

Public Document Pack



Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

Wednesday, 15 November 2023 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

S. Young

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Bill Woolfall (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor John Abbott	Labour
Councillor Angela Ball	Labour
Councillor Noel Hutchinson	Labour
Councillor Kath Loftus	Labour
Councillor Louise Nolan	Labour
Councillor Mike Ryan	Labour
Councillor Aimee Skinner	Labour
Councillor Gareth Stockton	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Sharon Thornton	Labour

*Please contact Kim Butler on 0151 511 7496 or e-mail kim.butler@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Wednesday, 21 February 2024*

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

Part I

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

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 20 September 2023 at the Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), P. Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chair), Abbott, K. Loftus, L. Nolan, Ryan, Stockton and Thornton

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Ball, Hutchinson and Skinner

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Ferguson, T. Gibbs, J. Briggs and A. Plant

Also in attendance: None

**ITEM DEALT WITH
UNDER DUTIES
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

Action

EUR10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.

EUR11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

EUR12 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board relevant to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.

N.B. Councillor Ryan declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as he had organised the petition to save the No 62 bus service.

EUR13 RECEIPT OF PETITION – POTENTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF 62 BUS SERVICE (MONDAY TO FRIDAY)

The Board considered a report of the Executive

Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided information on the petition received following the bus operator giving notice to withdraw the No. 62 bus service. A commercial decision was taken by the bus operator to withdraw the 62 Service due to it operating at a loss and therefore no longer commercially viable. The Council currently provided a level of public funding subsidy towards the operating costs under a “de minimis” arrangement.

A tender exercise to identify the cost to maintain the service had been carried out, however, the level of subsidy required by potential new operators was unsustainable by the Council given the budget position.

The Board was advised that since the publication of the agenda, the Council had carried out a further tender exercise with alternative bus operators to provide the service going forward. The Council recognised that the loss of the No.62 would leave Moore without a bus service as there were no close alternative bus routes. Following this exercise, Ashcroft Travel had been awarded a contract to provide the service. Ashcroft Travel would provide a similar timetable, starting on Monday 25 September.

It was noted that at a time of significant pressure on budgets, and the small amount of funding to support bus routes already being oversubscribed, it was fortunate that the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Travel Fund was able to provide the funding required to retain the No.62 service for the time being. It was hoped this would allow time for the route to re-establish itself on a commercial footing.

The Council would monitor usage of the service operated by Ashcroft Travel and would work with the operator to encourage increased passenger usage. It was vital that people used this service to ensure its viability.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with the Council Constitution, the petition be received by the Board.

EUR14 ENVIRONMENTAL FUND UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the expenditure of the Environmental Fund. Planning permission for the Runcorn Thermal Power Station (TPS) Plant was granted in September 2008. The Plant was subject to a legal agreement, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The legal agreement contained a provision that the owner of the Plant agreed to

pay the Council an annual lump sum payment for every tonne of fuel received and processed.

To date, the Fund had generated £5,924,470 and the projects that had benefitted from those funds were set out in Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: That the wide range of projects that had benefitted from the fund as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.

EUR15 HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND UPDATE 2022/23.

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration which provided a summary of the Annual Housing and Employment Land Monitoring Surveys undertaken by the Planning and Transport Department.

As set out in Halton's Local Plan, the report outlined a number of development targets for the provision of housing and the supply of land for employment including:

- 350 dwellings (net gain) per annum; and
- 180ha of land for employment purposes between 2014-2037.

In the year to April 2023, there had been 368 housing completions in Halton with 6 losses/demolitions with a net dwelling gain of 362 units. Of the 368 completions, 74% were in Runcorn and 26% were in Widnes.

Employment land monitoring for 2023 recorded the take up of 6.7ha of employment land, all of which had been in Widnes.

Members requested the number of affordable housing properties provided in the Borough in the past year and it was agreed that this information would be provided.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EUR16 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2023/24

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Reports for Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2023/24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

the Board as detailed below:

- Development and Investment Services;
- Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services; and
- Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services.

The reports detailed progress against service objectives and milestones, and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

The Chair advised the Board that a Topic Group would be set up to consider the introduction of civil traffic enforcement for traffic violations. A report setting out further information would be brought to the next Board meeting.

Councillor Ryan advised that he had submitted a number of questions regarding the performance management reports and he had received written officer responses. It was agreed that the questions and responses would be circulated to the Board.

RESOLVED: That quarter 1 performance management reports be received and noted.

Meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.

REPORT TO: Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 15 November 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-
- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
 - (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
 - (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
 - (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
 - (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or

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

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

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

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

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

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

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

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

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

REPORT TO: Environment & Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 15 November 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None

5.4 A Safer Halton

None

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

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

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Environment & Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2023**

EXB30	HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION - AMENITY STANDARDS FOR LICENSED PREMISES
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The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, which sought approval to adopt the Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing requirements and Amenity Standards Policy.

Over the past 12 months some Members had expressed concern about the proliferation and standards of HMO properties in certain parts of the Borough. Subsequently the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board (PPB) had agreed to establish a working party to agree a set of HMO amenity standards and explore options for additional control of HMO's. The working party had met on a number of occasions and developed an action plan which was approved by the PPB in February 2023. Details of the plan were outlined in the report.

Following a progress report on the action plan to the PPB in June 2023, the Board had endorsed the proposal to submit the HMO Property Standards Policy to the Executive Board for adoption. A copy of the Policy document was attached to the report.

RESOLVED: That the adoption of the Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Requirements and Amenity Standards Policy be approved.

EXB31	PRELIMINARY PROCUREMENT NOTIFICATION - PORT OF WESTON, SURFACE ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided notification of the intention to undertake a procurement exercise to appoint a specialist multi-disciplinary team to prepare pre-development design and feasibility work for surface access improvements to Port Weston, Runcorn. The contract was to be funded through the Liverpool City Region Freeport Seed Investment Fund, subject to securing a Grant Funding Agreement with the Combined Authority.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Members noted the intention to undertake a procurement exercise via the SCAPE Public Sector National Consultancy Framework, with the purpose of securing a specialist multi-disciplinary team to undertake design and feasibility work for surface access improvements to Port Weston; and

- 2) delegated authority is provided to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement(s) with the Combined Authority to access the Liverpool City Region Freeport Seed Investment Fund.

EXB32	PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR LIQUID ROAD FUEL CONTRACTS – SUPPLY OF DIESEL, KEROSENE, HVO AND AD BLUE
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval for the Council to be included in a national procurement exercise in order to award contracts for the supply of Liquid Road Fuels to Council sites.

The Council currently had a Liquid Road Fuel contract and a contract for the provision of Ad Blue in place with a total expenditure in the region of £733,000 per annum. These contracts were both awarded under a national Framework Agreement procured by Crown Commercial Services (an executive agency sponsored by the Cabinet Office that provided commercial services, including buying services for the public sector). Both contracts would expire on 31 March 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the use of Procurement Standing Order 1.4.1 to allow the Council to use a Framework Agreement procured by a Central Purchasing Body (Crown Commercial Services) in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulation 2015.

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIOS

EXB33	REVOCATION OF HALTON'S AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS IN WIDNES TOWN CENTRE
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The Board received a report of the Director of Public Health, which sought approval for the revocation of Halton's Air Quality Management Areas in Widnes Town Centre.

In 2011, the high levels of Nitrogen Dioxide measured $49\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ against the UK legal limit of $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Since then, a number of developments have resulted in a significant improvement in air quality. These included improvements in vehicle emission technology and the opening of the Mersey Gateway Bridge in 2017, which resulted in reduced traffic congestion in Widnes Town Centre. Levels of Nitrogen Dioxide in those areas were now consistently below the UK legal limit.

The Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board (PPB) had previously endorsed a report which set out the rationale for revoking the air quality management in Widnes Town Centre and the proposal for the public consultation (Minute EUR32 refers). In June 2023, the PPB received a further report which set out the results of the public consultation and the Board endorsed that the report be submitted to Executive Board to seek approval for the revocation.

The air quality management areas would need to be revoked by way of an Order of the Council under the Environment Act 1995 and a copy of the draft Order was attached as Appendix 2.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the revocation of:

- 1) the Halton Borough Council Air Quality Management (Widnes No.1) Order 2011; and
- 2) the Halton Borough Council Air Quality Management (Widnes No. 2) Order 2011.

REPORT TO:	Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	15 November 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit
PORTFOLIO:	Leader
SUBJECT:	The Corporate Plan - The Big Conversation Update
WARD(S)	Borough Wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Board with an update on 'The Big Conversation', which is integral to formulating a new Council Corporate Plan, to take effect from April 2024.

2.0 **RECOMMENDED: That**

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) that Board continues to endorse the approach to facilitate 'The Big Conversation'.

3.0 **Supporting Information**

3.1 Background

The Big Conversation is about engaging with the public so that they understand the challenges that the Council is facing.

It is an approach between the Council and those who live or work in Halton to work together in order to create an improved borough in all aspects of everyday life.

A Stakeholder Analysis together with a Communications Plan was developed in order to generate and establish as many opportunities as possible to involve all our stakeholders in many different and varied ways.

The Big Conversation consultation is open until November 30th 2023.

3.2 Breakdown of responses by source, as of October 4th 2023:

Total Number of responses: 777

No reply	41
Inside Halton	37
HBC Staff	220
Councillors	-
Comms Flyer	9
Comms Poster	-
Comms Desktop	-
Comms Outdoor	-
Comms Partner	-
Comms Short URL	5
Comms Media	43
Comms Banner	-
Comms School	-
Comms Staff Poster	-
Comms Bin Wagon	-
Comms Meta Advert	197
Comms Organic Facebook	94
Comms Organic X	9
Comms Organic Threads	1
Comms Organic LinkedIn	4
Comms Chamber Newsletter	-
Comms Business Improvement Growth	-
Comms Carers Centre	116
Comms Adult Social Care	-
Comms TUC	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	777

3.3 **Promotion, Consultation & Engagement:**

3.3.1 Consultation opportunity has been targeted to the following places / groups as detailed below. The number indicates the potential responses available;

- Social Media Impressions: 234,487 (times the survey was delivered to feeds on Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, Threads, LinkedIn and X)
- 1st Tuesday Business Event: 60
- Active Ageing Get Together Forum: 115
- Grangeway Community Centre: 30

- Dementia Group: 15
- Halton Patient Participation Group: 24
- Heads of Primary Schools: 60
- Runcorn Shopping city (specific) Adults: 44, Under 16`s: 6
- Widnes Market (specific) Adults: 30, Under 16`s: 10
- School Circular: 100 staff (serving 18,388 pupils)
- HBC Employees: 3000

Note that it's difficult to put an exact figure on the actual footfall for Runcorn Shopping Centre and Widnes Market, but based on estimated weekly footfall a conservative best guess would be:

Runcorn Shopping Centre: 500 – 1,000

Widnes Market: 500 – 1,000

3.3.2 Specific Forums and Venues attended / Scheduled to attend:

- **HBC Workforce**
Email to HBC Workforce: July 28th

Stephen Young Video message: September 5th
- **General Public**
Inside Halton Magazine: Summer edition
- **Businesses**
Halton Chamber of Commerce Network Meeting: September 5th

Halton & Warrington Business Fair: November 9th

Sci-Tech Daresbury Business Breakfast: November 10th

Newsletters - Halton Chamber of Commerce
Business Improvement Growth
- **Partners**
Halton Patient Participation Group: September 28th

Halton TUC

Newsletters - Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS
Halton Patient Participation Group
- **Adult Services**
Healthy & Active Ageing Event (Runcorn Shopping Centre):
September 18th

Dementia Group: Widnes (September 29th) and Runcorn
(October 11th)

Partners in Prevention Event (Widnes Market): September

21st

Healthy and Active Ageing Event Get Together: Runcorn (October 9th) / Widnes (October 17th)

Newsletters – Young Carers and Adult Carers

- **Children Services**

Primary Schools Heads Meeting: September 21st
(with an email follow up: September 21st)

Children`s Provider Network Meeting: October 4th

Halton Youth Cabinet: October 12th

Family Hub Centres – Kingsway (October 12th) and Windmill Hill (October 24th)

Riverside College: October 17th

Newsletters – Schools e-circular: September 4th

3.4 **Emerging Themes:**

3.4.1 A reminder that the 5 suggested themes identified were:

- Tackling inequality, helping those who are most in need
- Building a strong, sustainable local economy
- Supporting children, young people and families
- Improving health, promoting wellbeing and supporting greater independence
- Working towards a greener future

3.4.2 Level of agreement to all of the 5 suggested themes is very high, with the highest level of agreement being: 'Improving health, promoting wellbeing and supporting greater independence', and the lowest being 'Working towards a greener future'.

3.4.3 In terms of how can the Council can support these themes, the top 3 identified so far are:

- 'Provide opportunities for young people to engage with their local community and do things that interest them, keep them safe and make them happy'.
- 'Create vibrant town centres for everyone to enjoy across the Borough'
- 'Continue to ensure local people are able to enjoy the Borough`s parks and green spaces'

3.4.4 In terms of the ways our stakeholders can support the identified themes, these were as follows:

- 'Spending money with local shops and businesses'
- 'Doing their best to stay healthy and active'
- 'Look out for children and the vulnerable'

3.4.5 Identifying other potential corporate themes, the top 3 were:

- Business / Regeneration / Employment
- Environment: litter / pavements / greenery overgrowth
- Crime / Police / Antisocial behaviour

3.4.6 Given only 1% of respondents were aged between 16-24 years to-date, the current desires and commitments could change significantly when we have engaged with a greater number of young people. Nationally, younger people appear to be more concerned about the climate change agenda, and therefore the lack of support for green spaces and recycling efforts may change in December once the final sum of raw data is available.

Nevertheless, there is evident support for the provision of learning and skills services that nurture young adults and provide sustainable career opportunities for the whole borough; which is subsequently supported by the desire of a strong local economy – which residents are willing to invest in.

3.5 **Gaps and actions required:**

3.5.1 Demographic – there is a clear gap in the 16 - 24 year olds age bracket.

Actions:

- Target young adults at Riverside college/post 16 education settings
- Planned visits to Family Hubs (Kingsway and Windmill Hill)
- Sharing the Big Conversation on forms of social media which would target specifically this age group, eg Instagram and Messenger.

3.5.2 Geographical areas – analysis has shown that response has been low in 4 wards, 2 in Widnes, (Ditton, Hale Village and Halebank and Bankfield) and 2 in Runcorn, (Halton Lea and Norton South and Preston Brook)

Action:

These areas will targeted by iWalkers on Saturday, November 4th. Ward members will be advised that this will be taking place.

3.5.3 Work on-going in terms of indenting specific stakeholder groups that we haven't actively engaged with as yet, such as Faith groups and the visually impaired.

3.5.4 The introduction of iWalkers, who wear screens that can feature multiple images and videos, as well as pass out flyers and collect information. On the day they will also add someone to a Whatsapp

group and send images for social media and updates about the days progress.

3.6 Timeline:

- Mid-October onwards – gaps identified and addressed
- November 30th 2023: Consultation ends.
- December 2023: Analysis undertaken – key priorities identified.
- January – February 2024: Summary developed / shared with stakeholders via drop-in sessions within council buildings and open engagement at community spaces.
- March 2024: Corporate Plan finalised and approved at key forums.
- April 2024: the New Corporate Plan is launched.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no specific policy implications at this stage; however ultimately there will be a new contemporary and relevant Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There will be a potential financial implication around the engagement of 2 iWalkers, at a cost of £1,200 per day for 8 hours.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 The Corporate Plan is Halton Borough Council's key strategic document. This plan sets out the main vision, themes and values of the Council.

'The Big Conversation' will help to determine the Council's new set of priorities, which will be translated into the plan.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The major risk is that we do nothing and roll out the same priorities as we have done in previous years. To this end the current Corporate Plan is a losing relevance and doesn't fully engage with either the workforce or the people of Halton in the contemporary environment.

7.2 The Council is serious about 'Reimagining Halton', aligned with that commitment, this is a perfect opportunity to undertake a meaningful

piece of work which will engage the people of Halton and together with our workforce determine a set of new priorities, which will make a difference and take Halton forward over the next 3 – 5 years.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Equality and Diversity may well be a specific Corporate Plan priority, but if not then it will certainly underpin the Plan. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the policy development process.

The consultation process has been designed to be inclusive.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 At this stage there is nothing specific to highlight within the context of this report; however there is a distinct possibility that as a result of 'The Big Conversation' climate implications will form one, or a key part of on, of the Council's key priorities.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	15 th November 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Environment & Urban Renewal
SUBJECT:	Annual Road Traffic Collision & Casualty Report
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on the latest road safety statistics released by the Department for Transport through the publication of the 2022 Comprehensive Annual Report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- 1) **The overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton over the past decade be noted; and**
- 2) **The 2024/25 strategy of road safety schemes, road safety education, training, and publicity be endorsed.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The latest figures (2022) for Halton show a small rise in overall casualty numbers following last year's decrease. This is consistent with the national picture, where there have been increases in casualties of all severities over the previous 12 months (although still below pre-pandemic levels). A summary of the data is as follows:

- Halton easily achieved its performance targets, as set by the Department for Transport. (A KSI reduction of 40% by 2020 (based on a 2005-09 base average) was the target outcome). No new performance targets for English Local Authorities, outside London, have been set.
- There were 157 road traffic collisions involving personal injury within Halton, 9 more than the year before. These incidents resulted in 188 casualties, a 7% increase on the 2021 figures, but 24% below 2019 when traffic levels were comparable.
- For the first year the figures in this report are adjusted to take into account a historic under-reporting of road traffic collisions and casualties and are more representative of the true picture. They also allow a more uniform reporting of casualty numbers over time and between different Police Constabularies and Local Authorities.

- A total of 42 KSI (killed or seriously injured) represents a substantial increase on the previous year but are lower than the figures for 2019 (46) and continues the long-term downward trend.
- 40 of the casualties were classed as serious, and regrettably 2 people lost their lives on Halton's roads (the same number as 2021).
- A total of 3 children were seriously injured (CKSI) which represents an increase of 50% as compared to 2 in 2021 (as the numbers are small, percentage term comparisons can be misleading)
- There was a marginal decrease in the number of people of all ages being slightly injured (SLI), with casualty numbers down to 156 (a fall from 158 in 2021).
- Casualty numbers for vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists) have shown a slight rise but the 5 year rolling average shows a consistent decline.
- A total of 11 collisions occurred on Mersey Gateway controlled roads, resulting in 16 casualties, almost identical to 2021's figures, but still significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels (23 collisions, 28 casualties in 2019).

3.2 Appendix A sets out the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in 2022, together with comparisons of figures for previous years. Halton's performance in relation to neighbouring Local Authorities is also presented.

3.3 Of those killed or seriously injured, both the numbers of adult and child casualties increased. However due to the low numbers recorded annually in Halton, this number does fluctuate from year to year. A 5-year rolling average for casualty numbers is a more effective way to judge relative performance, and encouragingly both Adult and Child KSIs continued their downward trends.

3.4 In 2022 the country emerged from a succession of covid pandemic lockdowns, unsurprisingly the rise in road casualty numbers, in both Halton and nationally, almost exactly mirrored the rise in traffic levels.

