

Directorate Overview Report – Enterprise, Community & Resources

Reporting Period: **Quarter 3 – 01st October 2017 – 31st December 2017**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress within the directorate that have occurred during the period.

2.0 Key Developments

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

Finance

Local Government Finance Settlement

2.2 The Government announced the provisional local government finance settlement on 19 December 2017, the main points of which were:

- Grant settlement announcement was in line with figures included in the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- There has been an increase to the referendum limit for council tax from 2% to 3%.
- Government confirmed there were to be no changes to how New Homes Bonus grant was to be calculated.
- Halton will continue to be a member of the Liverpool City Region pilot scheme for 100% business rate retention until 2019/2020.
- Public Health grant was reduced by 2.6%, in line with forecasts.

Budget Saving Proposals

2.3 On 06 December 2017 Council approved initial budget savings for 2018/19 totalling £2.2m. Where possible budget proposals will be implemented immediately and will contribute to helping contribute towards maintaining a balanced budget for 2017/18. Further saving proposals will be presented to Council in March 2018.

School Budgets

2.4 Indicative 2018/19 budgets have been calculated and circulated to primary and secondary schools, confirmation of final budgets will be made following approval by the Education Funding Agency.

2017/18 Half Year Spend Report

2.5 The Council net spend position for the first half of the financial year was reported to Executive Board on 16 November 2017. Net expenditure was £1.9m over the profiled budget to date figure of £52.2m. Capital spending as at 30 September 2017 totalled £53.3m, which is 45% of planned capital spend for the financial year.

Spring 2017 Business Rate Reliefs

- 2.6 Progress is being made with applying various business rate reliefs announced as part of the Chancellors 2017 Spring Budget, including:
- Business Rate Pub Relief – Relief has been awarded to 11 local pubs, applications are expected from a number of other establishments.
 - Support to Small Business Relief – Pending final software testing, the Council will provide rate relief to 8 properties with a total approximate relief value of £15k.
 - Local Discretionary Relief – The Council has received grant funding of £166k to provide relief to local businesses who have seen an increase in their 2017 rateable value. To date relief of approximately £146k has been made to local businesses, with the aim to utilise the full grant by the end of the financial year.

Deputyship Service

- 2.7 The way in which the Council manages the Deputyship Service was subject to an assurance visit by the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) in November 2017. These visits are used by the OPG as a means of supervising public authority deputies.
- 2.8 The report from the visit concluded that the finance team and social workers have very good client insight and communicate well with each other. Record keeping and accounting was found to be robust and staff have access to training and support. Overall, the OPG visitor concluded that the Council's Client Finance team were very impressive.

Duty to report on payment practices and performance

- 2.9 The Council has recently published data on its website relating to its creditor invoice payment performance as required by a new statutory reporting duty introduced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The new reporting requirement comes as part of a package of government measures to tackle late payments to small suppliers. In 2016/17 the Council paid 95.67% of its supplier invoices within 30 days.

Insurance – Personal Injury Discount Rate

- 2.10 Earlier in the year an announcement was made by the Justice Department regarding changes to the personal injury discount rate, which relates to how insurers finalise the compensation amount in large loss personal injury claims. The impact of the change is that the total compensation paid out to people seriously injured or suffering long term trauma/disability is going to increase significantly.
- 2.11 In order to avoid a significant increase in insurance premiums the Council will be increasing the level of self-insurance for employers' liability and public liability insurance claims. With effect from 1 April 2018 the Council will fund the first £775k of any such claims.

Universal Credit

- 2.12 As mentioned in previous monitoring reports Universal Credit (UC) full service was implemented in Halton on 27th July 2016. The latest statistics published by the Department for Works and Pension indicate that there are 7,492 UC claimants in Halton as at 9th November 2017.
- 2.13 In the Autumn Budget the Government announced some changes for the UC system, which are summarised below:

- Cease Waiting Days – from February 2018 the Government are removing the 7 day waiting period for new UC claimants. Subject to satisfying the conditions of entitlement, all new claimants will be eligible for UC from the first day they claim it.
- Increasing Universal Credit Advances - currently UC claimants are entitled to an advance of up to 50% of their estimated entitlement which can be repaid over a period of up to six months. From January 2018, the Government are increasing the amount a claimant can receive from 50% to 100% of their estimated entitlement. Also the amount of the advance can be repaid over a period of twelve months.
- Support with Housing Costs – from April 2018 claimants who were previously receiving Housing Benefit (HB) and are transitioning to UC will receive two weeks extra HB from the date of change to UC.
- Alternative Payment Arrangements for Landlords – from December 2017 new guidance is being issued to DWP staff to ensure that claimants in the private rented sector who have Housing Benefit payments made direct to their landlord, are offered this option when they join UC, provided the relevant criteria are met.

Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

Apprenticeship Policy

2.14 As advised last quarter, the Council's Apprenticeship Policy is operational and ten new placements have been approved for establishment in various areas of the Council. Recruitment and arrangement of linked training provision is now in progress. Apprentices will take up post during Quarter 4 2017/18.

Agency Worker Staffing Update

2.15 The revised agency worker processes were subject to an internal audit during Quarter 2 2017/18. The findings of the audit are largely positive, with some learning points highlighted that will enable further revision of process and procedure. The activity around agency worker engagement is now incorporated into the Recruitment & Resourcing team in the new HR Service Centre, which will enable it to be considered as an integral part of the resourcing formula. Spend analysis on the agency contract for the year to date shows further reductions (refer to PPPE LI02d in Appendix 2).

ICT & Administration Services

Mersey Travel Agresso Delivery

2.16 The delivery of the commercial Mersey Travel project will go-live in December 2017. This has been quite an extensive programme of works due to the nature of the customisation required by the client and the minor extension of this project has allowed for the completion of the development in line with the client specification and a period of testing being undertaken.

