



Widnes and Runcorn Reset Post Covid-19  
Halton Borough Council



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## **Halton Council Economic Reset**

As the world starts to emerge from the first phase of the Covid-19 crisis local authorities around the country are consolidating existing, reallocating and securing resources in order to redefine their economy in order to improve the prospects for local residents and businesses over the years ahead, whatever those years have in store.

Halton Council has devised this plan to ensure that we can support local businesses in partnership with local organisations and businesses and partners operating in the Liverpool City Region. We will ensure that our strategy, lobbying and services reflect the changed environment.

### **Themes for post-lockdown Business Improvement and Growth Team support**

Capturing partner organisations' views of Covid-19, how to support businesses in the initial phase and design support to make the best of the emergence from this period is critical to ensure that we continue to perform strongly as an economy.

With certainty, no one knows how the economy will emerge from the crisis. However, the Council's Business Improvement and Growth team has captured the views of notable intelligence sources, business bodies and representatives to guide how we reposition our services in the short term to medium term.

### **Recent research findings**

The key points are highlighted below. A pathway is mapped out as a recommended route for the borough to assess and amend our economic and business support activities. It should be noted that the quantum of support to businesses is often dependent upon drivers and macro-economic interventions that will be beyond our control. They will also be the domain of the Central Government, Europe as well as, the Combined Authority, Nevertheless, this document will be used as a basis for prioritising the interventions needed locally to reset Halton's economy.

### **Key Points**

#### **Business**

Nationally, 24% of businesses have closed down but in addition, around 70% have seen a drop in income. Of those continuing to trade, over 60% businesses are furloughing staff with more than 50% of those continuing to trade (or pausing) deferring VAT payments. Where possible 80% of businesses have taken advantage of government assistance in April 2020.

Of businesses in the UK continuing to trade, and who sell goods or services online, 32% responded that online sales have increased throughout May 2020.

There has been a small increase in the number of new Value Added Tax (VAT) registrations between April 2020 and May 2020, from 15,250 to 16,460, which is related to the number of firm births; however, the number of new reporters in May 2020 is still below the 2015 to 2019 five-year average of 20,866 but there is some encouragement here.

#### **Prices**

Prices of items in the high-demand products (HDP) basket remained stable between the week ending 31 May 2020 and the week ending 7 June 2020.

### **Labour Market**

The volume of job adverts in catering and hospitality between 29 May and 5 June 2020 declined to a record low of 18.1% of its 2019 level and even though this sector is not dominant in Halton it is still a significant provider of employment.

Following peaks on 27 March and 6 April 2020, new declarations for Universal Credit by June 2020 and new claim advances have both gradually declined in the period to 2 June 2020 and are returning to levels seen in the middle of March.

The industries hardest hit are hospitality, retail and leisure but along with low short-term aggregate demand will come difficult trading circumstances.

One line from the ILO report on Covid-19 and the world of work is particularly helpful. “Policy responses need to focus on providing immediate relief to workers and enterprises in order to protect livelihoods and economically viable businesses, particularly in hard-hit sectors and developing countries, thus ensuring the conditions for a prompt, job-rich recovery once the pandemic is under control. X Limited public resources need to be used to encourage enterprises to retain and/or create jobs.”

### **Headline Business Impacts**

In the ONS fortnightly survey one-quarter (24%) of businesses that responded to the fortnightly survey as continuing to trade between 6 and 19 April 2020 said their turnover had fallen by more than half.

Overall, 57% of businesses responding as still trading had seen their turnover fall beyond its normal range, with almost all of them citing the coronavirus (COVID-19) as a contributing factor. There has been huge take-up of government support by businesses.

Initial reports show nearly two-thirds (66%) of businesses that responded to wave 3 of our business survey had applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in its first week of opening and by the week ending 6<sup>th</sup> June this has increased to 79% for those still trading and 95% for businesses who have temporarily ceased trading.

Of those who ceased trading, 78% of businesses had been trading for more than 2 weeks and 5% of businesses reported that they have resumed trading again. 12% had paused trading and do not intend to restart in the next two weeks, while 5% had paused trading but intend to restart trading in the next two weeks. This provides a good understanding of the position that businesses are in nationally.

### **Technology and homeworking**

Technology is helping to enable large numbers of people to work from home during the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown – but the ability to do so varies a lot between industries.

In 2019, only 10% of employees in the accommodation and food services industry had ever worked from home, compared with 53% in the information and communication industry.

Some jobs require face-to-face contact, or access to tools and machinery, and it may never be possible to work from home. But having access to the right equipment can make a difference. Our E-Commerce Survey shows that in 2018, outside the information and communication industry, less than half of employees were provided with a portable device (like a phone, tablet or laptop).

### **Post crisis (but notably not post Covid-19) World**

As a service, the Council's business support team has planned for the delivery of services in a world that may look very different to the one that we have known or had anticipated in the immediate, medium and long term future therefore we have sought the views of industry bodies to consolidate the intelligence that we have gathered locally about the prospects for business.

Industry and investment analysts consider the post-crisis world will be more indebted, less global, and more digital. Investors will need to contend with higher taxation, financial repression, and moderately higher inflation, along with populism and protectionism, while navigating the transitions from global to local supply chains, and from physical to digital.

Highlighted below are the three main trends with an explanation of the consequences and possible actions. Investors highlight three patterns that debt will be much higher, the world will be less global and there will be more digital.

#### **1. Debt levels will be much higher**

Debt levels will be much higher at the end of the current crisis. The precise spending picture remains unclear, but, given our current estimates, government debt as a percentage of GDP will be 15–25ppt higher by the end of 2021 than it was at the end of 2019 across much of Europe and in the US.

This is broadly comparable with the scale of the increase seen between 2007 and 2010 as a result of the global financial crisis but the caveat it may be far higher.

#### **Consequence**

There will be regional variations in how governments finance this debt, but broadly, we expect governments to use three means:

- Financial reticence
- Higher taxation
- Moderately higher inflation

#### **Action**

- Financial planning
- Re-assess cash and bond exposure
- Seek alternative diversifiers

#### **2. The world will be left less global**

The COVID-19 lockdown has been an unprecedented experiment in extreme localization, with many individuals staying in their own homes. These measures will clearly not persist in the long term. However, the world will probably be structurally less globally by the crisis, spurring a de-globalisation trend.

