

Corporate Policy and Performance Board– Priority Based Monitoring

Reporting Period: **Quarter 4 – 01st January 2019 – 31st March 2019**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the fourth quarter of 2018/19 for service areas within the remit of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2018-19 were agreed by Elected Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board in relation to the Council's priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency i.e.:
- Financial Services
 - Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency
 - ICT Infrastructure
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
 - Property Services
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 8 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

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

Finance

Benefits Division

Universal Credit

- 2.2 DWP statistics indicate that as at February 2019 there are 10,631 people within Halton claiming Universal Credit. The managed migration of people on legacy benefits over to Universal Credit is to be piloted in July this year with claimants in Harrogate. This will be followed at the end 2019 by the commencement of a national managed migration due to be completed in 2023. The DWP has given no indication of the scheduling in terms of areas and timing of the actual managed migration.

Audit, Procurement & Operational Finance

Insurance

- 2.3 The Council has recently completed a procurement process for a range of insurance policies. The outcome of the procurement has resulted in the Council achieving some reductions in premium, whilst also being able to reduce its level of self-insurance on its liability policy.

2.4 From 1 April 2019, the Council's new liability insurer is Protector Insurance, which is a Scandinavian company. It is a relatively new entrant to the UK public sector insurance market. The company's business in the UK has grown rapidly since 2015 and they now have over 60 UK local authority clients.

2.5 The other insurance policies placed as a result of the tender exercise are:

- Fidelity Guarantee & Crime
- Personal Accident & Business Travel (Inc. School Journey)
- Engineering Insurance & Inspection
- Medical Malpractice

All policies have been awarded for a period of three years with the option to extend for a further two years.

Direct Payments

2.6 The number of Social Care clients opting to receive a Direct Payment increased significantly again during 2018/19. Direct Payments offers Users greater flexibility, choice and independence in terms of how their assessed care needs are met. Direct Payment User numbers increased from 703 in April 2018 to 746 by 31st March 2019.

2.7 The Direct Payments team provide support for Direct Payment Users and carry out regular audits of Users' funds to provide assurance that monies are being managed appropriately and spent in line with each User's support plan. During 2018/19, the Direct Payments team recovered £707k from the audit process.

Revenues and Financial Management Division

2019/20 Budget & Council Tax Setting

2.8 The 2019/20 net budget of £108.6m was approved by Council on 06 March 2019. The net budget will be part-funded from an increase of 2.99% to Council Tax. The council tax to be generated for 2019/20 totals £49.6m and Halton's Band D council tax level of £1,419.08 continues to be the fourth lowest in the North West.

2018/19 Quarter 3 Spend Position

2.9 The Council net spend position for the period to 31 December 2018 was reported to Executive Board on 21 February 2019. Net expenditure was £3.1m over the profiled budget to date of £65.9m. Capital spending as at 31 December 2018 totalled £15.0m, which is 95% of planned capital spend of £15.7m at this stage.

Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Rate

2.10 Council tax collection rate for the year was 94.75%, an increase of 0.13% on this point last year. This is the first year-on-year increase to the collection rate since 2011/12, as in recent years there has been an adverse impact from the introduction of the council tax reduction scheme in April 2013.

2.11 Cash collected during the year (on behalf of the Council, Fire, Police and local preceptors) totalled £58.5m against an expected budget of £56.2. Cash collected includes growth to the council tax base and a further £1.9m collected from previous year's arrears.

- 2.12 The 2018/19 collection rate for business rates was 98.3%, an increase of 0.11% on this point last year. This is the fourth consecutive year in which the business rate collection rate has improved. Cash collected during the year (on behalf of the Council and Cheshire Fire) was £57.8m against an expected budget of £54.8m, this includes growth to the base and recovery against previous year's arrears.

Local Government Finance Consultations

- 2.13 The Council recently responded to two Government consultations covering the Fair Funding Review and Reform to Business Rate Retention. Responses were made both individually and through shared responses with the Liverpool City Region and SIGOMA (the Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities). The outcome to these consultations and the Government's subsequent proposals regarding the local government funding regime, could have a significant bearing upon the Council's funding from April 2020 onwards.

Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

New NJC Pay Spines

- 2.14 Work has been completed to transition employees and schools to the new NJC pay spines, effective from 1st April 2020 and this has been achieved with minimum disruption to the Council's grading structure, the integrity of which remains as originally intended. The revised NJC pay spines have been worked into the Council's 2019/20 budget.

Apprenticeships

- 2.15 Work continues with operational areas to progress arrangements for new apprenticeships in the Council, with 15 having been established during the 2018 - 19. Taking into account new apprenticeships, and those for existing employees, at year-end, at 2.4% the Council has met its government target for the financial year to have 2.3% of the workforce in an apprenticeship placement

EU Settlement Scheme

- 2.16 In response to the planned, but now delayed, UK exit from the EU, the pilot EU settlement scheme that had been put in place by government during Q3 has now become mainstream. This enables any settled EU citizens working in the UK to obtain relevant legal residency status and eligibility to work following the exit. Numbers of employees within the Council falling into this category are nominal, however the service continues to engage with our agency worker provider to ensure that relevant legitimate status is in place for agency workers used in critical services – for example Adult Social Care.