Halton Data Centre Development Programme

2.17 As part of the growing requirement for the centralisation of data and the delivery of cloud based working through the Halton services solution additional digital storage devices have been added distributing the data across the Halton Data Centres as part of the data centre development programme. Additional storage solutions are now under consideration allowing the distribution of SharePoint data following the planned upgrade of the solution to the latest 2016 operating system platforms for both server and application provision. The delivery of the programme will improve the user experience, delivering new functionality and security across the users of the Halton SharePoint facilities.

Uninterrupted Power Supply Replacement

- 2.18 UPS (uninterrupted power supplies) replacement within the Municipal Data Centre is now complete. The UPS systems work in conjunction with the authorities on site Generators at all data centre locations for improved business continuity services for all users of the Halton Data Centre solution.

Schools' Internet Connection

- 2.19 The rollout of the Virgin Media Internet Connectivity for schools is now complete.

Desktop and Cloud Services

- 2.20 Both the authorities Cloud Services Delivery and the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDi) upgrade continues to be successfully rolled out across all users. With User feedback being positive in terms of the added flexibility offered by the solution and the simplified and faster management of issues. The programme will continue into the New Year as additional resource is allocated to the programme to move the phase 1 delivery closer to completion.

CareFirst System and Foster Carers Extranet

- 2.21 The Care Financials project- Offering up to date financial information regarding care packages stored in the CareFirst system – is now nearing completion.
- 2.22 Foster Carers Extranet- the aim of this web based solution is to allow all communications with Foster Carers to be secure and electronic and replace all paper based communication. This will be a model for future physical mail replacement solutions.

Online HR Systems

- 2.23 On line DBS/Recruitment/ Health Checks- this project for the authority's HR team is now live and will remove a considerable amount of the physical administration involved in the recruitment process. Applicants will apply for Jobs, DBS checks and complete Health Questionnaires on line removing postal delays and allowing validation of information online so reducing any rework involved in chasing missing/ incorrect information.

Other Systems and Solutions

- 2.24 The Regional Adoption Agency solution went live on the 1st September. Allowing the regions LA's the ability to place staff within a central team but linked to the originating LA. All Halton staff will be operating using the Halton Cloud Desktop VDi solution on Wigan MBC's equipment to access Carefirst and all Halton systems.
- 2.25 EPACCS – End of Life Palliative care system went live, a system that connects our Social Care teams to GP's so that patients diagnosed as end of life are notified to the HBC Social Care systems. This has involved Halton Care Staff accessing the Medical Integration Gateway over the authorities NHS N3 connection.

GCHQ Code of Connection Approval

- 2.26 The PSN code of connection was approved this month by GCHQ for another 12 months, following some considerable changes in the security requirements given the events of the last few months.

Legal and Democracy

Review of Existing Boundaries

- 2.34 The Boundary Commission gave notice in Quarter 3 of their intention to hold a review of arrangements in Halton. Initial meetings have been held between the Commission, and Members and Officers to enable the information gathering exercise begin. This process will be time consuming and resource intensive, with any changes to be implemented at the Municipal Elections in 2020.
- 2.35 There will be a stage of public consultation later in the process. A Member working group is well established and all Members will receive questionnaires in the very near future.

Adult Social Care Delivery

- 2.36 Discussions have been held by Legal Services with colleagues in Knowsley and Sefton Councils over the possible development of New Directions, an alternative model for the delivery of Adult Social Care services. The alternative model is being explored to see whether services can be delivered differently and more efficiently and a detailed report is expected to be brought to Executive Board during Quarter 4.

Policy, Planning & Transportation

Highway Development

- 2.37 Work is on-going on Major planning applications and site supervision for the Lead Local Flood Authority/Highways, and feeding into the Planning Authority's Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.
- 2.38 Surveys of Highway Assets have been completed for this year for LTP PI16 and results are awaited. Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Highways Incentive fund has been submitted to Department for Transport. Halton are a strong level 2 and working towards level 3. Work is ongoing on Halton's response to Highway Management Code of Practice, and ensuring continuous improvement on Self-Assessment for Incentive Funding, to deliver lifecycle planning and steady state maintenance.
- 2.39 Preliminary Flood Risk assessment was published by the Environment Agency (EA) in December 2017. Work is ongoing to prepare design and business case to deliver on next year's (2018/19) EA Flood Risk funding allocation at Windmill Hill, Runcorn.
- 2.40 Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (joint Liverpool City Region document) consultation has now ended and a report will follow to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board in due course.

Schemes & Maintenance

- 2.41 Confirmation has been received granting Lottery Grant Funding (LGF) 3 funding for schemes at Widnes Fiddlers Ferry Rd gyratory, and design work has commenced on the gyratory element to ensure delivery.
- 2.42 The Liverpool City Region (LCR) wide highways design guide and specification for new developments is in the process of being agreed for joint adoption by all LCR partner authorities.

Structures

- 2.43 The temporary closure of the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) came into effect on 14th October 2017. Since then, the Council's contractor, Balvac, has set up their site accommodation and commenced scaffolding works for the project to paint the SJB's steel arch superstructure. Part-time closures of the SJB footbridge (necessitated by the scaffolding works) have been in place since 6th November 2017, with a shuttle bus service enabling pedestrians and cyclists to cross the river via the new bridge.
- 2.44 The team has been in discussion with officers at Knowsley MBC regarding the transfer (at nominal cost) of a footbridge to Halton. The bridge has been earmarked to a development site off Norlands Lane. It is anticipated that the bridge will become available for installation during Quarter 4.

