in the report, be approved; and
- 2) the Operational Director, Economy and Enterprise, with the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services and the Portfolio holder for Resources, be given delegated authority to accept reasonable adjustments to the offer price following detailed surveys, provided that any adjustments to the price still exceed the second best offer as set out in the report.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

Executive Board – 28th January 2016
TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO

**EXB101 NEC SHORT FORM CONTRACT AUTHORISATION FOR
BALVAC WORKS**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which sought authorisation to enter into an NEC Short Form contract with Balvac for the completion of Footway reconstruction works at Moore Lane, Moore, and the re-decking of the South West Footbridge at Halton Lea.

It was reported that the Council had an Access Agreement to the SCAPE Framework (the Framework), a public sector owned built environment specialist. It was intended that this Framework be utilised for the procurement of Bridge and Structures Maintenance works for this year. This year's works consisted of two parts; the Moore Lane footway reconstruction and the Halton Lea South West Footbridge re-decking.

Members were advised that, as the value of the combined works was less than £1m and that the Framework only had one contractor rather than a minimum of five, Executive Board approval was required on this occasion.

RESOLVED: That the entering into of a contract with Balvac, through the SCAPE Framework, for the procurement of footway reconstruction works at Moore Lane, Moore and the re-decking of the South West Footbridge at Halton Lea, be approved.

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB102 WASTE TREATMENT SERVICES CONTRACT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on a proposed extension to the Council's current contractual arrangements for the treatment of household waste.

A Waste Treatment Services Contract (the Contract)

to WSR Recycling was approved by the Board on 27 February 2014. This was put in place to cover the period from April 2014 up to the commencement of the Merseyside and Halton Resource Recovery Contract (RRC), anticipated to commence in mid/late 2016. An option to extend the Contract was included to ensure that the Council maintained its arrangements for the treatment of its waste whilst awaiting the operational start of the RRC.

It was reported that the operational date for the RRC had been confirmed as 1 October 2016. Therefore approval was sought to extend the Contract with WSR Recycling until 30 September 2016. Details of the likely expenditure were contained within the report for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That an extension of the Waste Treatment Services Contract with WSR Recycling Limited, to 30 September 2016, be approved.

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

Executive Board – 25 February 2016

TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO

EXB114 MERSEY GATEWAY BRIDGE PROJECT - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which provided a progress update on the Mersey Gateway Bridge Project (the Project) and on the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Limited (MGCB), for June to December 2015.

The Board was advised that the MGCB was a special purpose vehicle, established by Halton Borough Council, with delegated authority to deliver the Mersey Gateway Bridge project, and to administer and oversee the construction, maintenance and tolling of the new tolled crossings, which included the tolling of the Silver Jubilee Bridge.

The MGCB were commissioned to deliver the Project on behalf of the Council and operate as a commercial, not

for profit organisation, on an arm's length basis.

The report provided an update on progress of the Project and the performance of the MGCB in monitoring the Project, as required under the Governance Agreement. It covered:-

- Key Construction Events;
- Construction of the Main Crossing, Landside and Highways;
- Most recent activities on site;
- Programmed activities for January 2016;
- Health and Safety;
- Key Performance Indicators;
- Current Progress on the actions/risks at Financial Close; and
- Production of an Annual Business Plan.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) progress with the Mersey Gateway Bridge Project, as set out in the report, be noted; and
- 2) the performance of the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Limited in monitoring the Project Company's performance, as set out in the report, be noted.

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 23rd March 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Performance Management Reports for Quarter 3 of 2015/16

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider and raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the third quarter period to 31st December 2015.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2015-16 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board as detailed below:
- Development and Investment Services
 - Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services
 - Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services
 - Housing Strategy

The report details progress against service objectives and milestones, and performance targets and provides information relating to key developments and emerging issues that have arisen during the period.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board

- 1) Receive the third quarter performance management report;**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification; and**
- 3) Highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be reported at a future meeting of the Board.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Departmental objectives provide a clear statement on what services are planning to achieve and to show how they contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. Such information is central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Departmental service objectives and performance measures, both local and national are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The introduction of a Thematic Priority Based Report and the identification of business critical objectives/ milestones and performance indicators will further support organisational improvement.

6.2 Although some objectives link specifically to one priority area, the nature of the cross - cutting activities being reported, means that to a greater or lesser extent a contribution is made to one or more of the Council priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTIONS 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Not applicable

Environment & Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board Priority Based Monitoring Report

Reporting Period: **Quarter 3 – Period 01st October 2015 to 31st December 2015**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the third quarter of 2015/16 for service areas within the remit of the Environment & Urban Renewal (E&UR) Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2. Key priorities for development or improvement in 2015-18 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board i.e.:
- Development & Investment Services
 - Open Spaces and Waste and Environmental Improvement
 - Highways, Transportation & Logistics and Physical Environment
 - Housing Strategy
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 8 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

- 2.1 There have been a number of developments within the Directorate during the period which include:

Development & Investment Services

- Lakeside Phase 2 January 2016
Development Agreement signed and Keepmoat now in full possession of site. First homes and new Sales Office expected to open in April 2016.

The scheme covers approximately 1.7ha and will deliver 79 two and three bedroom homes for open market sale. Early reservations have been strong and likely to follow the previous Phase as one of Keepmoat's top performing developments. A two bed 'starter' home begins at £105,995 which reduces to £84,795 with 'Help to Buy'.

- Lakeside Phase 3
Keepmoat have been given a 3 year exclusivity agreement covering Phase 3 to enable them to investigate a number of abnormal issues with the remaining 1ha parcel. Housing mix on phase 3 is likely to include affordable housing to due to financial viability and possibly to enable demolition of a further deck access block.

Initial advice has been given to Keepmoat in respect of design, layout and dealing with site constraints. Regeneration will return to this in April 2016 following progress with Phase 2.

- **Canalside**
Works to improve access via length of redundant Busway, including upgrading of two bridges, was completed in May 2015. Next step is assessment of the carriageway and designs for road junction into the site from Busway. Marketing agents to be appointed in 2016 to provide advice and begin process for disposal of Canalside for approximately 250 homes.
- **Investment Enquiries**
The Business Improvement and Growth (BIG) Team managed 45 commercial property\inward investment enquiries in Quarter 3 2015/16, 10 of which were converted (inward investment enquiries 'converted' into actual investment projects).
- **Merseyside Business Support Programme**
Through the Merseyside Business Support Programme, Halton has received 287 enquiries for assistance. 126 companies are currently engaged on the programme and 116 have completed the initial diagnostic phase.

We selected a sample of businesses to follow up to assess the impact of the programme including the number of jobs created and a subjective assessment from each business on how the support had assisted the development of its business.

Tasks in this quarter included the collection of additional information concerning the impact upon employment and qualitative follow-on research in relation to the impact that the advice had made to the consolidation or growth of each business.

Without exception, the feedback from the chosen sample was very positive. We also started to collect the remaining documentation (and will continue to do so into quarter four) and informed participants of the total state aid received from the project.

The Business Improvement and Growth Team is developing a new programme which will be up and running from 1st April 2016.

- **Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant Programme**
The Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant (RGF) Programme is now closed and all claims for grant funding from Halton companies under both the RGF 3 and RGF 4 elements of the programme were paid and monies recovered from the LEP.

This work has been completed in advance of other projects that the authority is expected to also complete to meet Regional Growth Fund Criteria.

The tables below describe the final spend position with respect to both RGF 3 and RGF 4 and stands the same at the end of quarter 3 as it did at the end of quarter 2.

RGF 3

Company	Grant Award	Grant Paid	Percentage Paid
Converge IT	£160,275.00	£160,274.79	99.99%
The Protein Works	£104,265.00	£96,134.69	92.20%
WSR	£99,990.00	£99,990.00	100%
Ineos Technologies	£78,500.00	£78,147.80	99.55%
Helsby & Longden	£59,950.00	£58,937.29	98.31%
CDL	£163,191.20	£127,638.50	78.21%
Totals	£666,171.20	£621,123.07	93.23 %

RGF 4

Company	Grant Award	Grant Paid	Percentage Paid
Tall Security Print	£18,000.00	£17,487.00	91.13%
Merseyside Printing Co	£10,000.00	£9,996.00	99.96%
E-Scape	£15,000.00	£15,000.00	100%
Perceptive Engineering	£25,000.00	£16,067.93	64.27%
Freight First Ltd	£10,000.00	£9,891.00	98.91%
Totals	£78,000.00	£68,441.93	87.74%

- Sci-Tech Daresbury
Tech Space 2 base-build is now complete and work has commenced on the fit out. A tenant has been signed up to occupy the first floor of the 10,000 sq. ft. office space.

The final financial claim for ERDF was submitted in December 2015. Due to delays in the site connectivity works, the amount of eligible expenditure reduced resulting in a loss of almost £300k ERDF funding for the project. The delays were due to the approval and acceptance of the grant and the Authority is working with the applicant to see if we can absorb this in to the timescale of the wider contract.

➤ Regional Growth Fund

A total of £3,290,354.03 of private sector leverage was invested in the Borough as a consequence of the RGF 4 scheme, against total project expenditure of £3,916,416.50. In total 92.64% of contracted grant (RGF 3 + RGF 4) has been paid to businesses.

We arranged a scheme of follow-on visits from the Business Improvement and Growth Team to quantify the efficiency of the delivery of the programme and investigate new opportunities, particularly with the Merseyside Jobs and Growth Fund.

These follow on visits are an opportunity to get feedback from Halton businesses, with an overall positive response in terms of the usefulness of the programme; it used as a mechanism for maintaining an ongoing dialogue with businesses

➤ Merseyside Jobs and Growth Fund

This is a grant of up to £75,000 (maximum 20% of the total project value) for capital investments in businesses that have expansion plans which may lead to an increase in the number of people working for the business. We have referred more than 20 businesses to St Helens' Chamber of Commerce for this, the managing agent for this fund.

➤ Liverpool City Region – Growth Deal: Business Investment Fund

Liverpool City Region has been allocated £15.6m through its Local Growth Deal to stimulate economic growth through business investment. The original case for this funding was made on the basis of the impact of the RGF backed Business Growth Grant which in the last 2 years has supported 100 businesses across the City Region, leveraging £75m in other investment creating 2,000 jobs.

For Halton, a target of 97 supported businesses was set. At present 86 have received support with a deadline of 2017 to meet the overall target.

➤ Norton Priory Museum - Monastery to Museum 900

The main works commenced on site in early August 2015 and are progressing well. The exhibition fit-out contract has now also been let to a company called Elmwood, its works are due to commence on site in March. Final completion is due in summer 2016, the Museum being due to reopen in August 2016.

➤ Police Station & Magistrates Court

A contractor has now been appointed in respect of the proposed demolition work, J Bryan (Victoria) Ltd. The Council is due to complete on the purchase of the site in early January, immediately following which the contractor will take possession of the site. The demolition works are due for completion by the end of May.

- **New Travellers Site – Runcorn**
The project to create a 12 pitch Travellers site has now been completed, and the site is now ready for occupation, as yet however the site is unoccupied.
- **Runcorn Hill Park Pavilion Building**
All building works to the main pavilion are now complete, the building having been opened on 23 August 2015. There are still outstanding external works to other areas within the park which are continuing.
- **Fairfield Primary- redevelopment**
This project is currently out to tender on the Chest, the tenders are due for return on 25th January with the overall available budget being circa £2.1m. It is currently anticipated that the works will consist of 3 separate phases commencing in April 2016.

Policy, Planning and Transportation.

- The coordination of the works for the Mersey Gateway is increasing, this is to try and minimise the impact of the works on the travelling public. This is continuing to prove a challenge as works are underway at multiple sites throughout the Borough in order to meet the completion date.
- The work is increasing especially around Ditton roundabout (where the roundabout is being replaced with a traffic signal controlled junction) and, in the near future, the Speke Road will be diverted around the roundabout, however this will not take place until the mitigation measures are agreed to minimise the disruption. The Central Expressway, in Runcorn, is now closed for up to 7 months whilst the route is realigned and bridge works are carried out.
- The Pegasus Crossing (a crossing for pedestrians, cyclists and horses) will shortly be commissioned across A56 at Daresbury, near Keckwick Lane. It will be of particular benefit to SciTech staff who park in Daresbury church car park (SciTech rent spaces off the church).
- The Building Control (BC) collaboration with Knowsley Council has now been in formal operation for 6 months (15th July 2015) and the results have been very positive. Informal discussions are ongoing to set out future options for this joint shared service.
- Fee income is now covering budgeted costs and this is a key measure of success in securing a zero net budget business model based on commercial principles for the BC Service. Building Control must compete with the private sector ('Approved Inspectors') for work.

Additionally, the Council benefits from having the resource to undertake statutory duties such as dangerous structure assessment and safety at sports grounds and events (Creamfields). These additional duties are also covered by the fee income, giving significant benefits at nil cost.

➤ To support the Liverpool City Region Devolution agreement progress has been made on the following joint work streams;

▪ *Single Statutory Framework*

Workshops have been undertaken for elected member representatives at the Housing and Spatial Planning Board covering housing strategy and a single statutory framework for planning. The workshops have produced a high level work programme to deliver those strategic documents.

▪ *Priorities Overview Document*

An overview document of spatial priorities is being produced to capture the current pipeline and trajectory for major sites, schemes, infrastructure, and major land allocations. A draft of the document will be submitted to the Housing and Spatial Planning Board in March 2016.

▪ *Statement of Co-Operation on strategic planning matters*

This document is now at an advanced draft and is being used to capture the detail and work programme behind the 'Devolution Planning Asks'. The document sets out the evidence studies that need to be undertaken to deliver a single statutory framework and fulfils the legal requirement for each Council to show how they have worked with neighbouring authorities across the City Region on strategic planning matters.