## **Impact**

In a less global world, analysts expect to see more of the following:

- Populism
- Protectionism
- Localization

## **Action**

Reshoring  
Global diversification

### **3. More Digital**

Lasting changes from lockdown:

Lockdown measures have forced many consumers and businesses to fundamentally change the way they buy and sell goods and services, and turn more digital. While we think most individuals and businesses will return to previous ways of working as lockdown measures are lifted, there will be some lasting changes.

It remains unclear how quickly consumers and regulators will regain confidence in the safety of the sharing economy but some lockdown consequences include:

## **Impact**

- Greater digital adoption
- Less sharing
- Health technology takes centre stage with delivery and R and D

## **Action**

- Digital transformation
- Sector diversification
- Healthtech, genetic therapies, food revolution

## **The 90% economy**

With 88% of businesses now trading nationally, the final reference to research has lessons from an economy already out of lockdown and operating at 90%.

The Economist's (1/5/2020) lead article concentrates on the 90% economy and is useful in tempering expectations:

“In many things 90% is just fine; in an economy it is miserable, and China shows why. The country started to end its lockdown in February. Factories are busy and the streets are no longer empty. The result is the 90% economy. It is better than a severe lockdown, but it is far from normal. The missing bits include large chunks of everyday life. Rides on the metro and on domestic flights are down by a third. Discretionary consumer spending, on such things as restaurants, has fallen by 40% and hotel stays are a third of normal. People are weighed down by financial hardship and the fear of a second wave of covid-19. Bankruptcies are rising and unemployment, one broker has said, is three times the official level, at around 20%.

“If the post-lockdown rich world suffers its own brand of the 90% economy, life will be hard—at least until a vaccine or a treatment is found.”

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## Liverpool City Region Approach

Partners including Halton are working collaboratively to address many of the difficulties which the economy is facing arising from the challenges of the Covid-19 crisis.

### Baseline

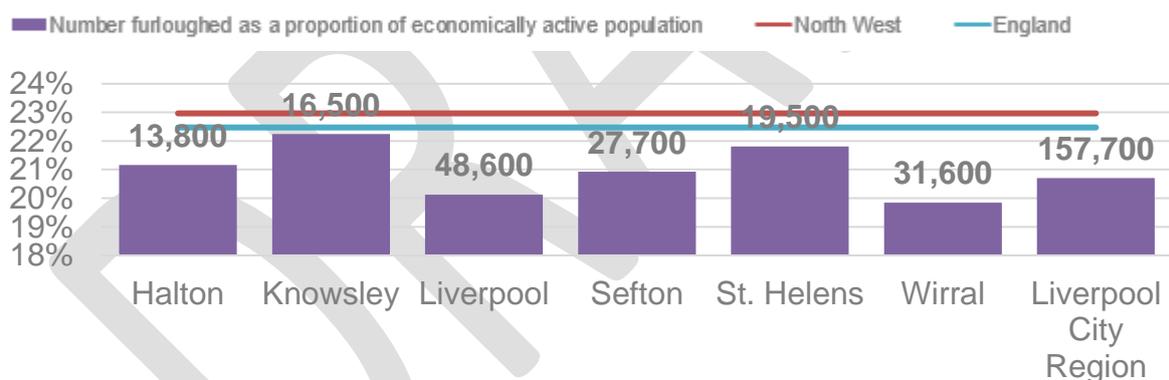
Pre-crisis, unemployment in the Liverpool City Region, was around 30,000 (4.2%) and economic inactivity 230,000 (24%) and this reflects a remarkable improvement in fortunes over the last three decades in the Liverpool City Region.

The headline of an improvement in performance masks concerning immediate feedback of the Covid-19 crisis where local survey suggests 1.5% apprentices made redundant, 20% on furlough and up to 60% reduction in starts in September.

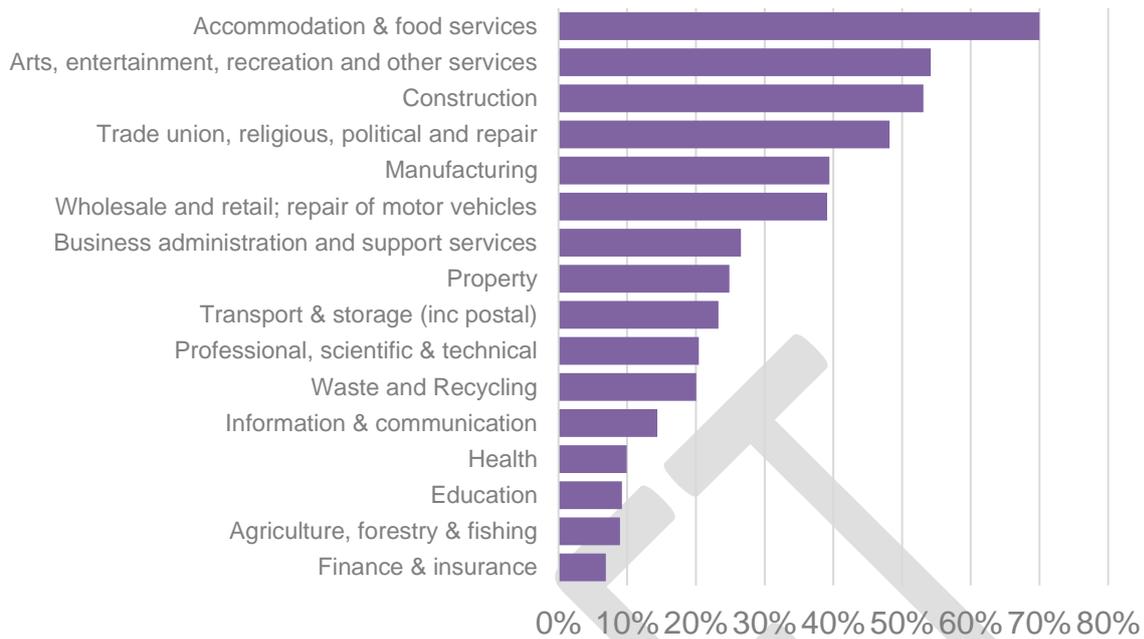
There is a 47% reduction in job vacancies advertised in LCR, compared to 45% nationally and 49% across all Combined Authorities and this will be matched with a gradual loss of job roles. This is part of the jobs picture but an important piece of the vitality of the LCR (via Adzuna)

A mapping exercise has been completed including all authorities and delivery partners in the Liverpool City Region to provide a comprehensive analysis the support that is currently available to individuals and businesses.