Traffic

- 2.45 A new Contract for the Maintenance of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), which includes traffic signals, variable message signs (VMS), etc. will be commencing on 1st April 2018 and is for an initial period of 6 years with options to extend with four 1 year extensions. Halton was the lead procurement authority for the tender, which covers all the Liverpool City Region authorities.

Planning and Development

- 2.61 Preparation is underway to commence public consultation on the draft Local Plan (the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan) from 4th January to 15 February 2018. Press adverts will be placed and copies of the document will be available on the website and in libraries and Halton Direct Link facilities.
- 2.62 The council has been successful in its legal action over the Gypsy site at Ponderosa in Daresbury and residential use of the site has now ceased.
- 2.63 Planning fees will be increased nationally on the 17 January 2018 by 20%. Given that obtaining planning permission is a legal requirement it is not anticipated that this increase will have any impact upon the number of applications that are received by the Authority.

Community and Environment

Community Centres

- 2.65 Through the improved control of costs and the effective marketing of Community Centres the recent upward trend of income generation continues and across the service the operation of all centres is anticipated to fall within budget allocation and that year on year attendance will continue to increase.
- 2.67 There have been a number of developments in recent months across the centres which, for example include:-

The trialled introduction of Chromebooks as opposed to traditional PC's at Castlefields offering greater flexibility to users with the potential accommodate up to 10 users at any one time. Additionally the centre now host 10 sessions per week of adult exercise classes which having proven very popular are expected to increase in 2018. Following work with local groups and schools the Girl Guides are now based at the Centre and delivering sessions on a Monday evening.

Both Grangeway and Ditton centres have seen investment with the improvement of facilities and utilisation of previously underused space with both centres now offering agile working

accommodation for Council staff, the provision of new space for hire and a two year lease agreement being agreed for space at Grangeway drawing in additional revenue.

In addition further venue generation will result from the leasing of Café space at Grangeway whilst at Murdishaw final negotiations are underway with a provider to utilise space as a classroom and this is anticipated to commence following the February half-term.

The Community Centres website <http://haltoncommunitycentres.co.uk/> and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/haltoncommunitycentres/> are now live and work is continuing on building the existing content of the website; opening hours and images of bookable spaces are scheduled to be included early in 2018 and have received social media training.

Events

2.74 The Brindley Theatre saw its most successful month in December since trading began in 2004 and the Panto in the Park event at Victoria Park in the same month was extremely well attended and resulted in very positive feedback from those experiencing the show.

Design and Development

2.76 The Peel House Cemetery enabling works first phase (earthworks) was completed in December 2017 and work will begin on the drainage in Quarter 4. In addition the Prescott Road car park, boundary and changing room area improvement works commenced in November 2017 and Runcorn Town Hall Boston Avenue boundary improvements were completed in December 2017.

2.77 The Thomas Mottershead Statue was completed by the artist/foundry, delivered and installed at Victoria Park at the end of October 2017 and an unveiling ceremony will take place during quarter 4.

Registration Service

2.81 In October 2017 the Registration Service held its first Wedding Opening Day that specifically showcased the rooms and facilities at Runcorn Town Hall. The service also gained an 'Excellent Achievement' against regional and national performance statistics for both timeliness of registrations and appointment availability and three Registrars gained the City Guilds Registrar Generals Qualification.

Leisure Centre / Sports Development

2.89 Fitness and Swimming memberships are still thriving despite the many challenges the service is facing and following a number of promotional events being undertaken during the period a total of 250 memberships were sold during Quarter 3.

2.79 During the period a number of actions were taken in response to feedback from Member groups at Kingsway and Brookvale which for example included:-

- Improvements to the gym music system at Kingsway and additional morning classes scheduled as well as evening aqua and Zumba classes and Studio equipment being deep cleaned / maintained;
- Further classes being introduced at Brookvale with a new full time instructor being recruited to support customers with gym activity.

- 2.84 There have also been a number of activities taking place across the centres during the Quarter 3 period which have included for example:
- New football camp, Sunday's on Astro turf – Elite training academy. Attracting elite from local clubs and preparing them for the next level and operated by professional and semi-professional football players.
 - New Walking Football session started in November due to the success of the current session and a Multi-Activity session scheduled to start in January.
 - 2 External National Pool Lifeguard Qualification courses delivered which has provided another 24 Lifeguards within the local area.
- 2.86 61 new participants have completed a registration form for the *Active Halton Community Programmes Project* of which 75% were females and 25% males with the most dominant age groups being 51-70, followed by 71-80, and the most popular venue for new participation being the Frank Myler Pavilion.
- 2.87 A Mischief Night at Castlefields Community Centre saw 14 children attending, 12 boys and 2 girls, who engaged in various activities including archery and the Year 5 & 6 tournament held at the Grange school on 23 November saw 9 schools taking part with a total of 12 teams.
- 2.88 Also as part of the FA's Girls and Women Football week a session was held in November. Kingsway provided the sports hall with Widnes Youth and Development FC providing the coach and Liverpool Ladies gave free tickets for their home match on the 11th November. 11 Girls attended, 5 were new to the club and interested in playing regular football.