▪ *Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment.*

GL Hearn has been commissioned to undertake this work on behalf of the Liverpool City Region (LCR). A 'Memorandum of Understanding' has been agreed between the member LAs and Executive Board will receive a report on 14th January 2016 to approve the MOU.

This study will provide a baseline position of housing and employment land requirements across the City Region to inform future planning documents (such as an LCR Strategic Plan) and joint Green Belt review work to accommodate growth across the LCR.

▪ *Transport Pipeline*

Pipeline Transport project workshops have been held over the last few months to identify future transport/highway schemes Halton and the LCR would like to deliver. Subsequently a number of pipeline transport projects are currently being drafted for consideration for future funding post 2021. Once the schemes have been approved by Halton they will be submitted to the LCR along with all the other districts proposals and then prioritised for any future funding which may become available.

▪ *Local Development Scheme (Local Plan – Update)*

A report has been produced for the Executive Board on 14th January 2016 to adopt an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out the timetable for statutory local plan production. Public consultation on the revised scope of the Delivery and Allocations Plan (to include selected policies from the Core Strategy) is scheduled to start before the end of February.

▪ *Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SMHA)*

The Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been concluded. This looks at the 'Objectively Assessed Need' (OAN) for housing in Halton, St. Helens and Warrington.

This assessment shows an annual requirement for 466 dwellings per annum over the period 2014-2037 (based on an assumed jobs growth of 4,952 over the same period). This is below the currently adopted figure of 552 p.a. derived from the 2008 Regional Spatial Strategy.

- *Retail Study*

Consultants England and Lyle have been appointed to prepare a Retail Study for the borough, assessing the health of our principal centres and quantifying the need (if any) for additional retail floor space over the next plan period.

- *Green Belt Study*

The Green Belt Study has been completed and has been published. This is a factual evidential document that sets out all of the land currently under Green Belt designation and assesses the characteristics and performance of these sites against the criteria in national Green Belt policy.

The study does not make any recommendations on the release of Green Belt sites.

- *'Bikeright' Scheme*

STEPS revenue funds a shared scheme between Knowsley and Halton via a consortium led by 'Bikeright'. The project promotes cycling with a focus on helping those who are trying to get back into work/training/education.

Funding secured from the STEP (Merseytravel/Local Growth Fund) enables a consistent approach across the two authorities and fortnightly rides and events will take place across the Borough with bikes and safety equipment being available to loan for the sessions.

A recycle bicycle scheme will be launched in spring 2016 and will operate until the end of October 2016. The scheme will provide low cost bikes to Halton residents and Victoria Park (Widnes) and Phoenix Park/Heath Park (Runcorn) have been identified as initial Cycle Hub areas.

- *Alternative Fuel Strategy*

Halton residents will have access to two Electric Charging Points (ECP's) one located at the Select Stadium, Widnes and one at Church Street, Runcorn (near old market entrance).

The points will be funded by Halton's LTP delivery fund, while Merseytravel are currently grant funding all electric charging costs until 2018, after which this will be reviewed.

The cost to the public is a one off joining fee of approximately £20.00 which will then provide access to an LCR wide network of ECP's. This project will support the delivery of Halton's LTP3 and the LCR Alternative Fuel Strategy objectives.

- *National Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy*

The Infrastructure Act has imposed a duty for the Secretary of State for Transport to bring forward a Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) in England. In July 2015, Part 2 of the Infrastructure Act (Cycling and Walking Investment Strategies) was enacted with the following objectives: invest over £200 million to make cycling safer so we reduce the number of cyclists and other road users killed or injured on our roads every year; double cycling rates. A public consultation is to be undertaken in spring 2016 covering activities to be carried out; results to be achieved; and standards to be met.

- The first part of the Highway Asset Management Plan is due to be presented at the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board meeting on 13th January 2016 for review before further submission to Executive Board in the early part of the new calendar year.
- The Council has received email confirmation from colleagues in Merseytravel that it has been successful in our LCR Growth Fund bid for additional funding for further and continued maintenance of the Silver Jubilee Bridge Complex. We expect to receive the formal letter in the New Year.

Open Spaces and Waste & Environmental Improvement

- The second phase of works at Runcorn Hill progressed during Quarter 3 including upgraded footpaths, new boundary fences and the refurbishment of the lake. Additionally, the lock at Spike Island which provides access to the marina from the River Mersey was refurbished and the outer lock gates are now fully functional which means that the lock can be kept in water.
- The major changes that were implemented to the waste and recycling collection services in August have had a positive impact upon resident behaviour and participation with the Council's recycling services. The changes saw a restriction on the amount of rubbish taken from every household which was intended to encourage waste reduction and increased recycling.
- Between April and January 3,300 households requested and were provided with larger or additional blue bins. During that same period, the Council collected over 500 tonnes more recyclable materials compared to the same period in the previous year and there has also been a corresponding reduction in the amount of general rubbish collected.
- Following the cessation of the Green Redeem (Recyclebank) Recycling Rewards programme at the end of 2015, the Council is currently working up the details of a new locally managed scheme to reward Halton's residents for their recycling efforts.
- The Waste Treatment Services (WTS) Contract with WSR Recycling Limited for the provision of services to divert waste from landfill has been extended until 31st September 2016 pending the commencement of the Merseyside and Halton Resource Recovery Contract (RRC) on 1st October 2016.

Housing Strategy

- Riverside Housing Association has been selected as one of a handful of Housing Associations to run a 6 month pilot of the new 'Right to Buy' scheme for Housing Association tenants. Before the scheme is rolled out nationally, the pilot aims to test a number of key issues, in particular
 - The nature and level of demand in different parts of the country
 - The values at which homes will be sold
 - The processes required to implement the full scheme

For Riverside, sales will be restricted to around 200 properties across the 6 local authority areas making up the Liverpool City Region, and for the duration of the pilot scheme applications will be restricted to those who have been tenants for 10 years or more.

The Government's November Spending Review included the following announcements –

- From 1/4/2018, Housing Benefit for new tenants in social rented housing will be capped to Local Housing Allowance rates (the limits for tenancies in the private rented sector), including a shared room rate for under 35s who are single with no dependants.
- Government investment for new build will be focussed on shared ownership and 'affordable' housing for owner occupation.
- Government will look to sharpen incentives for the New Homes Bonus and reduce the level of funding provided.

3.0 Emerging Issues

- 3.1 A number of emerging issues have been identified during the period that will impact upon the work of the Directorate including:

Development & Investment Services

I. Growth Hub

The Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) started to deliver a 'Growth Hub' for the city region. The Growth Hub is a virtual organisation/collaboration to provide business support services across the City Region. Each of the local authorities in the sub-Region have funds allocated to appoint a Growth Hub Broker and the recruitment process started in Halton in quarter 3 with a view to appointing in quarter 4.

We are delivering a 'virtual Halton Team' made up of both Council Officers and Chamber staff who will support the Halton Growth Hub Broker. Once appointed, this role will be to provide a comprehensive business brokerage and diagnostic service to all Halton businesses. This is for the time period 01 September 2015 to 31 March 2016. The outputs which we are required to deliver are interventions and interactions with business in the Halton area. This can include indigenous businesses or businesses considering moving to the area.

II. European Programme 2014-20

A full application for European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) under Priority Axis 3c 'SME Support' was submitted on behalf of a consortia made up of the LCR Local Authorities, Liverpool Vision, the LEP and St Helens and Liverpool Chambers of Commerce on 11 September 2015. The total bid came to £6m with a view of drawing down nearly £3m of ERDF. The Council are providing over £230k in match funding to deliver a three year project costing over £450k in total. Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued written feedback to the consortia in October 2015. Assuming the consortia can address the issues raised by DCLG it is anticipated that the programme will be signed off before Christmas and delivery will commence in Halton in January 2016.

DCLG also issued calls under Priority Axis 3 'Gap Funding Project for new commercial facilities' and Priority Axis 3 'Place Marketing for Investment'.

For the 'Place Marketing for Investment' call the Council are part of a consortium where the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership are the lead applicant for the bid with a view of the Combined Authority being the Accountable Body. Sci-Tech Daresbury are also a partner for the same bid. The project will be to develop a modest supply chain\sector development initiative focused upon the AEM and pharma' sector. The Council has indicated that it will provide cash match, not exceeding £25,000.00 each year, for a three year period as match.

The Council cannot provide match funding under the 'Gap Funding Project for new commercial facilities' call rather the Council have promoted the opportunity to commercial developers. To date two developers\companies have submitted outline applications to DCLG.

Langtree submitted an Outline Application on behalf of the Sci-Tech Daresbury Joint Venture under the 'Gap Funding Project for new commercial facilities' call for the next phase of development on the Eastern Plots. The application identified a request of £2.1m gap funding for the £10.7m project.

A full application for European Social Funding (ESF) was also submitted on Friday 02 October under the Priority Axis 1 'Inclusive Labour Markets' by a consortia made up of all six Local Authorities and Merseytravel. The total bid came to £42m, with a view of drawing down nearly £30m of ESF and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). The Council is providing £1.3m in match to deliver a three year project costing £3.3m in total. Department of Working Pensions (DWP) are due to provide feedback by the end of October 2015; with a view to the project commencing early in the New Year.

The Council has also submitted an EOI to VOLA who are the lead applicant on a Digital Inclusion application to Big Lottery Fund (BLF). BLF are an 'Opt In' provider of the European Social Fund who have recently released two calls; 'Digital Inclusion' and 'Financial Inclusion'.

The total amount of funding available is for £1.6m for Digital and £2.5m for Financial. The Council will be working with VOLA and other partners over the next couple of months to submit a 1st stage application by the end of November 2015. Applicants will then be requested to submit full application in the New Year with a view to projects starting in July 2016.

- III. Business Improvement District (BID) Programme
This is now managed by Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise.

Policy, Planning and Transportation.

- IV. *Logistics*
The various roadworks and closures required as part of the Mersey Gateway works are continuing to have an adverse impact on the reliability of local bus services. Regular monthly update meetings take place with the bus operators with regards to future roadwork projects to monitor the network and make changes to schedules to improve reliability and punctuality.
- V. *Traffic and Risk & Emergency Planning / Health & Safety*
To enable the closure of the Central Expressway during the Mersey Gateway works, permitted traffic on Northway (within Halton Lea) has been amended to allow for two-way traffic flows. This is working well and has had a positive impact. The option to make this a permanent alteration are being investigated.

Policy & Development Services

- VI. *Policy & Development Services*
The Housing and Planning Bill will now move to the House of Lords after passing its third reading (on 12th January 2016) following a session in the House of Commons.

A number of technical Government amendments had been made to parts 6 (Planning in England) and 7 of the Bill (compulsory purchase), and a new clause and schedule were added to enable the Mayor of London or a combined authority to prepare a development plan document where a local authority had failed to make progress on such a document.

- VII. *Major Site Delivery*

HBC Fields

Alstom UK Ltd have submitted a planning application (15/00549/FULEIA) for the construction of a purpose built transport and technology facility (Use Class B2) in three phases.

Phase 1 to include a 27,938 sq. m facility with associated access, car parking, HGV parking, service yards, rail sidings, landscaping, substation and associated engineering operations.

Phase 2A to include a 7,425 sq. m extension to the facility with a connection to the rail sidings constructed under Phase 1, an additional service yard, additional car parking and associated development. Phase 2B to include a further 15,925 sq. m extension to the facility with additional HGV parking and associated development at HBC Fields, Hale Bank Road, Hale Bank, Widnes.

Sandymoor

Development continues at a strong pace with David Wilson Homes, Morris, and Bloor all active. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is undertaking a community consultation during January on proposals for the local centre and primary school site.

Discussions are also underway with HCA on future phases at Sandymoor, including the Wharford Farm site.

Daresbury

Redrow has three live planning applications for the majority of the Daresbury site allocated for housing in the Core Strategy. The Local Planning Authority is awaiting the testing of the economic viability submissions by Redrow.

The Tech-Space building at Sci-Tech Daresbury is at an advanced stage of construction and work is also underway to open up additional building plots adjacent to the A56.

VIII. *Travellers*

Appeals are expected on the two unauthorised developments at Daresbury and in Astmoor but as yet, no dates for the hearing of these appeals have been received from the Planning Inspectorate.

There is a High Court injunction in place on the site in Daresbury to prevent any further development or changes in caravans / structures on the site. The next court date for this enforcement action is 17th February 2016.

4.0 Risk Control Measures

- 4.1 Risk control forms an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and performance monitoring arrangements. As such Directorate Risk Registers were updated in tandem with the development of the suite of 2014 – 15 Directorate Business Plans.

Progress concerning the implementation of all high-risk mitigation measures which are relevant to the Board is included as appendix 1.

5.0 High Priority Equality Actions

- 5.1 Equality issues continue to form a routine element of the Council's business planning and operational decision making processes. Additionally the Council must have evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011.

The Council's latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives was published on the Council website during quarter 4 and is available via:

[http://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/EandD/Equality -
objectives progress report - April 2013.pdf](http://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/EandD/Equality_-_objectives_progress_report_-_April_2013.pdf)

6.0 Performance Overview

6.1 The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate:

Development and Investment Services

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
CED10b	Commence Sci-Tech Daresbury Tech Space by April 2015 .	
CED10d	Completion of road at Johnson's Lane by March 2016 .	
CED10g	Commence Crossville development by March 2016 .	

Supporting Commentary

CE 10b

Started on site June 2015 with 12 month build.

CE 10d

The road at Johnson's Lane is completed up to the wearing course which has enabled the sale to proceed to Ballast Phoenix.

