

# Public Document Pack



## Executive Board

Thursday, 15 April 2021 2.00 p.m.  
To be held remotely, contact Clerk for access

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R'.

**Chief Executive**

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

#### PART 1

Item	Page No
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	<b>1 - 7</b>
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b>	
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.	
<b>3. CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO</b>	
<b>(A) CARE PROVIDER CONTRACT UPLIFT 2021/22</b>	<b>8 - 12</b>

*Please contact Ann Jones [ann.jones@halton.gov.uk](mailto:ann.jones@halton.gov.uk) or 0151 511 8276 for further information.*

*The next meeting of the Committee is on Tuesday, 18 May 2021*

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<b>4. RESOURCES PORTFOLIO</b>	
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<b>(A) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND MOVE ON PATHWAY PLAN FOR THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SERVICES.</b>	<b>37 - 41</b>
<b>7. SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985</b>	
<b>PART II</b>	
<p>In this case the Board has a discretion to exclude the press and public and, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, it is <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, having been satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.</p>	
<b>8. CHILDREN, EDUCATION &amp; SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO</b>	
<b>(A) BEEHCROFT NURSING HOME</b>	<b>42 - 46</b>

***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.***

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 18 March 2021 held remotely*

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chair), D. Cargill, Harris, R. Hignett, S. Hill, Jones, T. McInerney, Nelson, Wharton and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, D. Parr, I. Leivesley, M. Vasic, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner and A. Jones

Also in attendance: One member of the public and one member of the press

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

EXB83 MINUTES

*Action*

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

MINUTE NO: EXB72 – BUDGET 2021-22 – the Leader, Councillor Polhill, made the following statement, in relation to Pay (referred in Appendix D of the Budget report), and invited the Executive Board to consider and agree the following:

**A FULLY FUNDED, PROPER PAY RISE FOR COUNCIL AND SCHOOL WORKERS**

Local government has endured central Government funding cuts of more than 50% since 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central Government.

Over the last year, councils have led the way in efforts against the Covid-19 Pandemic, providing a huge range of services and support for our communities. Local government has shown more than ever how indispensable it is but the Pandemic has led to a massive increase in expenditure and loss of income, and the Government has failed to provide the full amount of promised support.

Local government workers have kept our communities safe through the Pandemic, often putting themselves at considerable risk as they work to protect public health, provide quality housing, ensure our children continue to be educated, and look after older and vulnerable people.

Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing at least 23% of their value since 2009/10. At the same time, workers have experience ever increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity.

Across the UK, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30%. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector. The funding gap caused by Covid-19 will make local government employment even more precarious. There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three quarters of the local government workforce.

Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2021 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

**This Council believes:**

Our workers are public service super heroes. They keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our towns and cities running.

Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the Council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.

Local government workers deserve a proper real terms pay increase.

The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding has been cut to the bone and who have not been offered adequate support through the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**Executive Board resolves on behalf of the Council to:**

- 1) write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a

pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central Government;

- 2) call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central Government to fund the NJC pay claim;
- 3) support the pay claim submitted by GMB, Unison and Unite on behalf of Council and school workers, for a substantial increase with a minimum of 10% uplift in April 2021, provided that central Government agree to fully fund, with new money, the pay claim;
- 4) meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the Council can support the campaign; and
- 5) encourage all local government workers to join a union.

## **HEALTH & WELLBEING PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB84 SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICE WAIVER REQUEST - KEY DECISION**

The Board received a request for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of Part 3, for the granting of a Direct Award for the delivery of a substance Misuse Service from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021.

In September 2015 the Executive Board granted authority to the Director of Public Health to carry out all necessary steps in relation to the open tendering and commissioning of Specialist Community Substance Misuse Services. The contract was awarded to *Change, Grow, Live* (CGL) for a fixed period of 5 years and was due to end on 31 March 2021, with no contractual arrangement for extension.

Members were informed that a full procurement exercise was due to take place during 2020 so that a new contract would be in place, however due to the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic this had not been possible. The report outlined the basis for the 6-month waiver request.

#### Reason(s) for Decision

A decision is required as the outcome will result in the Local Authority incurring expenditure which is significant; and is significant in terms of its effects on communities.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

At this stage, alternative options have not been considered.

Implementation Date

1 April 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) approves a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of Part 3, for the granting of a Direct Award for the delivery of a substance Misuse Service from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021.

Director of Public Health

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO**

EXB85 VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING – GRANT ALLOCATION 2021/22 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, on the Voluntary Sector Grant Awards for 2021/22.

The Board was advised that the Council had awarded grants to local voluntary and charitable organisations for a number of years. Applications were assessed against key criteria, such as impact on outcomes for local people, demonstrable wider social impact such as volunteering, training and development opportunities and the impact on reducing the need for statutory services. It was reported that applications were assessed and recommendations agreed by a Panel, which consisted of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Officers from the People Directorate.

The report set out the recommendations for an annual allocation for the financial year 2020/21, with the available budget of £226,640, for Members' consideration.

Reason(s) for Decision

A decision is required as the outcome will result in the Local Authority incurring expenditure. The expenditure will provide valuable services to Halton residents, which may otherwise not be financially sustainable.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

No alternative options are available to provide these funded services.

Implementation Date

1 April 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the grant allocations as outlined in the report.

Strategic Director  
- People

**RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

EXB86 REVIEW OF COUNCIL WIDE FEES AND CHARGES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the review of the Council wide fees and charges for 2021/22 for services provided by both of the Council's Directorates.

The Board was advised that, as part of the budget preparations for 2021/22, a review of fees and charges had been carried out. The aim in setting fees and charges was to ensure that the Council fully recovered the cost incurred in providing the service, although this was dependent on a number of factors outside of the agreed charge. These were detailed in the report and noted as including demand, which could change year on year and be affected by weather, economy and demographics; competition, where there may be a strong competitive market; and a statutory element, where some charges were outside the control of the Council and there was no discretion to what could be charged.

Attached at Appendix A was the proposed schedule of statutory fees for 2021/22 and the chargeable rates for The Brindley Theatre and the Registrar's Service were attached at Appendix B and C respectively, for 2022/23.

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A attached to the report and for 2022/23 as set out in Appendices B and C attached to the report, be approved.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

EXB87 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 items 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.

### **CHILDREN, EDUCATION & SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO**

*Councillor Ron Hignett declared a Discloseable Other Interest in the following item as his daughter works as a care worker in Halton.*

#### **EXB88 CARE PROVIDER CONTRACT UPLIFT 2021/22**

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – People, informing of the proposed annual uplift for domiciliary care, direct payments, supported living and care home providers within Halton, for 2021/22.

The report presented the proposed uplifts for each area, against last year's amount and showed comparisons within the Liverpool City Region authorities.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

- 1) note the contents of the report; and

Strategic Director  
- People



- 2) gives approval for the Council to actively enter into discussions with Care Providers, with a view to offer the recommended uplift for 2021/22.