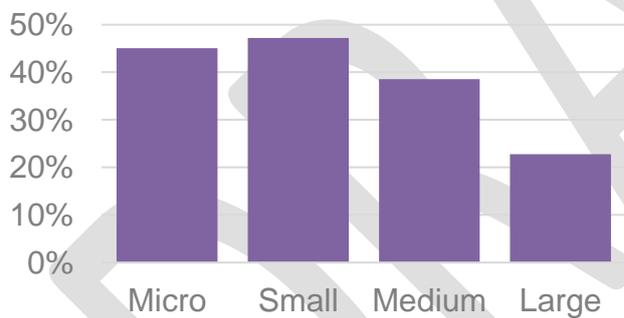
### Number of Employees and Proportion of the Workforce on Furlough



## Furlough Claims as a Proportion of Total Jobs by Employer Size



The dependence of small and medium sized businesses on the furlough scheme is illustrated on the graph below



### Potential scenario

This is where there are particular concerns. The Office for Budget Responsibility central planning assumption is that the country would increase to 10% unemployment which in the Liverpool City Region would see a further 45,000 unemployed. That is the worrying figure of 75,000 in total not including levels of inactivity.

LWI (Who are LWI) analysis of jobs and sectors places up to 110,000 people at high risk of redundancy

Of 1.8m who have applied for Universal Credit nationally it is estimated that this could be between 40,000 and 100,000 residents in the City Region.

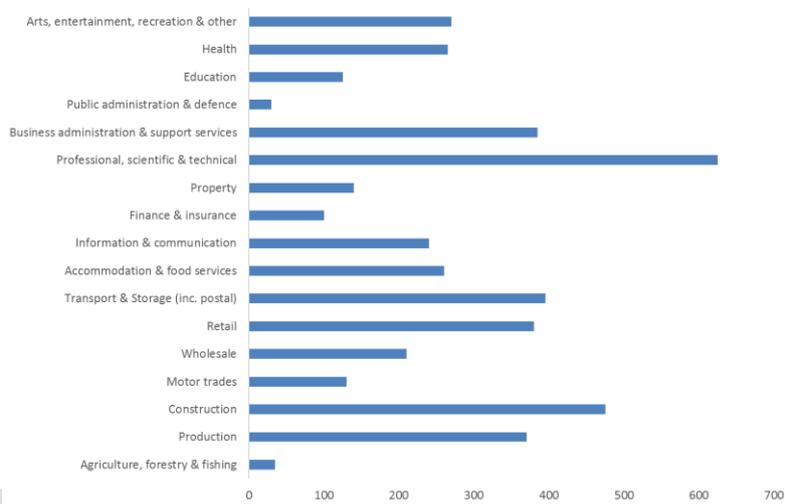
The following page illustrates the industrial make-up on Halton and highlights emerging indicators where the impact of Covid-19 is being felt

## Business types and employment type

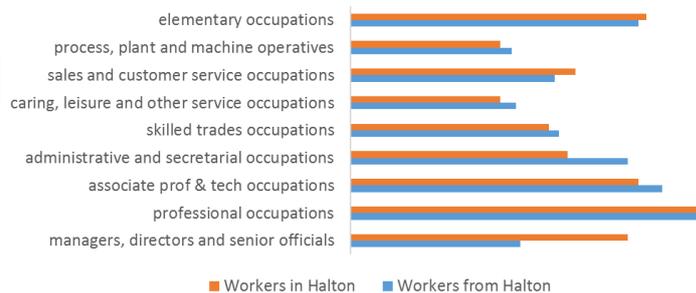
According to ONS data there were five industries where 75% or more of the businesses said they had temporarily closed or paused trading:

- sports activities and amusement and recreation activities
- accommodation
- food and beverage service activities
- libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities
- creative, arts and entertainment activities

Below are the number of Halton businesses by sector (2019 data)



Below is employment breakdown for people working in Halton and workers from Halton (Jan – Dec 19)



## Emerging Impact of Covid-19

### House Sales 2020

The small amount of local data available bear all the hallmarks of short-term economic shock in Halton and the wider City Region.

### House Sales 2020

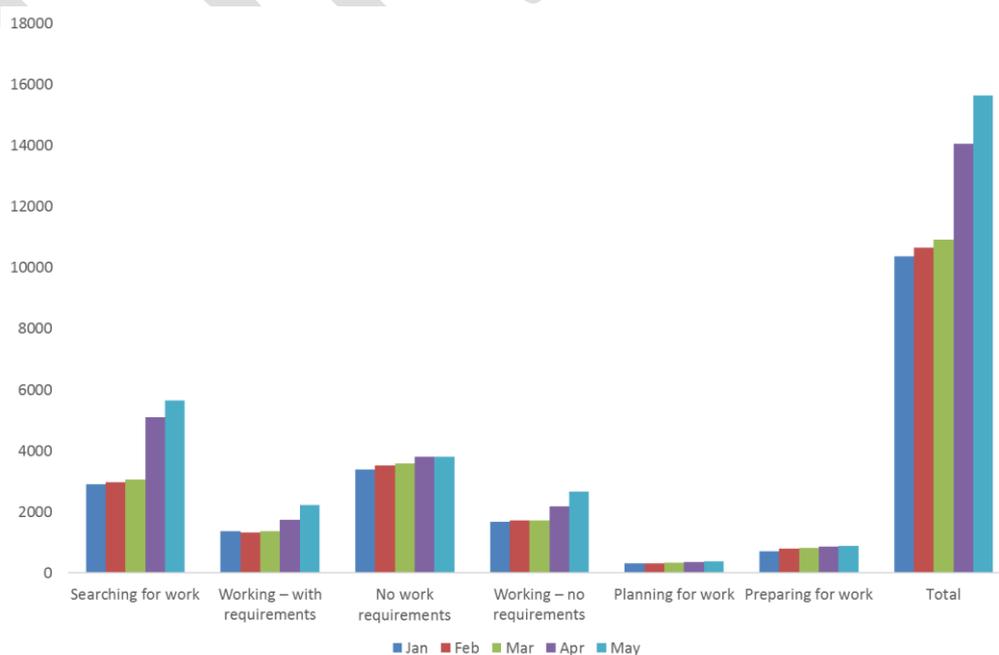
Below are the number of house sales by Runcorn & Widnes. There were only **3 sales** in April 2020