CE 10g

Initial appraisals have taken place. The site investigation work is currently being undertaken. Results from this will be used to inform the design, in particular the remediation and foundation design. Once these have been determined a more accurate viability appraisal can be completed.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	14 / 15 Actual	15 / 16 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
CED060	Occupancy of HBC industrial Units	89%	90%	94%		
CED061	Occupancy of Widnes Market Hall	85%	95%	82%		
CED062	Number of inward investment enquiries per annum	239	250	42 (15/16 cumulative)		
CED064	Number of funding enquiries per annum	113	110	70		N / A

Supporting CommentaryCED060

Two units have recently been let at Dewar Court. Expressway IE was sold on 11 December 2015 but the occupancy to the date of sale has been included in these figures but will be omitted from future figures.

CED061

Shopmobility has left but a number of traders have increased the size of their stalls since September and two new traders have started trading in the market.

CED062

In Q3 2015/16 there were 42 investment enquiries and it is still expected to meet the target for the year.

CED064

In Q3 we received 27 new enquiries for funding support. A larger proportion of enquiries traditionally in quarter 4 (after the Christmas break). Plus we have filled a vacant post so we will be in a better position to accept enquiries.

Open Spaces and Waste & Environmental Improvement***Key Objectives / milestones***

Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
CE 05	Woodland Expansion - Additional 200m ² of Woodland planted Borough wide - March 2016.	

Supporting CommentaryCE 05

Plans were drawn up for planting schemes during Q3. Planting will begin in Q4. The target of 200m² will be exceeded.

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
CE 06	Continue to deliver communications and awareness raising initiatives to ensure that participation with the Council's recycling services is maximised and that residents comply with the requirements of the Council's Household Waste Collection policy, March 2016.	
CE 07	Continue to review and assess the effectiveness of the Council's Environmental Enforcement Plans and Policies and maintain actions to ensure that the Council continues to effectively prevent and tackle a range of waste and environmental offences, March 2016.	

Supporting Commentary

CE 06

As part of the introduction of changes to waste and recycling collections, all households received an information booklet. This booklet represented the opportunity to directly engage with every household in the borough and as such it also provided information about the importance of waste reduction and increased recycling as well as information about the recycling services provided by the Council.

Further campaigns and direct engagement with residents will remain on-going.

CE 07

Following a review, the Council's Enforcement Policy was updated in August. The Policy document sets out the Council's approach to compliance and enforcement with respect to authority's regulatory services, including Waste and Environmental Improvement Services. Its review and revision was undertaken to ensure that the Policy remained up to date and fit for purpose.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	14 / 15 Actual	15 / 16 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 10	Residual household waste per household (Previously NI191).	534 Kgs	593 Kgs	422 Kgs		
CE LI 11	Household waste recycled and composted (Previously NI192).	46.8%	40%	46%		

Supporting CommentaryCE LI 10 & CE LI 11

This is an estimated cumulative figure which is subject to seasonal variation and will change. Performance in Q3 CE LI 10 is slightly lower than the corresponding period from last year (398kgs) and indications are that whilst the target will be met, performance may be lower than 2014/15. An increase in the amount of waste per household is consistent with increases experienced by other local authorities and appears a national trend.

For CE LI 11, despite an increase in the tonnage of recyclable materials collected through the blue bin scheme, as a result of different waste treatment processes being in place, overall recycling performance may fall for this year. The end of year target is however still forecast to be met.

Highways, Transportation & Logistics**Key Objectives / milestones**

Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
PPT 01a	Deliver 2015/16 major bridge maintenance works programme. March 2016.	
PPT 03	To deliver the 2015/16 LTP Capital Programme March 2016.	

Supporting Commentary

PPT 01a

Remaining works have been designed, estimated, procured and are now awaiting Executive Board to authorise the entering into of a contract with Balvac to complete the works.

PPT 03

The LTP Capital programme consists of two main strands:

- **Integrated Transport:** Several schemes have been completed including A56 Pegasus crossing (contribution to STEP programme) and pedestrian & cycle improvements at various locations. Schemes currently in delivery include: Clifton / Grangeway Cycleway; new crossing to the Hive; Hale Road / Ditton Road signal junction improvement to provide a Toucan Crossing on the STEP Mersey corridor cycle route. Reconstruction of Kingsway central reserve is due to commence in Q4. The Widnes Road improvement scheme (ASDA link) has been delayed pending completion of design and discussions with ASDA and the landowner. Subject to agreement, it is hoped that work can commence in Q4. The progress indicator has been changed to 'amber' as funding for this scheme represents a major part of the LTP ITB allocation.
- **Highway Maintenance:** The carriageway and footway programmes of resurfacing and reconstruction have been phased over the course of the year and delivery to the full budget allocation is nearing completion.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	14 / 15 Actual	15 / 16 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
PPT LI 01	Percentage of third party compensation claims due to alleged highway / footway defects successfully defended.	N / A	80%	60%	?	N / A
PPT LI 04 (ex NI 157)	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for:					
	a) 'major' applications	75%	60%	88.9%		
	b) 'minor' applications	43.75%	80%	77.1%		
	c) 'other' applications	85.71%	80%	88.7%		

Ref	Measure	14 / 15 Actual	15 / 16 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
PPT LI 05	To ensure a five year rolling supply of housing land available for 2,760 homes over 5 years. Measure as supply of ready to develop housing sites (%).	100	105	N / A	N / A	N / A
PPT LI 15	Bus service punctuality, Part 1: The proportion of non-frequent scheduled services on time (%):					
	Percentage of buses starting route on time	98.38%	98.40%	97.01%		
	Percentage of buses on time at intermediate timing points	93.82%	94.00%	89.89%		
PPT LI 17	No. of passengers on community based accessible transport	213,998	214,100	136,153		
PPT LI 19	Number of local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area in one year (000's)	5,493	5,500	4,330		

Supporting Commentary

PPT LI 01

Based on 31 received, 16 repudiated with 9 still ongoing. If those nine are reputed then the percentage rises to 81%. This will be an annual KPI in the future.

PPT LI 04

Majors are on target and above designation criteria (designation criteria increasing to 50% of decisions within 13 weeks and is being extended to apply to non-major decisions (amendment in the Housing & Planning Bill). Minor applications below 80% target due to the close working with applicants to overcome objections raised during the processing of the application. In the light of the Housing Bill changes, officers will now encourage applicants to formally request 'extension of time' where applicants need more time to amend submissions.

PPT LI 05

This indicator is reported annually at year end.

PPT LI 15

Performance in both indicators has dropped slightly due to the increased roadworks currently ongoing within the Borough. Bus operators continue to monitor the network and make changes to schedules to improve reliability and punctuality. Regular monthly update meetings take place with the bus operators with regards to future roadwork projects.

PPT LI 17

Figures for Q3 continue to show a decline as compared with the previous year. Figures for the majority of services remain fairly steady; however community group bookings have declined mainly due to Halton Community Transport ceasing to operate large coaches.

PPT LI 19

This indicator continues to improve with the majority of the bus stops on the core network now compliant. It is anticipated further bus stops will be improved during Q4.

7.0 Financial Summaries

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Summary financial position as 31st December 2015

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Employees	4,259	3,138
Repairs & Maintenance	2848	1,936
Premises	45	43
Energy & Water Costs	656	384
NNDR	533	513
Rents	431	397
Marketing Programme	22	7
Promotions	8	4
Supplies & Services	1,404	641
Agency Related Expenditure	3	3
Grants to Non Voluntary Organisations	352	339
Surplus Property Assets	-685	-514
Revenue Contrib'n to / from Reserves	175	175
Total Expenditure	10,051	7,066
<u>Income</u>		
Fees & Charges	-496	-338
Rent - Markets	-766	-574
Rent - Industrial Estates	-614	-452
Rent – Investment Properties	-655	-447
Transfer to / from Reserves	-676	-676
Government Grant - Income	-1,806	-1,355
Reimbursements & Other Income	-265	-260
Recharges to Capital	-227	-47
Schools SLA Income	-486	-481
Total Income	-5,991	-4,630
NET OPERATIONAL BUDGET	4,060	2,436
Premises Support Costs	1,924	1,452
Transport Support Costs	32	21
Central Support Service Costs	1,824	1,378
Asset Rental Support Costs	2,543	0
Repairs & Maint. Rech. Income	-2,558	-1,919
Accommodation Rech. Income	-2,763	-2,072
Central Supp. Service Rech. Income	-1,836	-1,377
Total Recharges	-834	-2,517
Net Expenditure	3,226	-81

Comments

The latest quarter shows the employees budget will not achieve the anticipated target set for the employee savings. This is due to service demands within the Department with any in year vacancies being filled quickly to avoid a backlog of workloads.

Expenditure has been restricted in year on supplies and services across all Division's and as a result the expenditure is under budget at the end of quarter 3.

Premises costs have remained stable during quarter 3 with accommodation space currently utilised to its maximum potential with both HBC and external agencies staff.

The trading climate is difficult within the region and a number of stalls at Widnes market are currently vacant; nevertheless both Widnes / Runcorn outdoor markets and the market hall are forecasting to over achieve on the income targets set for this financial year.

Due to the current economic climate the Asset Management Team continue to face pressure in renting out of commercial properties to various organisations. Based upon current occupancy levels the service is going to surpass it's current set income target. However, this could vary based upon any changes in occupancy levels and the impact of rental reviews during the final quarter of the year. The earliest we can foresee Surplus Property Assets savings of £685k being achieved is in 2016/17 due to the length of time involved in implementing the programme.

Fees and Charges and School SLA budgets vary from quarter to quarter depending on the level of support required. Both the cleaning and facilities team have over achieved on income targets the current financial year.

Overall the budget position will continue to be monitored and updates provided on a monthly basis to Budget Holders. Managers are reminded of the need to keep within budgets and remedial action undertaken.

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Summary financial position as at 31st December 2015

	2015/16 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation To Date £000's	Expenditure to Date £'000	Variance to Date (overspend) £'000
Economy, Enterprise & Property Dep't				
Castlefields Regeneration	635	120	117	3
3MG	3,493	320	324	(4)
Widnes Waterfront	200	0	0	0
Johnsons Lane Infrastructure	450	120	137	(17)
Decontamination of Land	6	0	0	0
Sci Tech Daresbury	10,965	9	9	0
Former Crossville Depot	200	161	161	0
Peel House Lane Demolition	6	1	1	0
Police Station Demolition	342	30	30	0
Travellers Site - Warrington Road	1,362	1,312	1,302	10
Widnes Town Centre Initiative	21	8	6	2
Lower House Lane Depot – Upgrade	24	17	17	0
Signage at The Hive	5	0	0	0
Equality Act Improvement Works	50	25	18	7
Grand Total	17,754	2,123	2,122	1

Comments

Warrington Road Travellers Site is now partially complete(S106 funding with Redrow still to be agreed).

In regards to the former Crossville Depot, a planning application has been submitted and is currently awaiting approval before work commences.

The timing of spend for Castlefields Regeneration scheme is unknown as the main expenditure item relates to a compulsory purchase order claim (which is likely to be referred to Lands Tribunal).

The bulk of the capital allocation for 3MG will be used to fund the construction of rail sidings which will commence in quarter 3.

Widnes Waterfront and Bayer project will only commence once the developer has an end user in place so timing of spend is hard to predict at this moment in time.

Decontamination of Land allocation will fund final contract retention payment.

Sci Tech Daresbury spend will relate to purchase of Tech Space building which is expected to be towards the end of the financial year.

PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 31st December 2015

	Annual Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure				
Employees	4,561	3,462	3,500	(38)
Other Premises	228	77	76	1
Hired & Contracted Services	214	92	100	(8)
Supplies & Services	299	182	160	22
Street Lighting	2,085	813	813	0
Highways Maintenance	2,333	1,972	1,968	4
Bridges	98	4	4	0
Fleet Transport	1,397	733	733	0
Lease Car Contracts	516	282	282	0
Bus Support – Hopper Tickets	180	80	80	0
Bus Support	525	497	497	0
Out of Borough Transport	51	16	16	0
Finance Charges	406	177	177	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	68	68	68	0
Direct Revenue Financing	14	14	14	0
NRA Levy	60	45	45	0
Total Expenditure	13,035	8,514	8,533	(19)
Income				
Sales	-372	-203	-213	10
Planning Fees	-531	-493	-493	0
Building Control Fees	-201	-179	-179	0
Other Fees & Charges	-469	-310	-345	35
Rents	-8	-6	-6	0
Grants & Reimbursements	-559	-185	-185	0
Efficiency Savings	-60	0	0	0
School SLAs	-40	-40	-42	2
Recharge to Capital	-312	0	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-217	0	0	0
Total Income	-2,769	-1,416	-1,463	47
Net Controllable Expenditure	10,266	7,098	7,070	28
Recharges				
Premises Support	642	515	515	0
Transport Recharges	629	460	512	(52)
Asset Charges	7,791	0	0	0
Central Support Recharges	1,935	1,455	1,455	0
Departmental Support Recharges	393	292	292	0
Departmental Support Recharges Income	-491	-368	-368	0
Support Recharges Income – Transport	-3,734	-2,612	-2,665	53
Support Recharges Income	-1,022	-594	-594	0
Net Total Recharges	6,143	-852	-853	1
Net Departmental Total	16,409	6,246	6,217	29

Comments on the above figures

In overall terms revenue spending at the end of quarter 3 is below budget profile. This is due to a number of expenditure and income budget areas.

Staffing is showing an overspend due to staff turnover targets not being met, this is due to the nature of staffing within PPT, there has been little staff movement over the last 9 months.