**MINUTES ISSUED: 23 March 2021**

**CALL-IN: 30 March 2021 at 5.00 pm**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 30 March 2021.**

*Meeting ended at 2.15 p.m.*

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director, People
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Children, Education & Social Care
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Care Provider Contract Uplift 2021/22
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough-wide

### 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Board of the outcome of the consultation discussions with domiciliary care, direct payments, supported living and care home providers within Halton for 2021/22.

### 2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) the Board note the contents of the report;**
- 2) the Board considers the recommendations and risks; and**
- 3) approval be given to offer the recommended uplift to care providers for 2021/22 as indicated in paragraphs 3.7-3.10 below.**

### 3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to ensure that the market as a whole remains viable and sustainable. When commissioning services, local authorities must have regard to the cost effectiveness and value for money that the services offer for public funds. However they must not undertake any actions which may threaten the sustainability of the market, and must ensure that remuneration for staff must be at least sufficient to comply with national minimum wage legislation, and that there is a 'fair price' paid for care.
- 3.2 In addition to the impact of Covid on the care sector one of the main challenges has been the increases associated with the mandatory National Living Wage (NLW) for workers aged 25 and above. The government has announced that the NLW will increase 2.2% to £8.91 from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and will become available to people aged 23 and above, down from the current age of 25 and will have implications for the care sector as a whole. The proposed uplifts will lay the foundations for achieving a diverse and high quality sustainable market.
- 3.3 Following the previous Executive Board report in March Halton Borough

Council has now consulted with all care homes, supported living and domiciliary care providers who will be working in the Borough in respect of the proposed fee increases.

3.4 All care providers received a questionnaire and were requested to feedback on any increases they had identified in relation to indirect and direct staffing costs and describe any legitimate current and future costs. They were also asked to consider whether there had been any opportunities to reduce costs.

3.5 A couple of key issues were raised which the Executive Board need to consider:

- Many of the homes are facing financial difficulties due to the low occupancy levels and resultant increase in costs per bed.
- Some of the homes have identified a 10% increase in their insurance rates directly attributed to the pandemic.
- The funding from government does not cover all of the costs associated with the pandemic. For example the additional costs of safe facilitation of visits, the testing of visitors, supporting residents in isolation, workforce wellbeing and increased overheads.
- Further concerns were voiced in relation to the increased frailty and complexity of the people that are looked after and the issues relating to employing and retaining nursing staff.
- Many homes reported that they have reduced costs by reducing staffing levels and any further cost reductions would be achieved by reducing staffing levels even further.
- References were made to the uncertain future for the sector

**3.6 Recommended Fee Uplifts**

Any proposed increase in fees will need to take into account the risks in the current market and the subsequent financial implications for the Council. Considering the impact of living wage, pension increases, overall cost of living and our position in the market, it is recommended that we increase our care home fees slightly more than domiciliary care and supported living to bring us more in line with our neighbouring authorities.

3.7 A proposed 2.2% increase for domiciliary care

2020/21	Increase by (£)	Recommended uplift 2021/22
£16.46	£0.36 (2.2%)	£16.82

## 3.8 A proposed 2.2% increase for Supported Living Providers

2020/21	Increase by (£)	Recommended uplift 2021/22
£15.19	£0.33 (2.2%)	£15.52

## 3.9 A proposed 2.2% increase for direct payments would see an increase from £10.70 to £10.94 for the basic rate. There are additional costs associated with being a Direct Payment employer, which include £99.00 per year annual insurance and £200 annual payroll fees. These additional on costs have not been included in the calculations below.

	2020/21	Increase by (£)	Recommended uplift 2021/22
Basic Rate	£10.70	£0.24	£10.94
Complex Rate	£12.00	£0.26	£12.26
DP Agency Rate	£16.46	£0.36	£16.82
DP Sleep rate (per sleep)	£66.24	£1.46	£67.70
Respite (per week)	£455.40 pw	£10.02	£465.42

## 3.10 A proposed 3.0% increase for care home rates

	2020/21	Increase by (£)	Recommended uplift 2021/22
Residential	£455.40	£13.66	£469.02
Residential Dementia	£550.62	£16.52	£567.14
Nursing	£496.80	£14.90	£511.70 (excl FNC)
Nursing Dementia	£583.74	£17.51	£601.25 (excl FNC)

## 3.11 The care home sector has been devastated by the effects of the pandemic and without this financial commitment from the Council care homes may not be able to continue financially. Willingness from providers to engage in projects may reduce and we may not be able to fully achieve our aspirations for the sector.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**4.1 The White paper, Working together to improve health and social care for all was published on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and may have implications on future funding models.5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

## 5.1 The increase in fee rates have been calculated based on the key risk areas, rather than an overall set increase across the sector as a whole. The uplift proposed is within current budget provision and any increase over 3%

would exert financial pressure on the Adult Social Care budget.

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

**6.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

None Identified.

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

None identified.

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

The Adult Social Care budget supports the delivery of services that contribute towards this priority.

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

None identified

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None Identified

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The financial pressures within this sector are well recognised both nationally and locally. Although providers understand the financial risks the Local Authority are facing, the ongoing burden of low occupancy levels, Covid costs and the difficulties in the recruitment of nurses is severely affecting the sector. The consultation highlighted that in order to further reduce costs the sector's only option was to reduce staffing levels that will undoubtedly influence the quality of care provided.

7.2 In mitigation, the recommendations are to agree fee rates that provide a slight increase for the care homes over the rest of the sector. Adult Social Care will continue to work with providers to identify alternative approaches to support them with financial pressures e.g. training, procurement and alternative approaches to the delivery of care, including technology.

7.3 The Government has confirmed that they intend to provide the NHS and social care with additional funding past April 2021 to support the next phase of the response to Covid 19. The precise financial details have yet to be released but will continue to support the sector with infection control measures.

7.4 The increase in fee rates will enable employers to meet the increased National Minimum Wage. We will also ensure that additional quality standards are implemented to improve the care and well-being of our residents and will continue to aim to adopting the principles outlined in UNISON'S Ethical Care Charter.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Agencies working under contract to the Council are expected to comply with the Council's policies relating to Ethnicity and Cultural Diversity as well as promoting social inclusion of some of the most disadvantaged people in the Borough.

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

None.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community & Resources
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Resources
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme
<b>WARDS:</b>	Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To recommend to introduction of a Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme, in order to assist residents who suffer hardship due to having to self-isolate but do not meet the criteria for other forms of Covid19 financial support.

- 2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the establishment of a Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme, as outlined in the report, be approved.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Background**

- 3.1 As part of its response to the Covid19 pandemic since March 2020, in order to support residents the Council has provided a range of financial and non-financial support measures. The Appendix contains an extract from the Council's Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) regarding Contact Tracing and Self isolation. The last paragraph contains a link to the Self-isolation pages on the Council's website setting out the support available for those self-isolating.

### **Shielded Individuals Hub**

- 3.2 A Shielded Individuals Hub has been operated to assist residents with the following areas:
- Essential supplies such as arranging supermarket slots, use of a food bank, and using the Discretionary Support Scheme to deliver food parcels.
  - Medication support through contact with pharmacies and arranging delivery.