3.5 **National Position**

Nationally, road casualties (all categories) increased by 6% in 2022, as set out in the Department for Transport 2022 Comprehensive Annual Report on Road Casualties available via:

[Reported road casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2022)

3.6 The Department for Transport (DfT) advises that comparisons with the previous years' figures should be interpreted carefully and advise that focus should be made on this year's performance in comparison with 2019, before the lockdowns associated with the Covid19 pandemic. Using this metric to gauge the success of our road casualty reduction programme relative to others, Halton is one of the better performing Local Authorities.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The work on casualty reductions is consistent with the policies and approaches incorporated in the Liverpool City Region's Transport Plan for Growth and Halton's Local Transport Plan 3 (2011 – 2025). Halton continues to participate in the Merseyside and Cheshire Road Safety Partnerships to share best practice and collaborate beyond administrative boundaries.

4.2 The completion of the Runcorn delinking works and Widnes Loops, together with the Silver Jubilee Bridge re-opening have reconfigured traffic flows around the Borough, plus the Covid pandemic impact on traffic levels (a fall in 2020, small bounce back in 2021 and further increases in 2022), has made comparative analysis difficult in terms of where best to target the casualty reduction works. However, there has been a noticeable modal shift towards walking (a 7% increase in pedestrian movements in 2022) and special attention has been given to small scale schemes that improve our road safety infrastructure, as well as new active travel routes linking employment areas to further encourage walking and cycling. Collaborative working with external agencies continues to offer an effective use of resources, and the ongoing decline in casualty numbers, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, is testament to this.

4.3 **Halton 2022/23 Programme Update**

This programme covers road traffic collision reduction schemes, road safety education, training, and publicity, as well as engaging with Cheshire Police to target effective enforcement action. Halton's Road Safety Team comprises four members of staff operating at 3.2 FTE (full time equivalent) and who also manage the School Crossing Patrol Service.

4.4 **“Smiley” SiDs** (speed indicative device / sign) remain ever-popular with Halton residents. In addition to encouraging lower speeds they also record the approach speeds of every vehicle. This information is shared with Cheshire Police when a particular speed problem is identified. The Team currently manages almost twenty of these devices around the Borough, many of them purchased by Area Forums and Parish Councils. We also operate a number of digital signs that flash either speed limit roundel or road safety messages, should an approaching vehicle be travelling at excessive speed.

4.5 **Speed Camera A562** (Speke Road). This year the fixed speed camera on the westbound carriageway of A562 Speke Road was further improved with the introduction of a vandal-resistant 'smart pole' to house the digital camera. It was important to maintain some kind of speed management at a site that had seen a fatal collision in recent years.

4.6 **Gyratory Red Light Camera**. In conjunction with the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, a red light / speed on green camera has recently been installed at A557 Watkinson Way, a site with the highest density of collisions in the Borough. In addition to enhancing road safety it is anticipated that this device will improve traffic congestion during peak hours, raising the capacity of this strategic junction.

- 4.7 **Mobile Speed Camera Sites.** Working closely with the Cheshire Road Safety Group the Team has sought to improve existing mobile speed camera sites and add existing locations for speed enforcement. A couple of possible locations have recently been identified and work is ongoing to determine their viability. Effective enforcement action will encourage safer driver behaviour.
- 4.8 **Collision Sites.** Using collision data supplied by Cheshire Police the Team has identified junctions where accident causation factors have included 'failure to Give Way' or 'failure to look properly'. Small scale schemes that make improvements (for example: cutting back vegetation; moving Give Way lines forward of parked cars; new signage; road markings etc.) have been undertaken at almost a dozen collision sites. The speed limits on Northern Lane and Hough Green Road, Widnes have recently been reduced from 40mph to 30mph and improvements to pedestrian facilities here have been programmed.
- 4.9 **Safer Active Travel.** In support of various policy objectives (tackling climate change, improving health and well being; improving air quality; options to lower the cost of living) Halton has been undertaking a number of large-scale cycling / walking initiatives to link residential areas with employment areas. These schemes have been funded via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. A number of improvement works that complement the Active Travel Strategy have included new pedestrian crossings, refuge islands, new lengths of high-friction anti-skid surfacing at controlled crossing points, and ensured uncontrolled crossings remain free from parked vehicles using physical features, including bollards, and lengths of pedestrian guard railing. Speed limits have been reduced at several sites where new cycleways are being introduced. The Team continues to undertake road safety audits (RSAs) on all the Borough's major schemes, to ensure that the safety of all road users is a priority.
- 4.10 **Education.** The Team has engaged with children and adults of all ages to deliver training and education:
- The 'Show You Care, Park Elsewhere' scheme to reduce congestion and promote road safety outside schools was delivered at reported hotspots
 - Over 1300 school children in Halton have had some form of cycle training in the previous academic year.
 - 'Stepping Out' pedestrian crossing training for Year 3 pupils has been provided at almost every school
 - The Team has undertaken drink / drug driving campaigns with you adults in local colleges.
 - In-car safety training for the very young and their parents and carers has been undertaken at numerous pre-schools and nurseries
 - The School Crossing Patrol Service remains extremely popular with parents and children and every day out Patrols help over 3500 children cross the road
 - Community family fun days at community and children centres have proved massively popular, with additional dates being added due to demand
 - Road safety training has been provided to refugees and asylum seekers in the Borough
- 4.11 **Halton 2023/24 Strategy**
- It is proposed to concentrate on interventions that enhance the safety of pedestrians and pedal cyclists (who still account for almost half of all KSIs). This

activity also supports a number of policy objectives, including encouraging modal shift.

- Collision analysis will be undertaken at sites with higher than expected collision histories. Work is then carried out at locations where improvements can be made, for example, the installation of refuge islands, improved cycleway signage and installed physical features to clear obstructive parking from pedestrian crossing points.
- Cheshire Police have recently indicated a greater willingness to share information and meet on site to discuss possible remedial measures for serious collisions.
- Extending mobile safety camera sites with Cheshire Police. Data from Smiley SiDs provides an indication of priority roads. A new mobile camera van lay-by is programmed to be installed on Derby Road as part of the Highway's cycle improvement scheme. It is expected that several more mobile sites could be added in Halton.
- Education, training and publicity. The ETP programme will continue as highlighted under the current programme set out above.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implication resulting from the publication of these latest figures.

5.2 Funding for road safety initiatives is now derived from a number of sources. Since 2011 'ring-fenced' grants for road safety have been removed. Consequentially this means that the road safety programme must be strictly prioritised.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

By helping to create a safer environment, road safety casualty reduction work assists in the safeguarding of children and young people and in the achievement of accessible services.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Improving road safety can encourage people to access opportunities for work, especially via sustainable / active travel means.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Any reduction in road casualties releases health resources to be focused on other areas of health care.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Road safety casualty reduction work of all types supports this priority through the introduction of initiatives and interventions designed to deliver a safer environment.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are benefits to the environment through encouraging active travel choices.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The 2022 DfT statistics indicate that Halton is performing well in term of road safety and collision reduction. However, a reduction in dedicated road safety resources can impact negatively on road safety and associated road collision statistics.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

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

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications associated with this report.

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

10.1 Report to Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board on 16th November 2022

Report to Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board on 16 February 2022.

Report to Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board on 18 November 2020.

Report to Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board on 13 November 2019

Report to Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board on 27 February 2019;

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Halton 2022 Traffic Collisions Review

In 2022 Halton saw a slight rise in collisions and casualty numbers as the country emerged from a succession of lockdowns from March 2020 onwards, associated with the Covid19 pandemic. The previous 12 months saw a marginal increase in the number of collisions, a narrow decrease in those slightly injured and regrettably a substantial increase in those seriously injured.

Given the impacts lockdowns had on both traffic levels and human behaviour, the Department for Transport advises against comparisons to periods which included the restrictions. Instead, they recommend direct comparisons with 2019 casualty figures since traffic levels have now risen to almost pre-pandemic levels. Comparing this year's data with 2019, we can see that both casualty and collisions numbers are significantly lower now, despite broadly similar levels of traffic on our roads.

All accidents reported to Cheshire Police and which occurred within the adopted highway in Halton involving at least one motor vehicle, horse rider or cyclist, and where at least one person was injured, are included in this Review. Collisions that occur on private land (or driveways) and car parks or do not result in personal injuries also excluded.

For the first year, the figures in this report for injured casualties are based on adjusting figures reported by the Police to take account of a historic under-reporting of road traffic collisions. These adjusted figures can reliably be used to compare trends over time across the country.

The Department for Transport has engaged with all Police Constabularies to ensure a uniform approach to STATS19 information gathering and in addition, changes to injury severity assessments have been made. Collisions are now more readily classified as 'severe' under these new rules. Historical data has also been re-examined and now the DfT is able to provide 10 years' worth of directly comparable data for every Police Force and Local Authority.

Year	Collisions	All casualties	Adult Deaths / Serious Injuries (adjusted) (AKSIs)	Child Deaths / Serious Injuries (CKSIs)	Slight Injuries All Ages (SLI)
2013	267	347	57	3	307
2014	279	376	68	4	325
2015	224	304	47	2	272
2016	257	353	61	6	308
2017	241	303	43	4	275
2018	194	230	42	6	202
2019	190	249	46	2	208
2020	149	181	32	4	159
2021	148	176	28	2	158
2022	157	188	39	3	156

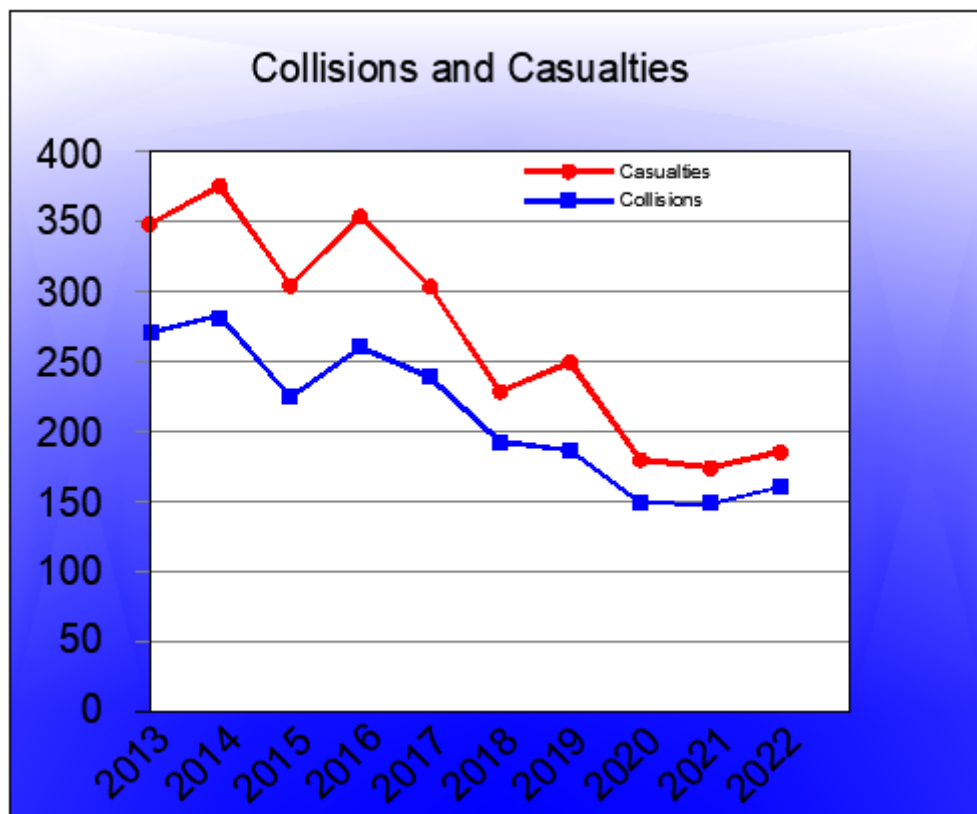


Figure 1 – Collisions and casualties (all categories) 2013 – 2022

Killed and Seriously Injured, All Ages (KSI) (Local Indicator PPTLI 6)

2022 saw an increase in the number of all-age casualties killed or seriously injured (KSI) in Halton, from 30 in 2021 to 42 in 2022. Sadly, two people lost their lives on Halton's roads in 2022, the same number as the year previously.

The DfT advises that comparisons with previous two years' figures should be interpreted with caution, given the dramatic changes in traffic levels associated with Covid lockdowns. Disappointingly, Halton, in comparison with other Authorities within the Cheshire Constabulary area and Liverpool City Region was one of the worst performing Local Authorities when comparing figures with 2021. However, when following the DfT's recommendations to only compare with 2019's casualty numbers, Halton remains one of the top-performing Local Authorities.

Given the small numbers involved and their inherent volatility, it is more advantageous to use a rolling average, taken over a number of years. The five-year rolling average (PPTLI 6) actually dropped from 38.2 to 37, a significant decline. KSI totals have plateaued somewhat in recent years and influencing factors such as the new Mersey Gateway Bridge and associated road system being outside Council control; reductions in budgets and the focus on small scale marginal gains; and changes to the Police serious injury reporting system have meant that opportunities to drive significant improvements are increasingly limited.

This year's rise in KSI numbers was not unexpected, given the rise in traffic levels, and it will be interesting to see if the historic downward shift in the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads can be maintained.

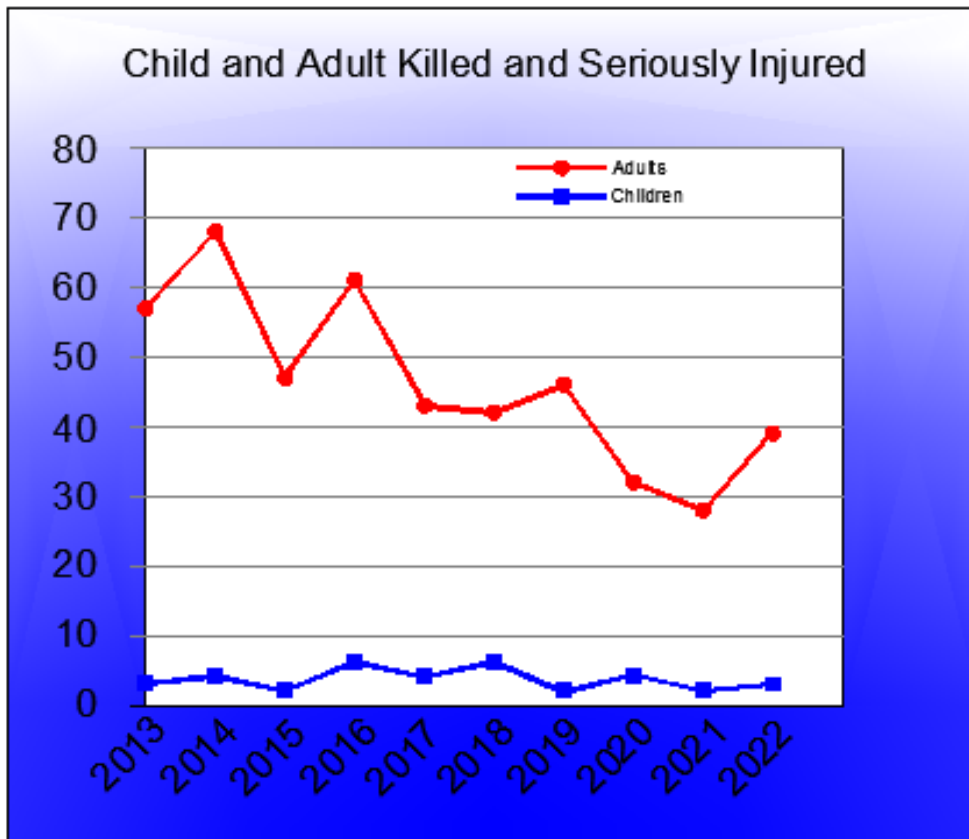


Figure 2 – Killed and Seriously Injured (Adults and Children) 2013 – 2022

Children (u16s) Killed and Seriously Injured (CKSI) (*Local Indicator PPTLI 7*)

In 2022, 3 children were KSI (killed or seriously injured) in Halton, an increase of 1 in comparison with 2021. Due to the numbers being so low, this annual total is traditionally very prone to variations, year on year. The five-year rolling CSKI average (PPLTI 7) has also decreased and is now 3.4, compared with 3.6 last year. Decreases in child casualty numbers are always welcome and the focus on schools for road safety engineering and education will be maintained.

Slight, All-Age Casualties (SLI) (*Local Indicator PPTLI 8*)

In 2022 there was a slight decrease in people of all ages slightly injured in Halton, down to 156 from 158, another record low. Comparison with pre-pandemic levels makes even better reading, with Slight, All-Age Casualties showing a 25% reduction on the 2019 figures.

Halton appears to have performed better than most Local Authorities who have mostly seen increased numbers in this category of casualty.

Then number of collisions on the Borough's roads increased slightly but are still significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels.

In 2011 the Government set out a strategy for Road Safety that set out an outcomes framework designed to help Local Government, local organisations and citizens to monitor progress towards improving road safety and decreasing the number of fatalities and seriously injured casualties.

The framework included six key indicators relating to road deaths. These were intended to measure the key outcomes of the strategy, but in Halton, given the low number of fatalities, and the consequent fluctuations, it was proposed to use KSI rates instead. Halton met its 2020 casualty reduction targets with ease but three years on, the Government is still to announce any fresh initiatives.

In 2021 U.K. Government Ministers spoke at the World Health Organisation’s Road Safety conference in Stockholm, supporting the global target of ‘50 by 30’ in the U.N. road safety declaration (a 50% reduction in road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030).

However, at home the U.K. Government has only set casualty reduction targets for Highways England despite administrations in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London adopting explicit targets for their areas. Notwithstanding the lack of tangible targets, it is important that progress towards achieving safer roads is monitored and our performance against neighbouring Local Authorities should be measured.

Looking at overall casualty numbers, despite a small uptick in 2022 compared to the year before, Halton is outperforming many neighbouring Authorities and the national picture. Although traffic levels have almost returned to pre-pandemic levels, casualty numbers in Halton have not, which is a source of encouragement. Locally, only Manchester City Council and Warrington Borough Council have out-performed Halton over the past three years.

All casualties	2013-2017 average	2019	2021	2022	2022 change over 2021	2022 change over 2019
Cheshire East	1179	751	738	821	+11%	-9%
Cheshire West & Chester	1038	743	646	707	+9%	-5%
Halton	337	249	176	188	+7%	-24%
Knowsley	376	259	172	295	+72%	+14%
Liverpool	1524	1143	1071	1193	+11%	+4%
Manchester	1216	1209	902	868	-4%	-28%
St Helens	415	285	262	290	+11%	+2%
Warrington	669	454	385	382	+0%	-42%
GB	169,341	151,514	128,209	135,280	+6%	-12%

With regards those killed or seriously injured, the situation is less positive, as there was a large increase in Adult KSIs for 2022, as compared with the year previously. However, following the DfT’s recommendations to only compare with 2019’s casualty numbers, Halton’s KSI look more than reasonable and compare favourably with Local Authorities in both the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire. Also, given that the numbers in Halton are so low, it is prone to wilder statistical

fluctuations than larger Local Authorities, underlining the importance of examining longer-term trends than year on year variations.

It will be interesting to see if the long-term downward trend can be maintained, or if the post-pandemic upturn in those killed or seriously injured on our roads is a new, worrying development. It goes without saying that in the current economic climate Local Authorities operate under severe financial constraints, lacking the resources to engage in new, large-scale casualty reduction strategies.