Stadium, Catering and School Meals Service

- 2.88 Both the Legends bar and Marquee continue to do well and the Marquee, which is now over 10 years old, and will be refurbished and as one of the largest indoor function rooms in the North West, over 15 major events are planned for 2018 which will generate a combined revenue of over £150K.
- 2.89 The Wedding and Partnership Fayre October 2017 was a great success, there was over a 53 couples plus family members who attended the Wedding Fayre and registered their details with our reception, overall on the day the event was well attended. In addition to income generated by the Fayre itself eight bookings were taken for the Stadium from the last event.
- 2.90 The I-pitch bookings have continued throughout the spring and early summer, we now have all the regular teams back on the pitch for block bookings until April 2018 and due to the success of the i-pitch, plans are now being prepared for the tendering process for the replacement of the carpet.
- 2.91 Table Tennis
Table Tennis England North West Conference held at Lancashire County Cricket Club Old Trafford on Saturday 20th January 2018, Karen Tonge MBE presented the awards in her capacity as North West Chairman. The awards were judged by an independent panel from the region. The Young Volunteer of the Year award at the conference went to Robyn Cosgrove of Halton Table Tennis Club.
- Niamh Scarborough a pupil from Wade Deacon High School and a member of Halton Table Tennis has been selected to represent England in her age group 9 – 13 years, Niamh is currently ranked number 5 in her age group.
- Table Tennis continues to be very popular with children and their families and is very well attended on a Tuesday and a Thursday evening.

2.92 The School Meals Service was again inspected by Hospitality Assured during the autumn, this was a full detailed inspection lasting 3 days, all aspects of the service were measured against stringent targets and again for the 9th year running the service has increased its overall score. Halton is one of only a handful of Authorities to hold this accreditation.

Economy, Enterprise & Property

Investment & Development Services

2.98 Occupancy at Sci-Tech Daresbury has increased to 75% and Vanguard House is now 100% occupied. Techspace One continues to perform well and there is strong interest from a number of companies which could result in a significant occupancy increase.

Castlefields

2.99 Lakeside Phase 2 is now substantially complete with the final property sale in December. There are outstanding highways issues to be resolved and final payments according to the Development Agreement due from Keepmoat. Keepmoat Homes received planning permission for 43 new homes at Lakeside Phase 3 in October 2017. The land value has been provisionally agreed with HBC and an Executive Board Report will be put forward in Q4.

2.100 The latest developments at the 3MG site include the Alstom Transport Technology Centre and Training Academy being completed in October 2017 and Stobart commencing construction of the new office headquarters for Rail and Energy at Viking Park.

External Funding

2.100 In Quarter 3 2017-18 23 new External Funding enquiries about funding support received, with assistance being provided in securing 8 grants totalling £852,799, and support being provided for around 18 bids with a value of £8.9 million. 12 bids worth £19.8 million are presently being monitored.

Investment Enquiries

2.101 The Business Improvement and Growth (BIG) Team managed 56 commercial property/inward investment enquiries in Quarter 3 with cumulative inward investment enquiries total (Quarter 1 – 4) is, therefore, 166 (64.4%) against a target of 250. 2 inward investment enquiries were ‘converted’ (inward investment enquiries ‘converted’ into actual investment projects) in Quarter 3. The cumulative conversions total (Quarter 1 + Quarter 3) is, therefore, 4% against a target of 10%.

Liverpool City Region Business Growth Programme

2.102 To date the Halton Business Growth Programme has engaged with 191 businesses. There are currently 113 Halton Businesses participating in the programme. The Halton Business Growth Programme has until December 2018 to meet a Company Assists target of 123 and a Jobs Created target of 108. To date 89 businesses have been assisted and 25 jobs created.

Employment, Learning & Skills

2.104 Halton People into Jobs (HPiJ) successfully secured a subcontract with Ingeus for the delivery of the new Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Work & Health Programme. The programme went live in Quarter 3 and will potentially run for 7 years.

- 2.108 The Combined Authority launched its 2018/19 Annual Skills Investment Statement in December 2017; the statement considers the key labour market evidence and wider strategic context for the Liverpool City Region (LCR) impacting on the development and delivery of skills needed for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
- 2.109 The Department for Education published its new Careers Strategy in December 2017. The Employment, Learning and Skills provision (ELS), including the wider City Region Apprenticeship Hub, will need to take account of the recommendations in the strategy. The ELS Division already holds the Matrix Standard and will be bidding to be a subcontractor for the next round of National Careers Service funding.
- 2.110 The LCR Apprenticeship Hub (managed currently through HBC) sponsored a range of activities in Q3, including a large NHS Skills Show, which saw hundreds of school pupils involved in 'have a go' activities relating to the health care sector. Additionally, the Open Door Theatre Company visited a number of schools, including in Halton, to perform a short play about apprenticeships and their benefits.

Property Services

- 2.112 The new Runcorn Linnets clubhouse was completed and handed over in November 2017 which allowed for the Aldi development to commence on site.
- 2.117 Works at Kingsway Learning Centre are nearing completion, the Library Service has now moved in its entirety to the ground floor and the new office space at 1st floor level will be completed in due course ready for staff to move in prior to 31st March 2018. The new offices being created at first floor level will accommodate 26 workstations in total, which will allow us to start vacating Kingsway House once complete. In addition to the office spaces 30 agile workstations are being created for general use by Council staff.
- 2.118 Further works associated with accommodation moves are anticipated to start within Select Stadium in due course which will see a significant amount of office space created. This will further help with the delivery of the Council's cost reduction accommodation strategy.
- 2.122 The main work to refurbish the ground floor of the Vince Street Centre to accommodate mental health services was completed in December. North West Boroughs Healthcare has some minor fit out works to complete and it's anticipated they will be taking occupation in January 2018.

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:-

Finance

Fair Funding Review

- 3.2 The Government have issued a consultation titled "Fair Funding Review: A Review of Relative Needs and Resources". The purpose of this review will be to enable the Government to reconsider how the relative needs and resources of local authorities should be assessed and how they will continue to have greater control over the money that they raise.

- 3.3 The current methodology covering needs and resources was introduced over 10 years ago and has not been updated since 2013/14. The review will be a key factor in determining future Council finances and the Council will contribute to the review through the Liverpool City Region and Sigoma.