- Other support that includes using existing Council services such as; Adult Social Care, Health Improvement Team, Discretionary Support Scheme, and Welfare Rights.
- Use of Halton & St Helens VCA to provide alternative arrangements such as providing volunteers.

### **Self-isolation Support Scheme**

- 3.3 As part of the Government's response to the pandemic, people who test positive for Covid19 or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, are required to self-isolate. From 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 a Self-isolation Support payment of £500 was made available to people who are working but are unable to work from home, and will therefore lose pay during their self-isolation period.
- 3.4 There are two Self-isolation Support schemes available. Firstly the national scheme where the person must be receiving a means tested benefit, meets the conditions of being required by NHS Test & Trace to self-isolate, are employed but unable to work from home and will lose income as a result.
- 3.5 The second scheme is a discretionary one, which has the same national conditions apart from there is no requirement to be on a means tested benefit. Halton has added two local conditions that a person must have property costs being rent or a mortgage, and the person must be on a low income, which is aligned with the Government's Benefit Cap amounts: <https://www.gov.uk/benefit-cap/benefit-cap-amounts>. The income amounts are: for a couple £384/week, single parent + child £384/week, and a single adult £257/week.
- 3.6 There may be circumstances where a person is told to self-isolate who does not qualify for a Self-isolation payment, and has particular requirements they need help with which cannot be met from existing resources.

### **Other Areas of Financial Support**

- 3.7 The Council also provides a number of other forms of financial support to residents, for example Discretionary Housing Payments, the Discretionary Support Scheme, and the Welfare Rights & Money Advice Service.

### **Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme**

- 3.8 The proposal is to introduce a Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme, in order to assist residents who suffer hardship due to having to self-isolate but they do not meet the criteria for other forms of Covid19 or other financial support.



- 3.9 Prior to applying this scheme, consideration would first be given to whether alternative options are available. Therefore, this scheme would only be considered in exceptional circumstances, where it is appropriate and fair to make an exceptional hardship award.

#### Statement of Objectives

- 3.10 An award under this scheme would be made in response to exceptional circumstances that threaten a resident's physical and/or emotional and mental well-being whilst self-isolating.
- 3.10 Each application must be supported by a range of information requested from the applicant, which may include some personal information, and this will be made clear to the applicant at the start of the process.
- 3.11 All applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on their individual merits.

#### Application Process

- 3.12 The features of the Council's Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Policy are that:
- It is discretionary;
  - An applicant does not have a statutory right to payment;
  - The operation of the scheme is for the Council to determine;
  - The Council may choose to vary the way in which funds are allocated according to needs;
  - Other than the normal appeal against the application of discretionary function by Judicial Review, there is no right to a statutory appeal of any application decision. In the interest of fairness the Council will operate an internal review procedure for appeals in a non-discriminatory way.

#### Eligibility Criteria

- 3.13 There are no pre-set criteria for an award made under the Council's Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme. Each application will therefore be considered on its own individual merits.
- 3.14 In deciding whether to award a Covid19 Exceptional Hardship payment, the applicant's particular circumstances will be considered. The applicant will be asked to provide supporting evidence to substantiate their claim. This may include, but is not limited to:
- Income and expenditure statements;

- Any sources of credit such as debit cards, credit cards, store cards, overdraft and loan arrangements;
  - Any financial assistance which is likely to be available to the applicant from other sources.
- 3.15 Decisions regarding eligibility for an award will be made by the Operational Director - Finance. Awards will be made either in monetary form or whatever means is deemed appropriate, and will be processed quickly to enable an applicant to continue to self-isolate.
- 3.16 The Council will notify the applicant in writing of the outcome within five working days of the date the decision is made. Where the request for an award is unsuccessful or is not met in full, the Council will explain the reasons why the decision was made.

#### The Right to Appeal

- 3.17 Covid19 Exceptional Hardship scheme is a discretionary scheme and therefore not subject to a statutory appeals process. Appeals will therefore be decided by the Council.
- 3.18 An applicant who requires further explanation of a decision must request this in writing within 20 days of notification of the decision.
- 3.19 An applicant who disagrees with a decision may appeal within 20 days of the original decision by writing to the Operational Director - Finance. Where possible, the Council will initially try to resolve the matter by explaining the reasons for the decision to the applicant in writing.
- 3.20 A further appeal can be made to the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community & Resources. If it is decided to reject the appeal, the reasons for the decision will be provided to the applicant in writing within 20 working days.

#### Fraud

- 3.21 The Council is committed to prevent fraud. Any applicant who tries to fraudulently claim a Covid19 Exceptional Hardship award might have committed an offence under the Fraud Act 2006. If the Council suspects that fraud may have occurred, the matter will be investigated as appropriate and this could lead to criminal proceedings.

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council has been administering the Self-isolation Support Scheme since 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 as part of the Government's response to the pandemic to support residents to self-isolate. In addition it has delivered other finance related support as set out above.

- 4.2 The Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme will provide an additional layer of support for residents in exceptional circumstances that are not provided for by existing support arrangements.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council has been allocated a further tranche of un-ringfenced Covid19 grant funding for 2021/22. The cost of payments relating to the Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme will be met from this grant funding. However, it is anticipated that relatively few awards will be required under the Scheme and the amounts of each award will be modest.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

The creation of a Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme will support the Council in its objective of providing assistance to Halton residents to allow them to self-isolate.

### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

None identified.

### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

None identified.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Awards made under the Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme will support the person asked to self-isolate, and also protect other people in the community.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

None identified.

### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 The Covid19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme is being put in place to provide support for residents in exceptional circumstances. There are no significant risks associated with implementing this scheme.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 The current proposal does not impact upon any equality and diversity issues, and the Covid19 Exceptional Hardship scheme only serves to enhance the Council's offer to Halton residents affected by Covid19. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and published in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
MHCLG Guidance for Council's on practical support for self-isolation (9/3/21)	Enterprise, Community & Resources	Ed Dawson

## Appendix

*Below is an extract from the Council's refreshed Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) regarding Contact Tracing and Self isolation. The last paragraph contains a link to the Self-isolation pages on the Council website*