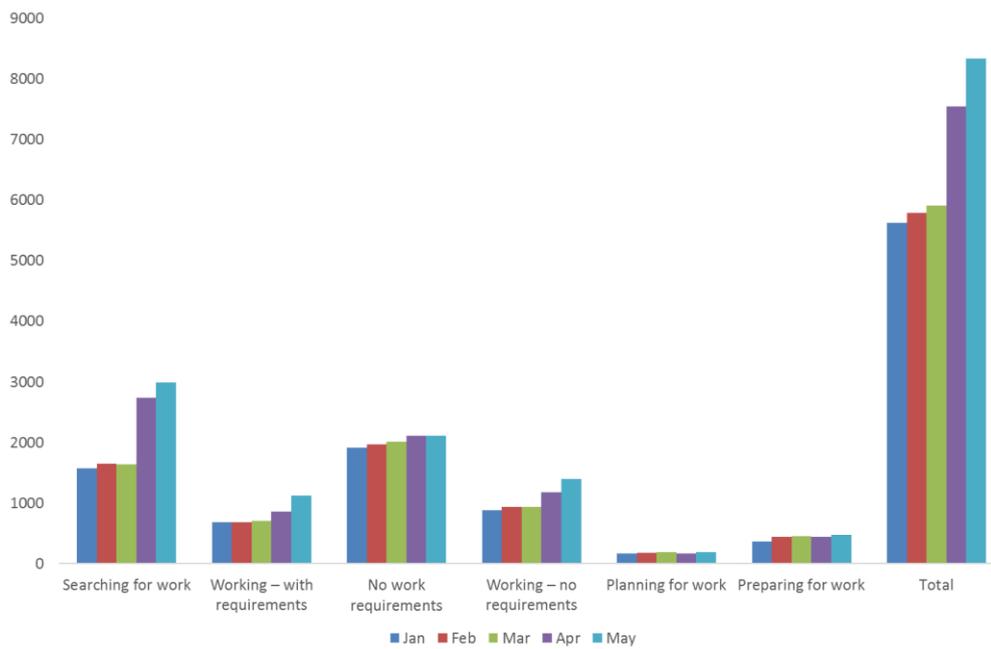
### Halton Universal Credit claimants – Jan to May 2020

Universal Credit claims has increased during COVID – the searching for work category showing the biggest increase.

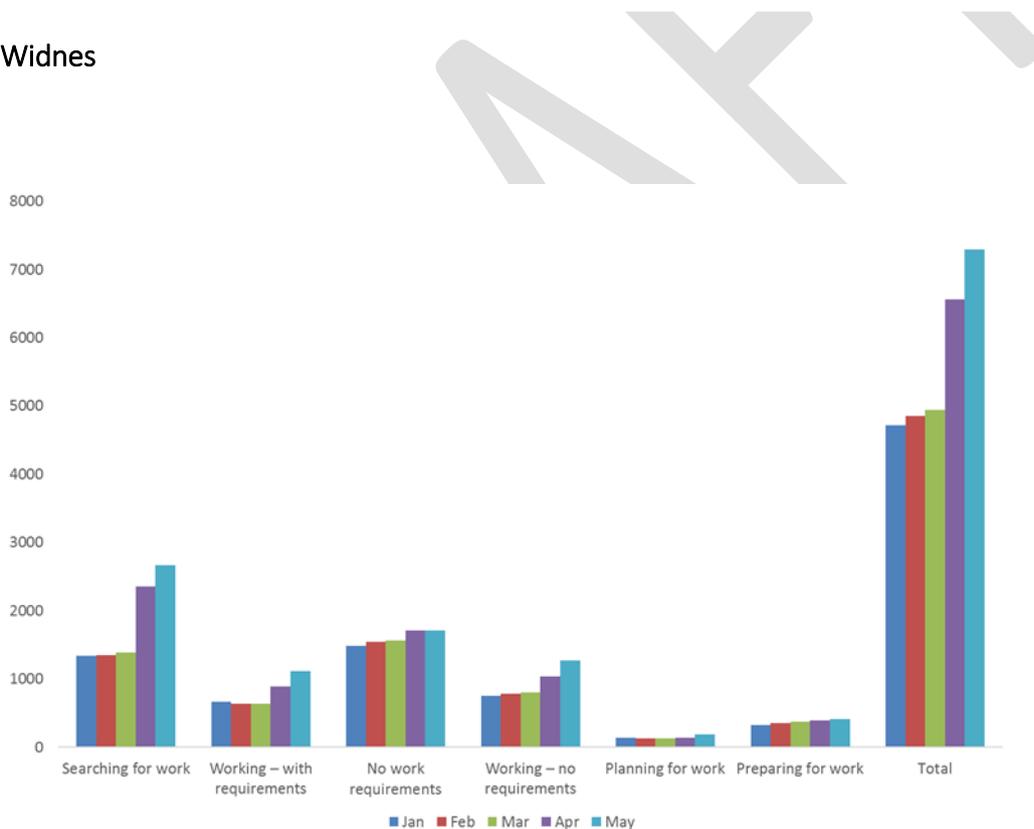
#### Halton



## Runcorn



## Widnes



Following a slight uptick in numbers in March (lockdown began on 23<sup>rd</sup> March) there was a significant rise in all areas in April and May. These data sets will form part of the monthly monitoring of this plan

## Liverpool City Region Response

### Working Principles

1. Responsiveness. Both the economic impact and government's response to it are uncertain. We must be ready to adapt our plan at every level from overall approach to specific interventions. We will scope more interventions than can be delivered and stand ready to re-order them as need and government focus changes.
2. Ambition. Start by aiming high and be prepared to reduce our plans as constraints emerge.
3. Deliverability. Everything we consider must be deliverable at the scale and in the timeframe proposed. The greatest gap in impact LCR sees is between plan and delivery. This will continue to be true until we address the challenge head on.
4. Partnership. Focus more on impact than on ownership. Whatever works best, goes.

### Objectives:

1. Minimise the loss of 1) jobs, 2) GVA and 3) learners from the existing economy
2. Prioritise new interventions that:
  - a. Align with the LIS's priorities and opportunities and local priorities
  - b. Maximise economic benefit as measured by discounted GVA and BCR (and work with government to enable a view of fiscal benefit)
  - c. Provide short-term economic stimulus as measured by time to launch
  - d. Maximise social inclusion in the economy as measured by fair pay, job security and labour market participation
  - e. Are compatible with a net carbon neutral city region by 2040
3. Positively facilitate #buildbackbetter under the Opportunities to Improve theme

These objectives will form the basis of a single prioritisation framework for interventions.