Income generated from both Planning and Building Control fees are in-line with current targets at this stage of the financial year. It is expected that by the end of Q4 both services will have fully met the expected income, if not slightly over achieved the income.

Supplies and Services is currently underspending due to closer control of non-essential spending by managers, this is expected to continue in the next quarter.

Income generated from sales at the Lower House Lane depot is slightly above budget for the year to date although the recent impact of nearby road closures connected with Mersey Gateway works is starting to have an adverse impact.

The above budget increase in other fees and charges is mainly due to income generated within the Traffic area for overrun charges and permits etc. The starting of the new permit scheme should also increase this income although not to the expected income target set at the beginning of the year. This shortfall will be covered by excess income and underspends from within the PPT division.

At this stage of the year it is anticipated that overall spend will be within the Departmental budget at the financial year-end.

POLICY, PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION

Capital Projects as at 31st December 2015

	2015/16 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation To Date £'000	Actual Spend To Date £'000	Allocation Remaining £'000
<u>Local Transport Plan</u>				
Bridges & Highway Maintenance				
Bridge Assessment, Strengthening & Maintenance	967	100	101	866
Road Maintenance	1,261	715	712	549
Total Bridge & Highway Maintenance	2,228	815	813	1,415
Integrated Transport	908	260	258	650
Total Local Transport Plan	3,136	1,075	1,071	2,065
<u>Halton Borough Council</u>				
Street lighting – Structural Maintenance	200	65	66	134
Street lighting – replacement programme	1,700	690	690	1,010
Risk Management	120	95	95	25
Fleet Replacement	2,174	650	651	1,523
Peelhouse Lane Cemetery - Highways	120	5	5	115
Total Halton Borough Council	4,314	1,505	1,507	2,807
<u>Grant Funded</u>				
Local Pinch Point – Daresbury E'way	943	80	72	871
Surface Water Management Grant	122	10	9	113
S106 schemes	314	0	0	314
STEPS program	664	95	90	574
Total Grant Funded	2,043	185	171	1,872
Total Capital Programme	9,493	2,765	2,749	6,744

Comments on the above figures:

The programme of spend regarding surface water management is dependent on uptake by members of the public. This in turn is affected by local weather conditions.

The STEP (Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package) programme has now commenced as is expected to fully spend by the end of the financial year.

The bulk of the LTP works has now been completed and these fees will now show during Q4 along with contract retention fees.

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 31st December 2015

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget To Date £'000	Actual To Date £'000	Variance To Date (overspend) £'000
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Employees	12,058	9,522	9,582	(60)
Other Premises	1,182	913	878	35
Supplies & Services	1,585	949	879	70
Book Fund	142	106	107	(1)
Hired & Contracted Services	1,152	753	766	(13)
Food Provisions	629	469	459	10
School Meals Food	2,077	1,320	1,300	20
Transport	54	52	59	(7)
Other Agency Costs	674	145	60	85
Waste Disposal Contracts	5,160	2,667	2,708	(41)
Leisure Management Contract	1,496	1,075	1,136	(61)
Grants To Voluntary Organisations	317	268	257	11
Grant To Norton Priory	222	222	229	(7)
Rolling Projects	38	38	38	0
Capital Financing	9	7	0	7
Total Spending	26,795	18,506	18,458	48
<u>Income</u>				
Sales Income	-2,207	-1,655	-1,526	(129)
School Meals Sales	-2,180	-1,585	-1,606	21
Fees & Charges Income	-3,272	-2,576	-2,501	(75)
Rents Income	-235	-234	-277	43
Government Grant Income	-1,202	-1,179	-1,168	(11)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-548	-426	-453	27
Schools SLA Income	-79	-79	-83	4
Internal Fees Income	-120	-83	-106	23
School Meals Other Income	-2,270	-1,791	-1,800	9
Meals On Wheels	-196	-134	-96	(38)
Catering Fees	-225	-154	-78	(76)
Capital Salaries	-53	-33	-17	(16)
Transfers From Reserves	-50	-23	-23	0
Total Income	-12,637	-9,952	-9,734	(218)
Net Controllable Expenditure	14,158	8,554	8,724	(170)
<u>Recharges</u>				
Premises Support	1,947	1,472	1,472	0
Transport Recharges	2,390	1,223	1,223	0
Departmental Support Services	9	0	0	0
Central Support Services	3,146	2,379	2,379	0
Asset Charges	3,005	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-382	-390	-390	0
Net Total Recharges	10,115	4,684	4,684	0
Net Departmental Total	24,273	13,238	13,408	(170)

Comments on the above figures:

The net budget is £170,000 over budget profile at the end of the third quarter of the financial year.

There have been a number of staff who have left the department on redundancy terms over the past quarter and subsequent vacant posts will help contribute to the staff turnover savings target for the remainder of the year. Although it is currently forecast that employee expenditure will remain above budget at year-end.. . Agency staff expenditure has decreased slightly in quarter three and is still significantly lower than last year, with the introduction of the apprenticeship scheme and vacant posts being filled.

Supplies and Services remain under budget profile across all Divisions to offset budget pressures within the Department. There are small underspends on areas such as equipment, advertising, and clothing.

The Leisure Contract is now in its final year and will end in March 2016, after which the service will be brought back in house and realise agreed savings.

Waste Disposal contracts are still over budget profile and will remain a pressure throughout the remainder of the year. This budget will be closely monitored throughout the new financial year to ensure costs are contained and brought back in line with budget.

Other Agency costs are £85,000 under budget profile mainly due to underspending on the Area Forums where some projects have still not yet been completed.

Sales, Fees & Charges and Internal Catering Fees are the most significant under-achievements on income across the Department. Fees and Charges income has recovered a little in this quarter mainly due to generated income relating to the Brindley and Open Spaces being maximised. The income relating to the collection of green waste has however over performed against budget by £44,000.

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Capital Projects as at 31st December 2015

	2015-16 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation To Date £'000	Actual Spend To Date £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	30	30	31	(1)
Stadium 3G Equipment	12	0	0	12
Widnes Recreation Site	741	600	573	168
Norton Priory	2,843	700	680	2,163
Norton Priory Biomass Boiler	107	0	0	107
Children's Playground Equipment	138	98	92	46
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13
Crow Wood Play Area	4	2	0	4
Runcorn Hill Park	138	138	521	(383)
Runcorn Cemetery Extension	9	0	0	9
Cremators Widnes Crematorium	109	109	188	(79)
Peelhouse Lane Cemetery	1020	12	12	1,008
Peelhouse Lane Cemetery-Enabling Work	65	20	20	45
Open Spaces Schemes	160	100	97	63
Playground Third Party Funding	340	0	0	340
Litter Bins	20	20	19	1
Total	5,749	1,829	2,232	3,512

Comments on the above figures

The Widnes Recreation project has now been completed although there are still a number of payments due in respect of retention and project completion. Total spend will be within the allocation.

The Norton Priory "Monastery To Museum" project commenced on-site in August 2015, and has an anticipated completion date of July 2016. Total Heritage Lottery funding amounts to £3.9M over the course of the project.

Funding for the Runcorn Hill Park project remains a concern. The initial contractor tasked with phase one of the building works went into liquidation once work had commenced. The decision was taken to continue with the project with the expectation that extra funding may be secured to meet the resulting increased costs. The additional costs of the re-tendered contract, together with remedial works required to the original constructions, and additional security costs, are in the region of £390,000. Requests to external bodies for additional funding have so far proved unsuccessful. Heritage Lottery Fund, the principal contributor to the scheme are unwilling to contribute further to phase one of the works. Total project funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund amounts to £2.2M until 2018 for a number of phases of the programme, and consideration is currently being given as to whether the costs of subsequent phases of the work can be reduced, whilst still attracting the full level of grant funding originally offered.

The allocation for Playground Third Party Funding represents funding carried forward from previous years to provide match funding for external grants. Any residual funding will be carried forward at year-end.

8.0 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 	Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year.

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 23rd March 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Community and Resources

SUBJECT: Business Planning 2016 - 17

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1. To provide an update on Business Planning for the period 2016 - 17 and to consider the Directorate priorities, objectives and targets for service areas that fall within the remit of this Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Board receive the advanced draft of the Business Plan extract prior to its consideration by Executive Board.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Following organisational restructuring the Council will develop a single Business Plan for the 2016 - 17 financial year, and in parallel with the budget, that is subject to annual review and refresh. The input of the Policy and Performance Boards into the business planning process and the setting of priorities for the Directorate is an important part of this process.

3.2 Key priorities for development or improvement for the various functional areas reporting to this Policy & Performance Board were presented to and considered by the Board in autumn 2015.

3.3 In light of the meeting the Draft Business Plan for 2016 - 17 has now been developed.

3.4 The Plan will include details of specific activities and performance measures and targets that would provide a focus for the on-going monitoring of performance throughout the coming financial year. The Plan will be subject to annual review and refresh in order that it remains fit for purpose taking account of any future change in circumstances, including any future funding announcements that may emerge.

3.5 Given the remit of this Board relevant extracts from the Draft Plan is now available for consideration by the Board.

3.6 It should be noted that plans can only be finalised once budget decisions have been confirmed in March and that target information will be determined following final outturn data becoming available post March 2016.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The development of a Business Plan forms a key part of the Council's policy framework in that it articulates the broad direction of the Council over the coming financial year.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Business Plan has been developed taking account of known resource availability.

5.2 The Plan will form the basis of the Priority Based Performance Reports which will continue to be presented to the Board during 2016 - 17.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 The business planning process provides a means by which the Corporate Priorities of the Council are integrated into the delivery of services at an operational level.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The development of a Business Plan will allow the authority to both align its activities to the delivery of organisational and partnership priorities and to provide information to stakeholders as to the work of the Directorates over the coming year.

7.2 Risk Assessment and the annual review and refresh of Directorate Risk Registers will continue to form an integral element of Directorate Plan development.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Equality and diversity considerations, and the Council's responsibilities under equalities legislation, remain integral to the business planning process. An annual report will be made available to Members as an element of the Council's performance management arrangements.

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

9.1 There are no relevant background documents to this report.

Key Developments

Policy, Planning and Transportation

Flood Risk Management

In April 2015, changes to planning policy were introduced to ensure that sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will be provided in new major developments where appropriate. Halton, in its role as lead Local Flood Authority is now a statutory consultee on the management of surface water in major planning applications and the Highways Development Division has provided advice to Planning in relation to around 40 proposed developments. To assist in the design of new developments, Halton is currently working with its Cheshire Mid-Mersey flood risk management partners to develop a local 'handbook' of SuDS standards and guidance for developers.

Bids for capital funding for flood risk management schemes which are to be delivered under the six-year programme 'refresh' were submitted in June 2015. Halton currently has seven schemes listed in the programme for 2015 – 16 and funding for a further three schemes to commence in 2016/17. Defra's 'partnership funding' approach to the delivery of the programme will require a local contribution to the cost of implementing the schemes.

Street Lighting

The ongoing costs of energy continue to put pressure upon the Council's revenue budgets and this is particularly evident in relation to the costs of providing street lighting. As a consequence during 2015 – 16, the Council has sought various means to mitigate the impact of these costs through, for example, the use of LED fittings and operating scheduled lighting of specific stretches of carriageway. These initiatives will continue as we move throughout the life of this plan in order to minimise, as far as possible, future operating costs whilst maintaining a safe highway network throughout the borough.

Logistics

During 2015 – 16, Integrated Transport Funding has been used to deliver new and improved passenger transport facilities including the replacement and refurbishment of shelters and enhancements to improve the accessibility for passengers with disabilities.

Part of this work has involved the installation of 38 Real Time Passenger Information displays at various locations throughout the borough. This is a GPS tracking system that provides more accurate data in relation to bus travel and arrival times allowing passengers to make better informed travel decisions within the network.

Additionally, all passenger service contracts for Adult and Children's Transport were re-tendered during 2015 – 16 for a contract term of between two and four years to the total value of £1.2M. This will ensure the continued provision of services throughout the life of this plan.

Mersey Gateway / Silver Jubilee Bridge

The construction of a second road crossing over the Mersey has been a long-held aspiration of the Council and its neighbouring local authorities. Following extensive lobbying of government by the Council, the construction of the new six-lane crossing first began in May 2014 and has continued in earnest throughout 2015-16. Upon completion in autumn 2017, the new crossing will relieve the congestion associated with the ageing Silver Jubilee Bridge and provide more effective transport links with the primary regional road network.

The Mersey Gateway Crossings Board was established by the Council to operate as a non-profit commercial enterprise to work on the Council's behalf with the Merseylink Consortium to deliver the project. The project is one of the largest infrastructure initiatives in the UK and is recognised by consultants KPMG as one of the top 100 infrastructure projects around the globe.

The crossing, which is over 70% funded by the private sector, will be integrated with other developments in public transport, cycling and pedestrian links across Halton along with improvements to regional transport links and regeneration activity, in order to further exploit long-term inward investment opportunities.

In addition, reusing and restoring the land across the project site will allow for further environmental improvements to be delivered. The Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust, a special charitable body, has been established to help improve the long-term environment within the area.

For example, approximately 700,000 square metres of material, enough to fill 284 Olympic sized swimming pools will be excavated within the project boundary with over 98% of this material being reused.

Whilst it is accepted that such a large scale project will inevitably involve some disruption to the highway network the Council, and its partners work closely to minimise, as far as possible, the impact of works through effective project planning and the regular publication of traffic information.