KSI (adjusted)	2013-2017 average	2019	2021	2022	2022 change over 2021	2022 change over 2019
Cheshire East	254	161	163	192	+18%	+19%
Cheshire West & Chester	200	132	157	142	-10%	+8%
Halton	55	46	30	42	+40%	-9%
Knowsley	75	47	39	71	+82%	+51%
Liverpool	304	257	268	267	+0%	+4%
Manchester	251	232	194	184	-5%	-21%
St Helens	84	83	76	63	-13%	-24%
Warrington	88	76	81	66	-22%	-13%
GB	31,119	30,364	24,497	29,742	+21%	-3%

When engaged in a casualty reduction programme it is vital to know who is involved and the causes behind these collisions. These, and long-term trends should also be examined to inform decisions and better enable us to target resources.

Casualty numbers (all severities) by road user type								
Year	Pedestrian	Pedal Cyclist	Motorcyclist	Car Occupant	Bus Occupant	Van Occupant	HGV Occupant	Other Veh Occupant
2013	43	26	31	235	3	7	0	2
2014	34	51	41	229	4	14	3	0
2015	45	24	29	185	3	8	7	3
2016	43	39	36	181	36	14	1	3
2017	41	37	28	175	14	7	1	0
2018	32	37	20	126	3	9	3	0
2019	36	21	25	155	3	4	4	1
2020	26	35	21	91	1	5	2	0
2021	17	26	19	102	1	5	4	2
2022	22	29	24	101	0	8	0	4

Most road user types show a decline in casualty numbers over the previous 12 months, except for cyclists, motorcyclists and van occupants, which although fluctuating, remain broadly constant over

the previous 10 years. However, it is worth noting that the 5 year rolling average for every category except van and other vehicle occupants is in decline.

In recent years Local Authorities have been actively encouraged to increase the number of people walking and cycling, through the construction of new pedestrian and cycle-only routes, re-allocation of road space and other initiatives to boost 'active travel'.

Walking is currently the only mode of transport where average trips per person are above 2019 levels and it is very satisfying to see a significant reduction in pedestrian casualties, both medium and long-term. Indeed KSI figures for pedestrians are currently half the number they were in 2019 and is testament to the number of pedestrian-focused engineering measures and road safety initiatives Halton Borough Council has engaged with, in recent years. Indeed, last year our Road Safety team delivered 'Stepping Out' pedestrian training to 892 primary school children across the Borough.

The casualty rates for cycling remain stubbornly constant, but with the construction of new, strategic traffic-free cycle routes in the Borough these numbers may begin to subside. Halton Borough Council delivered Bikeability training to 1339 children in Halton and cycle safety talks and independent travel training was provided to Years 5 & 6 children.

Of the 24 motorcyclists injured in Halton in 2022, 13 were categorised as serious, with one fatality. Of these 14 KSIs, almost half were aged under 30, with one being a child. Some of these casualties were riding illegally and were also engaged in other criminal activities. As such these people are extremely difficult to engage with from an education, training and publicity perspective.

In 2022, for the first time there were no bus occupants injured on Halton's roads. However, this is probably a reflection on the decline in bus travel over recent years. It is worth noting that although 36 bus passengers were injured in the Borough in 2016, one collision on A557 Rocksavage Expressway accounted for 28 casualties (all slightly injured).

All the collision data we receive from Cheshire Police is via the STATS19 recording system. The forms the Police use provide almost 100 possible causation factors as well as information regarding casualty types, weather, road conditions etc. This information is vital to properly direct a road casualty reduction programme although it is disappointing that too often Cheshire Police do not provide causation factor details to Local Authorities, only the Department for Transport.

Looking at the latest STATS19 data for Halton we can see that the overwhelming majority of collisions are caused by some form of driver error. Only a handful of collisions detailed issues with the road surface or layout as an accident cause and most of these related to temporary measures at roadwork sites. Below is a table illustrating the most common causation factors on Halton's roads last year:

Motor vehicles / cyclists – all casualties			
Causation factor	2013-2017 average	2021	2022
Driver or rider error or reaction	176	91	86
Driver / rider failed to look properly	108	39	52
Injudicious action	59	26	32
Impairment or distraction	35	29	28
Behaviour or inexperience	39	21	28
Driver / rider failed to judge other person`s path or speed	49	30	24
Driver / rider careless, reckless or in a hurry	22	12	20
Loss of control	32	28	18
Exceeding speed limit	13	12	16
Distraction in vehicle	7	5	15
Pedestrians – all casualties			
Pedestrian only	22	13	8
Pedestrian failed to look properly	16	6	4
Pedestrian failed to judge vehicle`s path or speed	5	2	2
Pedestrian impaired by alcohol	2	2	2
Crossing road masked by stationary or parked vehicle	2	1	2

Most factors have shown a decline over time, however there have been concerning rises in collisions involving drivers exceeding the speed limit or being distracted in the vehicle. Halton Borough Council continues to engage with Cheshire Police with regards speed enforcement and this year a fixed speed camera on A562 Speke Road has had an upgrade and a red light / speed on green camera has recently been installed at A557 Watkinson Way gyratory, a collision 'hot pot'. In addition, we are also working with the Cheshire Road Safety Group in identifying new mobile camera sites at locations experiencing speeding issues.

Since the Covid19 pandemic there has been a noticeable shift in traffic patterns, with less acute peak hours but more traffic on roads during traditional daytime off-peak periods. Changes in work and shopping patterns (more people working from home and the rise in shopping delivered to home) may account for some of this, but it is also clear that traffic associated with the 'school run' continues to grow, bringing its own related road safety issues.

Engineering measures designed to enhance safety around schools continue to be a priority and our Road Safety team continue to engage with schools and Police on a weekly basis to encourage safer behaviour from all road users and discourage inconsiderate parking, which often negatively impacts road safety.

In addition, our brilliantly run School Crossing Patrol service, celebrating 70 years in the U.K., continues to provide children with safe places to cross. Last year over 3500 children in the Borough crossed the road each day with the help of our Patrols.

The Department for Transport recommend using collision rates as the best metric to judge the relative safety of a Local Authority's highway network. The number of casualties per billion vehicle miles is usually lower for Councils with a more rural character, lower rates of deprivation and higher lengths of motorways relative to size. Halton does not really tick any of these boxes yet in comparison with rates both regionally and nationally we have performed well over an extended period:

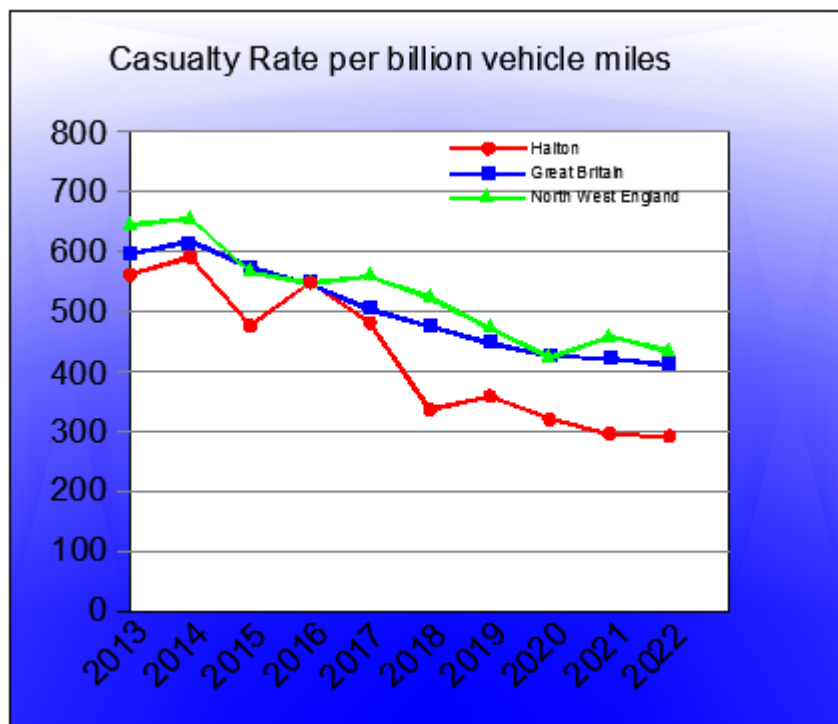


Figure 3 – Casualty rate (all severities) per billion vehicle miles 2013 – 2022

Since 2016 the casualty rate has substantially decreased and despite the ongoing budgetary constraints the safety of our roads continues to improve. Lack of resources mean a scaling back of engineering interventions but in recent years a greater number of small-scale engineering schemes have been devised to improve safety and accessibility for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. Add to that the sterling work of our Road Safety team in their education, training and publicity programmes, together with a greater engagement with Cheshire Police in targeted enforcement campaigns, there is no reason why further gains cannot be made in ensuring the safest road network possible.

REPORT TO:	Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	15 th November 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director - Environment & Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Environment and Urban Renewal
SUBJECT:	Houses of Multiple Occupation - Working Party Update
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update the Board on the progress of the Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Action Plan, endorsed by the Board at the 15 February 2023 meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board notes the progress against the action plan (Appendix 1).

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 A discussion paper was presented to the Board on 21 September 2022, with a Working Party then established to consider those recommendations in more detail.

3.2 The Working Party (WP) met for the first time on the 27 October 2022, the 19 December, the 14 February 2023, and most recently on 3 October 2023.

3.3 Over the summer, independent studies have been undertaken (by MetaStreet and ORS) to provide a detailed evidence base on the makeup of Halton's housing stock.

3.4 The following progress has been made since the last update to PPB in June 23:

- Adoption of a Halton Council "HMO - Amenity Standards for Licenced Premises" policy at the 14 September 2023 Executive Board. The 'Amenity Standards' document, was produced and endorsed by the PPB, and is now adopted as Council policy.
- A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide additional planning policy inputs on HMO planning applications has been drafted by the Working Party and will be considered by the PPB (under a separate report cover). The SPD seeks to introduce explicit planning controls on: concentration of HMOs; restricting sandwiching of properties by HMOs; restricting three or more adjacent HMOs; explicitly incorporate property standards; introduce explicit criteria to protect the amenity of neighbours.

- 3.5 The independent survey company, ORS (Opinion Research Services), have undertaken a detailed survey of properties within the West Bank area to identify the number of private rental properties and the number of smaller and unlicensed HMO's. The survey sought to identify tenure, property type e.g. self-contained flat, HMO and the number of unrelated occupants who do not form the same household and share facilities. Although the study did not identify a large number of HMOs in the area, it did show that the local housing market is dominated by rental properties (both private and social landlord). This factor may well account of the community perception that the character of the West Bank is changing. The survey concludes that is currently insufficient evidence to support additional or selective property licensing, or an Article 4 Direction, in the West Bank area however this position will be kept under review. A summary of the survey results and associated conclusions is provided in Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3.6 The results of the MetaStreet study are being finalised and will be report to the PPB in due course. MetaStreet are producing a stock condition and impacts report. This evidence document will investigate and assess the following factors across the borough:
- Accurate information on the current levels of private rental sector properties and tenure change over time by ward.
 - Accurate information on the current level of unlicensed smaller HMO's (3-4 Occupants) by ward
 - Levels of serious hazards that might amount to a Category 1 hazard or high scoring category 2 hazard (HHSRS) across the private rented sector by ward.
 - Ward level information on housing related stressors, including antisocial behaviour (ASB), crime, deprivation, and population changes including migration linked to the private rented sector in general and houses in multiple occupation specifically.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Members wish to ensure that any HMOs or privately rented accommodation provide suitable standards of housing for their tenants.
- 4.2 In regard to certain issues, like the condition of premises, antisocial behaviour, and management of domestic refuse, the Council has existing powers that can be used to tackle persistent nuisances.
- 4.3 As a result of the Working Party, new policy has been adopted by the Council has been adopted in the form of the HMO - Amenity Standards for Licenced Premises policy. A new supplementary planning document to introduce further planning controls on HMO will be considered by the PPB at the meeting (under separate report cover).
- 4.4 The Working Party has used West Bank as a focus area for review in order to understand the composition of HMOs as a proportion of housing stock. This has been conducted via a thorough review of available data sources. These have included:
- Independent ORS 'door knock survey' of 552 private houses

- Collaboration with the Police to review crime and complaint data
- Analysis of Environmental Health complaint data
- Waste Management Service complaint data
- Local knowledge from Councillors
- Analysis of Council Tax records
- Analysis of planning records

4.5 From the analysis of the above data sources it was concluded by the Working Party that the evidence does not show a proliferation of small HMOs across West Bank. Whilst there is currently insufficient evidence to support additional or selective licensing of private rental properties, or the introduction of an Article 4 Direction, the Council has existing Housing Act powers can be used to investigate concerns raised by tenants and ensure properties reach the required standards. These powers provide the surety that any HMOs or privately rented accommodation will provide suitable standards of housing for their tenants

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The formal adoption and implementation of the recommended policies will require additional staff resources.

5.2 Formal policy adoption is undertaken by Executive Board. The PPB Board's recommendations will need to be presented to Executive Board in due course.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

None

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no legal or financial risks arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no implications for climate change arising from this report.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX 1 - HMO WORKING PARTY ACTION PLAN

Ref	Task	Progress	Complete
1	Review the concerns raised by Members about HMOs	Complete – discussed at Working Party on 27 October 22 and included in PPB report of 16 November 22	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	Internal review of Council systems to identify HMOs. Note that small HMOs (4 persons or less) do not require licencing / planning.	Review concluded that door to door enquiry necessary to find small HMOs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commission External Evidence			
3	Specify and commission an external research company to report on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current levels of private rented sector (PRS) properties and tenure change over time. • Information on the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) as a subset of the PRS. • Levels of serious hazards that might amount to a Category 1 hazard (HHSRS). • Other housing related stressors, including antisocial behaviour (ASB), service demand, population and deprivation linked to the PRS. • Assist the council to make policy decisions, including the possible introduction of property licensing schemes under Part 2 and Part 3 of Housing Act 2004. • Undertake door to door surveys in West Bank (River Mersey up to Waterloo Road) and Fredrick Street to identify private rental properties and small HMOs (4 persons or less that do not require planning permission or HMO licences) • Examine the level of clustering of HMOs at Frederick Street, Widnes • Identify small HMOs and private rented properties in West Bank 	Specification drafted Awaiting results of MetaStreet Study ORS Report Complete	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	Bid into the Environment Fund with a view to funding the above research	Complete	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Investigate Policy Interventions			
5	Draft and circulate a Planning Policy	Complete – policy circulated 19 Dec 2022	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Scenario test the effectiveness of the policy in specific circumstances (such as Derby Rd, Cholmondeley Street). (Note that a planning policy is required to go through a statutory planning process and public consultation before it can be adopted and given weight in planning decisions).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WP to decide if suitable for adoption as HMO Supplementary Planning Document by Exec Board 	
6	Draft and circulate a Halton Council 'Property Standards for HMOs' document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft document circulated to WP 21 Sept 2022 Adopted by Executive Board 14 September 2023 	✓
7	Investigate an Article 4 Direction for West Bank to remove permitted development rights preventing single dwellings becoming small HMOs (note applications can still be made for planning permission).	Following a comprehensive review of available data sources, there currently is insufficient evidence to support the introduction of an Article 4 Direction. This matter will be kept under review.	✓
8	Investigate Additional Licencing of smaller HMO's and other private rented properties. West Bank will be used as a pilot study of potential schemes	The ORS Study identified only a small number of properties that were occupied by 3-4 adults who did not form the same household or family group. There is insufficient evidence to support an additional licencing scheme for smaller HMO's. The Council's existing Housing Act powers can be used to address any concerns about housing standards.	✓
9	Investigate options for Selective Licencing of private rented properties. The pilot will be used to inform options for any future borough wide scheme	The ORS study did identify a high percentage of private rental properties in West Bank, however there was no evidence that these properties cause a particular problem when compared with other areas of the borough. There is detailed Government guidance for local authorities on the circumstances when selective licencing may be appropriate and the evidence that is required. The guidance is clear that "only where there is no practical and beneficial alternative to a designation should a selective licencing scheme be made". https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/selective-licencing-in-the-private-rented-sector-a-guide-for-local-authorities/selective-licencing-in-the-private-rented-sector-a-guide-for-local-authorities . The councils existing powers to deal with waste, nuisance and housing standards are considered sufficient to address any concerns in the West Bank area. This position will be kept under review.	✓

10	Encourage the issuing of community protection warnings (CPW) / notices (CPN) to tackle persistent behaviour that is detrimental to the community	Matter raised with the Council's Enforcement Team who have advised that CPWs and CPNs will be issued to tenants and landlords in circumstances where there is evidence of any such persistent detrimental behaviour.	✓
Other Interventions			
11	To ensure that waste management collections and receptacle provision are appropriate for HMOs, West Bank in particular, and take into account the number of individuals residing at each HMO.	Implemented and to be kept under review	✓
12	Members to consider a Council Motion on HMOs to provide policy direction or propose adoption of 'Property Standards for HMOs' Document in conjunction with Action 5 and Action 6.	Complete – "HMO - Amenity Standards for Licenced Premises" Policy now adopted. Draft SPD to be considered by PPB for future adoption by Exec Board.	✓
13	Invite Inspector Thomas Hall of Widnes Local Police Unit (LPU) to the next WP to discuss Police response to ASB arising from HMOs (Police records are a primary source of evidence to demonstrate ASB is linked to HMOs).	Police attended Working Party on 14 Feb 23	✓
Resources			
14	Consider appropriate resources to deliver any selected interventions		
Recommendations of Working Party			
15	Report Working Party Recommendations (including necessary resources and timescales) to Executive Board	Adoption of "HMO - Amenity Standards for Licenced Premises" policy at 14 September 2023 Executive Board	✓

APPENDIX 2 - West Bank Survey Summary

Initial data based on Council Tax

Total number of properties within West Bank	728
Number of RSL properties	195
Number of Privately Occupied Premises (Rental of owner occupier)	533

ORS Survey

- Survey commissioned to investigate both household make up and tenure to identify small HMO's
- 552 private properties in scope of survey (may include small number of commercial properties or properties slightly outside West Bank Area).
- 3 attempts made to complete survey at various times of day.
- Feedback from the survey company has indicated that this is a reasonably good response rate for this type of survey and the sample size can be used to extrapolate data for the West Bank area as a whole.

Response Rate

Total completed responses	250	response rate:	45%
Non responses	302		55%
Non response reasons	No reply		72%
	Refusal		13%
	Property appears unoccupied		4%
	Language		2%

ORS Survey Results

Tenure	Number based on responses	Extrapolated Total	% all West Bank	% Halton Comparison
Owner Occupied	137	298	40	61
Private Rental	97	215	30	14
RSL	15	210	28	25
Property empty		13	2	
			100	100

Household Composition	Number based on responses	Extrapolated Total	Percentage of all households
Single Occupant	75	171	31%
Single family group	168	370	67%
2 or more unrelated adults living in a shared house (up to 4 occupants)	3	7	1%

Conclusion: The proportion of privately rented properties is approximately double that observed in the rest of the borough.

Licensed HMO's

7 properties in the West Bank area are licensed HMO's. There are a total of 24 HMO's in the wider Central and West Bank Ward.

Considerations

It is acknowledged that the data does not appear to reflect local perceptions in terms of the number of smaller unlicensed HMO's. It might be argued that a higher proportion of the properties that did not respond to the survey are in fact unlicensed HMO's and the extrapolation has not provided an accurate picture. Data on the 302 properties that did not respond has been analysed and compared with complaint data for housing standards, noise, pest control and refuse accumulations to assess whether these properties cause a particular problem when compared to the central and west bank ward as a whole. Complaint data has been analysed for a 3 year period. January 2020 to December 2022.