Across all areas of society and the economy partners in the Liverpool City Region have highlighted areas of work that could support the economy in the early stages of the crisis and into the transition into the recovery phase. These areas of work are neatly summarised as following encapsulating the three established pillars of economic intervention and seeking out opportunities for improvement:

1. Business Ecosystem
2. People Focused Recovery
3. Place and Economic Infrastructure
4. Opportunities to Improve

As placed based initiatives included under Place and Economic Infrastructure are longer term plans and actions integrated into existing working practices it is difficult to be responsive to crisis immediately. However, both place and economic infrastructure and opportunities to improve remain at the heart of the response of the Liverpool City Region with a reserent of the economy. We have a wide array of projects addressing the crisis with people based recovery and starting with programmes to improve business ecosystems

### Business Ecosystems

#### Business Starts

- Bespoke advice for people wishing to start their own business

## **Sector Specific Advice**

- Specific support for sectors and clusters (e.g. Care, Visitor Economy)
- Additional financial and digital inclusion provision

## **SMEs**

- Each local authority has been working tirelessly to defray £10,000 and £25,000 grants (for example in Halton we only had 63 businesses remaining as of 22nd June 2020)
- Creation of paid graduate internships in SMEs Bespoke support for people wishing to progress in work

## **People Focused Recovery**

### **General Employment Support**

- Response to Redundancy approach, bringing together national and local partners
- Assuming that newly unemployed people will be supported by JCP
- Pre employment bootcamp style support to get people into jobs
- Additional jobsearch and employment support for unemployed people, through scaled Ways to Work, Talent Match and other provision
- Future Jobs Fund style temporary jobs creation programme focused on keyworkers
- Skills development support for people and companies (linked to AEB, NRS and NSF)

### **Specific Need Support**

- Supported internships for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities
- Further mental health support embedded across all provision
- Targeted support for particular groups and communities (e.g. people with disabilities)

### **Support for young people**

- Focused wage subsidy for apprentices e.g. for 16-18 and 18-24 in care roles
- Additional support for 16-18 providers to ensure that they can support NEETs
- Help for schools to help them address the learning deficit from disadvantaged pupils

### **Community and Voluntary Sector**

- Enhanced support for community and voluntary sector organisations

## Halton's Priorities and Actions

Irrespective of COVID-19, there are a number of 'key ingredients' that will always be required to create and sustain a strong economy in Halton.

For example, the quality of the place and cultural offer; quality of housing and schools; a highly skilled and adaptable workforce; good quality sites and premises will always be important factors.

Up until COVID-19 lockdown we could see the good progress that had been made to grow and sustain the borough's economy. This is evidenced by the number of jobs being created in the borough; the increase in the number of businesses in the borough; as well as improvements in the number of our residents with higher skills and qualifications.

Therefore, existing strategies, programmes and projects have worked and can once again serve as the catalyst to deliver the transformation needed to restart Halton's economy.

## Halton's Growth Plan – The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan

The borough's Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan (MGRP) 2017-2027 (appendix x) is a key reference point for Halton's Economic Reset Plan. The MGRP initially sought to maximise the economic benefits of the Mersey Gateway Project beyond its construction period (Autumn 2017).

However, more recently, the purpose of the MGRP has been to facilitate the development of a steady pipeline of regeneration and development opportunities over a 10-15 year period. The project pipeline has used the Mersey Gateway branding as a way of packaging a series of interrelated projects and programmes in a coherent and consistent way.

It has served as a framework and provides focus for the Council and its partners to make effective investment decisions relating to a wide range of potential economic regeneration opportunities in the borough.

This will ultimately make it easier to promote the borough's regeneration opportunities to potential future investors and support the borough in resetting its economy.

The MGRP has been complemented by other pieces of work including:

**HALTON 2030** – a short but aspirational, ambitious and visionary document which sets out a longer term vision for the borough in **economic** terms;

**THE LOCAL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT** – an annual document which provides a statistical overview of the borough's economic indicators and will set out the evidence for shaping and informing Halton's future economic priorities and actions;

**HALTON'S SINGLE INVESTMENT FUND (SIF) PIPELINE** – this is a list of short to medium projects which feeds into the Combined Authority's SIF Prospectus

**THIS IS HALTON** – this is a regularly updated inward investment prospectus/brochure which focuses on Halton's Unique Selling Point highlighting the strengths, benefits and opportunities the borough has to offer.

## Mersey Gateway Regeneration Development and Investment Plan

The MGRP is accompanied by a more in depth detailed Plan (100 pages +) which provides a large amount of technical information relating to potential sites being brought forward for development. The larger document has been used as an internal document to assist officers in developing project plan for the respective 'Impact Areas' identified.

However, for ease of reference a shorter, more 'user friendly' fold out Executive Summary document was developed.

In preparing the MGRP, a significant amount of work was undertaken. This included:

1. Developing masterplans and delivery strategies for specific regeneration programmes and investigate feasibility of key enabling projects which form part of the Regeneration Plan;
2. Identify a steady pipeline of development and investments opportunities comprising residual land from the Mersey Gateway Project and adjoining areas within the project envelope;
3. Engaging across the organisation, but particularly with Planning Policy and Transport Dept., to ensure future continuity and support for delivery;
4. Align and integrate key projects with future funding opportunities such as the Liverpool City Region Single Investment Fund (SIF) - Transport and Development Pipelines.

From the outset, this approach was guided during year one feasibility work by the identification of thirteen projects and initially six spatial impact areas to investigate, with achievements and progress set out in appendix 1.

In summary work on the MGRP has provided a firm foundation on which to base Halton's Economic Reset Plan.

The fold out Executive Summary (attached) follows the structure of the detailed Regeneration Plan, and is within three parts:

### **Part 1 - Strategic Context to Regeneration in Halton**

This section outlines that during the past five years, thousands of new jobs have been created in Halton within our expanding Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics and Service Industries and the borough has seen investment in excess of £1 billion. As a result, Halton is currently on the front foot. This period of transformation and economic growth looks set to continue, as the Mersey Gateway Project further boosts commercial confidence in our area.

The aim of this strategic document is simple - to identify some of the tremendous development opportunities that the Gateway will create and to maximise those opportunities for the long term economic benefits of the area.