Changes to income collection arrangements

- 3.5 A ban on credit and debit card surcharges came into effect on 13 January 2018 as a result of the Payment Services Directive (PSD2) from the European Union. Arrangements have been made on all the Council's income collection systems to remove the surcharge previously imposed on credit card payments.
- 3.6 Following on from this development a decision has been taken to remove the cheque payment facility within in the kiosks located in the Halton Direct Links as the volume of cheque payments received is extremely low and customers now have the facility to make payment by credit or debit card at no extra cost. There has to date been no adverse reaction to this change and the Council does still accept postal payment by cheque where this is the only method available to an individual.

Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

HR Regulatory Legislation

- 3.7 As previously reported, the Policy and HR functions still await final regulations and implementation in respect of the Public Sector Exit Payment Cap and Public Sector Exit Payment Recovery regulations. It was anticipated that these legislative items may have been clarified by autumn, however it now appears unlikely that they will emerge before 2018.
- 3.9 No legislative change has yet emerged from the Taylor Review of Employment Practices – reported to Government in July. Indicative outcomes are anticipated in February 2018 and the Division will continue to monitor the wider employment arena.

Local Government Pay Claim

- 3.11 It was reported last quarter that Local Government Unions had submitted a pay claim to Local Government Employers for 2018/19. The claim is for a 5% increase across all National Joint Council (NJC) staff pay points, and the deletion of NJC pay points 6, 7, 8 & 9. It was noted that this is a challenging claim given the fiscal position of local government generally. It remains subject to national negotiation and the Council will await information and direction from the National Employers on this matter.
- 3.12 At the time of writing, the three trade unions involved in the national negotiations have formulated a position – both Unite and Unison have recommended that the offer is rejected by their members. GMB have recommended that the offer is likely the best that can be achieved, and that their members should accept. All three unions will consult members through formal channels. Given this position, it is unlikely that agreement will be reached in time to implement an award in April 2018.

ICT Infrastructure

Agile/ Remote Working

- 3.13 The authorities remote access solution is about to be upgraded from the existing Cisco VPN solution and the move to Google Authenticator and will offer all users a simple access solution and training notes will be issued to all users and the IT helpdesk is available to provide additional support.

Online Safety and Schools Web Filtering

3.15 Following a number of key security changes Halton Borough Council has now commissioned a supplier to provide an on-premises Web Filtering Gateway Solution that meets with the 'Prevent' agenda and more closely manages the threat landscape that exists today and in the coming years. This is now becoming a complex and highly managed environment that needs to comply with an ever increasing Government and security services prescribed agenda. This solution will be live by April 2018 in order to manage compliance requirements.

Hybrid Mail (Physical & Electronic) Solution

3.15 The rollout of the Hybrid Mail project out will identify opportunities not only to send physical mail cost effectively but also to replace physical mail with electronic media where possible. All Teams will be visited as across the Council as the process develops in parallel with the VDI rollout project in order to implement all changes in parallel.

Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)

3.18 As the new VDi Laptop solutions are rolled out to the teams, any offer required to work in an agile manner will now utilise one of the new large screen devices that are specifically designed to only access the Halton Cloud service whilst containing no software or data on the device – improving levels of security and ease of use.

Legal and Democracy

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

3.19 The General Data Protection Regulation comes into effect in May, and Legal Services anticipate a considerable number of requests for advice from Council officers and schools. Training sessions for Strategic Directors, Operational Directors and Divisional Managers have already been held and information about the requirements is being sent out via email and the News in Brief newsletter to staff members.

Constitution Review

3.21 Work is underway with a group of officers to review the Council's Constitution, prior to a revised version being presented to Council in May 2018.

Policy, Planning & Transportation

Structures

3.23 The various projects planned for implementation on the SJB complex over the next 12-15 months will need significant co-ordination and management. The main works comprise painting the steel arch superstructure, reconfiguration to the carriageway on SJB and the Runcorn Approach Viaduct (RAV), replacement of a hanger cable on SJB, repairs to the RAV concrete deck, cycle upgrades to the SJB approaches and the associated parapets upgrades, demolition of structures including RAV West, and the installation of a new parapet detail at the interface of RAV and RAV West.

Emergency Planning

- 3.25 A new Upper Tier COMAH site has been designated in Widnes; it is the Emerald Kalama Ltd site in Dans Road. The site has moved to Upper Tier Status due to the increase in the inventory of two substances, which are already stored / involved in industrial processes on the Emerald Kalama site.

Planning and Development

- 3.27 [Regulations](#) under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 were laid before Parliament on 13 December 2017, and, subject to parliamentary procedures will be brought into force in 2018. These will require all authorities to have up to date plans (and Statements of Community Involvement) and commence the statutory duty for authorities to identify their strategic priorities and the policies to address them. Additional powers are also provided for the Secretary of State to intervene in plan-making where authorities are not planning effectively for the needs of communities.

Economy, Enterprise & Property

Investment & Development Services

- 3.34 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (CA) has indicated that a new Call under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Programme Priority 3 (Business Support) will be issued in March 2018. Which will seek partners to deliver a range of business support services across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) for a period of two years.
- 3.35 Given the LCR Local Authorities and Chambers of Commerce currently deliver the 'Business Growth Programme' and 'Place Marketing, Inward Investment' projects under Priority 3 a collective decision needs to be made as to whether to develop new or modified projects or simply seek extensions of the current projects for a further two years and detailed scenario planning is now being undertaken.
- 3.35 The government's 'Growth Hub' business brokerage service in Halton is currently delivered by Halton Borough Council and Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise in partnership and the contract for the current programme (administered by the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership) expires in March 2018.
- 3.36 While the LCR LEP has yet to receive confirmation from government regarding the level of funding for the next phase of Growth Hub it intends to issue an Invitation to Tender (ITT) in February 2018 and will award contracts 'subject to funding'. Halton Borough Council and Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise are currently discussing the response to that ITT and specifically potential modifications to the delivery model in Halton.