In total there were 442 complaints received by environmental health within the Central and West Bank Ward. There are a total of 3318 properties in the ward. This equates to a complaint ratio of 0.13 complaints per property over a 3 year period. The 302 properties that did not respond to the survey were subject to a total of 20 complaints over the same period. This represents a complaint ratio of 0.06 complaints per property.

Conclusions:

- Based on the survey results there does not appear to be a high number of smaller unlicensed HMO's
- The proportion of privately rented properties is approximately double that observed in the rest of the borough.
- The properties that did not respond to the survey do not result in a higher rate of complaints when compared with the rest of the ward as a whole.

Overall Conclusion

The survey has indicated that there are a high proportion of privately rented properties in the Central and West Bank Ward when compared to the borough as a whole. The survey did not indicate that there were a significant number of smaller unlicensed HMO's. It is acknowledged that this does not reflect local perceptions. Whilst there are a high number of privately rented properties and there may be some smaller HMO's that were not captured by the survey, there remains insufficient evidence that these private rental properties cause significant problems that cannot be addressed by the council's existing powers.

REPORT TO:	Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	15 th November 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director - Environment & Regeneration
PORTFOLIO:	Environment and Urban Renewal
SUBJECT:	Houses of Multiple Occupation – Supplementary Planning Document
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Board with a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO), as prepared by the PPB's HMO Working Party.
- 1.2 Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan. Any policies contained in a supplementary planning document must not conflict with the adopted development plan. They are however a material consideration in decision-making. They should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.
- 1.3 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will provide additional planning policy inputs on any planning applications submitted to create large HMOs (that is properties for 7 or more unrelated occupants). The SPD will introduce explicit planning controls on: concentration of HMOs; restricting sandwiching of properties by HMOs; restricting three or more adjacent HMOs; explicitly incorporate property standards; and introduce explicit criteria to protect the amenity of neighbours.
- 1.4 Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for producing Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 1.5 In accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the regulations set out in the Town and Country Planning Act, the Council are required to consult on the Draft HMO SPD for a minimum of 28 days. Any organisation or person requesting to be kept informed of the production of SPDs will be contacted and informed that the SPD is available at deposit locations. The SPD consultation will be advertised and made available on the Council's website.
- 1.6 Once all representations have been received and any amendments to the SPD made, a 'Statement of Consultation' will be produced. This will list all

representations received as a result of the consultation and will explain how they have been taken into consideration and, where appropriate, the SPD altered.

- 1.7 Following an internal approval process (Executive Board), prior to adoption the Council are required to produce an adoption statement. This is to include the following information:

- (a) the date on which a supplementary planning document was adopted,
- (b) if applicable, any modifications made pursuant to section 23(1) of the Act,
- (c) notice that any person with sufficient interest in the decision to adopt the supplementary planning document may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of that decision, and
- (d) that any such application must be made promptly and, in any event, not later than 3 months after the date on which the supplementary planning document was adopted.

- 1.8 Once adopted the Supplementary Planning Document will form a material consideration in decision-making process.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board endorse the draft SPD for public consultation (Appendix 1).

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The rules for HMOs are slightly different between licencing (under Housing Act / Environmental Health) and town planning legislation, as explained below.

- 3.2 For licencing, a HMO is defined as a property occupied by 3 or more people who do not form a single household and share facilities such as a bathroom or kitchen. A large HMO is defined as a property occupied by 5 or more people who do not form a single household and share facilities such as a bathroom or Kitchen.

- 3.3 Since 2018 any large HMO occupied by 5 or more people who do not form a single household and share facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom must be licensed by the local authority.

- 3.4 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (GPDO) provides permitted development rights for the change of use of a dwelling (Class C3) to a small HMO for 3-6 occupants (Class C4) without the need to apply to the council for planning permission.

- 3.5 Properties with 7 or more unrelated occupants still require planning permission.

- 3.6 Therefore smaller HMO's with 3-4 beds require neither a license or planning permission.

- 3.7 There are currently 121 licensed HMO's in Halton. (i.e. properties with 5 or more tenants). The number of smaller unlicensed HMO's is unknown. This position is not unique to Halton because there is no requirement to seek a license or planning permission there is no reason for the landlord to notify the council.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Members wish to ensure that any HMOs or privately rented accommodation provide suitable standards of housing for their tenants and ensure the amenity of neighbours is protected.
- 4.2 In regard to certain issues, like the condition of premises, antisocial behaviour, and management of domestic refuse, the Council has existing powers that can be used to tackle persistent nuisances.
- 4.3 As a result of the PPB's HMO Working Party, a new supplementary planning document to introduce further planning controls on HMO has been drafted to ensure the amenity of neighbours is protected.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The formal adoption and implementation of the recommended policies will require additional staff resources.
- 5.2 Formal policy adoption is undertaken by Executive Board. The PPB Board's recommendations will need to be presented to Executive Board in due course.
- 5.3 There is a formal process for the creation and adoption of supplementary planning document, and this includes a period of public consultation (28 days).

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The objective of the HMO SPD is to ensure properties provide a safe and healthy environment for all residents, including children and young people to live.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The objective of the HMO SPD is to ensure properties provide a safe and healthy environment for all residents to live.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The objective of the HMO SPD is to ensure properties provide a safe and healthy environment for all residents to live.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The HMO SPD supplements the Local Plan Policies CS(R)12, RD3, C2, and GR2, and upon formal adoption will become a material consideration when determining future planning applications for HMO's.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no legal or financial risks arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 All private rental properties must by law meet a minimum energy efficient rating of E. This is set out in Environmental Health's Licensing Requirements and Amenity Standards Policy and so will be a consideration when determining all HMO licensee applications, where proposals require a licence.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX 1 – Houses of Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document

Draft

Halton House of Multiple Occupation
Supplementary Planning Document
October 2023

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Policy Framework
3. Controls on the Location and Distribution of HMOs
4. HMO Licensing, Management, and Amenity Standards
5. How to make a planning application
6. How will planning applications for HMO's be considered.
7. Appendix 1 – Policies from the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (CSR12, RD3, CSR18, GR1)

1. Introduction

A House of Multiple Occupation, commonly referred to as HMOs, are defined as a properties occupied by 3 or more people who do not form a single household (i.e. not living in a family setting) and who share facilities such as a bathroom or kitchen.

HMOs form an important part of Halton's housing supply adding to the choice of living for many residents. They provide a flexible and affordable option for housing for many who may have limited options. A variety of residents are known to occupy HMOs including people on low incomes, students, young professionals and those on short term work contracts. HMO's can form conversions of existing buildings or be purpose built.

Overall HMOs in Halton are well managed and provide a choice of living accommodation. However, if they are poorly managed or designed, they have the potential to cause issues to occupants and neighbours. A number of concerns over HMOs relate to:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Negative impact on the character of the area
- Parking
- Waste storage
- Inadequate living conditions for inhabitants

The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) aims to better manage the provision of HMOs in Halton whilst, improving the standards of accommodation that is provided and reducing detrimental impacts on the neighbours. The SPD will assist in the interpretation of national and local planning policy and set out good practice for planning outcomes.

This SPD will apply to planning applications for the creation of HMOs, such as those:

- HMOs created through conversions of other buildings,
- Purpose built HMOs,
- The expansion of HMOs.

2. Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and is a material planning consideration in planning decisions. It states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF sets out that the Local Plan should meet the objectively assessed needs for housing, as far as is consistent with the policies in the NPPF. It should provide a mix of housing types to meet the needs of different groups in the community and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. It also seeks to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Local planning policy

Relevant local planning policies are set out in the development plan for the area. The Development Plan for Halton comprises the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (March 2022).

Halton Delivery and Allocations Plan does not have a specific development plan policies specifically relating to HMOs however the following policies are applicable and are summarized below and reproduced in full in Appendix A.

Policy CS(R)12 Housing Mix states that the Council will support the right type of housing to facilitate mechanisms to meet the needs of Halton's existing population, address imbalances in the existing housing stock and ensure the homes provided can adapt to changing demographics.

Policy RD3 aims to raise the quality of design in Halton. A significant proportion of planning applications received by the Council relate to dwelling extensions, alterations and residential conversions and although most of the proposals are small scale, their impact on the local area can be considerable, particularly cumulatively.

Policy CSR18 addresses the design of places and spaces can have a profound effect on the way that we live, how we understand an area, the way that we treat an area and the way that we move through it. It is crucial for development design in Halton to be of a high quality, build upon an area's character, be adaptable to changing situations, and provide safe, healthy and accessible environments for all members of society.

Policy GR1 focuses on how design is not just about how a development looks but also whether it is successful in its context, whether it functions well, whether it is enduring and of high quality, and lastly, whether it contributes toward broader sustainability objectives.

Achieving appropriate high-quality design should be a key objective of all those involved in delivering sustainable development. Development should take the opportunities available to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions.

3. Controls on the Location and Distribution of HMOs

As well as forming part of the borough's housing supply and contributing towards meeting housing needs, HMO conversions can also enable the continued viable use of older housing and provide an effective use of land and buildings. However, HMOs typically intensify the use of properties, with more resident and visitor movements than a typical family home, and concentrations of them can impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and the wider neighbourhood.

Therefore, in order to help ensure mixed and balanced communities and to ensure that new development does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on amenity and quality of life, this SPD sets out restrictions to limit the concentration of HMOs in small areas and to manage the siting of HMOs relative to other HMOs. This will contribute to retaining local character, help to ensure a mix of house types and tenures, and reduce potential residential amenity issues. To achieve this the council will apply three measures:

- A. Concentration Threshold
- B. Restricting the Sandwiching of Properties
- C. Restricting Three Adjacent HMOs

A. Applying a Concentration Threshold

Planning permission will not normally be granted for new HMOs, or for proposals to extend existing HMOs, where the proportion of HMOs exceeds, or will exceed, 10% of the properties (residential and commercial) within a 50-metre radius of the application property.

The radius will be measured from the mid-point of the front boundary of the application property and calculated through the inclusion of properties that have a Land and Property Gazetteer address point within that radius. Existing properties that have been sub-divided into flats will be counted as single properties for the purposes of the calculation, as some of the issues that can be associated with HMOs can also be associated with flat conversions. However, purpose-built flats will be counted on an individual basis, as they are not subject to the same constraints as flat conversions and issues should have been fully addressed as part of the planning process.

To identify those properties used as HMOs, the Council will utilise data held on the council's databases, which identifies HMOs from a variety of sources, including HMO licensing data, planning records, and council tax data. However, this may not be an exhaustive record of all HMOs in an area, because some HMOs may not be known to the Council, particularly if they are too small to have required planning permission or be subject to mandatory licensing. Further investigation may therefore be required as part of the planning application process in response to new or updated information about the presence of HMOs in the locality.

There are limited circumstances where permission could be granted for an HMO that results in the 10% threshold being exceeded. They might include where:

- There is a strong physical barrier, such as a railway line, between the application property and established HMOs,
- There are a limited number of properties within the 50-metre radius, or
- The nature of the application property means that impacts will be lessened e.g., the property could be detached and have a substantial curtilage.

An example of applying the concentration threshold is shown in Figure 3.1.

A proposed HMO is shown in red and residential properties within 50 metres of the proposed HMO are identified. If the proportion of properties in use as HMOs exceeds, or will exceed, more than 10% of the properties within the 50-metre buffer zone, then permission will not normally be granted.

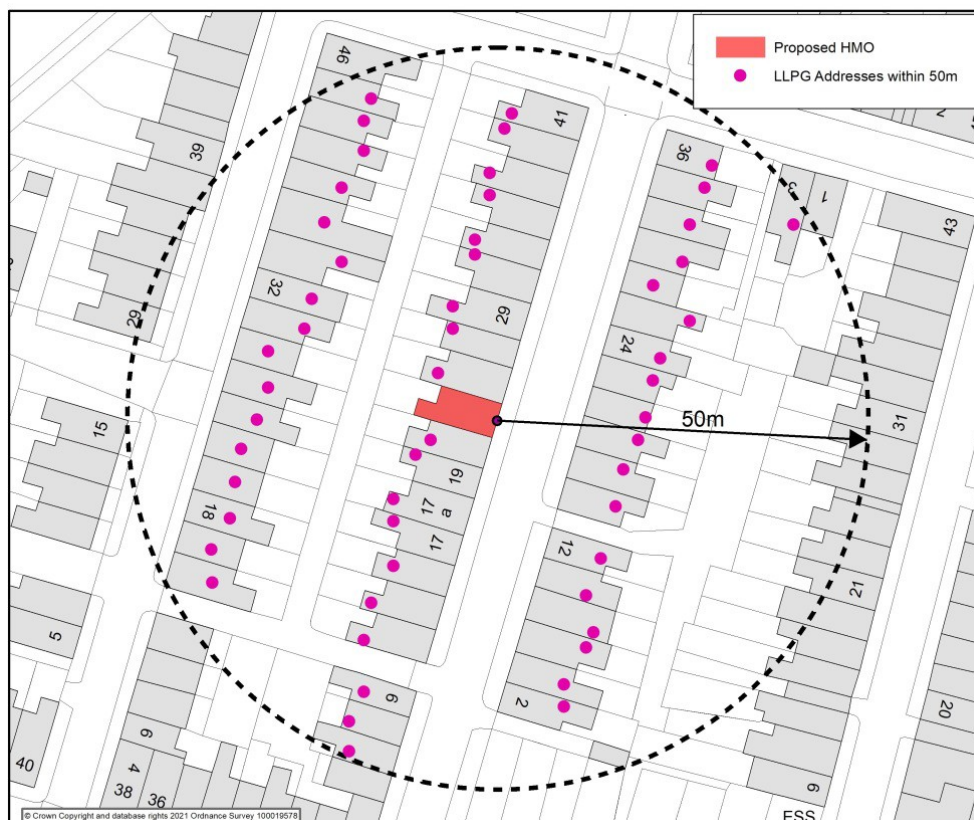


Figure 3.1 Applying a concentration threshold.

B. Restricting the sandwiching of properties

Planning permission will generally not be granted for the development of HMOs that lead to the ‘sandwiching’ of residential properties. Sandwiching occurs when a non-HMO residential property has an HMO on either side. This has the potential to lead to amenity issues for the non-HMO property due to the greater intensity of use of the HMOs.

Exceptional circumstances where permission might be granted for an HMO that ‘sandwiches’ a non-HMO residential property are limited but could include where there is a significant gap between the curtilages of the properties, or where properties are set within large gardens or curtilages.

An example is shown in Figure 3.2. The proposed HMO (in red) would result in the residential property at No. 33 being sandwiched between two HMOs. This would not normally be granted planning permission.

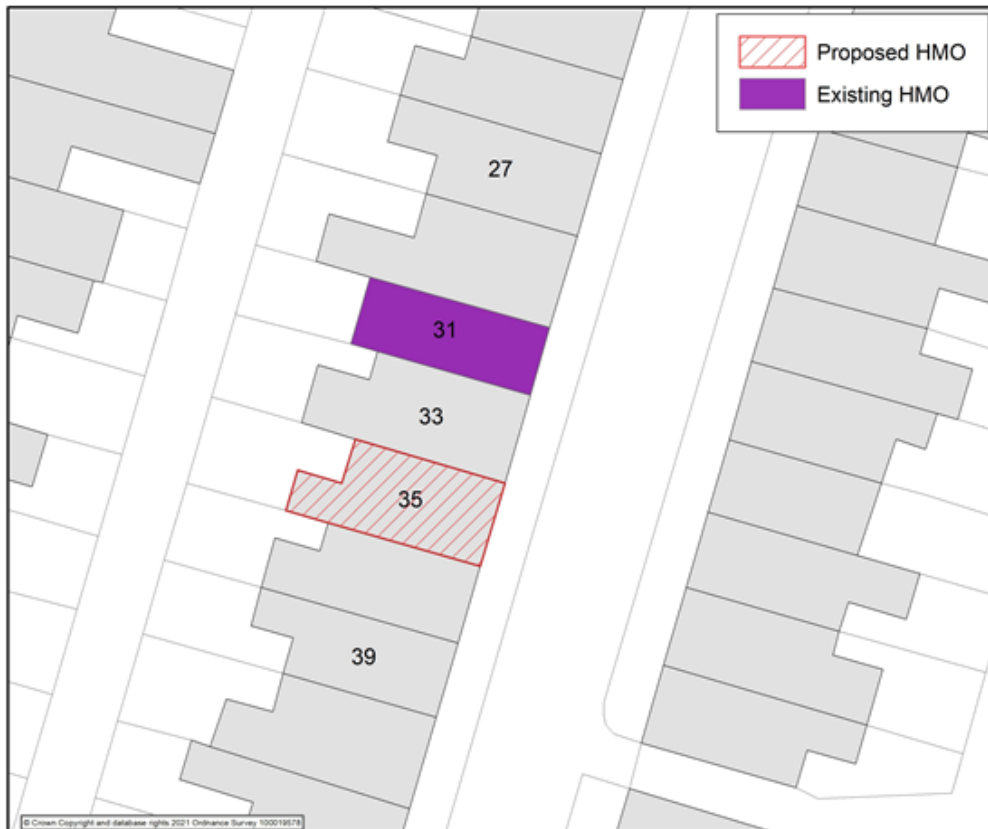


Figure 3.2 Restricting the sandwiching of property No. 33.

C. Restricting three adjacent HMOs

Planning permission will not generally be granted for proposals that would result in a block of three or more adjacent HMOs. Streets can sometimes become dominated by HMOs, which has the potential to lead to amenity issues for the non-HMO properties, particularly those opposite or adjacent, due to the greater intensity of use of the HMOs.

Exceptional circumstances where permission might be granted for a proposal that would result in a block of three or more adjacent HMOs are limited, but might include where there is a significant gap between the curtilages of properties, or where properties are set within large gardens or curtilage.

4. HMO Licensing, Management, and Amenity Standards

It is important to ensure that HMOs provide a good standard of accommodation for their occupants.

HMO Management Regulations

HMOs must comply with statutory regulations on management. This legislation places certain duties on the individuals managing the property and non-compliance with these regulations may result in a prosecution and/or fine (including a civil penalty).

HMO Licensing

All properties that are occupied by five or more people, from two or more households and sharing an amenity are subject to mandatory HMO licensing. Licenses are valid for five years and properties are subject to inspection during this period. If the council receives complaints regarding a property this will prompt further inspection and enforcement action is taken if necessary.

Halton Borough Council's HMO Standards

HMOs should also adhere to the council's HMO standards, in relation to:

- Natural and artificial lighting
- Ventilation
- Heating
- Water supply
- Bathrooms, shower rooms and sanitary conveniences
- Refuse
- Kitchen facilities
- Licensing

All properties that are occupied by five or more people, from two or more households and sharing an amenity are subject to mandatory HMO licensing. Licenses are valid for five years and properties are subject to inspection during this period. If the council receives complaints regarding a property this will prompt further inspection and enforcement action is taken if necessary. Further information can be found at:

<https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/business/EnvironmentalHealth/PrivateHousing.aspx>

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 apply to all HMOs and cover a number of items. In essence they require that the properties are kept in a good state of repair and that all facilities are in good working order at all times. A full copy of the Management Regulations can be found at the relevant government webpage,

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/372/pdfs/uksi_20060372_en.pdf

Management

All HMOs must be sound, safe and well managed. They need to be free from health and safety hazards. One area of particular emphasis is ensuring that there are appropriate fire precautions. This includes the provision of fire doors, firefighting equipment (such as fire blankets and extinguishers),

along with automatic fire detection systems and in some cases emergency lighting. The Housing Health and Safety Rating system covers the level of protection and likelihood of a fire in a HMO. A fire risk assessment will determine the level of fire precautions required.