Deferred funding from the Department for Transport has been confirmed for the remaining £4.9M of the Silver Jubilee Bridge Capital Maintenance funding awarded in 2011/12 for 5 years to 2017/18. This links in with the £600k of reconfiguration funding due in 2017/18 from the Mersey Gateway and 3-year funding of £3M for the period 2016/17 – 2018/19 from the Liverpool City Region. There is also the potential for a further £2M of LCR funding for an additional 2 years.

This LCR funding will enable steady state maintenance for the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) to be carried out and will be matched by £307k from HBC to give an overall fund of £1.3M per year. Once the Permit to Use (PTU) is reached in September 2017, vehicles will start to use the new Mersey Crossing, at which point the SJB will be closed for up to nine months so that the reconfiguration and disruptive maintenance works, such as high level painting, can be started.

During the latter part of 2015 – 16 the overarching Policy and Strategy documents for the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) have been developed and these will be presented for political endorsement during the early part of 2016 – 17.

These documents will form part of the Council's revised HAMP and will enable the further development of the operational delivery elements of the Plan. The HAMP will set out how the Council intends to manage its highway assets to ensure that they provide the longest and most cost effective service to the Borough and will provide the link to the Council's local priorities, e.g. through the Local Transport Plan, and those that are developed with partners at a regional level, for example through the Liverpool City Region Key Route Network Asset Management Plan.

The HAMP is a critical document in that the Government have determined that 10% of the future annual maintenance allocation of the Local transport Plan will be issued through an Incentive Fund. In order to achieve the highest allocation through the fund it will be necessary for the Council to have in place a comprehensive HAMP and to be able to demonstrate that this document is central to spending decisions and influences the Councils approach to managing its highway assets.

Planning, Building Control and Contaminated Land

At the time of writing this Plan a significant amount of new development is in the process of being delivered, including that at SciTech Daresbury, Mersey Gateway, and East Runcorn. There are also a significant number of sites in the development pipeline, notably in Widnes (Halebank / Ditton, Widnes Waterfront, North Widnes) which will be taken forward into 2016 -17.

The replacement of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which is 10 years old, and the identification of new development sites (allocations) to provide for growth remains a priority as we move forward. This will be achieved by the emerging Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) and the plan's supporting evidence base is progressing well with a number of key studies being commissioned / completed during 2016 - 16.

Community and Environment

Waste Management

Major changes were successfully introduced to the Council's waste and recycling collection services in August 2015. These included the borough-wide roll out of the Alternate Bin Collection (ABC) Scheme to all suitable properties and the introduction of enhanced kerbside recycling collection services. The changes were introduced to provide service improvements, deliver efficiencies and ensure the consistent application of the Council's Household Waste and Recycling Collection Policy, which sets limits the volume of waste to be collected from each household. The restriction on the amount of rubbish removed is intended to encourage waste reduction and increase recycling and all households across the

borough are now provided with either a fortnightly collection of a standard sized wheeled bin or a weekly collection of a small wheeled bin or refuse sacks.

A key focus for the service will continue to be the reduction in the levels of waste produced per household in the borough and to maximise recycling performance. Reducing the amount of residual waste that requires costly treatment or disposal will help reduce the Council's overall operating costs and generate further financial savings, in addition to improving the natural environment.

If the Council is to achieve its objectives, it is essential that residents accept their responsibilities for waste and make best use of the recycling services provided to them. A major barrier to waste reduction and increased recycling is public participation and to help overcome this awareness raising, community engagement and education will continue to be at the forefront of the Council's approach to encouraging residents to think about the amount of waste they produce and recycle. However, if the Council is to be successful in reducing the costs of dealing with waste, it will need to strictly apply its Household Waste Collection Policies and will need to take all necessary steps to ensure residents' compliance with those Policies.

Moving forward, the Council will look to extend the range of biodegradable and recyclable materials that it collects from households, as well as extending the range of materials that residents can deposit at its Household Waste and Recycling Centres within Runcorn and Widnes.

In 2015 the Council introduced a charge for the separate collection of garden waste and decisions to review services which have previously been provided free of charge are the direct result of significant reductions in funding settlements from central government. The introduction of the charge for the collection of garden waste is intended to make the service self-financing; meaning it will not require a subsidy from Council budgets. This approach will allow the Council to minimise the impact of budget reductions and help maintain important front-line services for the local community that may otherwise have to be withdrawn or reduced.

Environmental Improvement

Local environmental quality remains a significant consideration for the Council as it impacts on the whole community. The residents of Halton tell us that clean and safe streets are two of the most important factors in helping to make their neighbourhood a good place to live. It is crucial, therefore, that the Council continues to undertake actions to effectively tackle environmental crime, such as littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling, that can negatively affect the safety and attractiveness of the local environment.

The Council will continue to take appropriate action to protect those members of our community who are affected by the irresponsible behaviour of individuals who commit environmental crime. To this end, the Council will continue to work closely with enforcement partners and other external agencies to deliver a co-ordinated approach to enforcement. This will involve developing joint protocols and action plans and the utilisation

of statutory provisions available to address all forms of environmental crime within the boundaries of the Borough.

Whilst it will be important to develop and deliver effective communication, education and awareness raising initiatives, policies for tackling environmental crime will also need to be continually reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and support the effective delivery of the Council's environmental objectives.

Development and Investment Services

A significant amount of work has been undertaken during 2015 – 16 which has focussed upon engaging with internal and external stakeholders to bring forward and activate suitable sites to exploit various retail, leisure, and business opportunities. This has included for example St Pauls Quarter, Sci-Tech Daresbury, and 3MG.

Nb Additional narrative to be added.

Housing Strategy

The Housing Solutions team has been very effective in preventing homelessness, but will come under increasing pressure as benefit and related changes are introduced. As a consequence, we will be closely monitoring demand, reviewing capacity and ensuring the move on from homeless accommodation is timely, and strengthening our work with housing providers.

Emerging Issues

Policy, Planning and Transportation

Investment in Transport Improvements

As part of a City Region-wide project, an 'investment pipeline' of transport schemes is currently being developed across the six authorities. The aim of the work, which is due to be completed by March 2016, is to identify a selection of transport schemes at a range of scales which address current and future issues for each district, including supporting planned housing and economic growth.

This multi-lateral approach will result in the identification of schemes by each district, some of which, subject to an appraisal process, will be taken forward at a local level in a local investment pipeline. Others, deemed to be of City Region significance during the appraisal process, will be filtered through for assessment for potential inclusion in a City Region Pipeline of investment priorities, which can be regularly refreshed and updated, as new pressures and opportunities come to bear.

The Combined Authority now receive and manage the integrated transport budget across the Liverpool City Region and the local investment pipeline will be important in determining the prioritisation of schemes for each authority's funding allocation.

Network Management

As we move into 2016 – 17 the significant proportion of network management issues will be in relation to the ongoing construction of the new Mersey Crossing.

It is inevitable that a project of this scale will cause some interruption and diversion to normal traffic flows and routes as a result of the need to instigate new structures along with changes to existing infrastructure.

To minimise the adverse impact of such works the Council will continue to work closely with Mersey Gateway and other agencies to programme works in a co-ordinated and cohesive way.

For example the Council will continue to meet regularly with bus operators to discuss future phases of the programme and arrange schedules and temporary routes in order to maintain the reliability and punctuality of services.

Additionally the Council will continue to provide timely and accurate information to the public through the use of appropriate signage and website portals including its own and the Mersey Gateway website.

These pages will contain information about latest information, planned roadwork closures and diversion routes and bridge webcams that will assist road users in planning their routes and journey times.

Planning, Building Control and Contaminated Land

Planning reform continues to feature strongly in the current Government's agenda.

The Housing and Planning Bill forms a cornerstone of the Government's vision for 2020. With much of the content trailed in [Fixing the Foundations](#) (the Government's productivity plan), this is a considerable piece of legislation and Implications will be far reaching on topics including:

- Starter Homes
- Self-build and custom house building
- Right to Buy
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Local Plan (provisions for Sec of State to intervene locally if LAs do not have current Development Plans adopted)
- Permission in Principle and local registers of land
- Further changes to 'Permitted Development Rights'
- Local Authority Planning Performance

- Compulsory purchase procedures

At present, the full detail on these areas has yet to emerge and at the time of writing the implications for the work of the Council cannot be fully established. However, the Council will remain cognisant of changes as they emerge and, where necessary, take appropriate action to integrate any additional responsibilities into its processes and procedures.

Development and Investment Services

In fully exploiting further opportunities, a number of initiatives will be taken forward during the life of this Plan in relation to regeneration activities some of which have been identified below.

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Programme will provide a strategic focus for managing and delivering sites for investment and development following the completion of the construction of the new Mersey Crossing in autumn 2016. This will ensure that, in addition to the positive effects on the highway infrastructure, the wider economic benefits of the project can be realised.

The Council will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to develop and establish a Runcorn Retail Business Improvement District to generate additional resources to further investment and development of facilities at Runcorn Shopping Centre and Runcorn Town Centre.

Following the emergence of the Liverpool City Region in 2015 – 16, the Council will actively work with partner agencies to develop a Single Economic Plan for the region in order to maximise the benefits of such arrangements for local residents. In addition, the Council will further develop its relationship with Halton Chamber through the development of a Business Growth Hub which will provide a one stop shop for business support within the borough.

Support will continue to be provided for the development of applications and the utilisation of funding available from the European Funding Programme and specialist advice will be provided to the Greenbelt Review concerning the ongoing requirements for employment and residential land.

Housing Strategy

It is likely that the demand for Housing related services will continue to rise during 2016 – 17 as a consequence of the continuing changes to the Welfare Benefit system and the possible rise in interest rates resulting in a need for Mortgage Rescue Services (MRS). As such the Housing Solutions Team will work closely with other services and voluntary providers such as Welfare Benefits etc. to mitigate the potential impact upon those in need of housing provision.

Service Objective: PPT 01	Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) Complex Major Maintenance – Delivery of Liverpool City Region (LCR) Full Business Case and subsequent Procurement of Contractors to complete works over 3 year period from April 2016. This will ensure continued unrestricted availability of the SJB crossing and to allow future maintenance to be delivered on a steady state, lifecycle planned basis.		
Key Milestone(s) (16 / 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review progress against LCR SJB maintenance strategy and deliver 2016/17 major bridge maintenance works programme, March 2017. 		
Responsible Officer:	Divisional Manager Highways	Linked Indicators:	N / A

Service Objective: PPT 02	Deliver the statutory development plan as required by the Town and Country Planning Acts to provide a clear direction for the future development of the Borough. Provide operational policies that implement strategy and ensure transparent and accountable service delivery.		
Key Milestone(s) (16 / 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopt the Delivery and Site Allocations Local Plan (DALP) March 2017. ▪ Production of SPDs and Planning Briefs. March 2017. 		
Responsible Officer:	Divisional Manager Policy & Development Services	Linked Indicators:	PPT LI 02 / 03

Service Objective: PPT 03	Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme – Deliver the LTP Capital Programmes to ensure that the transport system is maintained and developed to meets local needs.		
Key Milestone(s) (16 / 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To deliver the 2016/17 LTP Capital Programme March 2017. 		
Responsible Officer:	Divisional Manager Highways	Linked Indicators:	N / A

Service Objective: PPT 04	Flood Risk Management - to manage the risk of local flooding (i.e. flooding arising from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses) across the Borough.		
Key Milestone(s) (16 / 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To manage the Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) capital programme of scheme delivery, and preparation of funding bid for future years. March 2017. 		
Responsible Officer:	Divisional Manager Highways	Linked Indicators:	N / A

Service Objective CED 09	To deliver a comprehensive development and investment service to develop and deliver major regeneration projects and maximise external funding opportunities.		
Key Milestone(s) (16 / 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refresh Markets Business Plan by September 2016 ▪ Establish Service Level Agreement with third sector regarding external funding provision by June 2016 ▪ Develop a charging policy for business and funding support by September 2016 ▪ Completion of Tech Space Development (SciTech Daresbury) by September 2016 ▪ Complete site preparation Eastern Plots (SciTech Daresbury) by September 2016 		
Responsible Officer:	Operational Director Economy, Enterprise and Property		

Business Plan 2016 – 17 Performance Indicators – Environment and Urban Renewal Extracts

Ref	Description	14/15 Actual	15/16 Target	15/16 Actual	16/17 Target
PPTLI 02	Net additional homes provided	501	552		552
PPTLI 03	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	259	138		138
PPT LI 04	Processing of planning applications (%) as measured against targets for, a) 'major' applications b) 'minor' applications c) 'other' applications	75.00% 43.75% 85.71%	60.00% 80.00% 80.00%		60.00% 80.00% 80.00%
PPT LI 06	No. of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	42.4 (2014)	44.4 (2015)		
PPT LI 07	No. of children (<16) killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 year Av.)	6.2 (2014)	6.2 (2015)		
PPT LI 09	The percentage change in number of people killed or seriously injured during the calendar year compared to the previous year. Figures are based on a 3 year rolling average, up to the current year.	-9.2% (based on 2014 data)	-8.4% (2015)		-5.6% (2016)
PPT LI 11	Damage to roads and pavements (above intervention levels) repaired within 24 hours.	98%	98.00%		98%
PPT LI 14	% of network where structural maintenance should be considered: a) Principal Roads b) Non-Principal Roads c) Unclassified Roads		1.00% 3.00% 3.00%		2.00% 4.00% 9.00%

Business Plan 2016 – 17 Performance Indicators – Environment and Urban Renewal Extracts