Employment, Learning & Skills

- 3.39 The LCR Apprenticeship Hub is sponsoring Visitor Economy Week in February 2018. A range of events and celebrations focusing on the sector are planned across the city region. The Apprenticeship Growth Plan, which was recently commissioned through the Hub will launch in National Apprenticeship Week in March 2018 and will set out the commitments from the Combined Authority and partners around apprenticeship growth. The Apprenticeship Hub will work alongside the Combined Authority and LEP in delivering a number of employer workshops to support them with use of the Apprenticeship Levy.
- 3.41 The Households into Work programme will go live in Q4 (February 2018), with first referrals expected in March 2018. The target number of households for Halton is 54. The programme is for 2 years with participants receiving support for 12 months.

3.42 Expressions of interest have been requested for a possible extension to the ESF Employees Support in Skills project (which includes the Apprenticeship Hub). These requests will be reviewed in April 2018 (current funding set to cease at end of July 2018).

Property Services

3.49 The Government's Clean Growth Strategy was published in October. The strategy is aimed at growing the economy whilst reducing carbon emissions much further, and in respect of this the public sector will clearly be on the front line of both reducing our own emissions but also promoting a reduction in emissions across wider industry. A new voluntary target of 30% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020/21 has been introduced for Local Government based on 1990 emission rates.

4.0 Risk Control Measures

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 Directorate Business Plans. The implementation of all high risk mitigation measures were reported to the Board at Quarter 2.

5.0 High Priority Equality Actions

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 is published on the Council website and is available via:






<http://www4.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/Equality-and-Diversity.aspx>

6.0 Performance Overview

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.

Financial Management

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
FS 01	Report Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board - November 2016.	
FS 02c	Provide quarterly monitoring reports on the overall budget to Executive Board.	
FS 03b	Publish the Statement of Accounts by 30th September 2016.	
FS 04	Establish Treasury Management Policy and report to Council - March 2016.	
FS 05	Establish and report prudential indicators to Council - March 2016.	

Supporting Commentary

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was reported to Executive Board on 16th November 2017. The financial forecast is being regularly updated.









The overall budget monitoring report for 2017/18 Q2 was presented to Executive Board on 16th November 2017, which highlighted a number of potential pressures emerging for which is required to keep spending within budget by year-end. Q3 will be reported on 22nd February 2018.

The draft 2016/17 of Statement of Accounts was certified by the Chief Finance Officer on 28th June 2017, commenced 1st July 2017 and shared with External Auditor, Grant Thornton LLP, on the same day. The draft was then approved by the Business Efficiency Board on 28th September and then later made available on the Council's external website on 30th September 2017

The 2016/17 Treasury Management Policy was approved by Council on 8th March 2017 and the Half year report is scheduled to be reported to Executive Board on 16th November 2017.

The 2017/18 prudential indicators were reported to Council on 08th March 2017 as part of Treasury Management Policy and Half-Year monitoring report was reported to Executive Board on 16th November 2017.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	16 / 17 Actual	17 / 18 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 01	Receive an unqualified external audit opinion on the accounts.	Yes	Yes	Yes		
FS LI 04	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected.	95.04%	94.75%+	82.20%		
FS LI 05	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received.	97.65%	95.00%+	82.87%		
FS LI 06	Average time for processing new claims (Housing & Council Tax Benefit).	19.94 (Days)	20 (Days)	19 (Days)		




Supporting Commentary

The 2016/17 Statement of Accounts audit opinion was reported to the Business Efficiency Board on 27th September 2017. As part of the 2016/17 audit of the Council's Financial Statements Grant Thornton concluded that their work had identified no material weaknesses.

In terms of collection rates and processing times there has been some minor deviation when compared to the same period last year and this is to be expected and there is nothing to indicate that annual targets will not be achieved.

Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Service

Key Objectives / milestones















Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
PPPE 01a	Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy (ODS) May 2017	
PPPE 01b	Review and refresh annual training calendar September 2017 .	
PPPE 04d	Ongoing monitoring of agency usage and spend April, September, December 2017, and March 2018 .	

Supporting Commentary

Activity underway in respect of all actions associated with the ODS. Formation of new Organisational Development Service December now aiding prioritisation of key aspects. Refer to narrative in Key Developments.

The Annual Training Calendar has been updated and regular dialogue with agency contract provider is ongoing and quarterly business review meetings are undertaken to monitor deployment and financial performance in this area.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	16 / 17 Actual	17 / 18 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
PPPE LI 01	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	8.66 (Days)	9.5 (Days)	7.31		
PPPE LI 02a	Total Full Time Equivalent Staffing Establishment	3,637	For Information Only	3,583	N / A	N / A
PPPE LI 03	% of training delegates attending as proportion of places reserved.	82.00%	90.00%	85%		
PPPE LI 04	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are ¹					
	▪ women	55.47%	50.00%	56.86%		
	▪ from BME communities.	2.41%	1.50%	2.50%		
	▪ with a disability	1.00%	8.00%	0.86%		
PPPE LI 05	No of staff declaring that they meet the definition of disability within the Equality Act 2010 as a % of the total workforce.	1.35%	10.00%	1.42%		
PPPE LI 06	Minority Ethnic community staff as % of total workforce.	1.00%	1.00%	0.97%		

Supporting Commentary

There has been a slight increase in absence from Q2 2017/18, that may be due to seasonal sickness at the time of year. This will be analysed as part of the review of new absence management procedures during Quarter 4.

Q3 has seen an increase in training attendance with the main service areas negatively affecting the performance is Adult Social Care Training. This indicator is subject to fluctuation, and given previous quarter's performance could still hit target.