Amenity Standards

In addition to the general duty on landlords. The Housing Act 2004 and associated regulations set out prescribed standards for all licensed HMO's. These regulations are set nationally by Government. Prescribed standards are set out below.

Space Standards

Sleeping accommodation

Rooms must comply with the minimum legal space standards set out below;

One person over 10 years of age	6.51 m ²
Two persons over 10 years of age	10.22m ²

However, if no other private or communal living areas are provided the minimum sleeping room sizes that HMO's in Halton must comply with are;

One person over 10 years of age	10 m ²
Two persons over 10 years of age	15m ²

Communal areas

Where communal areas are provided in addition to the rooms used for sleeping the space standards for communal areas are 17.5m² based on a 5 bed HMO.

For each additional tenant an additional 1 m² of space must be provided.

If this cannot be provided in a single room an additional communal room of a minimum 13m² must be provided. The overall size of the additional room must take into account the total number of occupants but as a guide an additional 1m² of space per tenant must be provided.

Space calculation and room design

Any area of the room with a ceiling height of less than 1.5m must not be counted in the calculation for space standards.

The shape and layout of bedrooms must be capable of accommodating a single bed for single occupancy rooms or a double bed or two singles for a double occupancy room. The rooms must also be capable of accommodating basic bedroom furniture such as a wardrobe and dressing table.

Kitchens and kitchen facilities

It is recommended that applicants discuss the design and layout of kitchens with the Council prior to installation particularly for properties with more than 5 occupants.

Kitchen size

Where kitchen facilities are shared the kitchen must have a minimum total floor area of 7m² based on 5 people sharing. Ideally, more than 5 people should not share the same kitchen. If this is not practicable then an additional 1m² of kitchen space must be provided for each occupant up to 10 persons.

Additional Kitchens ratio

If the additional kitchen space cannot be provided within the same room an additional kitchen must be provided i.e

6-10 persons 2 Kitchens

11-15 persons 3 Kitchens

To ensure the safe movement of people a single room must not contain more than 2 sets of kitchen facilities.

Kitchen facilities

Where shared kitchens are provided, they must contain the following facilities:

For up to 5 persons:

- A suitable fixed worktop, not including the draining board, no less than 2m by 0.6m
- Four cooking rings an oven and a grill (whether integrated into one appliance or separates).
- Four twin 13amp power socket outlets above the work surface height in addition to any sockets serving major electrical appliances. They must be adjacent to the work surface and at a suitable safe distance of minimum 1 metre, from any sink/wash basin.
- A standard 1m sink unit and integral draining board fixed within a base unit, together with an adequate supply of constant hot water and wholesome cold drinking water, and tiled splash back. The sink unit must be properly plumbed into the water supply and drainage systems.
- A suitable storage cupboard with a minimum capacity equivalent to a 500mm wall unit per person.
- A refrigerator of not less than 5 cu ft capacity (0.15m³).

Additional facilities for 6-10 persons sharing a single kitchen must include the following:

- A suitable fixed worktop, not including the draining board, of no less than 3m by 0.6m, instead of the 2m worktop for a single set of kitchen facilities.
- Fridge/freezer capacity to approximately 9 cu ft capacity 0.27m³, instead of 5 cu ft as above

Facilities for more than 10 residents must be provided on a pro rata basis and agreed with the council.

Hygienic and safe and design

The wall area behind sinks and food preparation areas must be tiled or provided with a splash back to enable the wall to be effectively cleaned. Food preparation surfaces and the surfaces of appliances and equipment must be impervious and easy to clean.

The floor area must be of a suitable material that can be effectively cleaned whilst avoiding the risk of slips and falls. It is recommended that applicants discuss the design and layout of kitchens with the council prior to installation particularly for properties with more than 5 occupants.

The layout of the kitchen must enable the safe movement of people and avoid the risk of burns, scalds, slips and trips. For example, cooking appliances must not be situated adjacent to doors or next to sinks.

Toilet and bathroom facilities

It is recommended that applicants discuss the design and layout of bathrooms and toilet facilities with the council prior to installation particularly for properties with more than 5 occupants.

Bathroom

All baths and wash hand basins must be equipped with taps providing an adequate supply of potable cold water and a constant supply of hot water and be properly connected to the drainage system.

All bathrooms must be situated in a proper room, must be suitably and adequately heated and ventilated and must be of an adequate size and layout.

Adequate electric lighting must be provided, and walls and floors must have a non-porous and easily cleanable finish. Suitable locking mechanisms must be fitted to the access doors of bathrooms and W/Cs to ensure privacy.

W/Cs

Toilet compartments must be located within 30 meters of the furthest occupant who will be using it, preferably on the same floor. Where this is not possible, the WC must be no more than one floor and no more than 30m distance from the users.

The room must be provided with adequate ventilation and electric lighting and a suitable locking mechanism must be fitted to the access door to ensure privacy.

All foul waste within the building must be adequately connected to the drainage system, with provision of rodding eye and inspection chamber.

A separate w/c compartment must contain:

- A fixed w/c with water supply to the cistern, and foul drainage to the external foul drainage system.

- A fixed wash hand basin with constant hot and cold running water, properly connected to the drainage system.

Wash hand basins

A wash hand basin (WHB) with a tiled splash back and satisfactory supply of cold and constant hot water properly connected to the drainage system must be situated in a bathroom or shower room containing a w/c.

A wash hand basin as described above must also be provided in a separate w/c compartment.

Shared Bathroom and toilet facilities

In bedsit type accommodation or shared houses, the bathroom and W.C. facilities may be shared between the occupants. There must be an adequate number of bathrooms and W.C.s provided for the number of persons occupying the dwelling.

The table below shows the permitted sharing ratios these are based on nationally prescribed standards.

up to 5 persons	1 bath / shower room with 1 WC and 1 wash basin.
6 – 10 persons	2 bath/shower and 2 WCs (+WHB in the same room as the WC, the WCs may be contained within the bathroom or a separate closet).
11 – 15 persons	3 bath/shower and 3 WCs (+WHB in the same room as the WC, the WCs may be contained within the bathroom or a separate closet).

Space Heating

Heating provision and minimum temperature

Where the house is not provided with central heating to the whole of the dwelling, it must be adequately and efficiently heated with the provision of permanent, fixed heating appliances or space heaters. Any heating system must be appropriate to the design, layout and construction of the building and provide adequate heat output to efficiently heat the whole of the property.

Any heating system must be economical and capable of achieving a healthy indoor temperature of 21°C for each habitable letting room, and 18°C in all other rooms and common areas.

Any form of heating must be controllable by the occupier and safely and properly installed and maintained.

In properties where the heating is centrally controlled, such systems must be operated to ensure that occupants are not exposed to extreme indoor temperatures and must be provided with controls to allow the occupants to regulate the temperature within their own private rooms.

Coin-operated heating and/or hot water systems in are not acceptable.

Energy Efficiency

To make homes as energy efficient as possible adequate insulation must be provided to cavity walls and loft areas.

It is now unlawful to rent a property that does not meet a minimum energy efficient rating of E as part of the licensing and inspection process energy rating certificates may be requested. A HMO license will not be issued to properties that do not achieve the minimum energy efficiency rating.

Gas and Electrical Safety

Gas and Solid Fuel Installations

All gas supplies, distribution pipework and gas fired appliances must comply with the relevant gas safety regulations.

All gas appliances must have an annual gas safety check undertaken by a GAS SAFE registered gas installer. A copy of the gas safety record must be made available to the occupier in accordance with the regulations. A copy must be made available to Halton Council on request and will be considered as part of the license and inspection process.

All gas appliances must be serviced and maintained regularly in accordance with regulations and manufacturer's instructions (usually every 12 months).

The property manager MUST keep the previous two years gas safety records available for inspection upon request.

All work to any gas appliances must be carried out by a suitably qualified GAS SAFE registered engineer.

Where occupants need to operate controls for gas fired central heating or hot water systems, simple and precise instructions for their safe and efficient use must be available.

An emergency control valve must be provided within 500mm of the gas meter that all occupants can easily access.

Electrical Installation

It is a legal requirement that all landlords must arrange for the electrical installation at their property to be inspected and tested every 5 years by a qualified electrician. Landlords are also required to carry out any urgent remedial works identified by the inspection report to ensure the installation is safe. A copy of the inspection report and details of any remedial work undertaken must be provided to the local authority on request and will be required as part of the application process. In practice this will involve obtaining an Electrical Installation Condition Report.

Carbon Monoxide

It is a legal requirement that a carbon monoxide alarm is installed in all habitable rooms that contain a fuel combustion appliance such as a gas fire, gas boiler or wood burner. The alarm must be maintained in working order. Habitable rooms will include bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms and communal areas.

Fire Safety and Precautions

Building Regulations

Where internal works or changes to the use of a premises require Building Regulation approval these requirements must be complied with as they will determine the appropriate fire precautions required by Building Regulations for that building at that time.

Fire risk Assessment

This is a specialist area and applicants may need to consider obtaining their own professional advice.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires the person responsible for a property to undertake a fire risk assessment. A fire risk assessment must be undertaken for the entire HMO property with the aim to identify potential hazards and reduce the risk of those hazards by deciding what fire precautions need to be installed.

Further detailed guidance on conducting a fire risk assessment and appropriate precautions in relation to sleeping accommodation for certain types of existing housing is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-riskassessment-sleeping-accommodation>.

A fire risk assessment must be completed for all HMO properties and will be requested as part of the license application process.

Smoke detection

In addition to implementing the precautions identified during the fire risk assessment the prescribed standards set by the Housing Act 2004 require a smoke detector to be installed on each floor of the living accommodation

Fire Safety Enforcement

The responsibility for the enforcement of fire safety requirements in private rented accommodation is shared between Halton Council and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service. A memorandum of understanding has been signed by both organisations relating to enforcement of the requirement and joint inspections of properties in relation to fire safety will be undertaken as required.

Lighting

Natural light

All habitable rooms must have sufficient natural light to enable normal domestic tasks to be carried out during daylight hours. Windows must be of adequate size, and of appropriate shape and position to allow for reasonable daylight penetration into rooms. Basement and sub-ground level rooms can pose particular problems, and there must be sufficient adequate open space outside the window to allow for adequate light penetration.

Artificial lighting

Artificial lighting must be positioned to provide sufficient light to enable domestic and recreational activities to be carried out without eyestrain and without creating glare or shadows. Artificial light is particularly important where domestic tasks require adequate light, for example in the kitchen over worktops, sinks and cookers.

Staircases must have artificial lighting that sufficiently illuminates their full length to avoid shadows and dark corners where users cannot clearly see where they are going. There must be switches or controls for the artificial lighting at both the top and foot of stairs. Any lighting provision to staircases and common areas must be in addition to any required emergency lighting.

Security

The HMO as a whole and individual private rooms within, must be capable of being secured to deter against unauthorised entry. Windows and doors must be robust and fitted with adequate security. Sheds or outbuildings must be maintained in good order and made secure. However, security measures must not compromise the means of emergency escape in the event of a fire.

Waste Disposal

Adequate facilities must be made available for the storage of waste. Communal bins must be stored in a secure external area within the private curtilage of the property. It will not be acceptable for communal bins to be stored unsecured on public land. The owner or manager of the HMO must ensure adequate bins have been provided to enable the tenants to comply with the councils' waste collection and recycling service. Information must be made available to tenants to ensure they are aware of collection days and when to present waste for collection and recycling. Once collected tenants must be instructed to return bins to the property. The owner must periodically monitor the arrangement to ensure the number and types of bins available are adequate and tenants are correctly following the councils waste and recycling scheme. A condition will be attached to all licenses requiring owners and managers take steps to ensure this requirement is complied with.

5. Making a planning application

An HMO comprises a house or flat which is occupied by three or more unrelated people who share an amenity such as a kitchen, lounge or bathroom. It includes a range of different types of accommodation such as bedsits and shared houses.¹

In 2010, changes to the planning regulations introduced a new use class - Class C4 "Houses in Multiple Occupation". This comprises a house or flat that contains between three and six unrelated occupants who share basic amenities. These are sometimes also referred to as "small HMOs".

HMOs comprising more than six sharing occupants are unclassified by the amended regulations (i.e. being "Sui Generis" (ii)) and are generally known as "large HMOs".

Change of use to / from a large HMOs (Sui Generis).

The change of use of a dwelling house (use Class C3) to a large HMO (shared housing defined as a HMO and occupied by more than six people) requires planning permission. The change from a large HMO (Sui Generis) to a dwelling house (use Class C3) also requires planning permission. Planning permission may also be required for a material change of use from a small HMO (use Class C4) to a large HMO (Sui Generis).

Change of use to small HMOs (use Class C4)

Under normal circumstances the change of use of a dwelling house (use Class C3) to a small HMO for up to six people (use Class C4) is 'permitted development' and no formal planning permission is required.

Change of use from other uses to HMOs

A change of use from other uses such as a shop or office to a HMO (large or small) is also likely to require planning permission.

¹ The legal definition of an HMO is contained within Part 7 of the Housing Act 2004.

6. How will planning applications for HMO's be considered?

The change of use from a dwelling to a HMO will not necessarily involve any physical internal or external alterations, but the material change of use in itself constitutes development requiring planning permission. This guidance will therefore apply to all planning applications consisting of:

- a change of use from a dwellinghouse (use Class C3) to a large HMO ('sui generis'); or
- a change of use from a small HMO (use Class C4) to a large HMO ('sui generis'); or
- a change of use from another use for example an office (use Class B1) or shop (use Class A1) to a large of small HMO that requires planning permission.

Issues to be considered in the determination of planning applications for HMOs are as follows:

Suitability of property for use as an HMO

The size of the dwelling and internal layout must be sufficient to accommodate any increased number of residents to protect the residential amenity of the occupants.

Appropriate means of storing and dealing with waste should be specified as part of the planning application. This must include provision for waste and recycling storage containers in a suitable enclosure within the curtilage of the property which will not impact negatively on the visual amenity of the area or the residential amenity of neighbouring residents.

Appropriate provision must also be made for secure cycle parking within the curtilage of the property. There should also be sufficient space for any additional cars to park, within the residential curtilage of the property where possible. This should not, however, result in the loss of front garden for hard standing for parking and refuse areas where this would detract from the existing street scene.

Proposed HMOs should meet the amenity standards set in the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan policy GR2: Amenity and any relevant standards set at a national level by national housing legislation and guidance.

Impact on local amenity

Any proposed change of use to a HMO should not place an unacceptable strain upon local facilities or have an unacceptable impact on local amenity. Consideration will be given as to whether the increase in the number of occupants within the property will have an adverse impact on noise levels and the level of amenity neighbouring residents can reasonably expect to enjoy. This is particularly relevant when considering the use of semi-detached or terraced properties, properties in narrow streets or densely developed areas where potential impact is likely to be more concentrated and directly affecting neighbouring residents. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate appropriate measures to mitigate potential impacts such as appropriate soundproofing to address noise transmission and impact issues. Consideration will also be given to whether the proposal would exacerbate any existing problems to an unacceptable level.

Display of advertisements

The Council recognises that in areas with high levels of HMOs there is the potential for a proliferation of signage which can detract from the street scene and adversely affect residential amenity.

The display of advertisements in England is primarily governed by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Certain types of outdoor advertisements, including property 'for sale' and 'to let' boards benefit from 'deemed consent' under this legislation and do not require advertisement consent to be obtained from the Local Planning Authority, provided that the advert is displayed in accordance with the criteria set out in the regulations. Any board advertising a property for sale or to let must however be removed within 14 days of the completion of the sale/let.

7. Appendix 1 – Relevant Local Plan Policies

Policy CS(R)12: Housing Mix and Specialist Housing

1. On sites of 10 or more dwellings, the mix of new property types delivered are encouraged to contribute to addressing identified needs (size of homes and specialist housing) as quantified in the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment, unless precluded by site specific constraints, economic viability or prevailing neighbourhood characteristics.
2. Proposals for new specialist housing for the elderly, including extra-care and supported accommodation, will be encouraged in suitable locations, particularly those providing easy access to local services and community facilities. Development proposals for specialist housing should provide adequate amenity space and parking.
3. Affordable housing provision in line with Policy CS(R)13 will still be required where the proposal for specialist accommodation provides self-contained dwellings.
4. There will be a presumption against further residential care accommodation resulting in or exacerbating an oversupply.
5. In order to reduce reliance on specialist housing in the future and to allow residents to live within their own homes for as long as they are able, the Council will encourage designs of dwellings that can be adapted should they be required.
6. Proposals for development that would result in the loss of special needs housing will only be granted permission where it can be demonstrated that there is no longer an established local need for this type of accommodation or adequate replacement accommodation will be provided.

Policy RD3: Dwelling Alterations, Extensions, Conversions and Replacement Dwellings

1. Proposals for dwelling alterations, extensions, conversion and replacement dwellings outside the Green Belt will be supported where they:
- a. Retain the character of the existing property, its setting and the surrounding residential area;
 - i. This will include consideration of the siting, scale, design, and materials to be used.
 - b. Will not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity and living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties; this will include consideration of
 - i. The potential for overlooking and the preservation of appropriate privacy distances; and
 - ii. The loss of sunlight or daylight to neighbouring properties; and
 - iii. The dominance or overbearing nature of the extension.
 - c. Enhance, provide or maintain safe highway conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles;
 - d. Will not result in isolated residential development.
 - e. Provide, or retain, sufficient parking within the curtilage of the property, where applicable.
 - f. Provide, or retain, adequate storage for recycling, refuse and cycles.
 - g. Retain outside access to the rear of the property; and they
 - h. Provide, or retain, a reasonable amenity space.

Conversion

2. Residential conversions of existing buildings will be permitted where they meet all of the above criteria (1. a-h) and where it is demonstrated that the building to be converted is of a permanent and substantial construction; capable of being converted; and in the case of sub-division or intensification of the existing residential use:
- i. they would not create or contribute to a harmful concentration of such uses with regards to amenity and highways; and
 - ii. it would not result in a loss of character.

Replacement Dwellings

3. Replacement dwellings will be supported where they meet all of the above criteria (1. a-h) and they will not result in over-development of the site, or the curtilage.

Change of Use

4. The conversion of buildings from non-residential to residential use will be supported where they meet all of the above criteria (1. a-h) and where it is demonstrated that:
- a. The building is of a permanent and substantial construction capable of being converted; and that
 - b. It will provide a satisfactory residential environment.

Policy CS(R)18: High Quality Design

1. Achieving and raising the quality of design is a priority for all development in Halton.
2. Development proposals, where applicable, will be expected to:
 - a. provide beautiful and well-designed residential, commercial and industrial developments appropriate to their setting;
 - b. enhance and reinforce positive elements of an area's character contributing to a 'sense of place', including the incorporation of public art where appropriate;
 - c. respect and respond positively to their setting, including important views and vistas, landmark buildings, features and focal points that have been identified in a proper context appraisal;
 - d. be flexible and adaptable to respond to future social, technological, economic , environmental and the health needs of the Borough;
 - e. promote safe and secure environments through the inclusion of measures to address crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour;
 - f. create public spaces which are attractive, promote active lifestyles and work effectively for all members of society;
 - g. incorporate appropriate landscape schemes into development designs, integrating local habitats and biodiversity;
 - h. provide safe, secure and accessible routes for all members of society, with particular emphasis on walking, cycling and public transport; and
 - i. be well integrated and connected with existing development.