Ref	Description	14/15 Actual	15/16 Target	15/16 Actual	16/17 Target
PPT LI 15	Bus service punctuality, Part 1: The proportion of non-frequent scheduled services on time (%): Percentage of buses starting route on time Percentage of buses on time at intermediate timing points	98.38%	98.40%		98.50%
		93.82%	94.00%		94.50%
PPT LI 18	% of bus stops with Quality Corridor accessibility features. (No. of stops – 603)	68.00% (411 Bus Stops)	70% (422 Bus Stops)		75% (452 Bus Stops)
CCC4	The % of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by Halton within the last 2 years	0	TBA	TBA	1.2
CCC5	Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation	19	TBA	TBA	17
CCC6	Households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the LA housing advice service, and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation (the number divided by the number of thousand households in the Borough)	1.27%	TBA	TBA	6
CED062	Number of inward investment enquiries per annum.	TBA	TBA	TBA	250
CED063	Inward investment enquiry conversion rate per annum (%)	TBA	TBA	TBA	10
CED064	Land developed for regeneration / housing (acres)	TBA	TBA	TBA	12
	Land prepared for regeneration (acres)	TBA	TBA	TBA	30
CED065	Number of funding enquiries per annum	TBA	TBA	TBA	60
CED066	% of successful funding bids	New	New	New	70

REPORT:	Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	23 rd March 2016
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Community & Resources
PORTFOLIO	Transportation
SUBJECT:	Objection to Proposed 30mph Speed Limit, Lunts Heath Road, Widnes
WARDS:	Farnworth

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report on an objection that has been received following public consultation on a proposed Traffic Regulation Order to introduce a 30mph speed limit on part of Lunts Heath Road, Widnes. Details of the proposed Order are set out in Appendices 'B' and 'C'.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board supports the proposal to make an Order to implement a 30mph. speed limit on Lunts Heath Road, Widnes as set out in Appendix 'B' and to the matter being referred to the Executive Board for resolution.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Continuing housing development adjacent to Lunts Heath Road has led to requests from residents and a ward member that the speed limit be reduced to 30mph over the full length of the route on the grounds that retention of a 40mph speed limit on the section in question was felt to now be inappropriate. Land to the south is now completely occupied by housing estates with multiple access points, and on-going building on the north side has resulted in there now being only a 300m length of frontage that is not occupied by residential developments. Accordingly, in December 2015, this Council advertised its intention of introducing a 30mph speed limit as requested.

3.2 Traffic counts are available for this route from the years 2002 and 2013 as follows:

Location	Date	Ave. daily 2 way flow
Wilmere Lane to Finsbury Park	July 2002	7831
Adjacent to Grosvenor Rd. (Church View)	July 2013	9442

The average daily flow has thus increased by approximately 20% between the years 2002 to 2013 on Lunts Heath Road, whilst nationally over the same time period the number of licensed vehicles has increased by 14.5%.

3.3 The national speed limit on lit roads such as Lunts Heath Road is 30 mph, however, current DfT advice on setting speed limits states that "general compliance needs to be

achieved without an excessive reliance on enforcement.” The mean speed of traffic recorded during the 2013 survey was 32mph, indicating that there would be a high degree of compliance with a reduced speed limit of 30mph.

- 3.4 Between the three years 2012 to 2014 inclusive, there were no road traffic collisions involving injury reported to Cheshire Police over the section of Lunts Heath Road now being recommended to be subject to a 30mph limit.
- 3.5 In keeping with its now essentially residential nature, the proposed speed limit would tie in with other areas to the east (Derby Road) and the western section of Lunts Heath Road which already has a 30mph speed limit. Drawing no. 9110 in Appendix ‘C’ shows the length to be covered by the proposed restriction.
- 3.6 During the advertised consultation period, one objection was received, from a Lunts Heath Road resident, which is reproduced in Appendix ‘A’ with personal details removed. The objection relates to interpretation of the DfT’s Transport Circular 01/2013 (Setting Local Speed Limits) and whilst quoting extensively from this document, the focus of the objection is that application of a 30mph speed limit to Lunts Heath Road is not realistic or justified and that this Council has not complied with the DfT guidance.
- 3.7 The latter is not the case as Lunts Heath Road is a lit, single carriageway road which has become residential in nature through adjacent development and on which the existing mean traffic speed has been independently recorded at 32mph. Therefore, the introduction of a 30mph limit is entirely in line with current DfT guidance.
- 3.8 The formal consultations on the proposed speed limit change involved site notices, a notice in the local newspaper and the delivery of individual letters to affected households. The proposal has the support of ward Councillors.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of the proposed speed limit revision if implemented would be approximately £2000 which would be charged to the Traffic Management Revenue Budget.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council’s ‘Children and Young People in Halton’ priority.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council’s ‘Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton’ priority.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council’s ‘A Healthy Halton’ priority.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The proposed speed limit reduction could serve to restrict vehicle speeds and thus the severity of any road traffic collision that may occur on Lunts Heath Road.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Halton's Urban Renewal'.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There is a variable and uncertain road safety risk associated with not introducing the proposed speed limit reduction, in that higher speed could contribute to the severity of any accident that occurred on the route. The section of Lunts Heath Road in question has a very low incidence of traffic collisions.

7.2 The proposal was brought forward at the request of residents and their ward Councillor.

8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES.

8.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 There are no background papers under section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

Objector's name & address details withheld.

21 December 2015

Dear Mr Parr,

THE HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (LUNTS HEATH ROAD, WIDNES) (30 M.P.H. SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2015

I wish to register my objection to the above named Order. My reason for objecting is that I have extensive experience of using Lunt's Heath Road at all times of day and in all conditions and consider the proposed speed limit reduction to be unrealistic and unjustified for the road in question. I consider that the proposed limit contravenes the advice given by central Government on the setting of speed limits.

I note the Council's statement of reasons for proposing the Order to be as follows:

"A reduction in the speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph due to the changing nature of the route which is now largely residential."

My understanding is to identify, justify and progress a change in speed limit, Halton Council is required to conform to:

"The Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 (SETTING LOCAL SPEED LIMITS) "

which in SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION has the following statement as the first of the Key Points:

"Speed limits should be evidence-led and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance. Speed limits should be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed."

This is repeated and extended in Paragraph 3 - *"Effective speed management is part of creating a safe road management which is fit for purpose. It involves many components designed to work together to require, encourage and help road users to adopt appropriate and safe speeds below the speed limit, speed limits are a key source of information to road users, particularly as an indicator of the nature and risks posed by that road both to themselves and to other road users. Speed limits should, therefore, be evidence-led and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel and encourage self-compliance. They should be seen by drivers as the maximum speed rather than a target speed at which to drive irrespective of conditions. It is often not appropriate or safe to drive at the maximum speed limit."*

The requirement for Halton Council to conform to this Circular is specified:

Paragraph 5 states – *"Local speed limits are determined by traffic authorities having regard to guidance issued by the Department for Transport."*

Paragraph 8 – *"This guidance is to be used for setting all local speed limits on single and dual carriageway roads in both urban and rural areas."*

The Circular identifies considerations in setting local speed limits, and these include:

Paragraph 23 – *"A study of crashes, their severity, causes and frequency, together with a survey of traffic speeds..."*

Paragraph 26 – *"Where there is poor compliance with an existing speed limit on a road or stretch of road the reasons for the non-compliance should be examined before a solution is sought. If the speed limit is set too low for no clear reason and the risk of collision is low, then it may be appropriate to increase the limit."*

The Circular identifies Underlying principles, including:

Paragraph 27 – *"The aim of speed management policies should be to achieve a safe distribution of speeds consistent with the speed limit that reflects the function of the road and the road environment. This should imply a mean speed appropriate to the prevailing road environment, and all vehicles moving at speeds below or at the posted speed limit, while having regard to the traffic conditions."*

Paragraph 28 – *"The estimated collision and injury savings should also be an important factor when considering changes to the local speed limit. Another key factor when setting a speed limit is what the road looks like to the road users."*

Paragraph 30 – *"The following will be important factors when considering what is an appropriate speed limit:*

- *history of collisions;*
- *road geometry and engineering;*
- *road function;*
- *composition of road users;*
- *existing traffic speeds;*
- *road environment."*

Paragraph 31 – *"Before introducing or changing a local speed limit, traffic authorities will wish to satisfy themselves that the expected benefits exceed the costs."*

"The speed limit appraisal toolkit will help assess the full costs and benefit of any proposed schemes"

Paragraph 35 – *"Mean speed and 85th percentile speed (the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles are travelling) are the most commonly used measures of actual traffic speed. Traffic authorities should continue to routinely collect and assess both."*

SECTION 5: THE SPEED LIMIT APPRAISAL TOOL

Paragraph 67 – *"In addition to enabling a local highway authority to decide whether or not to introduce a new speed limit scheme, the tool encourages transparency in the decision making process. It also provides a facility that encourages local highway authorities to adopt a more consistent process."*

Paragraph 73 – *"The output spreadsheets should be considered as a starting point for developing the appraisal into a case that can be readily understood and appreciated by a range of people."*

The Council has not provided any evidence in line with the above Guidance paragraphs to justify a change in the speed limit of an A-road which is an important west-east route along the northern edge of Widnes. There are few roads available which provide this connection, which the Council must have been aware of when agreeing to additional housing sites but no accommodation was made for this.

As indicated in the Guidance, the natural selection of a speed maximum by a driver depends on the condition of the road and its route. Lunt's Heath Road is wide, open and with few direct accesses on to it. Further, there is a grass verge between the road and the pavement along much of its length, distancing vehicles from pedestrians. At busy times of day, the expected speed will automatically reduce because of the impact on driving conditions. That is to say that the vast majority of drivers will amend their driving pattern to take into account any difficulties but when those difficulties are not present, normal progress can be made at a speed which is appropriate to the conditions.

If the Council has conformed to Government guidelines and has the data to support their case, I would be grateful to receive this and will, of course, give it due consideration. In the meantime, drivers have a right to expect speed limits to be applied on a consistent and rational basis across the country. Furthermore, unrealistically low speed limits will lessen drivers' respect for all limits, to the detriment of road safety generally.

I would be grateful if you will acknowledge receipt of this objection and advise me of the means by which it will be formally considered by Council Members.

Yours faithfully,

Mr David Parr, Chief Executive
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
WIDNES
WA8 7QF

Details of Proposed Order:

30mph Speed Limit.

Location	Description	Justification
Lunts Heath Road, Widnes	From the junction with Derby Road to a point 240 metres east of the junction with Cronton Lane. (Links to existing 30mph speed limit further west)	Reduction from 40mph due to changing nature of the route which is now largely residential.

Associated revocations: None

Exemptions: Standard

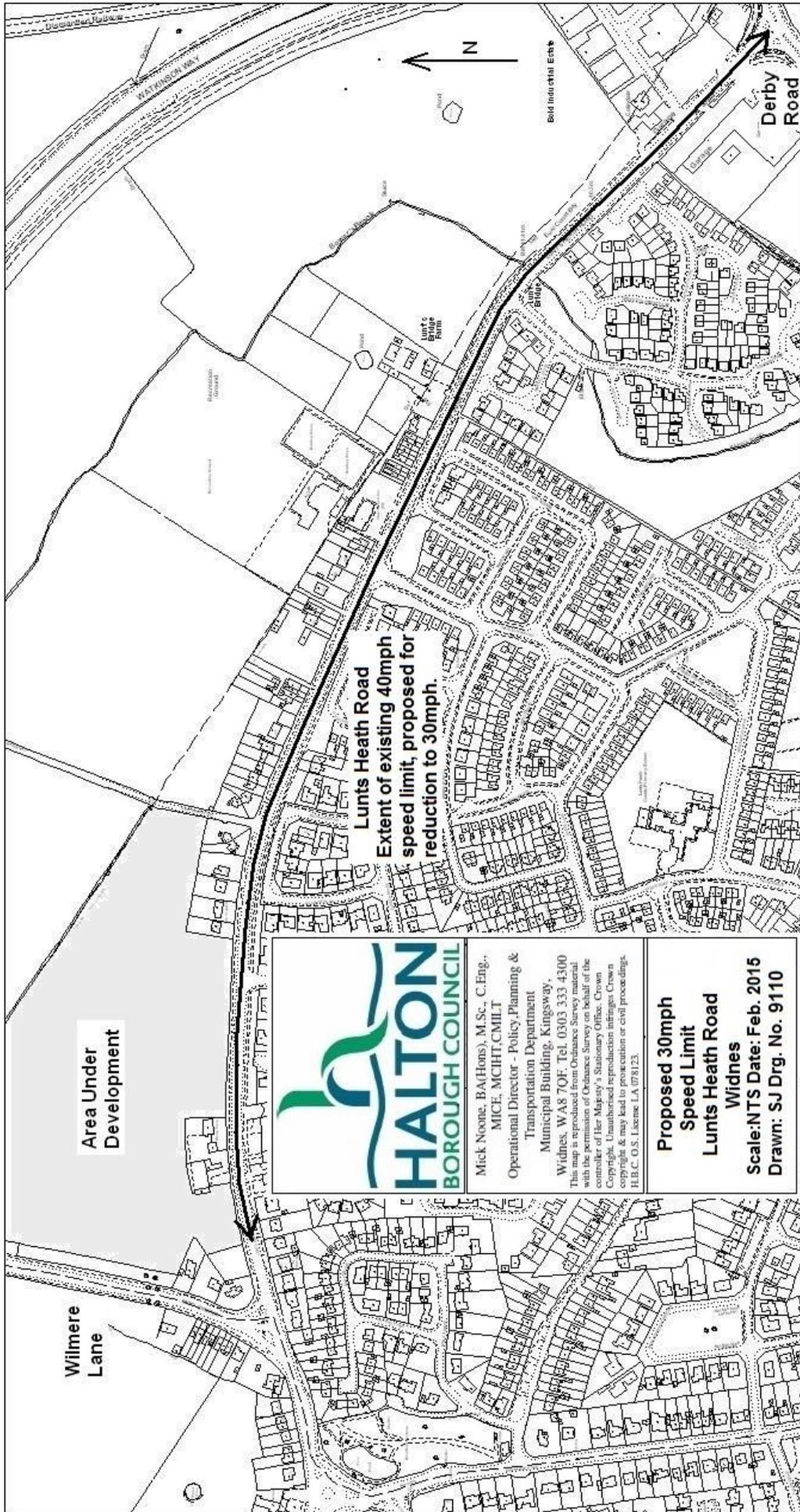
Statement of Reasons: As above.