The Gateway project underpins an ambition to move the area forward. Halton has a strong economy that punches well above its weight. This strategy gives an overview of some of the activity being planned and delivered in a location that could claim to be establishing itself as the region's innovation hub.

The document explains that Halton is part of the Liverpool City Region, situated within the economic triangle formed by Liverpool, Manchester and Chester, and is now home to a vast array of small and medium businesses as well as globally significant companies.

This area has numerous advantages that set it apart as a business location, including a good supply of suitable, value for money sites and premises, appropriate skills, and a pool of existing firms to act as suppliers and subcontractors. The area also has transportation links that are second to none. Approximately a third of the UK's residential population and around a half of all British manufacturing businesses is located within a two hour drive. Halton is ideally located between both Manchester International and Liverpool's John Lennon Airport. It offers direct access to The West Coast Mainline for both rail freight and passengers and to the ports of Liverpool, offering ferries to the Isle of Man and Ireland and shipping across the world, and also at Runcorn, via the Manchester Ship Canal. These locational advantages as well some of Halton's other assets and strengths are illustrated on the 'Connected Halton' diagram provided within the fold out summary.

## **Part Two: Mersey Gateway Ten Impact Areas**

This Plan identifies ten key 'Impact areas' that will be either accessed or enhanced as a result of the Mersey Gateway project. It explains how we will utilise all our assets and build upon our strengths to encourage development and create jobs for local people. We will achieve this by combining these elements in a cohesive way, establishing the Borough with a much stronger investment proposal both nationally and internationally.

The Plan focuses on how these ten regeneration and investment 'Impact Areas' are linked to the Mersey Gateway Project. These are places where the new crossing and wider project helps with the unlocking of land for new development and reposition an area for growth. These Impact Areas are expressed on the overview plan and comprise:

- Productivity - Development opportunities for employment related activity, with a focus on the Liverpool City Region growth sectors
- Connectivity - Key road, rail and water based supporting infrastructure projects
- Place - Wider housing, retail, leisure and other opportunities to support balanced and sustainable growth

Whilst each impact area can be delivered as a standalone regeneration programme, this Plan becomes more significant when the 10 impact areas are brought forward together in a cohesive way.

### **Proposed Key Impact Areas**

The proposed Ten Key Impact Areas are:

- West Runcorn Employment Growth Area
- Halton Lea Healthy New Town Centre

- Astmoor Business Park
- Southern Widnes (West Bank)
- Southern Widnes (Widnes Waterfront)
- Southern Widnes (Moor Lane / Ashley Way)
- Ditton Corridor
- Widnes Town Centre
- Runcorn Old Town Centre
- East Runcorn

### **Place-shaping Projects**

Between them, the ten 'Impact Areas' have the potential to accommodate numerous, separate and diverse projects in the coming years. Within this Plan, five stand-out place-shaping projects have been identified which as standalone projects have the potential to transform Halton, beyond their immediate site or the impact areas they sit within. Five potential place shaping projects have been selected as examples, to best illustrate the scale and scope of the ambition and the huge potential of these Impact Areas to transform the South of the City Region and beyond. Our 'Big-5' place-shaping projects are:

#### **Five place shaping projects**

##### **1. INOVYN WORLD CLASS CHEMICAL AND ENERGY HUB**

The 100 hectare INOVYN Campus in Runcorn has a unique global offer. It has a long history of innovation in manufacturing and the owner of the campus - INEOS, is a global chemical company with annual sales of around \$40 billion. Over 30 ha of serviced plots are available within the secured and managed campus, with access to; unique infrastructure including an independent and resilient power supply; primary chemicals and by products; HSE consents and COMAH designation; and, world class expertise and customer supply chain networks.

##### **2. SILVER JUBILEE BRIDGE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CORRIDOR**

The projected transfer of 80% of cross river vehicle traffic to the new Mersey Gateway Bridge provides a unique opportunity to not only redefine the function of the iconic SJB but also rediscover the historic heart of Halton. Whilst still retaining a strategic role as part of the Mersey Crossing complex, it will become more focussed as a 'local link' and promote cross river walking, cycling and public transport. This new sustainable transport corridor stretches from Runcorn Old Town to Widnes Town Centre and will be delivered in phases. It has potential to change the way we move between our towns and open new commercial frontage and residential opportunities, particularly within West Bank area of Widnes.

##### **3. DESTINATION RUNCORN' NEW STATION QUARTER DEVELOPMENT**

This is a unique opportunity to help realise the potential of Runcorn Mainline Station as a driver for growth and transport improvements. Delinking of the SJB highway approach has potential to release redundant highway and open up adjoining land to develop a new Station Quarter, comprising; new passenger and visitor facilities; new transport interchange and improved linkages to Runcorn Old Town and the Bridgewater Canal; and, new mixed use commercial and residential development. This scheme will not only redefine the Old Town but create an improved sense of arrival and impression of Runcorn, Halton and southern gateway into the Liverpool City Region.

#### **4. THE MERSEY MULTI MODAL GATEWAY (3MG) Phase Three**

Within the A562 Ditton Corridor there is approximately 24 ha of redundant and underutilised land. These sites have the potential to continue the success story of 3MG logistics hub with opportunities for advanced manufacturing. This not only continues the repositioning of West Widnes as a logistic hub of regional significance and a supplier park for Jaguar Land Rover / Automotive / Rail; but also helps meet demand in the City-Region for major commercial sites and drive forward growth in the wider Speke Road (A562) Innovation and Logistics corridor.

#### **5. – THE MID MERSEY PARK**

This is an opportunity to significantly enhance the leisure and visitor economy offer, by defining and branding a new park corridor. The park will link a necklace of mostly existing green spaces, promenades and visitor destinations, stretching from the Silver Jubilee Bridge to Arpley Bridge in Warrington. The park will be connected by a circular trail for walking and cycling, accessed at key locations. By improving access and stimulating increased public use, the new park will alter public perceptions by introducing greater numbers of people to the landscape of the mid Mersey estuary, and therefore create an improved environment and setting for investment.

#### **Part 3: Delivery**

The plan states that the key to success in Halton is our approach to partnership working, particularly with private sector partners. Halton has have been involved in Economic Development long before it became fashionable to do so, and, therefore, we understand regeneration does not happen overnight or in isolation. We believe our contribution is the leadership, governance and legitimacy we can bring to developing and realising a shared vision for a place; and how we can support investment through the contacts, resources and functions available to the Council. We also recognise the strengths of private sector partners and the dynamism and focus on viability and delivery that is brought to the table.