Policy GR1: Design of Development

1. The design of all development must be of a high quality, and must demonstrate that it is based upon the following principles:
 - a. A clear understanding of the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area.
 - b. Efficient and effective use of the site; and
 - c. The creation of visually attractive places that are well integrated with the surrounding buildings, streets and landscapes.
2. The Council will consider each of the following elements in determining whether the design is appropriate:
 - a. Local architecture and character.
 - b. Siting, layout, scale, height, proportion, form, grouping and massing.
 - c. Topography and site levels.
 - d. Orientation and appearance.
 - e. Materials, landscaping and green infrastructure.
 - f. The relationship to neighbouring properties and street scene; and
 - g. Reducing the fear of crime by promoting safe and connected environments.
3. Development proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings and ensure they contribute to the creation of a high-quality public realm that enhances conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
Development must where appropriate:
 - a. Provide welcoming routes that are easy to use, well-lit and overlooked.
 - b. Create well-defined streets and spaces.
 - c. Where buildings are located on corners, ensure that they present a strong and active frontage to both aspects of the corner, and that the corners of the buildings themselves clearly define the corner in the streetscape.
 - d. Integrate car parking and servicing so as not to dominate the street scene.
 - e. Avoid detrimental impacts on existing infrastructure and natural features; and
 - f. Provide linkages to the wider neighborhood.
4. All major² development proposals involving the construction of new buildings must demonstrate how sustainable design and construction methods will be incorporated to achieve resource efficiency and resilience to climate change in accordance with CS(R)19 taking into account the site-specific viability of the development, where appropriate.

² Major development is defined as:

development involving any one or more of the following—

- (a) the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits;
- (b) waste development;
- (c) the provision of dwellinghouses where—
 - (i) the number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 10 or more; or
 - (ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within subparagraph (c)(i);
- (d) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or
- (e) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more;

REPORT TO:	Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	15 th November 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Chief Executive
PORTFOLIO:	Environment & Urban Renewal
SUBJECT:	Performance Management Reports for Quarter 2 of 2023/24
WARDS:	Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the second quarter period to 30th September 2023.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023 - 24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Environment and Regeneration Policy and Performance Board as detailed below:
 - Development and Investment Services
 - Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services
 - Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services

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

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Departmental objectives provide a clear statement on what services are planning to achieve and to show how they contribute to the Council's

strategic priorities. Such information is central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

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

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 At the time at which annual business plans are developed, Directorate Risk Registers are also refreshed and updated.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Not applicable

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

10.1 Not applicable

Environment and Urban Renewal PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report

Rep

Reporting Period: **Quarter 2 – 1st July 2023 to 30th September 2023**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the second quarter of 2023 / 24 for those service areas within the remit of the Environment and Regeneration Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023 / 24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Environment & Regeneration Policy & Performance Board i.e.:
- Development & Investment Services
 - Open Spaces and Waste and Environmental Improvement
 - Highways, Transportation & Logistics and Physical Environment
- 1.4 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 7 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

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

Economy Enterprise & Property

2.2 Regeneration Town Centres

Halton Lea

Halton 5 redevelopment of offices to residential units (113 residential units comprising 14 2 bed and 99 1 bed) is on site.

Riverside – Phase I (Tricorn, local centre & church) – Planning permission has been granted.

Riverside- Phase II Planning Application (which includes Uplands and Town Park) - proposed demolition of dwellings, closure of subways and erection of replacement dwellings(23/00368/Ful) has now been submitted – currently out for consultation

“Changing Places” - Project to improve facilities & access at Halton Lea library is now on site. Tender assessment now complete and with contractor/developer “Parklands” winning with a tender price of £76,545 and is now on site.

Runcorn

Work to progress the programme of projects called “Reconnecting Runcorn” funded by the £23.6m Runcorn Town Deal is progressing with all proposals achieving traction. Most projects are progressing through the design phases, with all the associated surveys, consents, agreements, working with multi-disciplinary consultant teams, with a wide variety of colleagues / Council teams, and numerous external stakeholders involved.

First achievements on site can be reported: Hazlehurst had its official opening of 71 High Street on 9 June, which coincided with a Reconnecting Runcorn public information event at the Brindley, which was well attended by the public, with information stands on all project outputs with all Architects involved presenting.

Contractor Dunkil requires more time to complete the substructure of the Buddhist Temple, with the start of the Peace Garden works subsequently delayed.

The next projects to see a start on site early 2024 are (hopefully): The Brindley Theatre extension, and the new Youth Centre (57 59 High Street). Following the acquisition of a High Street site by Halton Housing, they are also likely to make a start with the construction of 66 new flats early in 2024.

Runcorn Station Quarter

Over the summer months we have received legal advice from DWF to help guide the procurement route and structure for an Operator to successfully manage and operate the Enterprise Hub. A draft Heads of Terms has also been produced.

Runcorn Station Building Development –A detailed delivery programme up to Approval In Principal stage has been produced and is 3 weeks ahead of schedule. A sponsor’s instruction has also been signed by partners along with Client Requirements and Client Remit.

A plan has now been finalised that highlights pockets of land in the Runcorn Station Quarter red line boundary area that are currently unregistered. DLA Piper will now begin to gather the necessary information to make the application on the Council’s behalf to HMLR.

2.3 Regeneration Non-Town Centres

Sci-Tech Daresbury

Discussions are ongoing with LCR Combined Authority in relation to the establishment of an Investment Zone across the LCR with a tax relief and business rates retention site at Sci-Tech Daresbury. The proposal will be reported to Executive Board in Q3. The next phase of development at the campus, Project Violet Phase 2 has been included in the Investment Zone priority projects and a reserved matters planning application has been submitted. The project will be tendered in Q3 and work is ongoing to secure funding ahead of an April 2024 start on site.

Astmoor

The Development Agreement is awaiting signature. The Project Manager has left post and recruitment to replace is under review. The project delivery plan is currently under review and key priority actions for the next quarter will be identified.

Foundry Lane

Developers Cityheart are on site, the final state of remediation is underway and foundations will commence in Q3. The planning for Phase 2 is prepared and awaits confirmation of the S73. The Project Manager has left post and recruitment to replace is under review.

Energy Retrofit Programme

- The team continue to manage a number of grant schemes to enable Halton residents, private landlords and Registered Providers access funds to improve the energy performance and decarbonise homes within the

Borough. These schemes are being delivered in partnership with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, with grant funding secured from Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy;

- Delivery of the Sustainable Warmth Fund has been the main focus of activity during this quarter. A delivery extension was provided by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) from 31st March 2023 to 30th September 2023 to enable completion of home energy improvement works.
- Grant funding been secured from the Home Upgrade Grant Round 2 (HUG2), with a target to improve between 50 – 100 properties 'off gas' properties, with insulation and renewable energy measure. A delivery / managing agent is current being procured by the Combined Authority, with the grant scheduled to launch in Autumn 2023 and run until March 2025.
- Residents' queries and applications for grant funding remain high.

West Runcorn

- The Council is continuing to work with INOVYN (part of the INEOS Group) and on their intention to improve and attract investment at their Runcorn site. This is part of a broader ambition to support longer term growth in green industry and jobs within West Runcorn.
- The Council has a memorandum of understanding with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to establish a Liverpool City Region Freeport, which includes Port of Weston.
- The Council continues to work towards undertaking design, feasibility and technical survey work to provide much needed infrastructure to unlock the Port of Weston. This work will be funded through drawdown of an initial tranche from the provisional allocation of £6.5m of capital seed funding.
- A milestone has been achieved with a Executive Board Approval for procurement of a specialist consultancy team to undertake feasibility work.
- Subject to a grant funding agreement with the Combined Authority, it is anticipated this feasibility work will commence in Quarter 3 2023/24.

3MG

Project closure meeting took place in the quarter between HBC and DLUC to discuss the overall outcomes of the project and establish arrangements for closure and completion.

Exeter 195 at Viking Park is near completion and is generating interest in the market. We expect to see a lease agreement soon for this. The sites at 3MG being promoted by a combination of the Liverpool city region growth board and service Halton borough council and the Freeport team which is also co located at Mann island with the investment service.

Borough wide Housing Strategy

Work has begun on preparing a new Borough wide Housing Strategy. An initial scoping period commenced in Quarter 2, with production scheduled to begin in Quarter 4 2023/24 and formal stakeholder and public consultation in 2024/25.

Business, Investment & Growth – Business Support Service

Within the quarter, the Business Improvement & Growth Team has rebranded and is now called the Business Investment & Growth Team. The rebrand was needed a) to align Halton with other services within the Liverpool City Region and b) to more accurately reflect for service that is being provided, namely supporting growing businesses and attracting new investors to the area.

The team has also designed a new programme to replace the Business Growth Programme. This is called the Business Support Service and has eight consultancy streams along with a business start element. The new design office programme means all services for business support are now integral and central to the Business Investment & Growth team leading to a smooth service for businesses needing help.

Initial discussions have taken place on a no prejudice basis with organisations who would like to deliver the Business Support Service. They will then give these contracts will take place in the next quarter where the majority (77%) being available in open market.

53 unique business interactions – 8 one-to-one business meetings, 22 property enquiries and 23 expressions of interest to the Business Support Service.

2.4 Asset Management

Former bus depot Moor Lane Widnes – following a period of marketing a purchaser has been found and legal service have been instructed to complete the transaction.

Completion of lease renewal for Unit 37 Astmoor Runcorn for the Bridge School

Completion of the lease renewal with Espositos Café at Victoria Park Widnes

Completion of the underlease for part second floor Rutland House with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

2.5 Policy Planning & Transportation

2.6 Highway Development

- Dukesfield Active Travel route completed linking Dukesfield to Runcorn Station Quarter via Waterloo Bridge.
- Procurement of a new Highway maintenance contract completed with an award made to Tarmac (joint contract with Warrington)
- SJB major maintenance scheme under preparation. This comprises steelwork painting on the suspended span of the bridge (below the bridge deck / carriageway).
- Arrangements have been made for the biannual cable loading testing exercise on SJB in October.
- Preparations have been made for the Principal Bridge Inspections to 4 canal bridges in Runcorn. The work will be undertaken in October, under licence from the Bridgewater Canal Company using a pontoon.
- the new Spike Island access bridge, which is due to be installed in the Autumn. Steelwork fabrication and foundation design arrangements have been progressed for
- Redrow and their contractor George Cox commenced work on the new junction onto the A558 from Keckwick Lane, this work includes a bridge for the New Farm underpass. The Daresbury Expressway is expected to re-open on 23 October.

2.7 Planning

- Q2 has seen some large housing applications determined by the Planning Committee, with a total of 813 dwellings consented:
 - 22/00318/FUL – Miller Homes site in North Widnes – 328 homes
 - 22/00377/FUL – Prospect Homes site in North Widnes – 99 homes
 - 22/00602/COU – 17 units in Runcorn Old Town
 - 22/00462/FUL - 50 no. affordable dwellings at Stockham Lane, Runcorn
 - 22/00543/OUTEIA - outline planning permission for 250 dwellings at Sandymoor, Runcorn
 - 23/00128/FUL – 69 dwellings at Palacefields, Runcorn (Riverside Housing Scheme)
- The Major applications determined in Q2 2022/23 are shown in Appendix 3.

Total Applications Received: (Includes those Withdrawn and Returned) 120	
Applications Decided 141	Applications On-Hand (Undecided) 198
Pre-Applications Received 39	Pre Applications Closed 40

N.B. There are certain applications (such as tree preservation orders) that are not counted in the statutory CLG speed of processing statistics. This accounts for the difference between the figures reported above and the figures given for PPT LI 04.

2.8 Community & Environment

Community Engagement

The Waste Team carried out a summer engagement campaign where officers visited 15 locations and engaged with over 1,000 residents. The campaign included talking to residents about waste and recycling matters and giving out information leaflets and offering advice. These campaigns aim to help reduce confusion around what can be recycled in blue bins in order to lower contamination.

The campaign also included social media messages around recycling and what to do with extra waste during the summer holidays and these messages reached an audience of over 9,000.

Community Walkabouts

The Waste Team was involved in a further 8 community 'walkabouts' along with more than 60 volunteers during this quarter. The walkabouts are in joint working with local Housing Associations and other partner agencies.

Community Engagement Officers meet at an arranged location and walk around the estate to discuss/make note of any issues they find, engage with residents, door knock, pass out information and report back anything that may need to be actioned.

Veteran's Clean Ups

Through a Service Level Agreement that the Council has with a local Veterans Group, Officers supported the scheduling and delivery 11 Community Clean-Ups during this quarter. These clean ups take place in various areas of the Borough with volunteers carrying out litter picking, cleaning and rubbish removal alongside the local Veterans Group volunteers.

2.9 Cemeteries

A new 'Statutory Declaration' system, in line with recommended best practice by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM), has been implemented by the Council for the legal transfer of 'Exclusive Rights of Burial' to a new owner on the death of the original owner for a grave plot in one of Halton's cemeteries. This is a far more robust system than was previously used, and better protects the Council and families from legal challenges.

2.10 Open Spaces

Parks

The park tennis courts at Runcorn Hill and Victoria Park have recently been subject to renovation works to the value of more than £58k through a project that was managed by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and funded by the UK Government and LTA Tennis Foundation. Halton has benefitted from being part of a programme of the biggest ever investment in parks tennis facilities across Britain, with millions of pounds of external funding going towards transforming over 2000 courts.

The 8 courts at the 2 parks in Halton have undergone extensive work to ensure viability for years to come; including repainting, new nets and a new gate system. Working with local Tennis Clubs, the new Council project will provide a significant boost to sporting facilities, improve the tennis offer in the borough and provide more opportunities for children and adults to get active.

As well as weekly free park tennis sessions, with equipment provided, the new courts will host Local Tennis Leagues, giving people the opportunity to get involved in friendly and social local competitions.

All courts will be available to book via the [LTA website](#). New booking systems and gate access technology means it is now easier to get on court by booking in advance to guarantee availability.

Design and Development

Birchfield Gardens refurbishment - A contract has been awarded to a main contractor and specialist sub-contractor. Work will commence this winter with completion expected by early summer 2024.

Sankey Canal Repair Works - A contract has been awarded for the localised minor masonry repair and vegetation removal works. The appointed contractor is preparing to commence works but no exact start date has been agreed as of yet. It is however anticipated that the works will be completed by Summer 2024.

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:-

Economy Enterprise & Property

3.2 Regeneration Town Centres

None detailed

3.3 Regeneration Non-Town Centres

None detailed

3.4 Business Improvement and Growth

None Detailed

3.5 Programmes Office

- Continue to establish Programmes Office function and requirements within the Dept; then start to roll this out to other Depts
- Continue to embed the Team - now at full complement – with clear roles and responsibilities
- Manage substantial workload going forward, prioritising projects and tasks
- Key pieces of work:
 - Town Deal Monitoring
 - UKSPF Monitoring
 - Destination Marketing programme delivery and moinitoring

- Catalyst NLHF bid submission (£800k)

3.6 Policy Performance Transportation

Highways

- The architectural lighting scheme for the SJB has been installed and is being tested. It is expected the first public display of the new lights will be on 5 November alongside the firework display.
- SJB under-deck steelwork painting scheme –technical assessments of the access scaffold and construction loading on the bridge. Are underway and discussions with contractors and consulting engineers are ongoing.
- There a number of vacancies in the streetworks team, this is causing delays with the processing of permits for utility companies and others who need to book road space to undertake works on the highway.
- A new red light / speed on green traffic signal camera will be installed in Q3 on the Widnes Gyratory (south bound side). This is paid for by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Surveys show that many drivers jump the red light in this location, and this leads to the blocking of the junction. It is expected the camera will improve junction capacity, as well as road safety.

Planning

- The Local Plans Team Leader has accepted a role with another local authority. An interim arrangement has been put in place from within the team and the team are working on a work programme to provide monitoring on the local plan and production of ancillary guidance documents.

3.7 Community & Environment Services

***None provided**

4.0 High Priority Equality Actions

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The Councils latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives is published on the Council website and is available via:




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

5.0 Performance Overview

- 5.1 The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that fall within the remit of the Board.



Development and Investment Services

Ref	Objective: To develop, coordinate and deliver major regeneration programmes To deliver Runcorn Towns Fund programme.
EEP 03	Environment and Urban Renewal



Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Spend the £23.6m by 31st March 2026 .		Projects across the programme are working through key stages. Early 2024 will see the first projects start on site. At this point in time it looks like all projects can be delivered, with all budget spend in time.
To secure additional funding for key projects (Enterprise Centre and Creative and Digital Skills Centre) by September 2023 . To secure vacant possession by July 2024 .		Additional YIF funding for the Creative and Digital Skills Centre was not achieved. The new youth centre at 57-59 High Street – part of the CDSC – will be delivered with only town deal funding. A review of the proposal for 63-65 High Street has been made to bring the overall project within budget. The funding from Liverpool City Region CA for the RSQ Enterprise facility is still unsecured, discussions are ongoing. Commercially sensitive negotiations are ongoing to achieve vacant possession of a shop on the High Street.
To review all projects (program and budgets) to make key delivery decisions by September 2023 .		All projects were shown at the Reconnecting Runcorn 2023 public information event 9 June in the Brindley. An update report to the Runcorn Town Deal Board 14 September 2023 noted progress on all projects in detail. Various projects are now going through a procurement process to find a contractor to start delivery early 2024, with other projects developing proposals in detail before submitting planning applications.