Plans: Drawing number 9110 for deposit only. (Appendix 'C' below)

Date to be advertised: ASAP

Date to be effected: ASAP

Advertising code: 5400 1625 2544



REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 23rd March 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Physical Environment

SUBJECT: Objectively Assessed Need for Housing.

WARDS: Boroughwide

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides a summary of conclusions on the Objectively Assessed Need for Housing, as contained in the recently completed Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

2. RECOMMENDATION: That the content of the report is noted.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 3.1 Since the publication of the national Planning Policy Framework in 2012, Government has required that Councils calculate the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing within their 'Housing Market Area' and that they plan positively to meet that need in full.
- 3.2 The Planning Practice Guidance published from 2014 sets out suggestions for issues that should be incorporated within any assessment of Objectively Assessed Need.
- 3.3 In 2015, Halton together with St.Helens and Warrington Borough Councils jointly commissioned specialist consultants GL Hearn and JG Consulting to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to re-examine the appropriateness of the Mid-Mersey geography (covering the three authorities) as a Housing Market Area (HMA) and identify the OAN for the Mid-Mersey HMA and for each of the partner authorities.
- 3.4 Appendix A is a Topic Briefing Paper that has been prepared for the website, setting out the various stages in the SHMA study leading to the suggested figure for Objectively Assessed Need for housing.
- 3.5 The conclusion from the study is that the Full Objectively Assessed Need for housing in Halton (assuming jobs growth of 4,952) in the period 2014~37 is 466 dwellings per annum. In addition, the SHMA identifies an annual shortfall of 119 affordable units per annum across Halton.

- 3.6 The Study looked at the size of the additional dwellings that are likely to be required. This shows a marked difference between the market and affordable sectors in Halton.

	Market	Affordable
1 bed	6.5%	44.8%
2 beds	30.4%	28.4%
3 beds	52.7%	23.8%
4+ beds	10.5%	3.0%
	100%	100%

- 3.7 Finally, the study considered the demand for specialist housing, by applying the proportion of the current population in specific age groups requiring specialist accommodation to future population projections. These figures do not account for changed priorities in how care needs may best be met, such as in-house or Extra Care models.

	Population	Residential Care
Aged 75+ (2014)	8,717	517
Aged 75+ (2037)	18,292	1,176
Change	9,575	659
Specialist Housing (at 170 per 1,000 pop)	1,628	
Per annum	71	29

- 3.8 The Briefing Note (Appendix A) together with the full study document are available for inspection on the Planning Policy Evidence Base section of the website <http://www4.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/Evidence.aspx>

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Whilst the Core Strategy was formally adopted by the Council in 2013, the Plan was prepared and largely completed its independent Examination prior to the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the introduction of the requirement to calculate 'Objectively Assessed Need' for housing.
- 4.2 The Core Strategy housing policy figure (552 p.a. – 2010~28) was derived from the previous Regional Strategy (2008) which was itself based on forecasts from 2003.
- 4.3 As the Core Strategy commits Halton to consider removing land from the Green Belt in the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan, we require an up-to-date figure for Objectively Assessed Need in order to calculate the level of any 'shortfall' in housing provision and hence the level of land that may be required. The SHMA provides an indication of what that figure is likely to be, however, it must be noted that any changes in the level of employment development being planned for will have a 'knock on' effect on the housing need.

- 4.4 Executive Board at its meeting on the 10th December, approved public consultation on widening the scope of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan to encompass changes necessary to the Core Strategy resulting from this.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None identified

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

This report provides details of the results of an evidence base document, so has no direct implications; however the results will directly inform the content of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan which will guide development over the period to 2037.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

This report provides details of the results of an evidence base document, so has no direct implications; however the results will directly inform the content of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan which will guide development over the period to 2037. The study, clearly demonstrates the direct linkages between economic growth and housing provision that the DALP will need to accommodate.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

This report provides details of the results of an evidence base document, so has no direct implications.

6.4 A Safer Halton

This report provides details of the results of an evidence base document, so has no direct implications.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

This report provides details of the results of an evidence base document, so has no direct implications.

7. RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 None identified. The commissioning of an OAN for Halton provides a key piece of evidence to support the preparation of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan, which removes an identified risk of proceeding without an up-to-date figure contrary to Government policy and guidance.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 None identified.

9. 9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2016)	Planning & Transport Strategy, Municipal Building	Alasdair Cross
National Planning Policy Framework	Planning & Transport Strategy, Municipal Building	Alasdair Cross
National Planning Practice Guidance	Planning & Transport Strategy, Municipal Building	Alasdair Cross

APPENDIX A



Planning & Transport Strategy

BRIEFING NOTE

#01/2016

Objectively Assessed Need for Housing (OAN) 2016 SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment)

(1) Summary

The conclusion from the SHMA study, is that the Full Objectively Assessed Need for housing in Halton is 466 dwellings per annum in the period 2014~37

(Assuming jobs growth of 4,952).

The guidance, effectively sets out a number of steps to calculating housing need, including;

- a) the need arising from the local population, and
- b) need arising from economic (jobs) projections / aspirations.

The Full Objectively Assessed Need is effectively the highest of these figures adjusted for market signals.

Halton, together with St.Helens and Warrington has commissioned the 2016 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) from expert consultants to provide these figures.

(2) Background

Since 2012, Government has required Councils to calculate the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing within their 'Housing Market Area' and to plan positively to meet that need in full.

Government does not specify a set methodology for calculating OAN, but it does provide broad guidance on issues that should be considered.

- Government's Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) Household Projections should be used as a starting point.
- The CLG projections may need to be adjusted to take account of;
 - newer ONS population projections;
 - local factors affecting migration;
 - local factors affecting population structure;
 - other known local circumstances.
- Likely change if job numbers, either based on;
 - past trends;
 - economic projections
 - other known local circumstances / aspirations
- Market signals, including;
 - land prices;
 - affordability
 - rate of development
 - overcrowding

(3) Housing Market Area (HMA).

Government states that

"A housing market area is a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work. It might be the case that housing market areas overlap."

There is no set methodology to defining housing market areas, but a rule of thumb is that 60% of people moving house do so within the area and 60% of commuters live and work within the area.

The 2016 SHMA study concluded that the 'Mid-Mersey' area comprising of Halton, St.Helens and Warrington Council's areas represents a HMA. (see separate Data Sheet). The Study has provided OAN figures for the Mid-Mersey area and for the three individual districts.

For Town Planning purposes, the starting assumption is that each authority will plan to meet its own need.

(4) Trend Based Demographic Projections.

Halton’s next development plan will cover the period from 2014 to 2037, so we will set out figures for this period.

The 2016 SHMA looks at four scenarios for ‘demographic need’

- a) (2012 based) CLG Household projections.
- b) Household projections (1) adjusted for 2014 based population projections.
- c) Household projections adjusted for ‘Unattributable Population Change’ (UPC)
- d) Household projections adjusted for ‘blend’ of 2014 based population projections and UPC.

Household projections are converted to housing need (dwellings) by including an allowance for vacant and second homes (2.6% from the 2011 Census).

- a) Scenario 1; the latest CLG Projections are based on the previous (2012 based) population projections.
- b) Scenario 2 applies the underlying assumptions from the newest (2014 Based) population projections which take account of 2011 Census findings, resulting in a slight uplift in projected need (from 233 to 251 pa.)

Scenario	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Hhlds 2014	54,162	54,162	54,162	54,162
Hhlds 2037	59,453	60,022	65,717	62,869
Change	5,215	5,859	11,555	8,707
Hhlds p.a.	227	255	502	379
Dwellings p.a	233	251	515	388

- c) Scenario 3 considers the issue of ‘Unattributable Population Change’. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) uses data from the national Censuses to validate and re-base their assumptions for the components of population change, i.e.

- 1) Natural population change (difference between births / deaths)
- 2) Net migration (internal and international)

These are key components in the population projections published by ONS. In Halton (as with

some other authorities) the total population counted by the 2011 Census was significantly different than expected in the ONS projection.

This indicated that there must be issues with one or more of the underlying assumptions being used for the ‘components of change’ in previous projections.

As there was no way to say whether the ‘error’ was in the ‘natural change’ or in the ‘migration’ assumptions and the error would work its way out of the calculations over the next 5 years, ONS quantified and classified this as being a third ‘unattributable’ component of change.

From the figure above (Scenario 3), it is clear that this has a dramatic upwards effect on the calculated demographic based housing need in Halton.

Technical work by ONS into this issue identified that nationally around half of the UPC error may result from an undercount in the 2001 Census.

- d) Scenario 4 considers the inputs and results from the previous scenarios and is the estimate recommended by our specialist consultants for demographic based housing need.

(5) Economic Led Housing Need.

In order to calculate the number of dwelling needed to house the required workforce there are again a number of steps that have to be followed;

- a) Forecast jobs
- b) Commuting ratio
- c) People with more than one job (double jobbing)
- d) Working age population
- e) Economic activity rates (% of people in working age groups that are in or seeking employment)
- f) Headship rates

The SHMA considers these in order.

- a) The starting point is the number of jobs the local economy is forecast to have in 2037. A number of national consultancies produce economic forecasts based on predicted performance of different sectors of the economy.



For Halton, the SHMA uses the latest forecast from Oxford Economics which predicts that the local economy will generate an additional 4,952 jobs over the period 2014~37.

Forecasts	
Jobs 2014	60,564
Jobs 2037	65,516
Change	4,952
% change	8.2%
p.a.	215

2011 Census	
Live/Work in LA	27,270
Home workers	3,741
No fixed place	3,527
In-commute	23,100
Total work in LA	57,638
Out commute	23,233
Total Live in LA (and working)	57,711
Commute Ratio	1.00

The SHMA estimates that Halton will need an additional 9,963 households to generate sufficient employees to fill the projected 4,952 net increase in jobs the local economy is forecast to create.

Economic	
Households 2014	54,162
Households 2037	64,125
Change	9,963
Households p.a.	422
Dwellings p.a.	444

f) Headship rates were held constant in this calculation, but are considered as a 'market signal' as part of 'affordability' under section 6.

b) The 2011 Census showed the balance between jobs and employees living within the borough (the commuting ratio) was 1.00. This means, for every additional job created within Halton, we would expect that there would be one additional employed resident. By contrast, St.Helens has net out commuting with a commuting ratio of 1.21, meaning that for every additional job within St.Helens they would expect demand to house an additional 1.21 employed residents.

c) There will be people within the economy who hold more than one job. For Halton this is estimated to be 2.6%, so an allowance is made for this to arrive at a figure for anticipated resident workforce (4,952 jobs – 2.6% = 4,836 change in resident workforce)

d-e) Changes to the number of residents within each age group and to the proportion of these that are economically active will impact on the total population needed to generate a given workforce. Different factors affect this including general demographics (e.g. the proportion of the population over retirement age is increasing) and social and governmental factors (e.g. increases in the proportion of females working and changed school leaving and state retirement ages).

(6) Aligning Economic & Demographic Need.

The last stage is to take account of market signals'.

- land prices;
- affordability
- rate of development
- overcrowding

The SHMA considered the above issues, looking at trends across the Mid-Mersey over the last 10 or 15 years. Comparisons with the North West and national situation showed that local market signals do not demonstrate that there are any abnormal local conditions.

One issue, whilst not confined to the Mid-Mersey authorities is the effects of house price and mortgage availability on first time buyers. In particular the effect on the numbers in the 25-34 age range who are able to form their own household. This age range has seen significant falls in their 'household formation rate', i.e. the proportion that have been able to form their own household.

The SHMA has modelled the housing need that would arise should the household formation rate for this age group be 'uplifted' to be more in line with historic trends (i.e. what would be expected if affordability and mortgage issues were not 'supressing' demand).



Calculations are undertaken against both the previously calculated 'demographic' and 'economic' need figures.

Need:	Demographic		Economic	
		Uplift		Uplift
Hhlds 2014	54,162		54,162	
Hhlds 2037	62,869	63,351	64,125	64,620
Change	8,707	9,189	9,963	10,457
Hhlds p.a.	379	400	422	455
Dwellings p.a	388	410	444	466
Uplift (p.a.)		21		22
% Uplift		5.5%		5.0%

It can be noted that this 'uplift' figure is significantly below the circa 10% suggested by planning examinations elsewhere, however affordability pressures are not as strong in Mid-Mersey as these other authorities.

The conclusion from the above, is that the Full Objectively Assessed Need for housing in Halton (assuming jobs growth of 4,952) in the period 2014~37 is 466 dwellings per annum

(7) Affordable Housing Need

The SHMA considers the demand for affordable housing and the level of any unmet need. It looks at the household income required to buy or rent without any financial assistance and considers the annual supply of affordable units.

Affordable Need	
Current	43
Newly arising	458
Existing h.hlds falling into need	426
TOTAL	928

Supply	
Social relets	799
Intermediate relets	3
Annualised new build supply	7
TOTAL	809
Unmet Need	-119

The SHMA identifies an annual shortfall of 119 affordable units per annum across Halton.