### 2.4 Contact Tracing

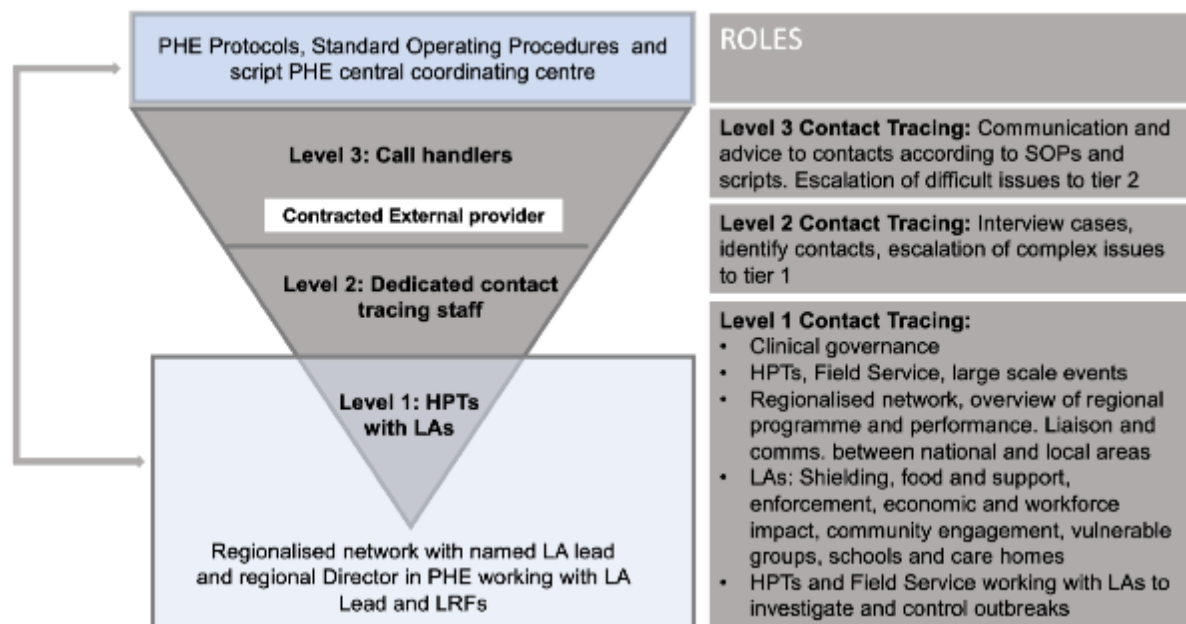
Contact tracing is one of the ways we protect the public from infectious diseases. If a person tests positive for COVID-19, we speak to them in order to identify anyone who has had close contact during the time they were considered to be infectious and then attempt to find these people as soon as possible. Once we have made contact we can then give them the advice they need to self-isolate and protect others. If they are in groups considered to be a higher risk, we make sure that we follow up with them to see how they are. If they become unwell we are then able to assess them quickly and take appropriate action. Presently contact tracing is carried out both by the national NHS Test and Trace Service and by the local Public Health Team.

The NHS Test and Trace Service will input and host information on both LFT and PCR (lab-confirmed) cases and contacts onto the national data system (CTAS) which is an invitation only system that is accessed through two routes: automatically by cases and contacts through text message or email invitation or by the phone-based contact tracing team.

CTAS receives details of all positive cases of COVID-19 via NHS Digital. Cases will be categorised into automatic follow-up (have provided email details/can use web-based tool) or phone follow-up. Cases following the automated pathway upload details of contacts into CTAS which are then followed up either automatically or by phone.

**NHS Test and Trace** is a National Service, and the role of the local authority is to support that service using our detailed knowledge of local communities and settings. The Local Authority has established the **Halton Outbreak Support Team (HOST)** team to support local people and a primary role for the authority is to offer support to vulnerable residents who have been asked to self-isolate, and also additional support to help with the management of complex sites and situations (for example schools and care homes). This is not a new role for the local authority, and Public Health teams routinely work with the Health Protection Team in PHE to support additional actions around outbreaks of other infectious disease within these settings.

Currently, the national system is broken down into the following levels:



Currently Tier 1 of the contact tracing service is subcategorised into:

- **Tier 1a** – this is the national co-ordinating function and will lead on quality assurance, data science, guidelines and protocols and clinical governance.
- **Tier 1b** - Health Protection Teams (HPT) and PHE Field Service Teams (FST) who will manage complex outbreaks and situations in conjunction with local authority Public Health support.

For Cheshire and Merseyside, Directors of public Health have invested in the provision of the Cheshire and Mersey Contact Tracing and Outbreak Support Hub (**HUB**) to coordinate much of the action required at Level 1. The HUB is a partnership between the nine Local Authorities, PHE and CHAMPS and provides additional contract tracing and outbreak management and we would like to maintain its essential role as we move into an endemic situation. We developed this Hub jointly with PHE and it brings together Public Health Consultants, call handlers, environmental health officers etc. and links into and supports our local Halton Contact Tracing and Outbreak Hub. Given the development of VOCs and the move towards Zero Hours Contact Tracing and Enhanced Contact Tracing we see resource for this Hub as crucial for surge capacity.

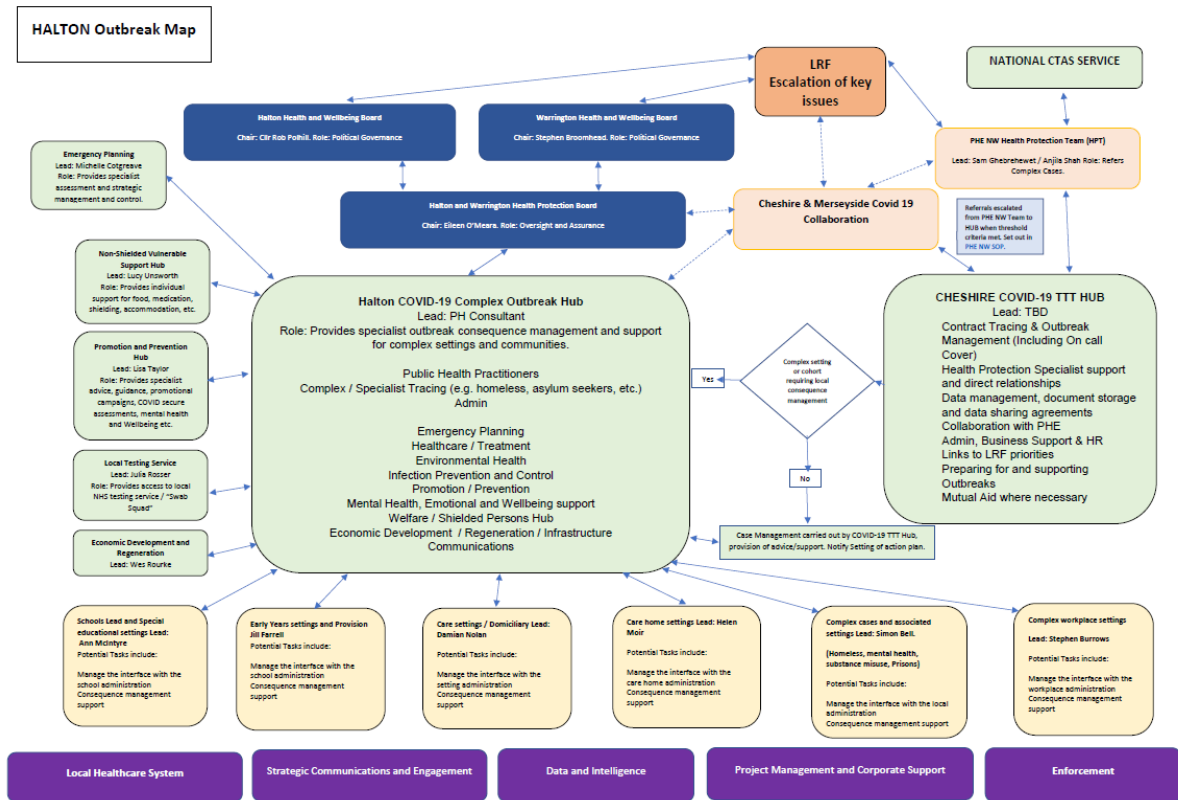
Each Local Authority area has also developed its own bespoke local offer in terms of additional contract tracing and consequence management.