Positive movement of the three staff component indicators from the same period (Q3) in 2016/17. It should be noted, however, that recruitment in to the top 5% of earners is very limited, and as such scope for significant change is low. In addition some movement in BME staffing levels is to be expected.

ICT and Administrative Support Services

Key Objectives / milestones





Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
ICT 01b	Further development of Cloud Services Platform - March 2017 .	
ICT 01c	SharePoint and Records Management enhancements - March 2017 .	
ICT 01e	Further development of commercial ICT opportunity within desktop, hosting and DR provision - March 2017 .	

Supporting Commentary

The rollout of the Cloud Services Platform is now in place with technical upgrades to the underlying server infrastructure planned to take place over the coming weeks to enhance functionality and the user experience

Sharepoint enhancements have recently been successfully undertaken with software and hardware upgrades to the underlying infrastructure. With a view to upgrade to the latest 2016 version of the software solution – tests are underway to ensure all 3rd party software solution compatibility.

Key Performance Indicators



Ref	Measure	16 / 17 Actual	17 / 18 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
ICT LI 01	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	99.01%	99.00%	99.00		
ICT LI 02	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	99.14%	99.00%	99.00		

Supporting Commentary

The availability of servers and WAN infrastructure remains at target for the year.

Legal & Democracy







Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
LD 01a	Review constitution - May 2017 .	
LD 02b	To induct all new Elected Members by October 2017 .	

Supporting Commentary

The revised Constitution was approved by Council in May 2017 and MAP meetings are continually offered throughout the calendar year with all new Members having been through the induction programme.

Key Performance Indicators


Ref	Measure	16 / 17 Actual	17 / 18 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
LD LI 01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total).	55 (98.21%)	56 (100.00%)	55 (98.21%)		
LD LI 03	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days).	7 (Days)	10 (Days)	7 (Days)		
LD LI 04	Average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department (working days).	1 (Day)	3 (Days)	1 (Day)		

Supporting Commentary

Progress towards all Members having a Personal Development Plan remains good at Quarter 3 and the figure is performing at the same level as the previous financial year.

In addition the average time taken to issue prosecutions and the filing of applications for Care proceedings are above target and in line with performance from Q3 2016/17.

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
PPT 01a	Review progress against Liverpool City Region (LCR) Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) maintenance strategy and deliver 2017/18 major bridge maintenance works programme.	
PPT 02a	To deliver the 2017/18 LTP Capital Programme March 2018.	
PPT 03a	Ensure continued unrestricted availability of the Highway network and to allow future maintenance to be delivered on a steady state, lifecycle planned basis.	
PPT 06a	Ensure that at least one exercise is carried out each financial year to test the COMAH plans March 2018	

Supporting Commentary

Most major bridge maintenance tasks have progressed and been completed on programme, but a delay of several weeks to the site phase of Task 28 (hanger cable replacement on SJB) is anticipated in Quarter 4 due to the demands of the specialist design and procurement processes.

As part of the LTP Capital Programme design work is nearing completion to improve Parking at Runcorn East Station. With the main body of construction planned for summer 2018.

Design work has commenced to provide improvements to cycling and walking from Runcorn Town Centre to Widnes Town centre across a reconfigured Silver Jubilee bridge deck with construction works planned to commence in the next quarter.

Design work is also progressing on improvements to walking and cycling access to businesses along Astmoor busway including upgrading existing traffic signal junction equipment and works to provide for north/south cycle route is nearing completion on site for West Runcorn intended to replace the cycling provision on Central Expressway.

Design work is also advancing on a project to improve walking and cycling on the route alongside Bridgewater canal from Runcorn Town centre to Murdishaw Marina and links to Runcorn East Station.















Phase 2 of reconstruction of the Kingsway central reserve has been completed in the period and Phase 3 is programmed to be completed February 2018 and work is ongoing on Halton's response to the new Highway Management Code of Practice, and ensuring continuous improvement on Self-Assessment for Incentive Funding, to deliver lifecycle planning and steady state maintenance.

Footway reconstruction programme is progressing well with works programmed to be completed in Quarter 4.

The annual programme of Bus Stop upgrades will continue although with ITB funding considerably reduced this year we will not be able to upgrade as many stops as in previous years.

The Runcorn Site COMAH Operators Exercise took place in April 2017 and went well.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	15 / 16 Actual	16 / 17 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
PPT LI 02	Net additional homes provided	700	552	N / A	N / A	N / A
PPT LI 03	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	138	138	N / A	N / A	N / A
PPT LI 04	Processing of planning applications (%) as measured against targets for, a) 'major' applications b) 'minor' applications c) 'other' applications	77.8% 88.9% 100%	60% 80% 80%	100% 82% 91%	100% 90.47% 89.60%	  
PPT LI 05	To ensure a rolling five year supply of housing land. Deliverable supply (units) as a % of rolling 5 year requirement.	105%	105%	151% (Draft)		N / A
PPT LI 12	Damage to roads and pavements (% above intervention levels) repaired within 24 hours.	100%	100%	100%		
PPT LI 16	Bus service punctuality, Part 1: a) Percentage of buses starting route on time ▪ Percentage of buses on time at intermediate timing points	96.22% 86.52%	98.55% 95.00%	96.42% 87.00%	 	 
PPT LI 19	% of bus stops with Quality Corridor accessibility features. (Total No. of stops – 603)	73% (434 Bus stops)	78.00% (470 Bus Stops)	73% (434 Bus stops)		
PPT LI 20	Number of local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area in one year (000's)	5,719	5,676	4,066		

Supporting Commentary

Figures reported annually for PPT LI 02 & 03

In comparison to Quarter 2 the number of Major planning applications determined on time remains the same (100%) Minor applications determined on time shows an increase over the previous quarter and other applications determined on time shows little variance. All remain above target.