		None of the projects raise substantial issues that might cause risk to timely delivery.
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Ref	Objective: To deliver Runcorn Station Quarter
EEP 04	Environment and Urban Renewal





Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
To provide a new station building by December 2025		Funding is still to be obtained from CRSTS for stage 5-8 (detailed design and build). Planning consent is also still to be obtained
To progress an Ad Medium Filum application with DLA Piper for various pieces of land within the red line boundary		On going

Ref	Objective
EEP 05	Corporate Resources: To maximise and maintain external funding resources To oversee the successful delivery of the Council's externally funded (economic regeneration) programmes, including employment, learning and skills and other schemes identified as corporate priorities.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
To establish the Programmes Office Team, ensuring the full team is in place and competent, with clear roles and responsibilities.		Team now at full complement; regular meetings held to ensure workloads and roles are understood
To establish/get endorsed a Business Justification Case for all bids over £50,000 to ensure the relevance and deliverability of externally funded schemes. All bids to be logged with the Programmes Office and all officers		Business Justification Case circulated to Dept managers; discussions started with senior Dept managers; two bid-writing training courses delivered for colleagues.

within the department to attend the Bid-Writing course before drafting any bids.		
To ensure effective systems are in place and understood for the monitoring of the Town Deal programme to minimise the risk of clawback/non-compliance		Monitoring systems well established; comprehensive Project Guide developed and distributed to project leads; bi-annual claim being completed; DLUHC assurance documentation being completed and risk registers developed

Ref	Objective
EEP 06	Corporate Resources: To provide a comprehensive and strategic asset management service Manage the Council's commercial and investment portfolio, implement the Council's disposal programme, support the Council's regeneration team for delivery of projects, provide asset valuation and associated financial reports to feed into the close down process.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Commence re tender process July 2023 for the contract for external property consultants to provide provision of estate management service.		Procurement instructed, working on the option for a direct award from the Crown Civil Service framework
Complete the asset management reporting to meet the timetable of financial close down by 30 April 2023 .		Reports were provided by 30 June to Finance and queries on reports by 9 July. Task not complete by end of April. Timescale for completion of reporting to be reviewed for 2024
Commence the re tender process July 2023 for the contract to appoint property advisers to prepare asset valuations.		Tender process commenced with instruction to Procurement. Tender process is timetabled with Procurement colleague during Q3
By 30 June commence marketing of 'hand back' sites in Widnes for disposal.		Site investigation reports are underway, for Phase 1 Site investigations 3 out 5 are prepared and Phase 2 reports underway. Progress made with UU to identify easements. Legal colleagues working on the wording of the easements. Both UU easements and site investigations are required prior to marketing the sites

EEP 10	Corporate Priority: To design, manage and deliver a place-based business support programme for Halton
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Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Scheme in Place September 2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scheme fully designed with commissioning commenced & called the Business Support Service
Scheme finalised March 2025	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On track for March 2025 completion

Ref	Objective
EEP 11	Corporate Priority: Secure funding, support procurement and ground-breaking to take place for Ultraviolet at Sci Tech Daresbury Commissioning of Ultraviolet

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Funding Secured Q3 2023 / 2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Joint Venture have agreed terms with The Chrysalis Fund and discussions are ongoing with the CA to secure Investment Zone funding.
Procurement Q4 2023 / 2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The project is being tendered using the Procure Partnerships Framework. Initial phase was completed this quarter and the tender will be put to market in Q3.
Groundbreaking Q1 2024 2025	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Currently on target for a start on site in April 2024.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators


STRATEGIC ISSUES	BASELINE POSITION	OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 1	OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 3	INTERVENTIONS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
High Unemployment	2.7% of economically active people are unemployed (2021 Census)			HBC's contribution: HPIJ delivery of Welfare to Work & Health programmes (Ways to Work, Restart, Work & Health Programme, Pioneer and Supported Internships Programme)	Percentage unemployed (aged 16-64 years). Percentage of economically inactive of working age
Low wage residents	Data not available from Census 21?			Employers signing up to the LCR Fair Employment Charter	Percentage of employees' earnings below real living wage.

	Data from Adzuna – median salary in Halton is £26,000 which is 14.3% less than the national average of £30,000 (although there has been a YOY increase of 8% in Halton)				
Low-income households	Data??			HBC's contributions: HPIJ delivery of Welfare to Work & Health programmes (Ways to Work, Restart, Work & Health Programme, Pioneer & Supported Internships Programme). Better off calculations for HPIJ jobseekers. In work support to help households increase their hours or change their job.	Percentage employees who are local (FTE) employed on contract for one year or the whole duration of the contract, whichever is shorter.
Good employment	Data not available from Census 21? Current Data from Adzuna – 26.93% in Permanent Employment, 9.68% in Contract Employment and 63.39% unspecified			Employers signing up to the LCR Fair Employment Charter HBC's contribution: Employer Engagement Strategy to be updated to recognise and celebrate 'good' employers in the borough.	Proportion of employed in permanent and non-permanent employment. Adzuna data??
(appropriate) External Funding Maximised	Some bids are logged, some are not. No strategic view on whether bids should be made. Officers writing bids which can take then away from core work; not always using skills of Programmes Office.	All potential bids registered on a Business Justification form. All relevant officers in Department trained in bid-writing. All project leads logging funding bids on central system.	Increase in appropriate funding secured. No resource issues in delivering. No clawback issues.	6 bid-writing courses p.a. scheduled. 3 monitoring and evaluation courses p.a. scheduled. Central log of all bids maintained.	to establish a Business Justification Case for all bids over £50,000 to ensure the relevance and deliverability of externally funded schemes – to be signed off monthly by OD. All bids to be logged with the Programmes Office and all officers within the Dept to attend the Bid-Writing course before drafting any bids.

Climate change agenda and carbon emissions	CO2 emissions for 2021/22 amount to 9327 tonnes	Reduce emissions by 1%. Actual emissions 8740 tonnes therefore reduction of 6.3%	Reduce emissions by a further 5%	Submit a funding bid and obtain funding to carry out decarbonisation works to various buildings. Continue to deliver the LED lighting replacement programme.	Percentage reduction in CO2 emissions from Council activities
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Policy, Planning and Transportation

Ref	Objective
PPT 01	Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme – Deliver the LTP Capital Programmes to ensure that the transport system is maintained and developed to meets local needs.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
To deliver the 2019/30 LTP Capital Programme March 2023.		<p>Sud North South Widnes final phases at Birchfield Road roundabout and Appleton Village completed. Desing works progressing well on Active Travel schemes at Runcorn Busway to improve cycling links between and Murdishaw centre and Halton Lea utilizing SCAPE.</p> <p>Construction work ongoing for LCWIP route from Runcorn Old town to Daresbury Sci Tech.</p> <p>Construction work in progress for Active Travel, Murdishaw centre to Whitehouse Industrial Estate, Murdishaw Centre to Runcorn East Station and then to Halton Lea to provide dedicated cycling facilities on the Busway.</p> <p>Feasibility/Design works in progress with SCAPE for East Runcorn Connectivity and A56 carriageway Reconstruction. Runcorn Station Quarter Dukesfield Active Travel Link construction work progressing.</p>

Ref	Objective
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PPT 02	Highway programmed maintenance.
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Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Ensure continued unrestricted availability of the Highway network and to allow future maintenance to be delivered on a steady state, lifecycle planned basis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Carriageway resurfacing completed at Ditchfield Road Everite Road junction, Bridgewater Expressway and Caldwell Road. Design work ongoing for carriageway resurfacing/reconstruction at Prescott Road, Penn Lane, Victoria Road. and Main street</p> <p>Footway Resurfacing completed at Caldwell Road, Penn Lane Castle Street, Mayfair Grove, St Michaels road, Castlefields Avenue East.</p> <p>Footway design work on going at Prescott Road, Kingsway, Victoria Road, Lunts Heath Road, Dans Road, South Lane, Picow Street, Castlefields Avenue east, Prescott Road, Sea Lane, Ridgeway, Poplar Close Lapwing Grove, Derby Road, Stonebarn Lane.</p>

Ref	Objective
PPT 03	Highway Routine and reactive maintenance









Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Continue to maintain the Highway Authorities statutory duties in accordance with Section 41 and 58 of the Highways Act.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing highway safety inspection continuing to maintain a safe and serviceable Highway.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators



Ref	Description	Actual 2022 / 23	Target 2023 / 24	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
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PPT LI 01	Percentage of third party compensation claims due to alleged highway / footway defects successfully defended. Annual Calculation.	Not available	Not available	Not available			Figures not available
Ref	Description	Actual 2022 / 23	Target 2023 / 24	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
PPT LI 02	Net additional homes provided	152	350	N/A	N/A	N/A	Indicator monitored annually as at 1st April. Target is 350 p.a. (2014 to 2037) as per the Delivery & Allocations Local Plan.
PPT LI 03	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	22	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Indicator monitored annually as at 1st April. Target is expressed as a percentage of development on qualifying sites (subject to viability).
PPT LI 04	Processing of planning applications (%) as measured against targets for,						
	‘Major applications’	71%	100%	67%			There has been a backlog of applications going through. It is expected that these results will improve in the next quarter
	‘Major applications’	62%	96%	75%			
	‘Major applications’	64%	98%	62%			

PPT LI 05	To ensure a rolling five year supply of housing land. Deliverable supply (units) as a % of rolling 5 year requirement	130%	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	DALP Policy Requirement (Annual) = 350 (a). Policy 5 Year Requirement (a) x5 = 1750 (b). 5 Year Deliverable Supply (2023-2027) = 2779 (c). (c/b as a %)
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Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
PPT LI 06	No. of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	28.8	N/A	26.8			Welcome fall in KSIs (all ages). Numbers are historically low.
PPT LI 07	No. of children (<16) killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 year Av.)	4.2	N/A	3.4			Child KSI have fallen again although given the small numbers involved they are prone to statistical fluctuations.
PPT LI 08	No. of people slightly injured in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	219	N/A	166			5 year average for slights has fallen. These numbers are very low, even compared with a decade ago.
PPT LI 09	No. of people slightly injured in road traffic collisions.	157	N/A	158			Rolling 12 month total of slight casualties has plateaued. Difficult to envisage them falling much lower in short to medium term.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

PPT LI 10	Damage to roads and pavements (% above intervention levels) repaired within 24 hours.	100%	100%	100%			No commentary provided
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	PROPOSAL	ADDRESS	DECSN	DATEDECISS
22/00157/FUL	Proposed phase 2 extension to approved planning application 20/00607/FUL comprising an additional 10 mixed-use light industrial units (totalling 1180sqm), 24 parking spaces, associated refuse and cycle storage, and landscaping with access to site via existing crossover at	Land To The East Of Canalside Court Warrington Road Runcorn WA7 1RD	REF	14/07/2023
22/00370/REM	Application for the approval of reserved matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) of permission 20/00337/OUTEIA (Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except for access, for the residential led mixed use development of the site, comprising of residential (Use Class C3), employment (Use Class B1) and local centre uses (Use Class A1-A4/D1) and associated infrastructure, landscaping and land remodelling) for erection of 97 No. dwelling houses and associated works at	Land North Of Red Brow Lane Warrington WA4 4BB	PER	02/08/2023
23/00127/S73	Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act to vary planning condition 3 of outline planning application 21/00166/OUT (Outline planning application, with all matters reserved, for laboratory and office space (Use Class E(g)(i) and E(g)(ii)) development with associated car parking and landscaping) to substitute approved Parameters Plan ref: 20565_P-101 Rev: D dated 27.1.21 for Parameters Plan ref: 20565_P-101 Rev: E dated 27.1.21 at	Daresbury Laboratory Keckwick Lane Daresbury Warrington Cheshire WA4 4AD	PER	15/09/2023
23/00128/FUL	Proposed demolition of existing buildings (including 26 existing dwellings, the existing local centre incorporating the Bethesda Church, and part of the Tricorn Public House), the infilling of the existing subway; the construction of a new local centre (comprising 63 extra-care dwellings, with associated communal facilities, ground floor retail floorspace (Use Class E) and 2 bungalows (extra care)); a replacement church / community facility (Use Class F1 / F2 / E); the change of use of the retained Tricorn Public House and associated Stables into 10 dwellings; the erection of a further 59 dwellings together with improved public realm, play facilities, improvements to open space, hard and soft landscaping works; and other associated infrastructure and works at	Land Within And Adjacent To And Surrounding Palacefields Local Centre Runcorn	PER	21/09/2023
23/00134/FUL	Proposed extension to current storage facility at	Diageo Packaging	PER	21/07/2023

Appendix 3: Major Planning Applications Determined


		Whitehouse Industrial Estate Murdishaw Runcorn WA7 3BE		
23/00221/S73	Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary Conditions 9, 10, 11B, 12 and 13 of permission 21/00498/FUL (Proposed erection of industrial/storage building for use class B2 / B8 purposes, parking and servicing areas, bunds, fencing, landscaping, ancillary works and retrospective permission for the retention of previously installed bunds) at	Bowman Works Gorse Lane Widnes Cheshire WA8 0YZ	PER	18/08/2023

Waste and Environmental Improvement**Key Objectives / milestones**





Ref	Objective
CE 03	Manage and Maintain the Borough's green space areas so that they continue to function to their intended purpose.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Manage greenspace areas as per the agreed specification - March 2023.		The Environment Services Division was able to deliver all works within the Council's agreed specification for green space management.

Ref	Objective
CE 04	Implementation of actions to ensure that the Council achieves its waste related targets and objectives.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Continue to deliver communications and awareness raising initiatives to ensure that participation with the Council's recycling services is maximised and that residents comply with the requirements of the Council's Household Waste Collection Policy - March 2024.		Activities to meet this objective have remained on-going. Please see key developments sections of the report.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
CE LI 18	Residual household waste per household.	625kg	625kg	314kg			Waste production is subject to season variation. This is an estimated figure but shows that levels are in line with those in Q2 in 2022.
CE LI 19	Household waste recycled and composted.	39.3%	40%	39.6%			This is an estimated figure but it does show that recycling levels are slightly higher than in Q2 in the previous year.

7.0 Financial Statements

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget at 30 September 2023

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,311	2,666	2,633	33	65
Repairs & Maintenance	1,940	983	990	(7)	(11)
Premises	122	110	116	(6)	(10)
Energy & Water Costs	1,768	680	570	110	207
NNDR	793	684	645	39	39
Rents	170	127	128	(1)	(1)
Economic Regeneration Activities	37	3	3	0	0
Security	509	187	202	(15)	(30)
Supplies & Services	356	183	190	(7)	(14)
Supplies & Services - Grant	962	262	262	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	105	53	53	0	0
Capital Finance	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	38	38	38	0	0
Total Expenditure	12,111	5,976	5,830	146	245
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-840	-409	-449	40	81
Rent - Commercial Properties	-906	-356	-334	(22)	(43)
Rent - Investment Properties	-44	-22	-20	(2)	(5)
Rent - Markets	-852	-429	-406	(23)	(46)
Government Grant	-1,229	-318	-318	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-990	-413	-416	3	6
Schools SLA Income	-300	-284	-235	(49)	(49)
Recharges to Capital	-251	-63	-70	7	14
Transfer from Reserves	0	-732	-732	0	1
Total Income	-5,412	-3,026	-2,980	(46)	(41)
Net Operational Expenditure	6,699	2,950	2,850	100	204
Recharges					
Premises Support	2,006	1,003	1,003	0	0
Transport	23	12	12	0	0
Central Support	1,710	856	856	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-7,728	-3,864	-3,864	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,985	-1,993	-1,993	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,714	957	857	100	204

Comments on the above figures

Budget monitoring is undertaken on a monthly basis with budget holders to ensure that unapproved overspends are avoided, developing action plans to achieve efficiencies and address areas of budget pressure. Finance works closely with the department to manage and analyse underspending to identify potential savings that could help meet current and future years' priorities.

Comparison to Previous Quarter

Economy, Enterprise & Property outturn has improved from a forecasted outturn of £0.125m over budget to £0.204m under budget at the end of the financial year with a current figure of net spend being £0.100m under budget for the second quarter of the year. A positive variance of £0.329m.

Supporting Information

The Department consists of 154fte of which 66fte are core funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.134m. There has continued to be delays in recruiting across the department, and so the projection is currently that the department will be under budget by £0.065m at financial year-end.

By carefully monitoring the accounts, the department has utilised grant/external funding where possible to try and relieve the pressure on the core Council budget. This is reflected in employee expenses this quarter where various projects have been identified and staff time has been charged accordingly. This process will continue throughout the year. As in Quarter 1 it is important to note that forecasts include an allowance for the 2023/24 pay award.

As inflation is running much higher than originally predicted at the time of budget setting, the department will be expected to absorb any price increases that may arise from within the budget allocations made. This is proving difficult for repairs and maintenance due to the continued increase in the price of materials. The Repairs and Maintenance programme is constantly under review to keep within budget. However, there is a risk that unexpected events may occur which require expenditure to be incurred, that has not been allocated for.

The Asset Management Service has incurred one off expense this year, due to the vacant unit at The Hive, that was previously occupied by Frankie & Benny's. Costs relating to NNDR, Repairs and Maintenance and Service Charges have had to be paid by HBC until the unit is leased.

Due to the energy costs budget increasing significantly in 2023/24, the department is forecasting that it will be £0.207m under budget in year as costs have not risen as much as expected, but costs are still predicted to be £0.502m higher than 2022/23, which is an increase of over 50%. The forecast will change over the following two quarters depending on the change in energy usage over this time.

This financial year has witnessed an increase in the security costs. This is due not only to inflation, but the need for additional security in Halton Lea, due to anti-social behaviour. The need for security at all locations is reviewed on a regular basis and if necessary, advice is provided from the Police.

As in previous years, and the long recovery from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the financial challenges of commercial property rent continue to present a significant financial challenge, though the second quarter of the year has seen an increase in the amount of commercial property income. This is due to Agency Staff within Asset Management being able to focus predominantly on the rent reviews and licence fees.

There is also a focus within the team to fill the vacant properties within the portfolio. The current projection is that the income target will not be achieved by £0.046m. This is a £0.144 lower than the figure projected in Quarter 1

Due to adverse trading conditions in the retail sector which have been made worse due to inflation and increased utilities costs, the department is projecting to under achieve on market rental income targets this budget year. The occupancy rate is approximately 89%.

The School Cleaning Service Level Agreement (SLA) is not covering its costs this budget year due to the need to employ agency staff to cover sickness and leave and the pay award. A review of SLA charges has been undertaken ahead of the next budget year. The demand for the service is also decreasing as schools move to Academies.

Approved 2023/24 Savings

Please see Appendix A for details of progress towards achieving budget efficiency savings agreed by Council in February 2023.

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**Capital Projects as of 30 September 23**

	Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Expenditure				
3MG	151	12	12	139
Murdishaw	30	0	0	30
Equality Act Improvement Works	282	84	84	198
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	36	0	0	36
Halton Lea TCF Roof Top Garden	35	0	0	35
Property Improvements	223	23	23	200
Waterloo Building Runcorn	93	0	0	93
Woodend - Former Unit 10 Catalyst Trade Park	200	161	161	39
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2634	1303	1303	1331
Police Station Demolition	406	0	0	406
Runcorn Station Building Development	515	30	30	485
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	17	0	0	17
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	291	0	0	291
Changing Places	212	52	52	160
Town Deal	2,740	585	586	2154
Total Capital	7,865	2,250	2,251	5,614

Murdishaw – The department has worked in partnership with Onward Homes to develop a community scheme which includes the establishment of a new CIC who will run a new venture from the former boxing club. A scheme of environmental improvements has been initiated across the estate with some signage improvements completed. Discussions are ongoing with Community Development and Murdishaw Community Centre to make improvements to the external space and refurbish the allotment space to allow for the local community to develop its allotment project.

Equality Act Budget- It is anticipated that the equality act budget will be fully spent by year end as the department have a number of projects that are currently on site or have yet to start which should be complete by year end.

Kingsway Learning Centre - There are plans for a PA system to be installed in October.

Property Improvements- It is anticipated that the Property Improvement budget will be fully spend by year end, the department have a number of projects which have been allocated to that budget, some of which are on site some of which have yet to commence on site nevertheless they will be complete by year end.

Waterloo Centre - Approval has now been obtained to demolish the building, as such works will commence prior to Christmas with the demolition. Final costings will be known during quarter 3.

Woodend - All works are complete except for the installation of the new gas supply which has been ordered and will hopefully be done prior to Christmas. The cost of the gas supply is circa £40k.

Foundry Lane – Project progressing on schedule with all ground remediation works now complete. Slight underspend against projected expenditure at 2022/23 year-end due to remediation works delays incurred during Q2 and Q3. Expenditure will fall back into line in 2023.

Police Station Demolition – Legal are in the process of finalising the overage payment for Cheshire Police

Runcorn Station Building Development –A detailed delivery programme up to Approval In Principal stage has been produced and is 3 weeks ahead of schedule. A sponsor’s instruction has also been sent to partners to be signed off.