In Halton, since the early days of the pandemic, the **HOST (Halton Outbreak Support Team)** has provided an outbreak monitoring and response service. The team aims to contact all positive cases to explore isolation, identify additional contacts and any support needs, and has been instrumental in work

around contacting those “Lost to Follow Up” through the National T&T service and those harder to reach individuals and communities.

Utilising the national CTAS data system, the team also provides welfare calls, home visits, text messaging and posted letters to ensure local people are supported and have access to the information they need, whilst reinforcing core health protection messages and prevention advice.

The Local structure is demonstrated below:



Operationally, there has been some disconnect between the National T&T system, regional PHE and local teams, with timely information for local areas not always clear or specific as to who will / should be dealing with specific issues. The balance between national and regional is now working more efficiently however improvements can still be made. Communication with Local Authorities is required as to what is expected on a local level, which will enable local authorities to plan and adapt their local contact tracing model and consider their own resources.

The regional Cheshire and Merseyside HUB has been vital in pulling together local areas, sharing best practice and reducing the burden on local teams and we are keen that resources are continued to be made available to support this function, as well as ensuring core local teams can continue to serve in this essential function.

As we enter the next stage of the pandemic, there needs to be a clear conversation with Local Authorities as to what the future structure will look like and what will be managed by PHE and the national and regional systems. If

there is an expectation that local areas commence detailed **enhanced contact tracing** there will need to be sufficient resource and training opportunities made available for local teams to pick this up. There will also need to be clarity on how local systems can better integrate case management systems with the national data systems.

## 2.5 Support for self-isolation

It has been recognised that some individuals may need additional support in order to complete the 10 day period of self-isolation. We are aware from various studies that there is limited compliance with the requirement to self-isolate for 10 days as required for positive cases or contacts of positive cases. Self-isolation is a critical element of reducing the spread of Covid-19 including any new variants and makes a significant contribution to keeping our family, friends and community safe, enabling us all to return to normal life as soon as possible.

In Halton, the HOST (Halton Outbreak Support Team) encourages individuals that it contacts to share any problems they might have with self-isolating for the required time, where there are additional support needs identified appropriate signposting or direct support has been arranged.

It is currently a legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. Individuals who fail to do so may be fined. The NHS T&T team will identify people who need additional support and pass their contact information to the Local Authority and the local HOST team will also ask all cases if they require additional support.

The **Halton/DHSC motivational text pilot** is ongoing with evaluation in-built to understand the impact of localised messages to people who test positive, and a campaign has been developed locally to inform local people about the support available to self-isolate and what their obligations are. Information is available through a variety of mediums (online, print, etc.) and the role of the Councils contact centre has been essential in providing information and effective support to local people. Halton has also invested in the development of a local programme - **“Halton - 10 days, 10 ways” – Self Isolation support.**





**The objectives of the campaign are:**

1. Encourage full compliance with self-isolation for those identified as positive cases or contacts of positive cases
2. Ensure anyone needing to self-isolate is aware of the full range of support that is available to them
3. Encourage people to plan for self-isolation and have necessary contingency arrangements in place

**The Key messages are:**

- If you have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or a public health official because you have tested positive for Covid-19 or you are identified as a contact of someone with Covid-19, you are required by law to stay at home for 10 days. Failing to do this could result in a fine of up to £10,000.
- There is lots of support available for anyone needing to self-isolate including help with money such as the £500 self-isolation grant, arranging volunteers to help with shopping or dog walking and to take over caring responsibilities if needed. Please check our 10 days, 10 ways self-isolation guide at [www.halton.gov.uk/selfisolation](http://www.halton.gov.uk/selfisolation) or call us on 0303 333 4300.

- Self-isolating is much easier if you have a simple plan in place – what to do if you can't get out to buy food, get medicines, go to work or to care for someone else. Having a few basic supplies, important information ready and discussing with family, friends or neighbours all helps in the event that you have to self-isolate due to Covid-19.

If local residents are identified as [clinically extremely vulnerable](#), they are advised to reduce social contact as much as possible to minimise the risk of infection and to limit all contacts, particularly with people that they do not live with. Those defined, on medical grounds, as clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus are people with specific serious health conditions. Access to food, medication and advice on wider support including pet care is provided on a dedicated self-isolation support webpage –[www.halton.gov.uk/selfisolation](http://www.halton.gov.uk/selfisolation)

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community & Resources
<b>PORTFOLIOS:</b>	Resources
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief
<b>WARD(S):</b>	Borough-wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 amended the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, such that councils may grant discretionary business rates relief to any business ratepayer in any circumstance.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to consider the renewal of discretionary business rate relief for existing registered charities, not-for-profit organisations and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC) who continue to satisfy the appropriate criteria.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That**

- (1) Discretionary business rate relief of 15% be granted for those registered charities and CASC organisations currently in receipt of such relief, for the period of three years commencing 1st April 2022; and**
- (2) Discretionary business rate relief of 90% be granted for the not-for-profit organisations currently in receipt of such relief (with lower amounts for two as indicated in the Appendix), for the period of three years commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.**

### **3.0 REGISTERED CHARITIES AND CASCs**

- 3.1 The Council has previously granted discretionary business rate relief to a number of organisations which are registered charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC). The Council currently grants discretionary business rate relief for these organisations for a period of three years.
- 3.2 The organisations automatically receive mandatory 80% business rates relief and the Council funds the full cost of such relief as part of the 100% business rates retention pilot scheme.

#### **4.0 NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS**

4.1 Not-for-profit organisations are not entitled to mandatory rate relief and therefore the full cost of any discretionary relief granted is funded by the Council.

#### **5.0 LEVEL AND PERIOD OF BUSINESS RATES RELIEF AWARDED**

5.1 Given the current financial challenges and constraints facing the Council, discretionary business rate relief of only 15% is currently awarded for registered charities and CASC organisations. The organisations themselves then have to meet the remaining 5% of their business rates liability.

5.2 For not-for-profit organisations the Council has in the main granted 90% discretionary rate relief, except in the case of two organisations who received less than 90% for specific reasons. The organisations themselves then have to meet the remaining 10% of their business rates liability.

5.3 The Council currently grants discretionary business rate relief to organisations for a three year period. It is recommended that this practice continues, in order to provide the organisations with some certainty so as to assist with their financial planning.

5.4 The Council provides these organisations with approximately twelve months' notice of any changes to their discretionary rate relief, to assist with their financial planning. Hence this request to consider the renewal of discretionary business rate reliefs from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

#### **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The registered charities, not-for-profit organisations and community amateur sports clubs (CASC) currently in receipt of discretionary rate relief, are listed in the Appendix along with the cost of such relief.