Repairs to damage to roads and pavements remains positive and bus punctuality continues to show an improvement on last year's figures and it is anticipated that the performance will continue to improve through Quarter 4 towards achieving the 2017/18 target.




It is anticipated that the target for Quality Corridor bus stops in the current financial year will not be met due to the reduction in funding allocation with 74% of bus stops will be completed by year end.

PPT LI 20

During Quarter 3 industrial action by staff at one operator had a significant effect on passenger numbers and it is likely that this will also have a negative effect on the year-end outturn figure.

Community & Environment

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
CE 01	Deliver a programme of extended informal learning opportunities meeting identified local targets (Library Service) - March 2018	
CE 02	Deliver a promotion and educational campaign - September 2017 and January 2018 .	
CE 04	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 2018 .	

Supporting Commentary

541 adults attended IT clinics to learn digital skills and to support job seeking with more than 120 people attended Code Clubs to learn how to make computer games, animations and websites by learning how to code.












In addition Fun Palaces at Ditton and Halton Lea Libraries were attended by more than 300 people and Activities delivered by the community for the community included digital music, painting, coding and quilting.

A significant school meals marketing campaign, which included a number of school visits, staff training sessions and the distribution of over 3,000 leaflets has seen the number of children staying increase slightly, this campaign will be repeated in early 2018.

In September 2017, the Council delivered a number of activities during National 'Recycle Week'. The aim of the week is to encourage the public to recycle more, by demonstrating the benefits of recycling items from all around the home. The national theme for Recycle Week this year was "Recycling – It's worth it" and throughout the week Officers held events at the following locations;

- Castlefields and Upton Community Centres
- Runcorn and Widnes Markets
- Runcorn Shopping Centre Halton Direct Link

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	16 / 17 Actual	17 / 187 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 01	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Primary Schools.	75.66%	87.00%	77.87%		
CE LI 02	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Secondary Schools.	65.22%	77.50%	71.33%		
CE LI 05	Residual household waste per household.	580kgs	575kgs	251kgs		
CE LI 06	Household waste recycled and composted.	43.63%	44%	50.32%		
CE LI 08	Number of physical and virtual visits to libraries (annual total)	562,648	600,000	322,558		
CE LI 09	Increase in percentage of the population taking part in sport and physical activity at least twice in the last month (KPI 1 from Active Lives survey)	N/A	TBC	73.8%		N / A

Supporting Commentary

Following the marketing campaign coupled with the cold wet weather there has been a fairly sharp rise in the uptake of Primary School Meals, this should continue for the remainder of this financial year, the target of 87% was always however a very optimistic figure.



There has been an increase in the uptake of Secondary School meals during the Winter months but similar to the Primary School target this target is also a little optimistic.

Estimated residual waste and recycling performance in Q3 is better than the corresponding period from last year and it is anticipated that this target will be met.

Visits to libraries is subject to seasonal fluctuations but performance remains on target.

Economy, Enterprise & Property

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q3 Progress
EEP 01a	Develop Halton Inward Investment Prospectus December 2017	
EEP 01c	Deliver Youth Employment Gateway (YAG) December 2017	

**Supporting Commentary**

The Halton Inward Investment prospectus is an integral part of the development of the 'Halton Tomorrow' visioning document and will provide a local accent to the Liverpool City Region prospectus detailing the specific sites and propositions that make up the 'Halton Offer'. The prospectus was completed in Quarter 3 2017/18.

The Youth Employment Gateway contract ended 31st December 2017. All KPI's were exceeded/met in year 2 of the programme.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	15 / 16 Actual	16 / 17 Target	Q3 Actual	Q3 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 01	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions indicator (Tonnes CO ₂ e)	17,804 tonnes CO ₂ e (actual 15/16)	15,882 tonnes CO ₂ e (target 17/18)	16,043 tonnes CO ₂ e (actual 16/17)		N / A
EEP LI 05	Number of Jobs Created (from projects managed by EEP)	122	200	36.8		N / A
EEP LI 06	Number of Safeguarded (from projects managed by EEP)	N / A	100	N / A	N / A	N / A
EEP LI 08	Number of People supported into work	543	400	250		
EEP LI 14	Number of inward investment enquiries per annum.	221	250	166		

Supporting Commentary

The reporting requirements for emissions have been amended whereby the figures for academies are no longer included. The figure for 2015/16 has therefore been amended to reflect the change to ensure the comparison to the 2016/17 figure is meaningful. The overall emissions for 2016/17 amount to 16,043 tonnes, which equates to a 9.8% reduction from the previous year, well within the target set.

The overall emissions of 16,043 tonnes is broken down into the following five categories:-

- School Buildings 5128t, Corporate buildings 5364t
- Unmetered supply 3913t
- Fleet Transport 1297t & Business Mileage 341t.
- There was a reduction in emissions across all areas, Street Lighting had the largest annual reduction in the amount of 15.6%.

The annual figure for this indicator is a year behind and therefore only reported in the following year. The revised target for 2017/18 is 15,882.

29.8 Jobs were created at Sci-Tech Daresbury (reported to DCLG in November 17)

- 3 Eddie Stobart
- 4 Stobart Group

Number of jobs safeguarded is subject to annual collection.

During Quarter 3 76 individuals were supported into work (250 year to date)




- 52 – ESF Ways to Work
- 16 – Youth Employment Gateway
- 7 - Ingeus Work Programme contract
- 1 – People Plus Work Programme contract

The number of inward investment enquiries is lower than that compared to the same period last year and at this stage the achievement of the annual target remains uncertain.





7.0 Application 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.