(8) Dwelling Size and Specialist Housing

The Study looked at the size of the additional dwellings that are likely to be required. This shows a marked difference between the market and affordable sectors in Halton.

	Market	Affordable
1 bed	6.5%	44.8%
2 beds	30.4%	28.4%
3 beds	52.7%	23.8%
4+ beds	10.5%	3.0%
	100%	100%

Finally the study considered the demand for specialist housing. This assessment predominately considered demographic change and applied current proportions requiring specialist accommodation.

	Population	Residential Care
Aged 75+ (2014)	8,717	517
Aged 75+ (2037)	18,292	1,176
Change	9,575	659
Specialist Housing (at 170 per 1,000 pop)	1,628	
Per annum	71	29

These figures do not account for changed priorities in how care needs may best be met, such as in-house or Extra Care models.

(9) References and Summary of base input data.

- <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments/>
- Economic forecasts from Oxford Economics (Q4 2016)



REPORT TO:	Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and performance Board
DATE:	23 March 2016
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Physical Environment
SUBJECT:	Findings and recommendations of the 2015 Tree Working Group
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Board of the work of the Tree Working Group and to report on its findings and recommendations.

- 2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the recommendations of the Tree Working Group be considered by the Board and if agreed they be taken forward to the Executive Board with a recommendation that they be accepted.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Tree Working Group was set up at the June 2015 meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal PPB. In 2015 Internal Audit issued a report on their audit of the tree inspection and management. They identified a number of the recommendations made by the previous Tree Working Group had not been fully implemented.

In June 2013 the PPB received a report from a Tree Working Group. It made seven recommendations and the following four have been revisited by the 2015 Tree Working Group:

Rec. 1 - *The Council develop a new tree strategy that clearly articulated how the Council managed its tree Stock.*

Rec. 5 - *Officers identify a suitable tree management system (database) that allowed mobile working and resources be made available to procure such a system or develop one in-house. The system being able to speak with other Council IT systems be investigated, Members recognised budgets were tight at this time but the potential risk of more accidents and claims could be avoided by investment.*

Rec. 6 - *The Operational Tree maintenance Team be strengthened so that more proactive maintenance work can be carried out.*

Rec. 7 - *Officers explore all opportunities to derive income from the Council's tree stock through the sale of logs or arisings. In particular opportunities relating to biomass energy production should be explored.*

Internal Audit 'assurance opinion' stated:

The Council has made progress and established a system to inspect trees within public parks and highways, which are considered to be the areas of highest risk. However, there is currently no system in place to identify and inspect trees on other land owned by the Council. Therefore the Council has only limited scope to identify and manage the risks presented by the tree stock within the borough.

We found the management information in regard to tree maintenance to be poor. As such it is not possible to provide assurance that urgent work is completed promptly or that the system of inspection to ensure work is carried out to the required standards is operating effectively.

Potentially this could weaken the Council's defence of any insurance claims arising from injury or damage caused by trees.

Internal Audit will carry out a follow up audit on their recommendations.

- 3.2 The working group has held six meetings, three of which have been with Open Spaces Service managers and technical officers.
- 3.3 The Tree Working Group 2013 recommendation to upgrade the IT system has not been implemented. The Open Space Service reported that the Council's ICT division currently has a heavy workload of approved projects, including Executive Board approved works. Therefore developing a system for the Open Space Service has not been a priority.

The Tree Working group submitted sixteen samples of jobs logged on the Mayrise Grounds system in Quarter 3 of 2015/16. The system is used by the Open Space Service to organise its work and record calls.

The Tree Working group found a lack of updates on the progress of these jobs; however in discussion with Open Space Services managers it was found that the majority of these had been completed. There is a reliance on only three officers to maintain this activity. This makes it difficult for managers to monitor the department's work.

Other issues raised were:

- a) Operational managers are reliant on printed worksheets for call related data (and use for work instruction on sites).
- b) There is problem in prioritising work and targets are not being reached. Calls present two distinct targets. The first to acknowledge the call to the caller (which may or may not inform on potential works). Where works are required (following site assessment) a second target will be created for the completion of works, on a priority basis.
- c) A number of different systems are in use in the Open Space Service.
- d) “Nothing at their fingertips, we have been doing workarounds for years.” Mayrise Grounds database does not lend itself to effective calls management; pertinent data fields are not clearly defined for purpose and, therefore, present a need to use alternative methods for effective data collection.

Management identified two improvements.

- The creation of a link from the HDL call centre to the Open Space Service system, as the Highways division currently have. At present calls are going to three separate systems.
- Hand held terminals be provided to supervisory staff to enable them to update database remotely.

Open Space Services have looked at a number of systems without success. Several applications contain one or more of the necessary elements for effective asset data, works and call related information management, to a greater or lesser extent. However, none of those considered to date present an effective solution within a reasonable cost.

Findings:

As previously reported the current systems are not fit for purpose. With the impact of budget cuts in the future affecting staff levels this can only get worse.

Recommendation:

The Open Space Service and the ICT Division should work with the Mayrise company to develop a better system.

Or ICT, working with the Open Space Service, should develop a customised system, which should be integrated with other systems as management described above.

A meeting with Yotta, the new owners of Mayrise, has taken place to consider development of the Mayrise Grounds application/database. Yotta declined to commit to any development. However, they have proposed that the Grounds data be tested within an alternative element of Mayrise. Data has been passed to Yotta and testing will commence shortly.

The Open Space Service has agreed with Internal Audit on the need for a new database for tree inspections.

- 3.4 The Planning division have a number of Council policies and national laws to enforce. Some relate to the green environment.

Findings:

As the Planning department's work is dictated by the Council's policies and statutory legislation.

The Tree Working Group identified a number of improvements to the assessment of planning applications:

The impact of a proposed development on the ecology and trees should take into account the long term effect of changes in the green environment. For example height of trees at maturity should not be greater than the property heights. Have regard to root spread.

Management responded: Such constraint would render sites to an extremely limited range of species and consequent limitations on habitat, amenity (pollution attenuation/mitigation) and longer term Sustainable Urban Drainage contributions.

Resilience - the more limited the range of species, the greater the potential for significant & widespread failure due to Pests and Diseases. The Open Space Service already comments on proposed planting plans at Application stage, where any inappropriate species and/or locations are revised.

The incidence of root damage from trees is relatively low in Halton. (since 2011 we have had 23 cases, of which, after investigation, we have accepted responsibility and paid out on 11) The root activity of trees is not wholly predictable and can be affected by a large number of variable factors. E.g. soil type, species, surrounding environs. This is already effectively managed within the Planning Consent & commenting process.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Core Strategy and the Unitary Development Plan both contain

high level policies on the green environment. Specifically, policy document GE27 Trees. The policies can be summed up as:

1. Preserve and protect
2. Increase the woodland cover to meet the Council's object for a Healthy Halton

Their intention is to improve the environment the community live in.

The Tree Working Group felt that this may have the effect of effect of creating a culture that places trees above the needs of individual residents.

An example being:

The 'right to light' is not one that residents have a legal entitlement to. This is one area of residents' complaints that is not dealt with to their satisfaction. The lack of a legal right is not a reason for not giving a resident access to light.

Officers explained that although there is no legal entitlement to a 'right to light' efforts are always made to be a 'good neighbour'. When it is possible to improve a light situation without detriment to the tree then work will be undertaken, even if that work is not required for any other practical reason. It is proposed that this is articulated within the Urban Tree Strategy document, currently in its final draft stage.

Findings of the Tree Working Group:

- a) *The group believes that the current policies do not go into specifics about how the Open Space Services should operate. This is largely left to the Division.*

The officers response was that the service operates within the parameters of BS5837 and BS 3998 which affords the Council protection when it is challenged over decisions that it has made in relation to trees

- b) *The relationship between residents' needs and environmental needs is not adequately described.*

Officers have proposed that this will be described thoroughly in the Urban Tree Strategy document.

- c) *Tree Preservation Orders are created under delegated authority. There is no neighbourhood consultation.*

Officers explained that Consultation is inherent within TPO

Regulations (Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Although served with immediate effect, there then follows a two week period where each Order is subject to a thorough Appeal process via the Planning division prior to Confirmation

Recommendations of the Tree Working Group:

- a) *We should review the policy on trees to make it serve the needs of residents better while preserving the green environment.*

The officer response was that An Urban Tree Strategy is in the final draft stages and it is proposed that this recommendation would be contained within it.

- b) *When an area is adopted inappropriate trees should be removed by the owner at their expense.*

Officers explained that this is already the current practice and that it will be enshrined within the Urban Tree Strategy.

- c) *When a resident complains about a tree the officer inspecting it may, quite rightly, decide no action is needed. The resident should have a right to appeal to the Divisional Manager of the Open Space Services and then, if not satisfied, appeal the decision to the EU PPB. A member from the Ward would present the case for the resident at the UR PPB.*

The officer response was that existing practice includes a referral process (operational inspection decisions can be referred to the Open Space Officer - Trees & Woodlands). All decisions are supported with clear response to callers (which can be made in written form when requested). A complainant is then able to appeal to the Divisional Manager and if still not satisfied they would then be able to make a Corporate Complaint. If there were to be an appeal panel of members, care would have to be taken to apply the same principals as the officers currently do so that the Council could defend itself, if challenged, about the decision made.

- d) *Use additional resources for non-planned work, e.g., diseased tree removal, storm damage clearing. The cost of this would be met from the proposed earmarked reserve.*

The officer response was that this would be possible through the use of additional hours (overtime) and/or employing contractors.

- e) *TPOs should have a neighbour consultation as with other*

planning matters. If requested, a resident who wants the matter referred to the Development Committee should be able to request this.

Officers believed that this is already part of the process. TPOs are administered by Local Planning Authorities (LPA) (e.g. a borough, district or unitary council or a national park authority) and are made to protect trees that bring significant amenity benefit to the local area. This protection is particularly important where trees are under threat.

If a local planning authority makes an Order, it will serve notice on people with an interest in the land, inviting representations about any of the trees covered by the Order. A copy of the Order will also be made available for public inspection. Following consideration of any objections and comments the authorities can decide whether or not to confirm the Order.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Tree Working Group believes that cut backs have hit management team and field staff numbers and that this has had an effect on the work of the Open Space Service.

In light of subsequent budget cuts the 2013 Tree Working Group's recommendation to strengthen the operational team is no longer possible.

Reduced staffing has impacted on the Division's performance. An example of this is the non-enforcement of TPOs. Enforcement is a Planning function but reductions in/to the Open Space Service staffing does impact on evidencing of enforcement.

There has been a lengthening in response times to the public from the original 2 weeks target. This has resulted in an increase in complaints about the service provided.

From April 2016 the Open Space Service will reduce by 17 front line staff.

The division's budget is based on an expected work load.

Findings:

- (a) The current budget setting does not take account of one off issues such as disease problems, or storm damage.
- (b) This Division, like others, mostly performs non statutory tasks and is therefore at greater risk of service cutbacks in future years.

Recommendations:

An Earmarked Reserve should be created from the General Fund to cover the cost of one-off events. (For example the Dutch Elm affected trees that are known about, would cost in the region of £9,725 to fell.)

Wood off-cuts and wood chippings should be used as a means of income generation through sales to third parties.

Legal

The Council have a duty of care in civil and criminal law for the safety of the trees in the borough.

The Internal Audit report commented - *The Council presently receives only a few compensation claims each year in respect of damage or injury caused by trees and the sums paid out have been very low. However, the financial and reputational cost to the Council would be significant if an individual was killed or badly injured by a poorly maintained tree for which the Council is responsible.*

They also found that a permanent tree inspection schedule has yet to be established.

Since the last Audit, a basic interim schedule has been put in place and a draft Policy approach to meet our legal obligations & liabilities (through a Risk Matrix) is awaiting implementation upon receipt of traffic data. If data is unavailable by April 2016 the Open Space Service will progress on the basis of a Road Priority category.

Recommendation:

To reduce the risk of legal action the Council needs to ensure that it has a record of inspection work.

This links in with the recommendations at IT above.

Note, Open Space Services management has agreed with Internal Audit to write a strategy that will be used to determine an inspection routine. The progression of the Urban Tree Strategy is awaiting/dependent on completion of the Risk Matrix, but is anticipated to go to the Executive Board in spring 2016.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

No Implications.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

No implications.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Health benefits of urban trees fall into two groups: the pollution-controlling aspect and the benefits of the spaces they create.

Urban pollution

Trees have a positive impact on the incidence of asthma, skin cancer and stress-related illness by filtering out polluted air; they also reduce smog formation and shade out solar radiation.

A large beech tree can provide enough oxygen for the daily requirements of ten people, and catches dust and pollutants on its leaves.

Wellbeing

Trees also provide a calm setting for recreation, and promote outdoor activity in safe, community spaces.

Studies have shown that patients in hospital rooms with views of trees and plants made fewer requests for pain medication and experienced a speedier recovery following surgery than did patients with views of streets and buildings from their windows. A tree view provides a temporary escape, and can even improve office workers' job satisfaction.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Two mechanisms are suggested by which crime rates might be reduced by trees. The first is through an increase in surveillance, essentially because public open space with trees tends to be used much more than space without trees.

The second mechanism relates particularly to violent crime and relates to evidence that vegetation has a mitigating effect on mental fatigue, itself often a precursor of outbursts of anger and violence.

The adoption of the NTSG document within the Urban Tree Strategy means that our whole ethos of inspection is based around Public Safety.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

Trees have many positive benefits to the urban environment and their visual impact can make areas more desirable for residents and

businesses.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are risks to the Council if it does not have appropriate arrangements in place to inspect trees within public parks and highways. Those risks were identified within the respective audit reports identified above.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

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

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