6.2 The Council funds 100% of any mandatory and discretionary business rates relief awarded.

#### **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

7.1 The organisations for whom discretionary rate relief is granted may engage with one or more of the Council's priorities.

#### **8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 None.

#### **9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 None.

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

<b>10.1</b>	<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
	Application forms and supporting evidence	Kingsway House, Caldwell Road, Widnes	Louise Bate Business Rates Manager

**APPENDIX**

**Registered Charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs**

These organisations automatically receive 80% mandatory rate relief. The table below presents the cost to the Council in each case of both the 80% mandatory rate relief and the 15% discretionary rate relief.

<b>Liabile Party</b>	<b>Annual Rates Liability</b>	<b>Cost to the Council of 80% Mandatory Relief</b>	<b>Cost to the Council of 15% Discretionary Relief</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
10th Hough Green Scout & Guide Group	3,174.40	2,539.52	476.16
1st Halton Scout Group	1,280.00	1,024.00	192.00
1st Moore Scouts	704.00	563.20	105.60
1st Weston & 0 Weston Point Scouts	1,868.80	1,495.04	280.32
4th Runcorn Scout Group	1,382.40	1,105.92	207.36
4th Widnes (St Bede's) Scout Group	576.00	460.80	86.40
Age Concern (Mid Mersey)	6,784.00	5,427.20	1,017.60
Cathy Stankevitch Foundation T/A Resport Uk	8,448.00	6,758.40	1,267.20
Cathy Stankevitch Foundation T/A Resport Uk	10,112.00	8,089.60	1,516.20
Catalyst Science Discovery Centre & Museum Trust Ltd	89,088.00	71,270.40	13,363.20
Cheshire Asbestos Victim Support Group	2,252.80	1,802.24	337.92
Chester Diocesan Board Of Finance	49,664.00	39,731.20	7,449.60
Focus Institute Of Gymnastics	13,184.00	10,547.20	1,977.60
Four Estates Ltd – Hillcrest	5,149.25	4,119.40	772.39
Four Estates Ltd – Brook Centre	1,792.00	1,433.60	268.80
Four Estates Ltd – Palacefields Community Centre	7552.00	6,041.60	1,132.80
Hale Village Hall Management Committee	2,299.20	1,839.36	344.88
Hale Youth Club	819.20	665.36	122.88
Halebank Youth Club	1,305.60	1,044.48	195.84

<b>Liable Party</b>	<b>Annual Rates Liability</b>	<b>Cost to the Council of 80% Mandatory Relief</b>	<b>Cost to the Council of 15% Discretionary Relief</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Mind Halton – Day Centre	960.00	768.00	144.00
Halton Community Transport	8,832.00	7,065.60	1,324.80
Halton Disability Partnership	2,406.40	1,925.12	360.95
Halton District Citizen Advice Bureaux Service	7,040.00	5,632.00	1,056.00
Halton District Citizen Advice Bureaux Service	6,528.00	5,222.40	979.20
Halton District Citizen Advice Bureaux Service	1,331.20	1,064.96	199.68
Halton District Citizen Advice Bureaux Service	248.32	198.65	37.24
Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC - meeting room	1,408.00	1,126.40	211.20
Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC - playing field	6,528.00	5,222.40	979.20
Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC – old changing rooms	2,022.40	1,617.92	303.36
Halton Haven Hospice – 23 Queens Avenue	2,252.80	1,802.24	337.92
Halton Haven Hospice – Barnfield Avenue	26,624.00	21,299.20	3,993.60
Halton Carers Centre Ltd	6,912.00	5,529.60	1,036.80
Halton Haven Hospice – Widnes Road	14,208.00	11,366.40	2,131.20
Halton Play Council Ltd	9,984.00	7,987.20	1,497.60
Halton & St Helens Voluntary & Community Action	15,232.00	12,185.60	2,284.80
Age UK – Church St, Runcorn	5,376.00	4,300.80	806.40
Age UK – Albert Square, Widnes	7,936.00	6,348.80	1,190.40
Liverpool Housing Trust Ltd	1,267.20	1,013.76	190.08
Loose	5,888.00	4,710.40	883.20
Norton Priory Museum Trust Ltd – Norton Priory Museum	15,360.00	12,288.00	2,304.00
Norton Priory Museum Trust Ltd – Walled Garden	5,068.80	4,055.04	760.32
Our Lady's Pre-School	1,305.60	1,044.48	195.84
<b>Liable Party</b>	<b>Annual Rates</b>	<b>Cost to the Council of 80%</b>	<b>Cost to the Council of 15%</b>

	<b>Liability</b>  £	<b>Mandatory Relief</b> £	<b>Discretionary Relief</b> £
RSPCA (Warrington, Halton & St Helens Branch)	1,561.60	1,249.28	234.24
Runcorn Frodsham & District MENCAP Society	1,664.00	1,331.20	126.72
Runcorn And District Foodbank	2,662.40	2,129.92	399.
Sandymoor Community Association	4,761.60	3,809.28	714.24
Shetland Rescue	4,227.81	3,382.24	634.17
Stick N Step	2,713.60	2,170.88	407.04
St John Ambulance	3,686.40	2,949.12	552.96
St Lukes Scouts & Guides	4,454.40	3,563.52	668.16
Trustees Of Mrs T H Browns Trust	3,328.00	2,662.40	499.20
Trustees Of Preston Brook Village Hall	3,532.80	2,826.24	529.92
Trade Training	1,303.02	1,042.41	195.45
Vicarage Lodge Pre-School Community Play Group	4,710.40	3,768.32	706.56
Widnes & Runcorn Cancer Support Group	3,686.40	2,949.12	552.96
Widnes Fellowship Centre	2,611.20	2,088.96	391.68
Widnes RUFC	14,130.50	11,304.40	2,119.58
Widnes Unit 365 Of The Sea Cadet Corps	3,891.20	3,112.96	583.68
Widnes Tennis Club	60,928.00	48,742.40	9,139.20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>486,007.70</b>	<b>387,484.94</b>	<b>72,773.30</b>



### **Not-For-Profit Organisations**

These organisations are not registered charities and therefore do not receive 80% mandatory rate relief. The Council currently provides 90% discretionary rate relief in all but two cases.

<b>Liabe Party</b>	<b>Annual Rates Liability £</b>	<b>Cost to the Council of Discretionary Relief £</b>
Astmoor Community Project Ltd	19,710.50	17,739.45
Birchfield Park Sports & Social	5,489.00	4,940.10
Bridgewater Motor Boat Club	2,544.90	2,290.41
Gentlemen Of Moore RUFC	4,590.80	4,131.72
Halebank Football Club	404.19	363.77
Halton Access To Media	2,694.60	2,425.14
Halton Credit Union Ltd – Halton Lea	13,847.25	12,462.53
Halton Credit Union Ltd – Queens Avenue, Widnes	2,694.60	2,425.14
Kingsway Bike Project	736.03	638.42
Pavillions Arena Ltd	5,114.75	4,603.28
Runcorn Rowing Club	464.07	417.66
Runcorn Sports Club	3592.80	3,233.52
Runcorn Subscription Bowling Club	785.93	707.34
Runcorn War Memorial Club Ltd <sup>(1)</sup>	5,738.50	573.85
West Bank Boat Club	1,010.48	909.43
Weston Rifle & Pistol Club <sup>(2)</sup>	1,322.35	991.76
Widnes Cricket Club	7,485.00	6,736.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78,225.75</b>	<b>65,590.02</b>

(1) Currently receives 10% relief.