UKSF – Halton submitted an Investment Plan to the CA for three strands of its UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme – Town Centres; Local Culture, Arts and Heritage; Green, Resilient, Safe Communities. This amounts to £608k up to March 2025 and is a mix of capital and revenue.

Runcorn Waterfront Development - Preparation work is currently ongoing in respect of getting all the tender documentation ready to go through a procurement exercise in respect of the demolition of both Belvedere and Churchill Hall. It is hoped that the tender documents will be issued via the Chest in November with a realistic start on site not being until the New Year.

Changing Places - The changing places facility at the Stadium is now complete and operational. Works are progressing well on site at Victoria Park with completion due in late October. Works have also started on site at Halton Lea Library, completion being due by the end of November.

The Town Deal programme –. The Town Deal programme covers a number of projects to strengthen the town centre economy, including Brindley Theatre Enhancement, Creative and Digital Skills Centre, Health and Education Hub, High Street Connectivity, Town Centre New Homes, Station Enterprise Facility, and Unlock Runcorn. Business cases for all projects have been submitted and approved. Work will continue on site for the next 3 years.

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EEP1	Capital Works Team	N/A	Increase the level of fee income by increasing the percentage charged or charging by time, including those works	10	0	0		On target.

			not currently charged for.					
EEP4	Cleaning Services – Council Buildings	580	Review cleaning arrangements, with a focus on only emptying bins and cleaning toilets daily.	0	100	0		Until the accommodation review is complete, only limited savings will be made in 2024/25
EEP2	Caretaking & Security Services	641	A review and restructuring of caretaking arrangements.	0	52	0		Restructure will take place in 24/25. It is anticipated the full saving will not be met in year.
			Reduce security cover at Halton Lea to provide opening/closing and then static guarding 7.00am to 7.30pm Monday to Friday, and 9.30am to 3.00pm on Saturdays to cover the opening hours of Halton Direct Link.	35	0	0		Cannot achieve savings for security due to anti-social behaviour in Halton Lea. Police have advised security is kept on site until this is resolved.
EEP5	Corporate Buildings	927	Generate additional rental income by providing additional office space for external organisations at Rutland House, by letting out the remaining three floors.	120	0	0		Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP6	Facilities Management	165	Restructure the team in light of an expression of interest for retirement.	44	0	0		Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP8	Technical Support & Market Team	392	Restructuring of the team	98	0	0		Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
Total Economy, Enterprise & Property Department				307	152	0		

POLICY, PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2023

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,149	2,260	2,393	(133)	(251)
Efficiency Savings	-100	-100	-100	0	0
Premises	211	117	85	32	65
Hired & Contracted Services	115	183	208	(25)	(50)
Supplies & Services	133	64	125	(61)	(123)
Street Lighting	1,766	390	213	177	355
Highways Maintenance - Routine & Reactive	1,583	382	535	(153)	(306)
Highways Maintenance - Programmed Work	1,712	509	394	115	230
Fleet Transport	1,410	645	748	(103)	(207)
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	52	24	5	19	38
Bus Support	458	231	231	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	31	30	30	0	0
NRA Levy	73	72	71	1	2
LCR Levy	882	441	441	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	359	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	13,834	5,248	5,379	(131)	(247)
Income					
Sales & Rents Income	-101	-38	-23	(15)	(30)
Planning Fees	-738	-374	-301	(73)	(146)
Building Control Fees	-242	-121	-58	(63)	(126)
Other Fees & Charges	-932	-527	-467	(60)	(119)
Grants & Reimbursements	-179	-206	-206	0	0
Government Grant Income	-197	-177	-177	0	0
Halton Hopper Income	-54	-13	-1	(12)	(25)
Recharge to Capital	-317	-108	-13	(95)	(190)
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-882	-441	-441	0	0
Contribution from Reserves	-489	-489	-489	0	0
Total Income	-4,131	-2,494	-2,176	(318)	(636)
Net Operational Expenditure	9,703	2,754	3,203	(449)	(883)
Recharges					
Premises Support	509	254	254	0	0
Transport	591	265	320	(55)	(111)
Central Support	1,432	716	716	0	0
Asset Rental Support	686	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-885	-443	-443	0	0
Transport Recharge Income	-3,764	-1,759	-2,063	304	609
Net Total Recharges	-1,431	-967	-1,216	249	498
Net Departmental Expenditure	8,272	1,787	1,987	(200)	(385)

Comments on the above figures

Financial Position

The current position for the PPT department is net spend is £0.200m over the profiled budget with a projected full financial year outturn of £0.385m over the approved budget.

Comparison to Previous Quarter

The projected outturn is forecast to differ from Q1 as the report is now showing that the department will be further over budget by the end of the financial year, moving from a projected £0.111m over to the updated £0.385m. The reasons for this will be broken down further later in this report.

Supporting Information

As in previous years budget holders are working closely with the Finance Officers to ensure a balanced budget is achieved. Wherever possible capital expenditure is being prioritised in order to relieve pressure on the revenue budgets.

Employee expenditure is predicted to be over budget at the end of the financial year due to the increased demand of drivers for client transport. This is then offset in the income section where the staffing expenditure is then recharged out to other departments. This Q2 report now includes a projection for the outstanding 23/24 pay award so the outturn reflects the increased staffing costs with no additional budget.

Supplies and services and contracted services are projected to be over budget as in previous years. Halton has a contract with MEAS (Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service) which is hosted by Sefton LA which is used to provide Halton with advice in relation to ecology, waste, environmental impact assessments and local plans. Although the expenditure on the contract is over the allocated budget, it would cost Halton considerably more to provide this advice in house. Legal fees are also projected to be over budget due to external legal advice being required in the Planning section.

The street lighting expenditure is projected to come in under budget as per the previous financial year. Various actions have been taken to decrease the amount of power being used such as lights being turned off 12am – 6am on some routes and over 80% of HBC owned street lighting stock of around 20,500 columns have been upgraded to LED. Current estimates are based on last year's spend, and this will be confirmed over the next quarter once the use increases over the winter months.

Highways maintenance budgets are projected to be over budget. Capital is again being utilised where appropriate. The report is again broken down into routine and reactive schemes and programmed works so the various areas can be looked at in more detail. Contractor and material costs for maintenance continues to increase in line with current high inflation levels and is having a negative impact.

Fleet transport has seen an increase in costs across fuel and parts when compared to the Q1 projected figure. This then has a knock-on effect to the costs being recharged out to the other areas of the authority. There is also a significant delay in the time it takes from placing an order and receiving the goods. Every effort is being made to prolong fleet replacements, but this also has a negative impact on the cost of repairs.

There is a slight downturn in the number of applications being received. However, this has been mitigated by Government increasing planning fees at a higher rate than forecast. In Q1 it was shown that this would help to balance the income target, however, it is now anticipated that this will not be the case, and the target will not be achieved.

Building control income is currently under its income target but it is hoped that a number of major housing schemes will soon be approved and therefore this will filter through to the income. Again, this is being monitored closely by Halton and Knowsley as part of the Building Control shared service and will be updated for future reports once an income reconciliation exercise has taken place between both parties.

Other fees and charges are not expected to meet income targets due to the Planning division not achieving S106 related fee income. This is currently being reviewed to see if this can be improved in Q3.

As in previous years the recharge of salaries to capital schemes will not achieve its income target due to a lack of traditional capital projects and therefore there is less opportunity to capitalise. There is a relationship between the under achievement of income and the lack of staff within the Highways division which means staff are not available to carry out works on capital schemes and therefore cannot be recharged out to generate income.

Approved 2023/24 Savings

Savings that were put forward for 2023/24 can be seen in Appendix A at the end of this report

Risks/Opportunities

Across the whole department inflation has significantly driven costs up and every division is bearing the cost of this. The Highways and Logistics divisions are seeing the largest impact of this when purchasing materials / fuel / parts for vehicles etc.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2023

Project Title	2023-24 Capital	Allocation to Date	Actual Spend	Total Allocation Remaining
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	Allocation £'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Local Transport Plan				
Total Bridge & Highway Maintenance	3,133	114	114	3,019
Integrated Transport	549	0	0	549
CRSTS	7,140	1,148	1,148	5,992
SJB – Decoupling	0	0	0	0
Runcorn Busway	239	68	68	171
East Runcorn Connectivity (ERC)	1,577	1,488	1,488	89
A56 Reconstruction	947	0	0	947
Dukesfield ATL (Waterloo Bridge)	0	1,493	1,493	(1,493)
LCWIP Phase 2 Daresbury	5,783	842	842	4,941
ATF3 Murdishaw to Whitehouse	3,000	0	0	3,000
ATF4 Widnes Town Centre				
Accessibility	122	0	0	122
SUD Green Cycle	0	2	2	(2)
Total Local Transport Plan	22,490	5,155	5,155	17,335
Halton Borough Council Schemes				
Street Lighting	876	7	7	869
Lighting Upgrades	1,269	121	121	1,148
Silver Jubilee Bridge - Lighting	531	0	0	531
Risk Management	578	1	1	577
Fleet Vehicles	6,280	1,240	1,240	5,040
SUD Green Cycle	0	0	0	0
Widnes Loops	0	3	3	(3)
Total Halton Borough Council Schemes	9,534	1,372	1,372	8,162
Total Capital Expenditure	32,024	6,527	6,527	25,497

The East Runcorn Connectivity (ERC) project is currently being redefined which will focus on the major maintenance of the A56 and 5 active travel links within Halton. The scheme is on track and communication is in place with LCR to secure additional funding for detailed design and full costing profiling. This will include consultation with members, shareholders and public which is currently taking place in October 23.

Dukesfield and Waterloo Bridge are now reopened. The original grant funding has now been fully spent and conversations are under way with LCR in relation to further funding for this financial year to offset the expenditure.






CRSTS replaces the historical grant funding from the DfT. It is broken down into various areas such as carriageway maintenance, footway maintenance, street lighting and structures. Expenditure is low in Q1 and Q2 as payments will mostly occur towards the end of the financial year as in previous reports.

The A56 project is in support of the new junction completion for the Redrow development which overlaps with the ERC scheme mentioned above. This scheme is in abeyance until further funding for the ERC is announced, therefore expenditure will be minimal.

LCWIP Phase 2 Runcorn to Daresbury is currently underway on Long Benton Way. A change request is currently being put to the CA as the allocation of £5.7m is not anticipated to be fully spent due to reduced scope of the scheme.

ATF3 Murdishaw to Whitehouse is currently not on site but is due to start imminently.

The fleet replacement scheme is being utilised only when necessary, as every vehicle is being retained if it is cost effective. Only when vehicles are past the point of being economically viable for repair are they then replaced. With the rise of inflation there has been a significant increase in the cost of new vehicles when ordered in comparison to previous financial years. There are also exceptionally long lead times when orders are placed to the time of them being delivered due to the worldwide shortage of semiconductors.

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description Of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
PPT 1	Fleet Management & Maintenance	400	Reduction in the annual contribution to the Fleet Replacement Reserve.	40	0	0		Budget has already been removed and saving will be met in full
PPT 2	Transport Coordination	484	Reduction in the provision of subsidised bus grants. Currently, 14 bus services are subsidised through contracts where there are no commercial services. Passenger utilisation of routes would be assessed to see where reductions can be applied with the least impact upon services.	50	0	0		Budget has already been removed but the expenditure is expected to see a significant rise as mentioned in the Q1 report. However, this is being met by a contribution from Mersey Gateway.
PPT 4	Schemes and Maintenance	1,056	Reduction of 6% in the programmed road maintenance budget.	60	0	0		Budget has already been removed and saving will be met in full
PPT 5	School Crossings	70	Approach the Schools Forum to seek a contribution of at least 50% towards school crossing service	35	0	0		Still waiting to take a report to Schools Forum to discuss further action
PPT 6	Traffic	N/A	Consider introducing civil traffic enforcement for traffic	0	150	0		This is a complex piece of work to take

			violations. Employ private sector civil enforcement officers to issue fines and generate income. It would take 12 months to apply for powers from the DFT and put the scheme in place. The Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board will consider this via a Topic Group.					forward, it requires DfT to grant powers to Halton. The project also needs resourcing, and the department is still awaiting capacity from the Accelerated Growth project. No savings were eligible for 23/24 financial year.
Total Policy, Planning & Transportation Department				185	150	0		

Community and Greenspace

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2023

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	17,085	7,607	7,428	179	358
Premises	3,685	1,483	1,479	4	8
Supplies & Services	1,598	837	882	(45)	(90)
Hired & Contracted Services	607	231	286	(55)	(111)
Book Fund	140	86	86	0	0
Food Provisions	371	117	181	(64)	(127)
School Meals Food	1,965	841	858	(17)	(32)
Miscellaneous Transport Costs	117	55	68	(13)	(26)
Other Agency Costs	601	182	209	(27)	(53)
Other Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Disposal Contracts	6,885	106	57	49	98
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	67	18	14	4	8
Grant to Norton Priory	172	86	87	(1)	(1)
Capital Financing	201	41	0	41	83
Total Expenditure	33,494	11,690	11,635	55	115
Income					
Sales Income	-3,962	-1,950	-1,402	(548)	(1,095)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,752	-3,488	-3,614	126	251
Rental Income	-221	-98	-108	10	19
Government Grant Income	-695	-646	-774	128	256
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-665	-383	-389	6	12
SLA Income	-2,391	-2,260	-2,139	(121)	(242)
Internal Fees Income	-592	-96	-176	80	161
Capital Salaries	-173	-46	-46	0	0
Transfers From Reserves	0	51	51	0	0
Total Income	-14,451	-8,916	-8,597	(319)	(638)
Net Operational Expenditure	19,043	2,774	3,038	(264)	(523)
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,825	913	913	0	0
Transport	2,046	1,027	1,047	(20)	(41)
Central Support	3,856	1,933	1,933	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-540	-274	-274	0	0
Net Total Recharges	7,386	3,599	3,619	(20)	(41)
Net Departmental Expenditure	26,429	6,373	6,657	(284)	(564)

Comments on the above figures

Financial Position

The net department spend is £0.284m over budget at the end of Quarter 2 and the estimated outturn overspend against budget for 2023/24 is £0.564m.

Net employee spend is estimated to be under the approved budget at the end of the financial year. The forecast outturn includes the pay increase proposal of £1,925 for all grades (a 3.5% increase for DM and above scales has already been agreed). Whilst the proposed pay deal is over what had been included within the budget this is mitigated by the number of vacancies within leisure services and reduced casual usage in line with 2022/23 actual data.

Food Provisions is overspent due to the increasing inflationary food costs from suppliers.

Whilst it is currently forecast that waste disposal spend will be within the approved budget for the year this comes with a certain amount of caution. Waste disposal forecast cost is based on estimated tonnage of waste and the department is still waiting on invoices to be presented for previous years.

Sales income for the year is expected to underachieve compared to the budgeted income target. Shortfalls in income at the Stadium, school meal sales plus a reduction in room hire at Community Centres and Libraries are forecast to contribute towards lower income levels.

Additional grant Income has been received from Sport England under the Swimming Pool Support Fund initiative to ensure the continued provision of leisure centres in the Borough.

School Meals SLA income is forecast to underachieve over the course of the year, but this will be mitigated by reduced staffing costs.

Trade Waste fee charges are expected to overachieve with the increased uptake of green waste collections.

Approved 2023/24 Savings

Please see Appendix A for details of progress towards achieving budget efficiency savings agreed by Council in February 2023.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2023

Project Title	2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	34	17	18	16
Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment	28	14	13	15
Halton Leisure Centre	15,056	7,528	8,014	7,042
Open Spaces Schemes	851	426	137	714
Children's Playground Equipment	105	53	15	90
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12	2	1	11
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	30	0	340
Runcorn Town Park	284	142	106	178
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,023	512	20	1,003
Pickerings Pasture Café	520	250	0	520
Litter Bins	20	5	0	20
Totals	18,286	8,978	8,324	9,962

Comments on the above figures**Halton (Moor Lane) Leisure Centre**

The project is making good progress and on track. Total project cost has increased slightly due to increase in provisional sum items. Totals costings for the project are continually being reviewed.

Open Spaces

This covers spending on a variety of externally funded projects: Birchfield Gardens refurbishment, Upton Rocks access works, The Big Halton Forest, and some small minor works contracts. Spending is behind target due to capacity issues.

Children's Playground Equipment

This is an ongoing project which includes spend on improvements within the Borough's playgrounds.

Upton Improvements

Open space improvement works undertaken. Work has been delayed due to capacity issues.

Crow Wood Park

The main contract is now completed, outstanding balance will cover final and retention payments.

Landfill Tax Credits Schemes

Currently used to support improvements for a rolling programme of existing playgrounds/open space schemes across the Borough.

Runcorn Town Park

Project to renew park infrastructure. Project is ongoing with 2 contracts on site. Carry forward to complete work in season and for contingency payments. INEOS funding of £300k was deferred - £10k each to 2023/24 & 2024/25 plus £280k to 2025/26

Wigg/Spike Island Recovery Works

The programme was slightly behind due to staff capacity issues. However, a consultancy is in place and have begun site investigation works ahead of finalising designs/contract documentation for tender.

Pickerings Pasture Café

Creation of Café Facility at Pickerings Pasture, a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), which would be operated as a franchise. The Council has been asked to include £520k within the Council's Capital Programme to fund the construction of the café facility. Funded over seven years, the capital financing cost would be £87,500 per annum. This sum could be realised through a bid to the Environment Fund (paying £87,500 pa for seven years). Once completed and opened the café would generate income for the Council from the franchise rental, which could be used to offset the running costs of Pickerings Pasture.

COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE DEPARTMENT**APPENDIX A**




Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
COMM 1	The Brindley Theatre	64	Reduce Box Office opening hours from 10am-5pm Monday-Friday to 10am-2pm. Currently 80% of tickets are purchased online or by telephone and this is increasing each year.	10	0	0		Box Office core opening hours were reduced to 5 hours (Mon – Fri) 10am – 3pm. They will be realigned to 4 hours daily 11am – 3.00pm (Mon – Fri) from 1 September onwards.
			Replace all non-LED lighting in the building. This is estimated to reduce on-stage energy costs by 75%.	10	0	0		
COMM 3	Sport & Recreation	471	Restructuring the roles and responsibilities of the Sports Development Team	0	36	0		On track to meet savings identified for 2024/25.
COMM 4	Stadium & Catering Services	751	Franchise the concourse only catering services to an external operator.	50	0	0		
			An organisational restructure is currently	40	0	0		

Ref.	Service	Net	Description of Saving	Savings Value			Current	Comments
			being implemented for Stadium & Catering Services to reflect recent service changes.					
COMM 6	Area Forums	170	Reduce the base budget provision to £50k temporarily for one year, with all unspent monies in 2022/23 (currently £120k) being carried forward to be spent by the relevant Area Forums in 2023/24. The base budget position will then be reviewed for 2024/25.	120	-120	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Implemented in 2023/24 budget setting.
COMM 5	Stadium & Catering Services – School Meals	12	Cease to deliver the school meals service, which has made significant losses of over £200,000 for a number of years and is forecast to make a similar loss by year-end. Work would be undertaken with schools over the next two years to support them to secure an alternative means of delivery, whether in-house or via an external provider.	0	0	12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Work underway in school meals being delivered through alternative means
Total Community & Environment Department				230	-84	12		




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 <i>is better</i> as compared to the same period last year.
Amber 	Indicates that performance <i>is the same</i> as compared to the same period last year.
Red 	Indicates that performance <i>is worse</i> as compared to the same period last year.
N / A	N / A
	Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year.