The MGRP emphasises that In Halton, regeneration is not just about building things and transforming places. It is also about promoting inclusive growth and changing lives. We always seek added value, by securing local employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities to improve local economic prosperity.

These existing and previous interventions need to be intensified if we are to proactively promote and support Halton's economy in the future, albeit in the knowledge that, as a result of COVID-19, there will need to be some changes to how we need to deliver these interventions.

#### **Halton's Property and Investment Services Response**

As a result of our evaluation of the above insight and intelligence, the Council's Economy, Enterprise and Property Department has considered an approach that best meets the needs of the local economy and business base in order to redesign, develop and deliver programmes and services to best meet local need and economic circumstances.

#### **Guiding Principles**

We have, therefore, developed the following guiding principles to guide our decision making.

1. Systematic list of priorities needed:
  - a. Which are the high value adding businesses?
  - b. Which are the high employing businesses?
  - c. Which are “local” businesses?
2. What are the needs of the “sectors” we prioritise?
  - a. Differentiate which businesses need large capital sums to “restart” and which do not
  - b. What skills and training is needed by these businesses?
  - c. Our focus will be more manufacturing (particularly food) chemicals, digital enabling, science and medical and logistics sectors as we emerge from the crisis.
3. Create new role and way of operating for:
  - a. Town Centres to attract and reach new customers
  - b. Retail
  - c. Leisure this year?
4. Establish training needs, especially in manufacturing, production, digital enabling, science and medical and logistics sectors
5. Investment needs

We have also made reference to the International Labour Organisation’s Policy Framework pillars when rebuilding a Post-Covid-19 economy

Pillar 1 Stimulating the economy

Pillar 2 Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

Pillar 3 Protecting workers in the workplace

Pillar 4 Relying on social dialogue for solutions

The immediate emphasis of the Team’s actions is awareness raising, Lobby for grants support Put grant support in place, Training support and re-drawing of existing business support programmes

Short-term actions are summarised in the table at Annex 1 and the activity of the service is grouped into three:

- 1. Business Improvement and Growth**
- 2. Town Centres Regeneration**
- 3. Employment Skills and Jobs**

## **Annex 1 Business Improvement and Growth Actions**

### **Business Improvement and Growth Team**

The work of the team is broken into three main areas and segmented as follows:

#### **Investment and Retention Services**

1. Inward Investment
2. Larger Indigenous Businesses
3. Information Services
4. Property Inquiry Services

#### **Business Support**

5. Support local businesses
6. Growth Hub (contributing to)
7. Business Start Ups relationships and gaps
8. Business Support Programme

#### **Sector Development**

9. Logistics
10. Advanced Engineering Development
11. Green Economy Development
12. Tech Economy Development

#### **Regeneration**

13. West Runcorn Hyport
14. Sci Tech Hartree
15. Runcorn Town Centre
16. Runcorn Station Quarter
17. Astmoor Regeneration
18. 3MG
19. Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan

**MORE DETAIL CAN BE PROVIDED ON PIPELINE PROJECTS.**

Theme	Topic	Covid-19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
Investment and Retention Services	1.Inward Investment	Drive policy at City Region	Number of Investments	Physical investments	Unknown	4 investment over 10,00 square feet per year	Ongoing	PC	PS MG
Investment and Retention Services	1.Inward Investment	Manage Portfolio of ongoing investment projects	Number of investment	Physical investments	Unknown	4 investments over 10,000 square feet per year	Ongoing	PC	PS MG
Investment and Retention Services	2.Larger Indigenous Businesses	Delivery of KAM  Subtly assess the position of local units and	KAM of local major businesses	Number of business account managed	40	40	Ongoing	PC	Team and JQ
Investment and Retention Services	2.Larger Indigenous Businesses	Design programme of engagement for future for Small and Medium sized businesses – not micro	KAM of larger indigenous businesses	Number of business account managed	250	250	May 2020	PC	PS and MG
Investment and Retention Services	3.Information Services	Design, writing and delivery of Covid-19 weekly newsletter	Dissemination of newsletter	At least 1 newsletter distributed per week	1 newsletter per week	48 per year	Ongoing	MG	Team
Investment and Retention Services	3.Information Services	Relaunch social media presence and redesign a	Increase business engagements	Followers on Twitter	2540	3500	September 2020	MG	PC and PS

Theme	Topic	Covid-19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
		post-Covid-19 campaign							
Investment and Retention Services	4.Property Inquiry Services	Manage Portfolio of ongoing property enquiry projects	Investments in Halton	Number of investments	7	10	March 2021	MG	PC and PS
Investment and Retention Services	4.Property Inquiry Services	Enhanced market intelligence	Improved understanding of the business base in Halton	Sector reporting	10 reports on sectors	10 reports on sectors	May 2020	PC	Team
Business Support	5.Support local businesses	Grant support to be advised	Support to local businesses	Grants paid out	300	300	June 2020	Paul Corner	Team
Business Support	6.Growth Hub (contributing to)	Manage enquiries	Support to local businesses	Number of engagements	500	500	Ongoing	Team	
Business Support	7.Business Start Ups relationships and gaps	Design scheme to strengthen relationship with business start advisors across the team	Model business start support	Disparate understanding needs to improve	Improvement of understanding	Improvement of understanding	August 2020	Peter	Team
Business Support	8. Business Support Programme	Develop Digital Business Support Programme:	Broker consultancy support	Broker consultancy support			Ongoing	KH	DF

Theme	Topic	Covid-19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Business Planning</li> <li>• Strategic Marketing</li> <li>• Digital</li> <li>• Finance</li> </ul>							
Sector Development	9.Logistics	Build into Key Account Management programme	Forum in place	Regular communication	Informal engagement	10% of businesses engaged	September 2020	SMD / AS	
Sector Development	10.Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Development	Relaunch network and subgroups	Forum in place	Regular communication	Informal engagement	10% of businesses engaged	September 2020	PC	MG
Sector Development	11.Green Economy Development	Create client book bespoke to each business post lockdown	Forum in place	Regular communication	Informal engagement	10% of businesses engaged	September 2020	PS	
Sector Development	12.Tech Economy Development	Evaluate Grant and loans available and target local businesses	Forum in place	Regular communication	Informal engagement	10% of businesses engaged	September 2020	MG	

## Annex 2 Regeneration – Town Centres

Town Centres are the most tangible part of a local authority that a resident will associate with and in general have a vested interest as a local destination for leisure and retail. Regardless of the attractions of larger more corporate retail and leisure destinations, the majority of people want local amenities to be as good as possible. This provides a constant challenge to local authorities to constantly reinvigorate their town centres either by themselves or through commercial partnerships.