(2) Currently receives 75% relief.

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Community and Sport

**SUBJECT:** Local Area Forums

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1) To provide Members of the Board with details of the impacts that the planned changes to the borough's Ward boundaries will have upon Local Area Forums and to ask Members to consider and approve recommendations in respect of dealing with those impacts.

### **2. RECOMMENDED: That Members approve:**

- 1) **The proposals for dealing with the impacts that Ward boundary changes will have upon Local Area Forums, as set out within the report;**
- 2) **That Halton's current seven Local Area Forums be disbanded with effect from 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021; and**
- 3) **That six new Local Area Forums, as set out in Paragraph 3.7, be established in Halton with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

### **3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Changes to the borough's current Ward boundaries were due to come into effect on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020, however, following the postponement of the 2020 local elections due to COVID-19, those boundary changes will now come into effect on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The boundary changes will have implications for Local Area Forums.
- 3.2 At their meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021, Members of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board received a report on the impacts that the impending Ward boundary changes would have on Local Area Forums. Members endorsed a number of proposals contained within the report, including the proposed new Area Forum boundaries, and also made recommendations in respect of the Area Forum budget allocations.

- 3.3 Further to the meeting of the Corporate PPB on 21<sup>st</sup> January, the Council's Executive Board received a report on the 25<sup>th</sup> February which set out revenue budget proposals for 2021/22. The report contained the following proposal in respect of Area Forums, which Members of the Board approved;

*Remove the £200,000 budget provision for Area Forums for one year only.*

*This will be on the basis that the total underspend remaining at 31/03/21 (currently forecast to be £223,000) will be fully carried forward and reallocated on the usual basis to the new Area Forums in order to provide funding for 2021/22.*

- 3.4 The above proposal was subsequently approved by the Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> March and, in light of the decisions taken by the Executive Board and Full Council, the budget allocation of any carry forward will be distributed to the new Area Forums based upon the proportion of the borough's Electorate within each.
- 3.5 Should any Area Forum projects be approved and/or delivered within current Area Forum structures during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the financial expenditure incurred shall be charged against the budget of the most relevant new Ward/Area Forum.

#### Area Forum 'Footprints'

- 3.6 There are currently seven Area Forums that are made up of the Wards as set out below;

Area Forum 1 – Broadheath, Ditton, Hale & Hough Green  
Area Forum 2 – Appleton, Kingsway & Riverside  
Area Forum 3 – Birchfield, Farnworth & Halton View  
Area Forum 4 – Grange, Halton Brook, Heath & Mersey  
Area Forum 5 – Halton Castle, Norton North, Norton South & Windmill Hill  
Area Forum 6 – Beechwood & Halton Lea  
Area Forum 7 – Daresbury

- 3.7 The establishment of new Wards will affect the current Area Forum 'footprints'. Officers have considered the implications of this and are recommending that six new Local Area Forums be established with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Using the current Area Forum 'footprints' as a guide to creating the new ones, Members are asked to consider that six new Area Forums be established as set out below;

Area Forum 1 – Bankfield, Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank and Hough Green  
Area Forum 2 – Appleton, Central & West Bank and Highfield  
Area Forum 3 – Birchfield, Farnworth and Halton View  
Area Forum 4 – Beechwood & Heath, Grange and Mersey & Weston  
Area Forum 5 – Bridgewater, Halton Castle and Halton Lea  
Area Forum 6 – Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor, Norton North and Norton South & Preston Brook

A plan showing the proposed new Area Forum boundaries and the current Area Forum 'footprints' is attached as Appendix 1.

**5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The financial implications are set out within the report.

**6.0. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no new Policy implications arising from this report.

**7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

**7.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

None identified.

**7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

None identified.

**7.3 A Healthy Halton**

None identified.

**7.4 A Safer Halton**

None identified.

**7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

**8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

None identified.

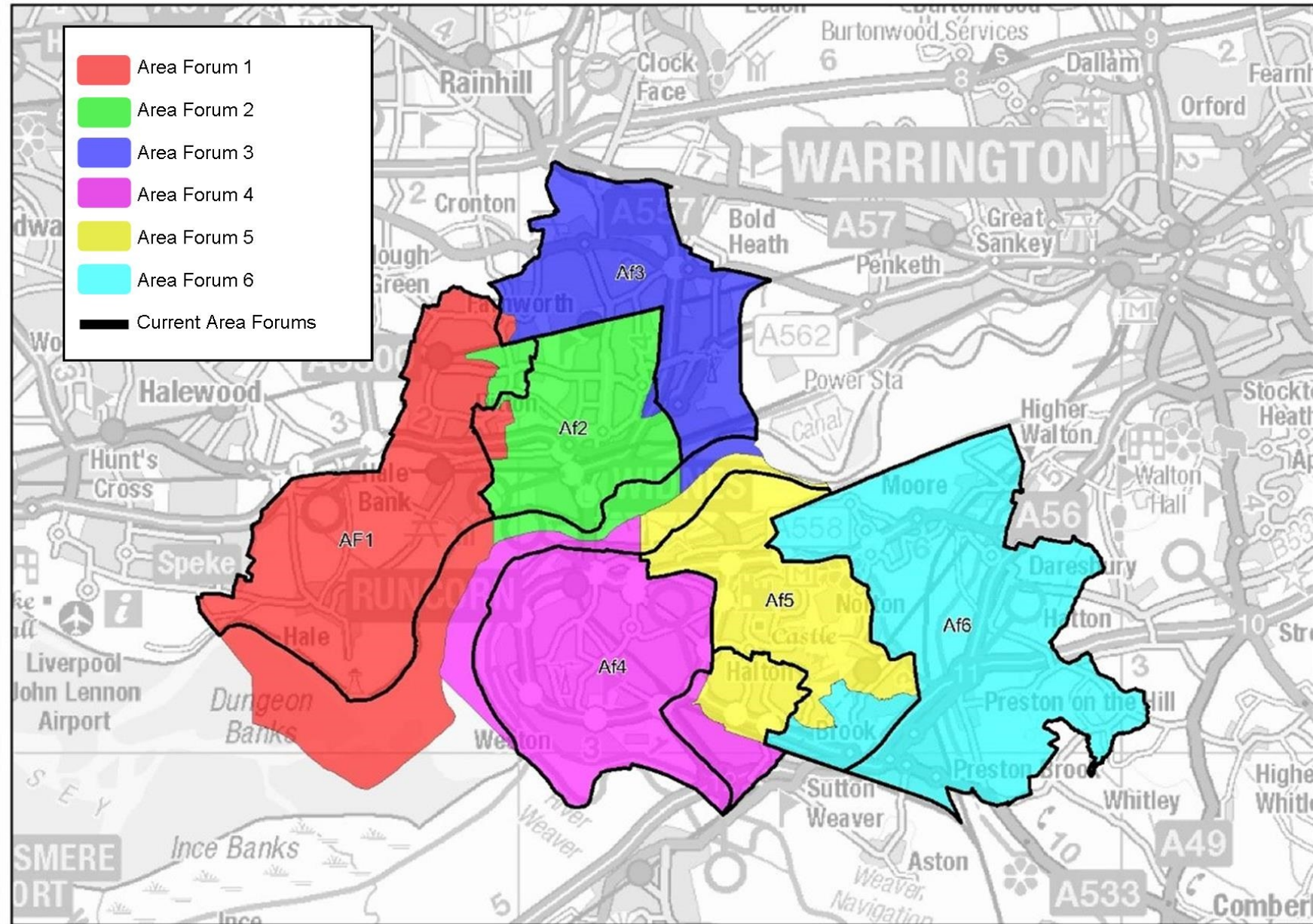
**9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