Recruitment & Resourcing Update

- 2.17 During Quarter 4, backlogs of recruitment work as a result of resource constraints were cleared and a proactive approach to working with services to manage recruitment is now in place. A high volume recruitment exercise within the Adult Social Care area has been successfully undertaken in the period, with a further exercise in progress, and more planned. A multi-disciplinary approach to such exercises, using the expertise of HR, Marketing, Social Care and Customer Intelligence colleagues is proving to be an effective way to tap into the local labour market and attract new applicants to advertised roles.

Payroll Audit

- 2.18 An internal audit of payroll activity was concluded during Quarter 4 with a full level of assurance being concluded with no recommendations made on any of the areas scrutinised.

Schools Service Level Agreements

- 2.19 Annual traded service level agreements across the HR service areas were offered to Halton schools during Quarter 4. There has been a slight increase in sign-up, with two schools returning to purchase the service following a period of supply with external commercial organisations which demonstrates the continuation of a reliable and respected service offer by the Council.

Mindfulness Practice

- 2.20 Within the Organisational Development (OD) Service, Mindfulness is now becoming a cornerstone of the workplace wellbeing provisions. The Learning and Development (L&D) team have been embedding Mindfulness Practice within the Corporate Wellbeing offer giving employees the capacity to deal with and recover quickly from difficult situations. The offer consists of group sessions and 1:1 provision to ensure higher levels of resilience within the workforce.

E-Learning

- 2.21 E-learning remains an important element of the training offer with the development of more courses' and greater uptake. A comparison of completed e-learning modules from - 2017/18 (268) and 2018/19 (1192) represents an increase in e-learning take up of 445%, demonstrating a more efficient and flexible way of learning within the workplace.

ILM 3 in Leadership & Management

- 2.22 10 employees successfully attaining the ILM 3 in Leadership & Management qualification, building middle management skills within the organisation. The Council's training provision has recently been inspected by the ILM External Verifier and once again received very positive feedback, citing "meticulous processes in place, clear evidence of a focus on learner development, highly detailed feedback and support given to all learners".

Recruitment Personal Profile Analysis (PPA)

- 2.23 The OD service continues to work with managers in a range of areas to design Recruitment Personal Profile Analysis (PPA), with profiling undertaken to support recruitment to a range of posts recruited to during the latter part of the year. PPA is also being utilised within operational teams to develop and strength professional interaction.

ICT Infrastructure

OLM Eclipse Upgrade

- 2.24 Care First 6 is a Care Management System which holds records of the Council's Social Services clients, both adults and children's. It is an essential tool in the provision of social care and supports the protection of both vulnerable adults and vulnerable children and young people, it allows social care staff and key partner agencies to gather, retain and understand the needs of individuals and families.
- 2.25 As the Care First 6 product has been utilised for such a long time, it has become outdated and there are now more efficient and effective products on the market. Crucially, it will not be long until the suppliers of Care First 6, OLM Systems Ltd, will cease to support the product and update it.

- 2.26 As a consequence Officers from all interested services (Children's and Adults Services and IT) have, over recent months, carried out a review of the available software on the market that could potentially replace the Care First 6 product. This included a soft market test exercise and a review of the approach adopted by other local authorities.
- 2.27 Subsequently the Eclipse product from the existing supplier OLM was chosen the authority used the appropriate procurement framework to complete the purchase.
- 2.28 The project is now in the planning phase and the teams within ICT Services and the respective client teams will now formulate a project plan to initiate the change to and upgrades of the associated systems which it is anticipated will take 9 – 12 months to implement.

One Stop Shops – Contact Centre

- 2.29 The One Stop Shop staff continue to deliver council services through our location in Widnes and Runcorn and during 2018 - 19 handled 23,352 cases with average wait times at Halton Lea and Widnes within target.
- 2.30 The Contact Centre staff handled 21,252 calls during 2018/19. The average wait time for the third quarter was 5mins and 03 seconds. These calls resulted in 27,521 cases being logged relating to the customers enquiries.

MYAPPS.halton.gov.uk – Halton Cloud Desktop Upgrade Programme

- 2.31 The authorities' in house Cloud Services Delivery and Cloud Desktop upgrade continues to be successfully rolled out across all users with over 1,400 users now migrated into the new in-house cloud service. Approximately a further 400 users will be migrated from the existing MyDesk cloud systems and those using traditional laptop's will also be linked to the new MyApp's desktop – this project has enabled the cost of Laptop devices to reduce from over £1000 per unit to just over £350 per unit.

SharePoint 2019

- 2.32 The project has now started for the upgrade and development of the latest version of Halton's existing SharePoint Records Management deployment. This widely used and essential management solution has served the authority for over 10 years through its various iterations. The latest version will now enhance the user experience further with additional sets of functionality and the essential ability to link with Halton's own Cloud facilities and allow the associated technologies to enable and embrace Hybrid Cloud technologies as the authority moves towards Cloud based Microsoft Office M365 connectivity.

Exchange 2016 and Hybrid Cloud Services

- 2.33 in order to allow the authority to comply and merge with the new Microsoft Hybrid technology stacks that allow both services to be delivered through Halton's own data centre locations and enable links into the Microsoft cloud known as Azure. Email will be the only main stream product set that will be enabled through the Azure route for the time being with additional cloud based services reviewed over the next few years enabling a subset of HBC users who do not require a full desktop experience access to Office based technologies via the internet utilising secure access routes maintained within the Halton Cloud System.

Legal and Democracy

- 2.34 The Council's final submission has been made to the Boundary Commission regarding their electoral review which aims to recommend boundaries that will mean each Councillor will represent approximately the same number of voters. Further details can be accessed via <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-west/cheshire/halton>
- 2.35 A triennial review of Members' Allowance Scheme has now been completed and the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel were accepted by the Council, and the revised arrangements were implemented in March 2019.

Community and Environment (Catering, Stadium and Registration Services)

Halton Stadium

- 2.36 The new playing pitch has now received its validation from FIFA which allow the continuation of professional Football being played at the stadium. Officers will now be seeking to engage with both Liverpool and Everton Ladies Football Teams with a view to resuming its relationships with both clubs and them making use of the stadium and its facilities for future fixtures.
- 2.37 The Halton Spartans American Football Team have signed up to use the facility to play 5 games this season and for their weekly training session. In addition Widnes Football Club and their Youth Academy will also continue to make use of the facilities and in addition a number of representative games have been planned for this year.

Karalius Suite

- 2.38 Work is now complete on the newly refurbished Karalius Suite which will enable the release of the Halton Suite to be used for staff accommodation with the resulting savings in ongoing costs to the Council.

Stadium Restructure

- 2.39 In light of existing demand and market trends the stadium fitness offering has been reformed and will see the delivery of a Ladies Gym with a capacity to cater for approximately 200 users alongside a prestigious table tennis facility.

School Meals

- 2.40 The School Meals Service has again received Hospitality Assured accreditation and this marks ongoing achievement by the service and its staff. Hospitality Assured is the quality standard created by the Institute of Hospitality specifically for customer facing businesses and allows organisations to monitor progress toward achieving customer service excellence and optimising organisational performance.

Property Services

Education Maintenance Programme

- 2.41 Works on the 2018/19 schools maintenance programme have progressed throughout the year with 13 of the 15 projects having been completed at a total cost of circa £825K. The final 2 projects will be completed in due course. The programme of work for 2019/20 has now been approved by Exec Board, this will be going to full Council for approval in due course.

Corporate Maintenance programme

- 2.42 Works on the 2018/19 corporate maintenance programme have been progressing throughout the year with the majority of projects now having been completed. The budget will be fully spent by year end.

Picow Farm Old Archive Unit Refurbishment

- 2.43 Following on from the reroofing of the old archive store at Picow Farm Depot which was completed in January, the unit has been undergoing a refurbishment to enhance storage facilities for Open Spaces and to improve traffic flow on site. The works are due to be completed in April 2019.

Mersey Gateway Handback Sites

- 2.44 Meetings and site visits have continued over the past few months with the Mersey Gateway Crossing Board and Merseylink in respect of all the temporary use areas that will ultimately be handed back once all works are completed.
- 2.45 The first 3 temporary use areas have now been handed back, all being in Widnes. Further sites are due to come back in April and work will continue in respect of these over the next few weeks. Merseylink are currently working towards June 19th as the date when all sites are due to be handed back.

Accommodation Moves

- 2.46 Throughout 2018 plans have been put in place to ensure we vacate Kingsway House by October 2019 when the lease expires, saving in the region of £300k revenue costs in the process. To facilitate this we completed the refurbishment of some of the 1st floor accommodation within Kingsway Learning Centre in 2018 to create 2 office bases and a large agile working area, the Revenue & Benefits staff having moved into the office space.
- 2.47 As previously indicated now works to the Karalius Suite at the Stadium are complete, works to convert the Halton Suite in to office accommodation will commence in April, following which, further works will be undertaken at the Stadium in order to create enough capacity to relocate the majority of the remaining staff from Kingsway House, to facilitate us vacating the building by Oct 2019.

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

Benefits

Universal Support

- 3.2 At 31st March 2019 the Council ceased providing Universal Support for Universal Credit claimants. The DWP have commissioned the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to deliver this service from 1st April 2019 and it is now known as "Help To Claim". This service provides support up to the first payment of Universal Credit and does not include any Personal Budgeting Support.

- 3.3 The CAB have received funding from the Government to deliver the “Help To Claim” service and they are currently introducing new procedures as part of their implementation process.

Revenues and Financial Management

Statement of Accounts

- 3.4 Work has begun on closing the accounts for 2018/19 and the process is now in place to complete the draft Statement of Accounts prior to it being passed to the council’s external auditor (Grant Thornton LLP) on 31 May 2019.

Review of Local Government Finance

- 3.5 A new inquiry into local government finance will take place ahead of this year's public sector Spending Review. The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee will explore how effective existing funding for local government is, in providing resources to meet need and demand for services. MHCLG are looking for Councils to provide input into the review, which the Council will do through a shared response with the Liverpool City Region.

Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance

Late Payment of Commercial Debts

- 3.6 The Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations allows creditors to claim interest, a fixed sum of compensation and, in some circumstances, the reasonable costs of collecting overdue commercial debts. The legislation, which cannot be applied to debts owed by individual’s e.g. Council Tax arrears etc., helps to deter late payment of debts and compensates creditors where late payment is received.
- 3.7 Work is currently underway to make the necessary system changes to allow the Council to make use of this facility. Under the new arrangements the Council will impose interest at a rate of 8% above base rate per annum in respect of overdue commercial debts that relate to goods and services. Additionally, fixed penalty compensation is recoverable depending on the level of the debt. .
- 3.8 In practice, the Council will notify commercial debtors that late payment will result in interest and a penalty being applied, when payment reminders are issued. Where a debt is paid late, the Council will then will issue a Late Payment Demand for the interest and penalty due.

Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

Employment Legislation

- 3.9 No substantive legislative change has yet emerged from the Taylor Review of Employment Practices – reported to Government in July 2017 - however the Government published the ‘Good Work Plan’ in December 2018, which focuses on the key themes of employment status, treatment of agency workers, and enforcement of employment rights.
- 3.10 Having reviewed the plan, there do not appear to be any principles highlighted with which the Council does not already demonstrate compliance and this will be kept under review in light of any legislative changes that may emerge.

Gender Pay Gap

- 3.11 The Council met its legal obligation to report the Gender Pay Gap in March 2019. The outturns reflect the snapshot date of 31st March 2018 and were favourable by comparison and further information is available via <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/EandD/genderpaygap.pdf>
- 3.12 The gender pay gap did increase on the previous reported year, largely because during the year to 31st March 2018 the Council TUPE transferred 2 care homes into its operations which added a number of lower paid female employees to the Council staffing establishment. This is being remedied to a degree through restructuring and harmonisation to Council pay grades / rates and terms and conditions, however will not influence the Gender Pay Gap measurement until the measure applied at 31st March 2020 is published (which will be in 2021).
- 3.13 Looking at sub-regional data, Halton currently has the highest percentage of female employees in the top two pay quartiles, and has the lowest percentage difference in median hourly pay rate.
- 3.14 It is important to note that Gender Pay Gap data is not related to equal pay, which the Council addresses correctly and diligently through a job evaluation system. Work to identify any areas where the Council could address the gap will continue to form part of ongoing Organisational Development activity, however the report largely reflects the demographic of the working population and is therefore not easily malleable.

Public Sector Exit Payment Cap and Public Sector Exit Payment Recovery

- 3.15 Previous quarterly monitoring reports have indicated that final regulations and implementation guidelines in respect of the Public Sector Exit Payment Cap and Public Sector Exit Payment Recovery regulations were awaited. Whilst no final regulations have in fact been published, the Treasury has launched a new consultation on a revised set of regulations aimed at capping Public Sector Exit payments.
- 3.16 The consultation runs until July 2019 and both national and regional local government representatives have already indicated a lack of clarity in the revised regulations, which appear to fail to reconcile the national policy intention of capping total payments with the legal entitlements already written into statutory pension fund regulations that take no account of, nor accommodate, any capping at this stage as it is anticipated that no workable set of regulations will emerge before the end of 2019 at the earliest.
- 3.17 Previously reported signs of increasing spend and overriding of regionally agreed pay rates for agency workers in some services remain. Increased usage of placements can be attributed to the plugging of gaps during periods of recruitment difficulty, as outlined in Key Developments above, as well as meeting increased service demand in areas such as social care. Increase in costs can be attributed to the growth in numbers, and also pay rate increases for lower graded posts linked to the NJC pay award 2018-20, as many social care unqualified posts are at the Council's grade 2 and 3 where pay awards were higher.
- 3.18 The law requires pay parity for agency workers, which increases placement cost. Project-based recruitment exercises are in progress to grow the staffing establishment and reduce agency usage in these areas.

ICT Infrastructure

Microsoft 365 / Licensing

- 3.19 With the release of Microsoft Office 2013, Microsoft expanded Office 365 to include new plans aimed at different types of businesses, along with new plans aimed at general Business and larger organisations such as ourselves.

- 3.20 Such arrangements mean that from 2020 unless organisations are using Office 365, or similar, Cloud Licence products access to the Microsoft Office suite of products and Skype for Business they will lose mainstream support and become unavailable.
- 3.21 Unfortunately almost every third party application requires access to some form of the Office Suites output in the means of MS Word or Excel and most systems integrate with the Outlook email clients for output and updates within business process held within the systems in question.
- 3.22 Halton operates just short of 600 servers and over 400 applications many of which are 3rd party purchased applications. Link this to the considerable training implication associated with any change from the Microsoft suite of products this could cause every employee or school child in the environment considerable issues.
- 3.23 There are alternative product sets available but all have their own issues and still associate themselves with considerable costs. Many of these suites are free to the general public but once held within the larger business environment become quite costly in terms of licensing and functionality.
- 3.24 The ICT teams have reviewed many of these options but the complexity of the business environment precludes all but a small number of options that again do not suit all requirements.

Licensing

- 3.25 Extensive negotiations have been underway navigating the minefield that is Microsoft licensing and defining and designing a software solution that will enable the authority and its schools to operate for a further 3 years under what is known as an Enterprise Agreement or EA. This Corporate EA has been negotiated and will be finalised early in the 2019/20 financial year.
- 3.26 The EA for the Schools has now been agreed and signed in partnership with St Helens MBC allowing the full use of the product suite for the next three years, the cost for which will be covered by a straight recharge back to the Halton Schools utilising this agreement. This Academic EA is heavily discounted and enables the authority to license all teachers and pupils within those schools which are party to the Service Level Agreement.

Legal and Democracy

- 3.27 As the Boundary Review enters its next phase, considerable support will continue to be required from staff throughout the department.
- 3.28 Preparations continue for the Local Election in May.
- 3.29 Legal support will continue to be necessary in respect of Mersey Gateway issues and other major projects.

Community and Environment (Catering, Stadium and Registration Services)

- 3.30 There are no issues to report this period.

Economy, Enterprise and Property (Property Services)

Property Services

Widnes Market

- 3.31 Following on from the restructure within the Economy, Enterprise and Property department the responsibility for the overall management of Widnes Market transferred to the Operations Division as of October 1st 2018. The recruitment of staff to the various posts has now been completed and revised protocols have now been drafted taking in to account the recommendations from a recent audit report. The updated Charging Policy and Protocols documents will ensure that there are fully up to date transparent working procedural documents in place which will help ensure that staff members and traders/tenants alike understand the consistent approach taken to both charging matters and Market procedural matters, which will be for the benefit of all.

Deregulation of Water Retail Market

- 3.32 Discussions are still on-going at a City region level in respect of undertaking a City region procurement exercise for water services in due course. The water retail market was deregulated as of April 2017 as such there is now a requirement to procure these services via a competitive exercise. Halton has now provided the necessary information with regards our water consumption and fed this into the City Region's procurement group. The favoured option following a discussions is to undertaken a mini competition via the CCS/YPO frameworks as they have already been through a procurement process and have a number of providers approved. The retail arm of the water industry only forms circa 7% of overall water charges as such no significant monetary savings are likely.

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)

- 3.33 The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) come into force in April 2018. They represent one of the most significant environmental policies to impact the public sector in several years as they will make it unlawful from April 2018 to let buildings in England and Wales which do not achieve a minimum EPC rating of 'E'. Whilst we have significantly reduced our investment property portfolio over recent years we have now identified the properties that require EPC's and we are currently in the process of ensuring these are in place by the due date.

Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020

- 3.34 Following on from the publication of the Government's Clean Growth Strategy in October 2017 further guidance has been published in July 2018 in respect of the new voluntary target of 30% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020/21, based on a baseline year of 2009/10. The guidance also outlines the new 'Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020' which has been introduced, which local authorities as well as the wider public sector are encouraged to sign up to and report against the new targets. In the New Year we will be focussing on what measures need to be implemented to help us try and achieve the 30% reduction.

Climate Change Levy (CCL)

- 3.35 The carbon reduction commitment scheme (CRC) is coming to an end on 31st March 2019. The result of this is that the climate change levy (CCL) charge is being amended to compensate. The implications for Halton, as we had previously come out of the CRC, is that we will see an increase in charges as the CCL element of the bill is going up by 67% on the gas and 45% on the electricity. The increase in overall costs won't be significant however as in reality an average size primary school is likely to see a rise of circa £250 per annum.

4.0 Risk Control Measures

- 4.1 Risk control forms an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and performance monitoring arrangements. As such Directorate Risk Registers were updated in tandem with the development of the suite of 2018 – 19 Directorate Business Plans.

Progress concerning the implementation of all high-risk mitigation measures were reported to the Board in Quarter 2.

5.0 High Priority Equality Actions

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

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

<https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/EandD/ObjectivesProgressReport.pdf>

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.

It should be noted that given the significant and unrelenting downward financial pressures faced by the Council there is a requirement for Departments to make continuous in-year adjustments to the allocation of resources in order to ensure that the Council maintains a balanced budget.

Whilst every effort continues to be made to minimise any negative impact of such arrangements upon service delivery they may inevitably result in a delay in the delivery of some of the objectives and targets contained within this report.

Financial Management

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
FS 01a	Report 2019 – 22 Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board - November 2018.	
FS 01b	Report 2019 – 22 revenue budget, capital programme and Council Tax to Council - March 2019.	
FS 02c	Provide quarterly monitoring reports on the overall budget to Executive Board.	

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
FS 03a	Publish the Statement of Accounts following external Audit by 31st July 2018 .	
FS 04a	Establish Treasury Management Policy and report to Council - March 2018 .	
FS 04b	Provide monitoring reports to Executive Board on a bi-annual basis.	
FS 05a	Establish and report prudential indicators to Council - March 2018 .	
FS 05b	Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board on a bi-annual basis.	

Supporting Commentary

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was reported to Executive Board on 15 November 2018. The financial forecast is regularly updated, including an update presented within the 2019/20 budget report.

The revenue budget, capital programme and 2019/20 council tax levels were approved by Council on 06 March 2019 and the Statement of Accounts approved by Business Efficiency Board on 25 July 2018 and the audit certificate published on Council's web-site on 23 August 2018.

The 2018/19 Treasury Management Policy was approved by Council on 07 March 2018 and Half- year monitoring report was presented to Executive Board on 15 November 2018 which was supported with an analysis of the economic outlook provided by Link Asset Services, the Council's treasury management advisors.

The 2018/19 prudential indicators were reported to Council on 07 March 2018 as part of Treasury Management Policy. A Half year report was presented to Executive Board on 15 November 2018. Prudential borrowing indicators are reviewed on a regular basis.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	17 / 18 Actual	18 / 19 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 01	Receive an unqualified external audit opinion on the accounts.	Yes	Yes	Yes		
FS LI 02	Receive positive annual comment from the External Auditor relating to the financial standing of the Council and the systems of internal financial control.	Yes	Yes	Yes		
FS LI 03	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected.	94.62%	94.50%	94.75%		
FS LI 04	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received.	98.21%	97.00%	98.32%		

Ref	Measure	17 / 18 Actual	18 / 19 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 05	Average time for processing new claims (Housing & Council Tax Benefit).	18.79 (Days)	20 (Days)	16.90 (Days)		
FS LI 06	Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances.	5.3 (Days)	6 (Days)	Yes		

Supporting Commentary

2017/18 Statement of Accounts audit opinion was reported to the Business Efficiency Board on 25 July 2018. In the 2017/18 Audit Findings report the Council's external auditor concluded that the risk in regard to the Council's financial position and sustainability was sufficiently mitigated and the Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Council's external auditor commented in the 2017/18 Audit Findings report that it was satisfied that the Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and concurred with management's assessment that the Council will continue for the foreseeable future and that the going concern basis was appropriate for the 2017/18 financial statements.

The collection of Council Tax has marginally increased by 0.13% when compared with the same point last year and there has been an increase of 0.11% in the collection of Business rates as referred to earlier in this report.

New claims processing times have improved when compared to this time last year, with a reduction of 1.89 days.

Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Service

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
PPPE 01a	Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy May 2018	
PPPE 01b	Review and refresh annual training calendar September 2018 .	
PPPE 01c	Regular engagement with service managers to identify areas of challenge and develop appropriate bespoke solutions April, September, December 2017, and March 2019 .	
PPPE 01d	Development of Management Development Programme September 2018	
PPPE 02a	Establish 10 new apprentice placements within the Council consistent with the requirements of legislation March 2019	

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
PPPE 02b	Establish 10 new existing employee apprenticeships to enable up-skilling in a range of business areas compliant with the requirements of Apprenticeships legislation March 2019	
PPPE 03a	Monitor the impact of Attendance policy quarterly – support with financial and data analysis – June, September, December 18 and March 2019	
PPPE 03b	Demonstrate improved wellbeing, cost reduction and productivity enhancement over the financial year 2018 – 19, through a review of data and engagement with managers and employees March 2019 .	
PPPE 04a	Review analysis and consider most appropriate resourcing mix in collaboration with service management in areas of highest Agency usage September 2018	
PPPE 04b	Implement resourcing plans with service management in appropriate areas September 2018	
PPPE 04c	Ongoing monitoring of agency usage and spend April, September, December 2018, and March 2019 .	

Supporting Commentary

The Organisational Development Service is now enabling a focus on Organisational Development Need. Actions within the strategy are in scope of current activity, with additional initiatives now being brought forward for inclusion in the portfolio made available below to the organisation. The basis of a revised strategy is being constructed as the scope of the service grows. This will be brought forward in 2019/20.

Basis of a programme for senior leadership development is constructed and has been agreed by Management Team. Procurement process completed and applications have been received. Selection process in progress at year end point.

Regular monitoring is ongoing but the implementation of the new Attendance policy demonstrates a positive impact.

Regular dialogue with agency contract provider is ongoing. Quarterly business intelligence is analysed to keep track of deployment and financial performance in this area. Full financial year reporting demonstrates both usage and cost increase in this area. Refer to commentary in Emerging issues above, and KPI PPPE LI 02c/d below.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	17 / 18 Actual	18 / 19 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
PPPE LI01	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness absence (Corporate)	10.28 (Days)	10	11.36		
PPPE LI02a	Total Full Time Equivalent Staffing Establishment	3,470	For info only	3,299	For information only	For information only
PPPE LI02b	Total Staff (head count) (indicator for information only)	4,648		4,141		

Ref	Measure	17 / 18 Actual	18 / 19 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
PPPE LI02c	Total Agency Worker usage (number of placements – year to date)	685 Placements	650	1411		
PPPE LI02d	Total Agency Worker usage (cumulative cost – year to date)	£1,718,283 (Gross Cost)	£1.5m (Gross Cost)	£1,967,098 (Gross Cost)		
PPPE LI03	% of training delegates attending as proportion of places reserved	89.00%	90.00%	92.72%		
PPPE LI04	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are					
	a) women	56.86%	50.00%	57.74%		
	b) from BME communities.	2.53%	1.50%	2.53%		
	c) with a disability	0.86%	8.00%	0.93%		
PPPE LI05	No of staff declaring that they meet the definition of disability within the Equality Act 2010 as a % of the total workforce.	1.45%	10.00%	1.33%		
PPPE LI06	Minority Ethnic community staff as % of total workforce.	0.99%	1.00%	1.01%		
PPPE LI07	Average time to recruit (Management Team approval to employee start date)	69 (Days) (Q3 2017/18)	Baseline to be determined 18/19	57.4 (Days)	N/A	N/A
PPPE LI08	Staff turnover rate (Permanent & temporary staff. Excludes casual)	4.70%	TBC	4.74%	N/A	
PPPE LI09	Number of apprenticeship placements established in the Council (cumulative – year to date)	10	20 (Government target is 55)	15		

Supporting Commentary

This outturn of working days lost due to sickness is below target, however it was anticipated that this may be the case because the new absence management procedures introduced on 1st July 2017 were expected to eradicate under-reporting. Due to the implementation of the new Absence Management policy and procedures have resulted in more robust management reporting, which has produced an increase over previously recorded figures. This will be subject to ongoing review.

The year has seen an increase in the number of placements, with many being shorter in nature. Refer to commentary in Key developments above. There has also been an increase in the cost of agency placements, which links to the increase in placement numbers immediately above.

Positive outcome on two elements of the diversity indicators, with the target achieved and better performance than in 17/18. However recruitment in to top 5% of earners is very limited, and as such scope for significant change is low.

Target for employees with a disability is based on wider community profile. The indicator for BME staff remains static. Fluctuation may occur in year due to staff turnover, however forecasting this is difficult and recruitment practice remains focused on being open to all and the Council is a 'Disability Confident' employer.

The introduction of a new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) means that information concerning time to recruit will be more accurate than previously reported but means that comparison with previously reported data to be difficult. During the first year of meaningful measurement, a reduction has been seen and a further reduction is anticipated in 2019/20.

Whilst the number of new apprenticeship placements established falls below that government target, the Council is satisfied that the placements are in areas where skills deficits need to be addressed and that there is an intention to create sustainable longer-term job opportunities. The level of achievement is viewed as very positive in the current economic climate. The target set out in Objective PPPE 02 has also been surpassed.

ICT and Administrative Support Services

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
ICT 01a	Continued Enhancement of the virtualization platform to enhanced or new technologies - March 2019.	
ICT 01b	Further development of Cloud Services Platform - March 2019.	
ICT 01c	SharePoint and Records Management enhancements - March 2019.	
ICT 01d	Interactive Web Services Enhancement and further SharePoint Integration - March 2019.	
ICT 01e	Further development of commercial ICT opportunity within desktop, hosting and DR provision - March 2019.	
ICT 02a	Continuing improvements, enhancements and potential commercial use of Cloud system - March 2019.	
ICT 02b	Continuing workflow implementation - March 2019.	
ICT 02c	Improvement and enhancement of all web based customer interfaces - March 2019.	
ICT 02d	Continued development of document management and distribution services - March 2019.	

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
ICT 03a	Continual development of the I Want Admin Portal - March 2019.	
ICT 03b	Develop and enhance operational Records management Unit Services - March 2019.	

Supporting Commentary

Roll-out of the new desktop facilities are underway, with over 1,400 Virtual Desktop Users utilising the RDSH platform for desktop access – roll-out to continue over the coming months to cover all users.

Technical upgrades to the underlying server infrastructure for the Cloud Services Platform is planned in line with vendor software release to enhance functionality and the user experience.

The Records Management Unit is central to the development of the multitude of projects associated with data governance, digitisation of paper records and the development of many services such as centralised post and print – this focus will remain.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	17 / 18 Actual	18 / 19 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
ICT LI01	Average availability of Council servers.	99.07%	99.00%	99.5%		
ICT LI02	Average availability of the Council's WAN Infrastructure.	99.03%	99.00%	100%		
ICT LI03	School support SLA - % of calls responded to within agreed target					
	Priority 1	93.00%	85.00%	100%		
	Priority 2	94.00%	90.00%	99%		
	Priority 3	100.00%	95.00%	100%		
	Priority 4	100.00%	95.00%	100%		
ICT LI04	Average working days from delivery to completion of a new PC.	10 (Days)	10 (Days)	10 (Days)		

Supporting Commentary

All indicators have met their target for the year. In addition, as all new corporate and partner users are now automatically placed into the MyApp's solution rather than traditional "Fat" laptop's – the only Fat devices are now direct replacements for the small number of users with complex technical/application requirement yet to move over to the cloud systems towards the end of the project.

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
LD 01	Review constitution - May 2018 .	
LD 02a	To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting where desired.	
LD 02b	To induct all new members by October 2018 .	

Supporting Commentary

The revised Constitution was approved at Annual Council in May and all Members are given the opportunity to have a MAP meeting but this remains a matter of personal choice.

All new Members went through the induction programme in Quarter 1 with the induction of further new members is being planned for at present and through the next financial year.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	17 / 18 Actual	18 / 19 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
LD LI01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total).	55 (98.21%)	56 (100.00%)	55 (98.21%)		
LD LI02	Percentage of Members attending at least one organised Training Event.	86.00%	100%	91%		
LD LI03	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days).	7 (Days)	10 (Days)	10 (Days)		
LD LI04	Average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department (working days).	1 (Days)	3 (Days)	3 (Days)		
LD LI05	% of Executive Board minutes published within 5 working days after the meeting.	100%	100%	100%		

Supporting Commentary

The very demanding target for the number of members having personal development plans has not quite been met but the indicator is dependent on the individual choice of Members.

Also the outturn figure for the percentage of members attending at least one training event is better than last year and whilst the target has not quite been met it is a matter of individual choice for Members.

Community & Environment

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
CE 01a	Deliver a promotion and educational campaign (school lunches) - September 2018 and January 2019 .	

Supporting Commentary

An educational School Meals Campaign took place in September for the new pupils starting secondary school. Further visits are planned for the new term.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	17 / 18 Actual	18 / 19 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 01	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Primary Schools.	78.20%	80%	76.26%		
CE LI 02	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Secondary Schools.	71.88%	75%	84.14%		
CE LI 03	Take up of school lunches (%) – primary schools.	63.36%	65%	59.61%		
CE LI 04	Take up of school lunches (%) – secondary schools.	61.22%	55%	74.68%		

Supporting Commentary

The take up of free school meals and lunches, although remaining positive during quarter 3, has failed to achieve annual targets in some instances. Performance is broadly in-line with the outturn from the previous financial year although there has been a slight drop in primary school meals.

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
EEP 06a	To complete the construction of Widnes Market roof	
EEP 06b	Complete the construction of Crow wood park pavilion	
EEP 06c	To complete the refurbishment of the Halton Suite and relocation of staff – March 2019	
EEP 06d	To complete the retender of the property services consultant services contract	

Supporting Commentary

Work has now started on site, however completion will not now be until late May early June so the Milestone will not be achieved. The delay has been due to a number of reasons but primarily associated with ground conditions necessitating a redesign of the foundations.

Work to the Halton Suite is now likely to start in April and be completed late June so the Milestone will not be achieved. This is as a result of the works to refurbish the Karalius Suite, which are now complete, taking longer than envisaged.

The procurement process has been completed, the successful consultant being Cassidy & Ashton who were appointed in November.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	17 / 18 Actual	18 / 19 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 01	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions indicator (Tonnes CO ₂ e)	16,043 tonnes CO ₂ e (Actual 16/17)	14,663 tonnes CO ₂ e (Target 18/19)	14,811 tonnes CO ₂ e (Actual 17/18)		
EEP LI 05	Occupancy of Widnes Market Hall.	83.0%	83%	84%		
EEP LI 06	Unit Costs – office accommodation (reported annually).	£1,153	£1,124	£1,054		

Supporting Commentary

The reporting requirements for emissions have been amended whereby the figures for academies are no longer included. The actual figure for 2016/17 has therefore been amended to reflect the change to ensure the comparison to the 2017/18 figure is meaningful.

The overall emissions for 2016/17 amounted to 16,043 tonnes. The emissions for 2017/18 are 14,811 tonnes which equates to a 7.6% reduction. Energy consumption has risen slightly, however as the kw/h-CO2 conversion factor has been reduced due to the greater mix of renewable energy being generated the overall CO2 emissions have reduced.

The breakdown is as follows:-

- School Buildings 4894t, Corporate buildings 5252t,
- Unmetered supply 3045t,
- Fleet Transport 1277t
- Business Mileage 343t.
- Street Lighting had the largest annual reduction in the amount of 22%.

The target for 2018/19 has been set at 14,663 tonnes CO2e, a 1% reduction over 2017/18. The annual figure for this indicator is a year behind and therefore only reported in the following year.

Occupancy rates at the market have remained constant during the last couple of years

There has been a slight reduction in maintenance costs associated with the Council's four main office locations.

7.0 Financial Statements

The Council's 2018/19 year-end accounts are currently being finalised. The year-end position for each Department will therefore be made available via the Intranet by 30th June 2019.

8.0 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.