In this section we have taken a systematic approach to responding to the crisis for our town centres.

Theme	Topic	Covid-19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
Town Centres	Establish temporary body to coordinate action during crisis and pre-recovery stage	Ensure response is organised, effective, efficient and significant. Responding to the immediate needs of the TC as well as plan for the future recovery					Now	Operational Director	
Town Centres	Communications	Ensure information reaches the right people at right time especially business					On-going	MO/Regeneration Manager – Town Centres	

Theme	Topic	Covid-19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
		owners and public Positive stories							
Town Centres	Monitor Footfall	To understand TC use and potential issues					On-going	DF	
Town Centres	Wides and Runcorn Old Town Business Contracts	Compile town centre business lists and email address where possible					May 2020	DF	SM and JH
Town Centres	Halton Lea and Trident Albert Square Green oaks	should HBC be involved?					Now	Operational Director	
Town Centres	Contact Town Centre business	Use email/social media to understand business plans and challenges					Now	DF	SM and JH MG
Town Centres	Traffic Management	Will there need to be temporary road closures or traffic restrictions?					End May	TG	Highways

Theme	Topic	Covid-19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
		Will they need approval or covered by general permitted development order							
Town Centres	Parking Management	Review parking restrictions and enforcement					End May	TG?	Highways and regeneration
Town Centres	Walking	Identify hot spots, pavement widening review queuing positions, one-way systems					End may	TG	Highways and regeneration
Town Centres	Cycling	Identify temporary and new cycle routes into TC					Mid-June	TG	Highways and regeneration
Town Centres	Bus Stops/station	Do bus stops need to move to accommodate queues?					Mid-June	IB	Highways

Theme	Topic	Covid-19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
Town Centres	Consistent Signage (signs and on the floor)	Review TC signage Procure new standard signage Design (local identify) and install floor signage					Mid-June	IS	Highways and regeneration
Town Centres	Public Health advice	Identify how and where this is communicated (linked to signage)						Public Health Consultant	
Town Centres	Enhanced cleaning and sanitising	Are additional cleaning services required? Should HBC provide sanitiser stations? (Linked to public health)					May 2020	Paul Wright	
Town Centres	Waste Collections	Collections to be improved in line with PHE guidance						Jim Unsworth	
Town Centres	Identify any additional	Council's disability					Do we have a		

Theme	Topic	Covid-19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
	challenges for people with disabilities	champion to raise and promote					disabilities champion?		
Town Centres	Business Advice and funding	Establish online presence, new communication channels with customers, click and collect services, use of digital technology Establish business networking					May and June	Business Support	Regeneration Town Centres
Town Centres	Pubs/cafes/restaurants	Review Operations Should they have additional pavement/road space for operation? (see Park lets)					June	Highways	Licensing
Town Centres	Runcorn Market	Should HBC consider temporarily						WR	

Theme	Topic	Covid-19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
		re-introducing the market							
Town Centres	Review Council TC services	Widnes Market Libraries HDL Toilets HPIJ Runcorn Brindley Public open Space Community Centres					June	John Hughes	
Town Centres	Role of PCSO's	Review PCSO role Are more stewards required?					June	Community Safety	

### Annex 3 Employment, Skills and Jobs

To support the economy and specifically employment skills and jobs in response to Covid-19, we will introduce;

- A new LCR Bounce Back Employment Scheme for residents and businesses
- A new Self-Employment Start Up Scheme
- Intensified end-to-end employment support through the flagship LCR Ways to Work Delivery Partnership.

Our actions reflect existing arrangements and partnerships that have been in place for over 20 years, which will be extended and adapted to respond to the expected economic conditions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a suite of interventions to off-set economic and social shock.

The attached table details the initial bounce back operations which will be put into force

Redundant Theme	Topic	Covid 19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
People Based Recovery	Redundancy support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents affected by redundancy due to Covid-19;</li> </ul>	Number of redundant residents supported	Redundancy support received	54 made redundant in April/May 2020	TBC	30 months	SS/LC	HPIJ & Apprenticeship Support teams
People Based Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour market trends</li> <li>• Critical sectors</li> <li>• Digital</li> <li>• Young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents affected by reduced hours due to restrictions linked to employment as a result of or due to Covid-19, for</li> </ul>	Number of unemployed residents	Job subsidy intervention received	TBC	1800	30 months	SS/LC	HPIJ & Apprenticeship Support teams
				Self-employment grant received	TBC	375	30 months	SS/LC	HPIJ & Apprenticeship Support teams
				Gaining employment outside of	TBC	423	30 months	SS/LC	HPIJ & Apprenticeship Support teams

Redundant Theme	Topic	Covid 19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lone parents</li> <li>Over 50s</li> <li>Support for self employed</li> <li>Existing Ways to Work participant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>example to meet social distancing measures and requirements</li> <li>Unemployed residents whose previous job roles are those most affected by Covid-19, such as the visitor economy, leisure and tourism</li> <li>Residents who wish to redeploy into potential growth sectors, i.e. Digital, Environmental and Social / Health Care Sectors</li> <li>Young people (our future talent) , most</li> </ul>		job subsidy intervention					
				Receiving LCR Bounce Back support	TBC	3585	30 months	SS/LC	HPIJ & Apprenticeship Support teams
				Gaining education or training	TBC	129	30 months	SS/SB	Adult Learning Team
				Gaining a qualification	TBC	193	30 months	SS/SB	Adult Learning Team
				Gaining basic skills	TBC	59	30 months	SS/SB	Adult Learning Team

Redundant Theme	Topic	Covid 19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
		<p>at risk of becoming NEET as a result of Covid-19, including Care Leavers and LAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single parents returning to the labour market;</li> <li>• Over 50's whose employment opportunities have reduced as a result of Covid-19</li> <li>• The previously self-employed who are no longer able to trade</li> <li>• Existing W2W participants with mental or physical health conditions, ex-offenders,</li> </ul>							

Redundant Theme	Topic	Covid 19 Action	KPI	Measure	Baseline	Outcome	Timescale	Lead	Support
		homeless, domestic violence survivors, substance abuse issues. All of who will have been further disadvantaged by Covid-19							

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