None identified.

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

There are no background papers associated with this report.

PROPOSED NEW LOCAL AREA FORUMS





<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director, People
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Physical Environment
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Eligibility criteria and Move on Pathway Plan for the Council's Housing and Homelessness Services.
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough-wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Executive Board in respect of the changes to the eligibility criteria for accessing housing and homelessness support that were made as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

1. note the contents of this report; and
2. agree the recommendations at 3.2 that the Housing Solutions Team revert to using the homelessness eligibility criteria and adopt a phased approach to its implementation.

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 At the beginning of the pandemic, central government announced that all local authorities should continue with the statutory eligibility criteria for services but also adopt an approach of supporting all people who contact housing and homelessness services for help, irrespective of their priority need. The 'Everyone In' approach meant that, although those in priority need would continue to be supported as before, there was now an additional layer of support for a wider group of vulnerable people that was needed.
- 3.1.2 The widening of the eligibility criteria resulted in substantially more direct involvement with people who would not otherwise have been deemed eligible for services, and in particular a considerable number of single homeless people who would previously have been given advice and support, but who would not have fallen within the statutory

duty to be accommodated.

- 3.1.3 The Covid restrictions led to a further increase in demand for support and placements. The main increases were from “sofa surfers” (people who are essentially homeless but who sleep in the homes of friends or family on a temporary basis) and the increased number of relationship breakdown within families. In addition, the fear of transmission of the virus, meant that many people no longer had the option of staying with family and friends and therefore had no choice other than to present themselves as homeless.
- 3.1.4 This increased the level of demand on services. Existing temporary accommodation provision very quickly reached capacity, and it was necessary to place a number of people in hotel accommodation, Presently, there are approximately 20 clients staying in temporary hotel accommodation at any given time and placements continue to increase.

Dates	People Placed	Total Number of Nights	Cost
Mar 20 – May 20	43	468	£29,772
June 20 - August 20	74	639	£31,007
Sept 20 – December 20	176	2027	£62,573
Jan 21 – 23 March 21	168	1909	£64,573
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>5043</b>	<b>£187,925</b>

- 3.1.5 Additional temporary accommodation provision was commissioned to meet the increased demand, which included reinstating the mothballed units at Grangeway Court; a new scheme at Columba Hall, Widnes providing 21 apartments on a short-term basis, allowing placements of people with less complex needs. Private landlords were contacted to see if they could help; other currently commissioned services also expanded their provision.
- 3.1.6 Central Government had previously ordered an embargo on evictions of people in rented properties. Although this embargo has now been lifted the impact of this is not likely to appear for some months (due to the time it takes to get eviction cases through court), it is likely that this will further increase the numbers of people across the country who will present themselves as homeless.
- 3.1.7 The Local Authority made a commitment to extend the ‘Everyone In’ approach up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, and all clients presenting as homeless will continue to be accommodated. Discussions with Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have advised that move on pathway plans to reduce temporary accommodation must be put in place.



3.1.8 The thrust of current government policy is now to support people to move on from their homeless accommodation into more permanent settings, and transition back to the routine approach to the delivery of homelessness services.

**3.2 Move On Pathway Recommendations:**

3.2.1 In order to follow government policy it is recommended that the Housing Solutions Team revert to using the homelessness eligibility criteria.

3.2.2 Officers will continue to work with all clients in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, offering advice and assistance to clients who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, to secure permanent housing options and support.

3.2.3 It is recommended that a phased move on approach be implemented to reduce the future use of hotel placements and ensure that commissioned accommodation services are available to meet demand and Local Authority statutory obligations.

3.2.4 The proposed move on pathway plan;

- Full move on plan to be developed to arrange a move on approach over a three-month period, commencing 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021.
- Vaccination roll out within all homelessness services, whereby, all clients should have received first Covid vaccination by June 2021
- Direct Property Matches via social landlords will continue for clients up to 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021
- All clients presenting as homeless from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 will be assessed in accordance with Homelessness legislation
- All clients presenting as rough sleeping from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 will need to be verified by commissioned outreach service Whitechapel.
- Move on transition and dispersal of private sector commissioned apartments will commence from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

3.2.5 MHCLG have confirmed that additional funding of up to £100.000 will remain available to offset temporary accommodation costs during the move on transition period. A further bid is due to be submitted to MHCLG to outline the relevant expenditure costs.

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no policy implications arising from this report.

**5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 To delay the proposed move on pathway process may result in further financial costs to cover temporary hotel placements.

5.2 Failure to adhere with the homelessness legislation and meet statutory obligations could subsequently lead to further legal challenges, with the Local Authority incurring legal court costs.

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

**6.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

Children and young people, and any families where children are dependents, have always been a priority need for temporary accommodation, and this has not changed under the local amendments to the eligibility criteria. All children and families who have needed temporary accommodation during the period of the pandemic have been provided with accommodation and support.

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

There are no implications for employment, learning and skills in Halton arising from this Report.

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

People who are at risk of homelessness, and rough sleepers in particular, frequently have complex lives and multiple health problems. People in this position are regarded as being vulnerable, which has placed them within the priority for support, and the changes to the eligibility criteria have not changed this.

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

There are no direct implications for a Safer Halton arising from this Report.

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

There are no implications for Halton's urban renewal arising from this Report.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Continuing with the current approach will require increased financial support for the service.

7.2 The impact of changing the approach will affect those clients within temporary accommodation and future placements. There are risks that

people could become homeless and potentially revert to rough sleeping, which will increase the risks to their health.

7.3 The provision of a managed approach to this unique situation can potentially mitigate some of the health risks and reduce the potential for additional coronavirus infection in the Borough.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no equality implications arising from the contents of this Report.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002	Through Contact Officer	Patricia Preston
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	Contact Officer	Patricia Preston

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted