

Public Document Pack



Executive Board

Thursday, 11 July 2024 2.00 p.m.
The Boardroom, Municipal Building

S. Young

Chief Executive

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

PART 1

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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. | |
| 3. LEADER'S PORTFOLIO | |
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*Please contact Gill Ferguson 0151 511 8059 or
gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 12 September 2024*

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| PART II | |
| <p>In this case the Board has a discretion to exclude the press and public and, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, it is RECOMMENDED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, having been satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.</p> | |
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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.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 13 June 2024 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Ball, Dennett, Harris, M. Lloyd Jones, T. McInerney, Nelson, Thompson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor P. Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner and G. Ferguson

Also in attendance: None

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

| | <i>Action</i> |
|---|---------------|
| EXB1 MINUTES | |
| <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2024, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p> | |
| <p>CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO</p> | |
| EXB2 2023/24 SPENDING AS AT 31 MARCH 2024 | |
| <p>The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which reported the Council’s overall revenue net spending position for the 2023/24 financial year.</p> | |
| <p>A summary of spending against the Council’s revenue and capital net spending position for 2023/24 was presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and these provided detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms net spending as at 31 March 2024 was £5.633m over budget. This was an improvement from the forecast outturn position of £7.144m reported at the end of December 2023, which showed that the actions being taken by Directorates were having a positive effect. Whilst an improved position, it</p> | |

was still a detrimental impact upon the Council's finances and further reduced the Council's limited reserves.

The report also detailed a review of the Council General Reserve as at 31 March 2024. The current balance of reserve totalled £5.149m which was considered to be a minimum level which the Council should hold.

In addition, it was noted that Capital Spending at 31 March 2024 totalled £43.939m, which was 71.4% of the planned spending £61.528m (which assumed a 20% slippage between years). Appendix 2 presented details of spending against all capital schemes. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 31 March 2024.

It was noted that the 2024/25 budget had been increased to reflect the increased spending against all the high-pressure areas. It did not provide a budget for the excess cost of agency staff (the assumption being that departments provided for this by reducing spending elsewhere) and the budget also included Transformation Programme savings target of £4m.

A report on the 2024/25 budget monitoring position as at 31 May 2024 along with an initial outturn forecast, would be presented at the earliest opportunity to allow for any urgent corrective action to be taken.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Council's 2023/24 outturn position as presented in the report be noted;
- 2) Directorates take all possible steps to manage spending in line with budget during 2024/25; and
- 3) Priority is given to the acceleration of the Council's Transformation Programme, to ensure it is sufficiently developed to deliver the savings required to meet the medium-term financial gap and help the Council replenish its reserves.

Director of
Finance

EXB3 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS
FOR QUARTER 4 2023 - 24

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director – Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the fourth quarter period to 31 March 2024, for the People Directorate (Social Care Health); and the Enterprise,

Community and Resources Directorate.

The Board was advised that the Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary of key issues arising from the relevant quarter for each Directorate and was aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council's performance management arrangements and Executive Board had a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability. Performance Management would continue to be important in the demonstration of value for money and strengthening accountability.

RESOLVED: That the report, progress and performance information be noted.

EXB4 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented five applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, for consideration.

It was noted that under the amended provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council was able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer. This relief had previously only been available to organisations that were a registered charity, a community amateur sports club or a not for profit organisation.

The report outlined details of the five applications, in relation to their respective addresses. Appended to the report was the potential annual cost to the Council of granting the discretionary rate relief.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the application for 15% discretionary top up relief from Change, Grow, Live for premises at 75 High Street, Runcorn, be rejected on the basis that they are a Charity who operate nationally;
- 2) the application for 15% discretionary top up relief from Care UK Charity for premises at 3-5 Runcorn Shopping Centre, Runcorn, be rejected on the basis that they are a Charity who operate nationally;
- 3) the application for 15% discretionary top up relief from Staffordshire Winter Sports Club Ltd for

Director of
Finance

premises at Silver Blades Ice Rink, Earle Road, Widnes, be rejected on the basis that they are a Charity who operate nationally;

- 4) the application for discretionary relief from Gateway Community Ltd for premises at Hallmark House, Constance Industrial Estate, Waterloo Road, Widnes, be approved at 90% with effect from 1 April 2023; and
- 5) the application for discretionary rate relief from English Table Tennis Association Ltd for premises at Units 17-18, Greenoaks Way, Widnes, Cheshire, be rejected on the basis that they are an organisation who operate nationally.

EXB5 CORPORATE SECURITY CONTRACT

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which notified members of the intention to go out to tender with regard to procuring a new corporate security contract in line with the Council's procurement strategy. The new contract would commence on 1 April 2025 and would be for a three year period, with the option for a 12 month extension subject to satisfactory performance.

RESOLVED: That Members note the intention to go out to tender via the Chest in respect of procuring a new corporate security contract.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB6 FOSTERING & SGO CARERS UPLIFT FROM 22/23 & 23/24

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services, which advised on an uplift in payments to Foster Carers and Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Carers for 2022/23 and 2023/24. The request is for:

- all SGO Carers to be paid an uplift of 1% from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023; and
- all Foster Carers and SGO Carers to be provided with an uplift of 2% to be backdated to 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

RESOLVED: That the uplift in payments to Foster Carers and Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Carers for 2022/23 and 2023/24, as outlined in the report be approved.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

EXB7 SERVICES FOR MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS CHESHIRE FOR HALTON, CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER AND WARRINGTON: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services, which sought approval for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders, to allow the continuation of a contract with 'We are With You' to deliver on behalf of the Council, the Tri-Party Missing from Home and Care Service, for a period of one year from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

We are With You have been commissioned to deliver the PAN Cheshire Missing from Home and Care Service, since July 2018. The Service operated across Halton, Warrington and Cheshire West and Chester, and the contract was due to end on 30 June 2024. The reasons for the proposed one year contract extension to 30 June 2025 were set out in the report and the three local authorities had agreed to continue with a joint commissioning approach with Halton acting as the lead.

RESOLVED: That approval be given for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders to allow the continuation of a contract with We are With You to deliver on behalf of the Council, the Tri-Party Missing from Home and Care Service, for a period of one year from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB8 LONG TERM PLAN FOR TOWNS, FUNDING FOR RUNCORN

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which set out details to date about the Long-Term Plan for Towns funding which was allocated to Runcorn in the Spring Budget 2024.

In the Spring Budget 2024, the Government announced Phase 2 of their long-term plan for Towns programme which identified Runcorn as one of 20 additional towns across the country which would benefit from £19.5m endowment style funding to invest over a 10 year period in local priorities.

In order to access the funding Halton would need to

produce a Long- Term Plan for Runcorn. The Government had issued guidance on 1 October 2023 which required each town to establish a Town Board to oversee the development of the long-term plan. Halton proposed to repurpose its existing Town Fund Board, in line with Government guidance to ensure compliance with this guidance and to avoid duplication.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had released £50k of capacity funding to the Council to establish a Town Deal Board. A further £200k capacity funding would be issued to develop the plan which was to be submitted by 1 November 2024.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the Government list of interventions which had already been assessed as having a strong case for investment, value for money and benefit to cost ratio.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board accepts external grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) of £19.5m in relation to the Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPT);
- 2) agree that the Council will act as Accountable Body for the LTPT Programme;
- 3) the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, be authorised to amend the Towns Fund Board terms of reference and membership to reflect the criteria of the Long-Term Funding for Towns criteria;
- 4) in consultation with the Town Deal Board, the Deputy Leader and Member of Parliament for Runcorn and Helsby, authority be delegated to the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, to spend the £200,000 capacity funding to develop a ten-year Vision and three-year Investment Plan to submit to Government by 1 November 2024; and
- 5) delegate authority to the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration and the Section 151 Officer, to agree and complete Funding Agreements with partners that will deliver the LTPT for Runcorn projects on behalf of the Council, as the Accountable Body for the Programme.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EXB9 EAST RUNCORN CONNECTIVITY (ERC) PROJECT A56
CONSTRUCTION GATEWAY

The Board received a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval to enter into a delivery agreement and commence Stage 5 of the SCAPE Framework process awarding a contract to deliver the A56 major maintenance works to Balfour Beatty. The contract would commence in July subject to approval and was programmed to complete in September 2025.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) approval be given to awarding a contract to Balfour Beatty via the SCAPE framework to complete the A56 Major Maintenance Scheme;
- 2) the Director Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, be delegated to accept the Grant Funding Agreement and enable timely delivery of the contract; and
- 3) the Director Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, be delegated to deal with any matters relating to procurement and operation of this contract.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EXB10 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT
1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO
INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- 1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public

interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL AND DEPUTY LEADER'S PORTFOLIO'S

EXB11 DELIVERING THE FREEPORT UPDATE - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment & Regeneration, which provided an update on the progress relating to Halton's Freeport. The report sought approval to carry out due diligence investigations with a view to acquiring the 44-acre (of which 15 acres were water) Port of Weston site for the regeneration of West Runcorn.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) the Board supports the approval to carry out due diligence investigations with a view to acquiring the Port of Weston Site (using Freeport funding) for the regeneration of West Runcorn;
- 3) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director for Environment & Regeneration, in consultation with the Deputy Leader to take the necessary steps to progress further the Freeport in Halton as outlined in this report;
- 4) following appropriate due diligence, the Board authorises the Director Finance to put in place systems to support the acquisition of land to support the regeneration of West Runcorn; and
- 5) approval be sought from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHUC), via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

Freeport Board, to reallocate Freeport Seed Funds for the planning and construction of an access road onto Port of Weston and to purchase the Port of Weston.

MINUTES ISSUED: 18 June 2024

CALL-IN: 25 June 2024 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 18 June 2024.

Meeting ended at 2.35 p.m.

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 11 July 2024
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
PORTFOLIO: Leader
SUBJECT: Urgent Decisions
WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To bring to the attention of Executive Board urgent decision/s taken since the last meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report is noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Council's Constitution gives authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decision/s which are required before the next formal meeting of Executive Board.

These must be made in consultation with the Leader of the Council where practicable, and with the Operational Director – Finance and/or Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary. They must also be reported for information to the next practically available meeting of the Board.

3.2 More information on each can be found on the Council's website:

<http://councillors.halton.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?bcr=1>

3.3 The urgent decision/s taken since the last meeting of Executive Board:

| Date Decision taken | Decision details |
|---------------------|---|
| 29 April 2024 | High Needs Provision – Capital Allocation |
| 3 May 2024 | Household Support Fund – 2024-25 Scheme and Spending Plan |
| 29 April 2024 | Thrive approach delivering better value |

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are none other than the constitutional requirement to report urgent decisions for information.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The report is for information, and there are no risk issues arising from it.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

9. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no climate change implications.

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

10.1 No background papers were used in the preparation of this report. Further information on the decision/s taken is available from the link in Paragraph 3.2.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| REPORT TO: | Executive Board |
| DATE: | 11 July 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Director ICT & Support Services |
| PORTFOLIO: | Corporate Services |
| SUBJECT: | Delivery of Managed Detection Response System – Key Decision |
| WARD(S) | ‘Borough wide’ |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update the executive following approval of the Digital Strategy and ICT Capital programme on a key project that will adopt/deliver innovative security technologies to address the evolving cyber threat landscape, reducing cyber risk and detection time, the primary aim of which will be to improve the security footprint of the authority. Delivering a solution that will rapidly identify and limit the impact of cyber based threats by performing threat hunting, monitoring and response.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the Board approves the procurement of a MDR (Managed Detection Response) System for a single payment of £638,001 delivering over five year contracted term; and
- 2) the Board approves the investment strategy.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Following approval of the Halton Digital Strategy by Management Team and Executive Board in March and April 2024, the IT Security Team have evaluated eight security offerings within the market place this was narrowed down to three Tier 1 solutions, the offerings in question are cloud based remote management services primarily for Threat detection, response and remediation.
- 3.2 The three chosen for final evaluation were all tier 1 suppliers within the security management space.
- 3.3 Following the detailed evaluation over the last 4 months (documentation available but would pose a security risk if published externally) the chosen MDR offers the price point and far out ways the other offerings with the level of services offered within the package offering, together with the peace of mind for the authority that this supplier being one of the largest

suppliers in the world has the in-house resource to manage and maintain what is now becoming an essential a key technology solution.

3.4 So what is MDR: It is 24/7/365 managed (by humans as well as tech)

- Threat Detection
- Threat Hunting
- Response and Remediation
- Point of Contact
- Incident response
- Data Location
- Service Level Management
- Managed Risk Services
- Security Awareness training
- PEN Testing and attack simulation management

3.5 Within HBC our technology assets and our data assets live in an ever changing world where the opportunity for criminal activity is increasing on a daily basis. In reality at a rate that is starting to become a major threat to the operation and sustainability of the authority.

3.6 We are now at the mercy of many attack vectors from individuals and criminal gangs through to foreign government backed agencies.

3.7 This is a world-wide issue that is hitting our news feeds and TV screens constantly with prominent attacks across a number of London hospitals recently causing millions of pounds worth of issues and disruption as business's are not able to operate without access to technology anymore. Many of our employees born in the late 80's early 90's have never experienced a workplace without technology.

3.8 As an organisation we closely follow NCSC and DHLUC cyber security frameworks and guidelines but this isn't enough.

3.9 We need 24/7 monitoring especially with the advent of the cloud and 3rd parties now linked into or managing our data assets. To deliver 24/7 monitoring and response would be an unaffordable proposition as we are not in a position to afford the skills base needed in-house to manage such an onslaught of technical requirement.

3.10 It must be noted that purchasing this contract is not a magic pill and that we would never be subject to any attack but this will considerably mitigate the potential for attack and improve our security stance.

3.11 As part of the procurement process the supplier will implement a 20 day proof of concept installation across the HBC technology landscape.

To involve Managed Detection and Response

- Operating hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24x7)
- Onboarding
- Detection
- Response & Remediation

Project Kick-off Three (3) days

Tenant creation, vulnerability scan, and reporting review Up to fifteen (15) days

Project Closeout Two (2) days

3.12 Following a successful POC Onboarding will begin

- Service initiation meeting (kick off meeting)
- Customer completed pre-engagement checklist
- Review Customer IT Environment
- SecureWorks XDR application enablement
- Agent rollout assistance

3.13 Detection • 24x7 Access to security analysts

- Threat Detection and Investigations

3.14 Response and Remediation leading to Threat Response Action's set for HBC

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified at this stage.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Following the approval of the increased ICT rolling Capital Programme to support the development of the transformation programme. Key projects have been identified and detailed evaluation across a number of key software and managed services platforms has started.

5.2 This key project will adopt/deliver innovative security technologies to address the evolving threat landscape, reducing risk and detection time, the primary aim of which will be to improve the security footprint of the authority. A solution that will rapidly identify and limit the impact of threats by performing threat hunting, monitoring and response.

5.3 This managed services platform will integrate with the HBC platforms out of which it will support the Digital Journey of considerable change to the current HBC technology environment.

5.4 At this stage we are still building the platform and linking with other major projects such as M365 and the new device strategies. This will now start

to pull these solutions together and evaluate and remediate issues and the changes required to deliver a fully integrated platform for the authority.

- 5.5 This project will be funded by capital rolled over from the 2023/2024 capital programme together with 2024/2025 capital.
- 5.6 £419,000 from 23/24 - £219,001 from 24/25.
- 5.7 By procuring this solution upfront and over the five year commitment has brought considerable savings in relation to the project overall - negotiations discussed the spread and coverage of services as well as the associated costs and the potential hidden costs.
- 5.8 It is possible to pay for the solution quarterly in arrears but this would increase the contractual costs by £124,000 – following discussion it is cheaper to procure using existing capital funding.
- 5.9 All three of the final evaluation set altered pricing considerably and changed the offerings accordingly, the final product set chosen and the contractual cost offers a huge saving over the initial prices and offers a greater level of included services and systems. Again detailed evaluation is available but for commercial and security reasons this cannot be published within this document under section 31a of the FOI rule set but is available for review if required by internal HBC resource.

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

The business case for technology investment outlined in this report will enable and support transformational change to be delivered within all service areas across the authority, also supporting other workstreams comprising the Re-imagine Halton transformational programme.

It is important we invest in technology platforms that will allow our customers, both internal and external, improved user experience and access to services by facilitating self- service, 24/7, multi-channel delivery. Service managers will also benefit from having access to a platform for facilitating the redesign of the way they deliver their services to improve service efficiency and build capacity.

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

As 6.0

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

As 6.0

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

As 6.0

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

As 6.0

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

As 6.0

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Failure to invest in new technology to facilitate transformative change risks the gradual erosion of service levels and loss of capacity to make transformational change in the future. The continued risk of Cyber-attack.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The authority's policies and process will be followed.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None

10.0 **REASONS FOR DECISION**

10.1 The security of the authority, compliance with the DHLUC Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF)

11.0 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

11.1 Following approval of the Halton Digital Strategy by Management Team and Executive Board in March and April 2024, the IT Security Team have evaluated eight security offerings within the market place this was narrowed down to three Tier 1 solutions, the offerings in question are cloud based remote management services primarily for Threat detection, response and remediation.

11.2 For security reasons: Specific information is removed related to Section 31a Freedom of Information Act prejudice to law enforcement.

11.3 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

11.4 It is intended to initiate a 20 day proof of concept installation 24th June 2024 prior to any go live, this will also comply with additional cyber security requirement prior to the general election.

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

For security reasons: Specific information related to Section 31a Freedom of Information Act prejudice to law enforcement.

With regards to this project this covers several areas related to ICT security (including by not limited to, backup and recovery, vulnerabilities, encryption methods) and as such this information is exempt under Section 31(a) of the FOI Act.

Exempt information has been used in the production of this report, which is protected by s31 Freedom of Information Act 2000

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Executive Board |
| DATE: | 11 July 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Corporate Director – Chief Executive’s Delivery Unit |
| PORTFOLIO: | Corporate |
| SUBJECT: | Transformation Programme Board |
| WARD(S) | Borough-wide |

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To outline the proposed model for a Transformation Programme Board, using Working Party principles.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That**

1) the report is noted; and

2) the Board approves the establishment of a Transformation Programme Board, and

3) a Working Party consisting of the ten Executive Members be appointed to form the Transformation Programme Board, and make recommendations to the Executive Board, as required.

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Council’s Transformation Programme started to operate on 1st April 2023, since when it has grown in both scope and complexity. The programme is in place until 31st March 2026.

3.2 The governance of the Programme primarily sits with the Executive Board, who act as the ‘Programme Board’. Where a project sits within an Executive Portfolio, the Portfolio Holder assumes the role of the ‘Lead Member’ within that transformation project.

3.3 A level of scrutiny operates across the projects within the programme through Topic Groups, led by the Chairs of relevant Policy & Performance Boards. Any recommendations emerging from this scrutiny are referred to the Executive Board, via the Lead Member for the respective project.

3.4 As the programme enters its second year of operation, it is noted that the breadth and depth of the projects within the programme has

grown, the monitoring of project performance, interface with other disciplines within the Council, and the monitoring and management of benefits, risks and issues has become more complex.

3.5 Given that the operation of the Transformation Programme will require more intensive governance between now and March 2026, for the reasons outlined at 3.4 above, it is proposed that a dedicated Transformation Programme Board is established.

3.6 The Transformation Programme Board will consist of the ten Executive Members of the Council as set out below, appointed as a Working Party, to perform the function of the Board;

- Leader
- Deputy Leader
- Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources
- Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People
- Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care
- Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing
- Portfolio Holder for Community Safety
- Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal
- Portfolio Holder for Employment, Learning, Skills and Community
- Portfolio Holder for Climate Change

3.7 It is proposed that the Board is supported and facilitated by a number of officer members;

- Chief Executive
- Corporate Director, Chief Executive Delivery Unit
- Director of Finance
- Head of Transformation Delivery Unit
- Senior Delivery Officer - Programme Management & Governance
- Lead Officer - Communications & Marketing

3.8 The Board will be in place to provide governance and oversight and has no delegated authority within the scope of the Council's Constitution. The Board may make recommendations to the

Executive Board as and when required.

3.9 Where a formal decision is required following the Board's consideration of any matter within its purview, that decision will be referred to be included in the agenda of the next available meeting of the Executive Board.

3.10 Associated with point 3.3 above, the Board may receive recommendations from Policy & Performance Board Topic Groups as part of the Council's scrutiny arrangements pertaining to Re-imagine Halton Transformation projects. Following the establishment of the Transformation Board, this will be instead of any recommendations going straight to the Executive Board.

3.11 The Executive Board may review the period of operation of the Transformation Programme Board at any time.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct policy implications arising from this proposal.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The proposal to establish a Transformation Programme Board is grounded in the need to robustly manage the Council's finances, a key element of which is the achievement of financial benefits within the Re-Imagine Halton Transformation Programme.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

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

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The Transformation Programme has links to the delivery of all corporate priorities.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Failure to apply a sufficient level of governance and oversight to the Transformation Programme may result in opportunities being missed, financial and non-financial benefits not being achieved, with existing and future service delivery being compromised.

7.2 The Transformation Programme Board will monitor the programme risk register as part of its oversight role.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There is the possibility of the emergence of Equality & Diversity issues across the Council's service portfolio where transformation project work is undertaken. These issues would be addressed on a case-by-case basis and monitored by the Transformation Programme Board.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Executive Board |
| DATE: | 11 July 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Corporate Director – Chief Executive’s Delivery Unit |
| PORTFOLIO: | Corporate |
| SUBJECT: | Productivity Plan |
| WARD(S) | Borough-wide |

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To outline the requirement for a Productivity Plan to be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, and to present that plan to the Board for endorsement.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That**

1) the report is noted; and

2) the Board endorses the Productivity Plan for submission to DLUHC

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 In April 2024 the Council’s Chief Executive received a letter from the Minister for Local Government, setting out the requirement for the Council to submit a Productivity Plan, by 19th July 2024.

3.2 The letter outlining the requirement is at Appendix 1 to this report. It is not prescriptive, but proposes a number of themes for consideration. It also outlines a clear expectation that the plan will not exceed four pages.

3.3 The plan has been constructed along the lines of the themes communicated by the Minister and is at Appendix 2 to this report.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct policy implications arising from this report.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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

6.1 There are no direct implications for the Council's priorities arising from this report.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no risks arising from this report.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no Equality and Diversity issues arising from this report.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

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

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Simon Hoare MP
Minister for Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

16 April 2024

Dear Chief Executive

Productivity in Local Government

As you know, the Government is reviewing productivity across all public services and local government is, of course, part of that exercise. The recent [Local Government Finance Settlement](#) announced that councils would be asked to produce productivity plans. This letter formally begins that process.

May I first thank you for your very helpful engagement with my officials. Your views and thoughts have been valuable in shaping this approach to make it as useful as possible for all of us.

Local government has already done a huge amount in recent years to improve productivity and efficiency. However, lockdown and post-lockdown has proved challenging, and you are looking for new ways to go further. These new plans will help us understand what is already working well across the whole country, what the common themes are, whether there are any gaps and what more we need to do to unlock future opportunities. We will share these important lessons across the sector.

Productivity is not one-dimensional, and I would encourage you to consider the various facets that encompass the drive for greater productivity. When developing your plans, please think broadly and include reference to not only how you run your organisation, but also how you run the public services you provide and how you provide place leadership. It is with this wide view that we can ensure we are providing value for money for residents.

I am not looking to impose excessive burdens. I am not issuing you with a formal template or a detailed list of criteria to meet. I expect your plans to be three to four pages in length, and to set out what you have done in recent years, alongside your current plans, to transform your organisation and services. I do not want to specify a list of metrics you must report, but I do want to understand how you will monitor and assess your plans to assure yourselves and your residents that they will be delivered.

The plans should consider the below themes and where appropriate, should reference the work your council undertakes alongside other public services, such as the NHS and police.

1. How you have transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources.

Questions to consider:

- how has the organisation changed in recent years to become more productive? You may wish to consider what you have done around staffing, structures, operating models etc;
- how do you measure productivity in your organisation?
- what changes have you made to improve services, and what effects have those had?
- what are your current plans for transformation over the next two years and how will you measure the effects of those changes?

- looking ahead, which service has greatest potential for savings if further productivity gains can be found? What do you estimate these savings to be?
- what role could capital spending play in transforming existing services or unlocking new opportunities? If you have already used capital spending to boost growth or improve services, we would be interested in learning more;
- what preventative approaches you have undertaken and can the value of these be quantified?
- are there wider locally-led reforms that could help deliver high quality public services and improve the sustainability and resilience of your authority?

2. How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.

Questions to consider:

- what are your existing plans to improve the quality of the data you collect; how do you use it and how do you make it available to residents?
- are there particular barriers from legacy systems?
- how often do you share data with other organisations, and do you find this useful?
- Are there opportunities to use new technology to improve workflows and systems, such as predictive analytics and AI?

3. Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems.

I know we will share the aim to reduce waste wherever we can and, while you have all made huge strides in recent years, no organisation is ever 100% efficient. You should set out your plans to reduce wasteful or “gold-plated” spend.

Questions to consider:

- how do you approach identifying and reducing waste in the organisation? How do you monitor progress?
- where have you followed invest to save and what was the result?
- how much time and money do you spend on staff EDI training (internal and external), networks, and other programmes? How many EDI Champions do you have as an organisation? How do you log and report the time and money spent on EDI related activity? How do you assess the effectiveness of that training?
- what percentage of total staff budget is spent on a) agency and b) consultants? How do you assess value for money on agency & consultancy spend and what are your plans to reduce use / costs? How many of those consultants or agency staff have been in place for over a year?
- what governance structures do you use to ensure accountability of spend?
- do you share office functions with other councils and if so, how useful do you find this?
- if you share external training costs with neighbouring councils, how do you factor out duplications of service between your council and your upper-tier council (if you have one)?

- if you have one, what is your assessment and experience of working with an elected mayor, combined authority, or devolution deal?
- what proportion of your paybill is spent on trade union facility time?

4. The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove.

There will be barriers preventing you from going as far or as fast as you would like to. I would like your plans to set those out, so that we can understand how government, or the market, can help you overcome these barriers to go even further.

Questions to consider:

- what are the barriers preventing you from improving productivity further within your organisation?
- what are the barriers preventing you from improving services further?
- are these barriers consistent across multiple services?
- what would you need to remove those barriers? What do you need from government, the market or elsewhere?

Your plans must be returned by 19 July 2024, by email to productivityplans@levellingup.gov.uk.

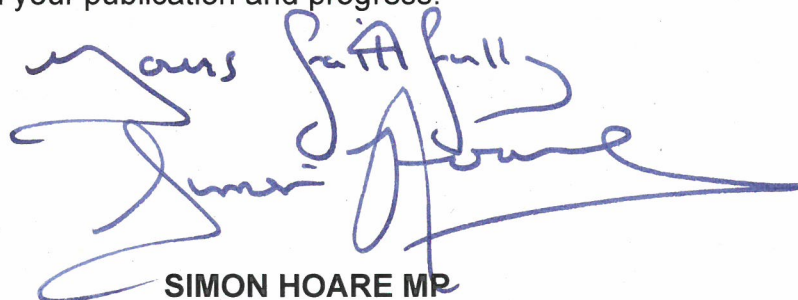
You must ensure that there is member oversight and endorsement of the plan before it is submitted, and the plan must also be uploaded to your website so that residents can see it. You should consider how you will update the plans and report on progress on a regular basis. The plans should also contain relevant metrics and key performance indicators to allow you and your residents to monitor progress.

Once received, we will review the plans to identify common themes and issues across the sector. We are keen to highlight best practice that others can learn from.

Individual plans will not be rated or scored, and we will not produce any kind of league tables. We are interested in understanding what is happening across the sector.

We are setting up a panel to consider the themes and evidence that comes from the plans. I will chair the panel and bring together experts from the sector and beyond, including Oflog and the LGA. They will consider the issues emerging from the plans, the implications for future national policy design, the role of government in supporting further change and the role of the sector in going further. The panel will advise national government and local government, and I believe this collaborative approach will ensure the most effective outcomes.

I look forward to updates on your publication and progress.



SIMON HOARE MP
Minister for Local Government



Halton Borough Council Productivity Plan – June 2024

This plan has been developed and submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in line with the requirements set out by the Minister for Local Government in his letter to the Council's Chief Executive, dated 16th April 2024.

For ease, the plan aligns with the four areas of focus set out by the Minister.

1. Transformation of service design and delivery to make better use of resources:

The Council, with its partners, has implemented several notable changes to the way services are delivered within the community to better effect, focusing on efficiency of delivery and generating system wide improvement across community services.

The parameters set by the Minister for the production of this plan document do not allow the space for detail to be included, however the Council would be happy to elaborate and provide more detail on the examples given below to colleagues in DLUHC, as required;

- Halton Intermediate Care and Frailty Service (HICaFS) - launched in December 2021 to replace services that were previously provided separately. A single point of access with a coordinated response, jointly funded by the Council and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside through the Better Care Fund, delivered in partnership by the Council, Warrington & Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.
- Family Hubs - Halton was selected as a pilot LA by DfE and DHSC and since December 2022 has been developing the principles of the Family Hub Model, with partners, to focus on the key areas of parenting, infant feeding, speech and language, inclusive services for young people 11+, and digital 24/7 access to support independent self-support.

Notwithstanding examples such as those above, significant challenges prevail around maintaining and improving productivity against a backdrop of reduced resources and increasing demand. The Council agreed in 2022 to adopt a three-year approach to setting a balanced budget on the basis that:

- All of the 'easier' revenue budget savings had been taken in previous years.
- Reducing expenditure to the levels necessary to balance the budget would require substantial changes to the way the Council delivers services.
- Children's Services needed time and support to improve.
- Over previous years, the Council had removed much of the capacity required to change the organisation in a sufficient timescale, to deliver a balanced budget.
- Change on the scale required would need significant investigation, consultation, culture and organisational change in order to be deliverable and sustainable. This could only be achieved in the medium term.

The Council implemented a three-year Transformation Programme in April 2023, designed across key themes, to promote a shift in the way in which services operate to meet demand and support the community, whilst at the same time achieving commensurate savings targets as part of the Council's MTFS. The programme places additional capacity at the centre of the organisation and is funded via a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy (*for fuller background and detail, refer to report to Executive Board and Council, March 2023:*

<https://councillors.halton.gov.uk/documents/s73425/Exec%20Board%202023-24%20-%20Budget%20Report%20Final.pdf>

2. Plans to take advantage of technology to make better use of data to improve decision making, service design, and use of resources:

The Council has a history of using technology to enable productivity across the organisation. During 2019 the Council adopted agile working principles across many services, underpinned by a capable and flexible IT infrastructure that was designed and managed in house. At the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council maintained productivity at optimum levels seamlessly as the technology platform in deployment already enabled remote working on a large scale. This enabled a productive ongoing response to community need as the country moved through the pandemic period.

The Council has robust plans in this regard and recently has responded to shifting global technologies and as part of its approach to transformation is adopting the Microsoft 365 operating model as a default platform, to enable remote working and collaboration in a flexible but secure environment.

Within the Transformation Programme work is currently ongoing to examine, change and develop the way in which currently available technology can promote more productive customer access to service areas and key systems, both from within the community and inside the organisation itself. This will include the application of AI.

At the present time, the Council is working collaboratively with the Hartree Centre (<https://www.hartree.stfc.ac.uk>), based within the Borough, to develop a secure and robust approach to capturing and managing service data to enable performance assessment, productivity planning, and demand forecasting.

3. Plans to reduce wasteful spend within the organisations and systems:

The Council has a strong track record of robust financial planning and management, evidenced by the annual audit of its accounts by Grant Thornton and that, up until 2016/17, overall spending had been managed within budget every year. However, like all local authorities it has since had to manage within significant financial constraints.

The Council actively promotes the avoidance of wasteful spend across organisational systems. This is managed through a robust regime of financial monitoring and management at officer and Member level, promoting accountability across organisational systems. This is open to public scrutiny through the publication of reports on Executive Board and Council agenda.

Halton has been one of the worst affected local authorities, with its core spending power since 2010/11 having only increased in cash terms by £6.5m (4.2%) compared to the England average increase of 15.7%. In real terms Halton has seen a reduction of £52.4m (25.9%) compared to the national average reduction of 18.1%. Against this backdrop there exists a focus on achieving value for money and return on investment in the organisational psyche.

The letter setting out the expected considerations to be included in this section of the plan cites a number of spend elements on which the Minister applies some focus. The Council's position in respect of these is set out in the following paragraphs.

EDI training and resources – the Council incurs nominal spend in this area, employing a 0.5 FTE Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer to cover the whole of the organisation. The primary focus is on ensuring that the Council necessarily complies with the legislative duties incumbent upon it through the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Agency Spend – the issues around agency worker spend in LA's (and other public bodies) are well rehearsed. The Council has been forced to spend more than is desirable on agency resource in recent years, following a shift in the characteristics of the labour market, escalating demand in social care (Adults and Children's), and the 'overheating' of the agency worker market. In 2023/24 spend was 15.06% of the total staff budget.

As part of its Transformation Programme, the Council is actively reducing spend in this area and to ensure ongoing VfM is in the process of moving to an alternative delivery model for contingent labour, implementing a public-to-public joint venture partnership which will launch in September 2024.

Consultancy Spend – against a backdrop of avoiding wasteful spend and not permanently employing resources that it does not consistently need, the Council finds periodically a need to use consultancy to apply skill and expertise to projects or initiatives for which there is no in-house skill. In the last financial year consultancy has been used to bring technical / professional skill into a range of areas, and has specifically been used to implement the Transformation Programme, an approach that will remain in this area for the foreseeable future at a moderate level. In 2023/24 spend was 2.24% of the total staff budget.

Trade-Union facilities time – in accordance with the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017, the Council has been required to submit metrics to the Cabinet Office demonstrating proportionate spend on facilities time for several years. It has consistently complied with that requirement. The data is available in lines 741 and 742 of the dataset held on the government website at this location: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/665ef37d16cf36f4d63ebdb5/Facility-Time-22_23-Dataset.xlsx

4. Barriers preventing progress that government can help reduce or remove:

There are a number of barriers that currently impede the Council in effectively planning its finances, which is consequential on its ability to plan for optimum productivity in the development and delivery of services to its community. Please refer to the key points outlined below;

Barriers related to Local government funding:

- Single-year settlements
- Real-terms funding cuts
- Late announcement of finance settlements
- Fragmented funding for local authorities
- Competitive bidding for funding pots
- Delays in the Fair Funding Review
- Inadequate funding provided with the devolution of powers
- Council tax referendum limits
- Fixed price grants that don't allow for inflationary impacts
- Inequity and conflict around health funding to LA's and health partners

Barriers associated with Government reporting regimes:

- Extensive monitoring required by Government departments for some funding through reporting, Boards and administration
- Guidance on Government Policy /S chemes often appearing months after announcements, so activity can't commence and productive time is wasted estimating the impacts / approach

- Multiple ways in which Government collect monitoring information, i.e. via Microsoft Forms for UKSPF, via Delta for most other things, via Excel spreadsheet for Levelling Up Funds
- Producing productivity plans

Barriers related to non-productive application of resources to Council activity:

- Limits on Councils ability to change some discounts for Council Tax, leading to time spent on regular checks of eligibility
- Abuse of the Freedom of Information Act (including Subject Access Requests) by some organisations resulting in significant unnecessary work on often non-sensical requests
- The need to continue producing paper Council Tax bills, Planning notices etc rather than just online versions
- The continuing requirement to hold all Council meetings in-person and to not allow some Council meetings to be held online

Barriers to effective delivery of Social Care services:

- Uncertainty over the future of the adult social care precept and restricting it for use on adults' social care only
- Pressures around capacity and demand from acute hospitals
- Inadequate funding and resource for preventative measures
- Workforce shortages and difficulty recruiting and replacing workers
- Shortage of foster carers in children's social care resulting in costly residential provision
- Cost of residential placement for looked after children

Summary

The Council takes seriously the need to deliver the best quality services that it can within and across its community. In 2023, the Council extensively consulted its community on the development of new Corporate Plan, resulting in new priorities against which it will deliver the Corporate Plan 2024-29 (<https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/corporate-strategy.aspx>)

The Council will focus its resources over the coming years towards delivering those priorities productively and efficiently. It is within that context that the successes, current initiatives to maintain and improve productivity, and the challenges outlined above are being planned for.

Halton Borough Council, June 2024

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| REPORT TO: | Executive Board |
| DATE: | 11 July 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Finance Director |
| PORTFOLIO: | Corporate Resources |
| SUBJECT: | 2024/25 to 2026/27 Capital Programme |
| WARD(S): | Borough-wide |

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 Council approved the capital programme for 2024/25 on 6 March 2024. Since then new capital grant allocations have been received and slippage to capital projects for 2023/24 has been rolled forward to 2024/25. The purpose of this report is to bring all the separate elements together and report on the Council's total planned capital programme expenditure and associated funding over the next three years.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That Council be recommended to approve the updated capital programme for 2024-27, including forecast spend and funding, as set out in Table 1 and Table 2;

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The 2024/27 Capital Strategy Statement was approved by Council on 6 March 2024. It provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It summarised the expected capital spend over the medium term and the sources of funding available.

3.2 At the time of writing the Capital Strategy Statement estimates of capital allocations at that time were known to be subject to variations. This report updates the latest position, which includes confirmed and indicative capital grant allocations for 2024/25 and future years.

3.3 The capital programme is subject to regular review and monitoring reports are presented on a quarterly basis. Information is presented to show the actual spend incurred to date and how this compares to the capital allocation for the year. A forecast is provided to indicate if the capital programme will be utilised in full during the year or if there is any expected slippage to capital schemes.

Planned Capital Programme Expenditure

- 3.4 Table 1 below presents the planned Capital Programme for 2024/25 onwards based on current information for approved schemes, funding available and slippage of scheme expenditure from 2023/24. The capital programme is subject to continuous change as new resources and projects are identified, and will be updated throughout the year as revisions are approved by Council.

Table 1 - Planned Capital Programme Expenditure 2024/25 to 2026/27

| | 2024/25 £'000 | 2025/26 £'000 | 2026/27 £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Childrens Directorate | | | | |
| Schools Capital Repairs | 749.0 | - | - | 749.0 |
| Basic Need Projects | 600.8 | - | - | 600.8 |
| SEND Capital Allocation | 3,355.2 | - | - | 3,355.2 |
| SCA Unallocated | 255.6 | - | - | 255.6 |
| Childcare Expansion | 314.8 | - | - | 314.8 |
| Family Hubs & Start for Life | 53.2 | - | - | 53.2 |
| Childrens Directorate Total | 5,328.6 | - | - | 5,328.6 |
| | | | | |
| Adults Directorate | | | | |
| Halton Carers Centre | 199.0 | - | - | 199.0 |
| Disabled Facilities Grant | 600.0 | 600.0 | 600.0 | 1,800.0 |
| Stairlifts | 270.0 | 270.0 | 270.0 | 810.0 |
| Joint Funding RSL Adaptations | 270.0 | 270.0 | 270.0 | 810.0 |
| St Patricks Care Home | 1,200.0 | - | - | 1,200.0 |
| | | | | |
| Adults Directorate Total | 2,539.0 | 1,140.0 | 1,140.0 | 4,819.0 |
| | | | | |
| Environment & Regeneration Directorate | | | | |
| Stadium Minor Works | 30.0 | 30.0 | 30.0 | 90.0 |
| Open Spaces Schemes | 600.0 | 600.0 | 600.0 | 1,800.0 |
| Upton Improvements | 13.0 | - | - | 13.0 |
| Halton Leisure Centre | 8,997.0 | - | - | 8,997.0 |
| Children's Playground Equipment | 67.8 | 65.0 | 65.0 | 197.8 |
| Landfill Tax Credit Schemes | 340.0 | 340.0 | 340.0 | 1,020.0 |
| Crow Wood Park Play Area | 12.0 | - | - | 12.0 |
| Runcorn Town Park | 468.6 | 280.0 | 280.0 | 1,028.6 |
| Spike Island / Wigg Island | 1,933.5 | - | - | 1,933.5 |
| Pickerings Pasture Cafe | 503.0 | - | - | 503.0 |
| Litter Bins | 20.0 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 60.0 |
| 3MG | 134.5 | - | - | 134.5 |
| Murdishaw Redevelopment | 21.2 | - | - | 21.2 |
| Equality Act Improvement Works | 293.2 | 300.0 | 300.0 | 893.2 |
| Foundary Lane Residential Area | 1,160.0 | - | - | 1,160.0 |
| Runcorn Town Centre Mgmt | 76.6 | - | - | 76.6 |

| | 2024/25 £'000 | 2025/26 £'000 | 2026/27 £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Runcorn Station Enterprise Hub | 11.4 | - | - | 11.4 |
| Property Improvements | 185.2 | 200.0 | 200.0 | 585.2 |
| Unlock Runcorn | 2,882.0 | 250.0 | - | 3,132.0 |
| Brindley Development | 2,825.8 | 1,497.6 | - | 4,323.4 |
| Runcorn Town Centre – Creative & Digital | 2,563.7 | 442.7 | - | 3,006.4 |
| Town Centre New Homes | 63.1 | - | - | 63.1 |
| Health & Education Hub | 22.2 | - | - | 22.2 |
| High St Connectivity | 1,175.1 | 1,462.5 | - | 2,637.6 |
| Runcorn Station Quarter | 484.7 | - | - | 484.7 |
| UK Shared Prosperity Fund | 51.9 | - | - | 51.9 |
| Runcorn Waterfront Development | 268.7 | - | - | 268.7 |
| Changing Places | 24.1 | - | - | 24.1 |
| Sci-Tech Daresbury Project Violet | 2,200.0 | - | - | 2,200.0 |
| CRSTS funded Schemes | 5,288.6 | - | - | 5,288.6 |
| CRSTS SJB Lighting | 530.8 | - | - | 530.8 |
| Street Lighting - Structural Maintenance | 1,025.6 | 200.0 | 200.0 | 1,425.6 |
| Street Lighting - Upgrades | 969.4 | - | - | 969.4 |
| East Runcorn Connectivity | 5,851.7 | 5,851.7 | 5,851.7 | 17,555.0 |
| Risk Management | 597.8 | 120.0 | 120.0 | 837.8 |
| Fleet Replacements | 4,927.4 | 1,423.3 | - | 6,350.7 |
| Mersey Gateway Land Acquisition | 212.4 | - | - | 212.4 |
| Environment & Regeneration Directorate Total | 46,831.9 | 13,082.8 | 8,006.7 | 67,921.4 |
| Chief Executives Directorate | | | | |
| IT Rolling Programme | 1,026.9 | 700.0 | 700.0 | 2,426.9 |
| Halton Smart Micro Grid | 11,000.0 | - | - | 11,000.0 |
| Transformation Programme | 3,740.0 | 1,000.0 | - | 4,740.0 |
| Chief Executives Directorate Total | 15,766.9 | 1,700.0 | 700.0 | 18,166.9 |
| Total Capital Programme | 70,466.4 | 15,922.8 | 9,846.7 | 96,235.9 |

- 3.5 The Council receives one principal source of funding from Government, City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). This is received from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA), as the co-ordinating body. This replaces the previous two principal sources of formula based capital funding from Government to improve local transport conditions, namely Integrated Transport Block (ITB) used to fund small

transport improvements and Highways Maintenance Block (HM) used to maintain the highway, associated structures and covering works such as resurfacing, bridge maintenance and street lighting.

Funding the Programme

- 3.6 Table 2 below summarises how the capital programme will be funded.

Table 2 Capital Programme Funding 2024/25 to 2026/27

| | 2024/25 £'000 | 2025/26 £'000 | 2026/27 £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Specific & General Grants | 31,608.4 | 10,644.5 | 6,991.7 | 49,244.6 |
| External Contributions | 3,342.3 | 1,186.0 | 1,186.0 | 5,714.3 |
| Borrowing | 30,975.8 | 2,692.3 | 1,669.0 | 35,337.1 |
| Revenue Contributions | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Receipts | 4,540.0 | 1,400.0 | - | 5,940.0 |
| | | | | |
| Total Funding | 70,466.4 | 15,922.9 | 9,846.7 | 96,236.0 |

- 3.7 The Council will continue to seek and secure further additional external resources to reduce on-going revenue implications and enhance the capital programme. For example, through Section 106 agreements.
- 3.8 Borrowings undertaken to support the capital programme are undertaken in line with the Prudential Code and Council's Treasury Management Strategy. This ensures that external borrowings are affordable and within prudent and sustainable levels. Borrowings to fund the capital programme over the three years will be repayable in future years from either Government grant, forecast capital receipts or funded from future revenue streams.
- 3.9 Prudential borrowing remains an option to fund future capital schemes, but the financing costs as a result of the borrowing will need to be found from savings within the revenue budget.

Capital Receipts

- 3.10 Available capital receipts are used to fund the capital programme. Sales from the disposal of surplus land and buildings may only be used to fund capital expenditure. These funds cannot be used to fund revenue expenditure, with the exception of up to 4% of the proceeds of the sale of capital assets being allowable to fund the revenue cost of disposing of an asset.
- 3.11 Estimates of capital receipts over the medium term are based on forecast land and building sales.

- 3.12 Table 3 below shows the expected balance of capital receipts over the next three years. The Council attempts to maintain a minimum value of £3m of retained receipts towards funding the capital programme.

Table 3 Capital Receipts

| | 2024/25 £'000 | 2025/26 £'000 | 2026/27 £'000 |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Balance B/F | 4,980.6 | 3,440.6 | 5,040.6 |
| In-Year Anticipated Receipts | 3,000.00 | 2,000.0 | 1,000.0 |
| Receipts Utilised | -4,540.0 | -1,400 | - |
| Balance C/F | 3,440.6 | 4,040.6 | 5,040.6 |

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The financial implications are as set out within the report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

6.3 A Healthy Halton

6.4 A Safer Halton

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no direct implications, however, the capital programme support the delivery and achievement of all the Council's priorities

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 There is a risk that slippage to the capital programme, could result in increases to the cost of delivering schemes. Additional revenue costs could be incurred if the schemes are not delivered in time.
- 7.2 Many grants which fund capital expenditure come with conditions to how funding can be used and outcome targets for when the asset is brought into use. Deviation against these conditions may result in requests for clawback to the funding from approving bodies.

7.3 The capital programme is heavily funded from prudential borrowing; of total capital expenditure, £35m or 40% will come from future and existing borrowings. Risks exist in schemes funded from prudential borrowing. It is important to recognise on undertaking borrowing that a clear plan exists which identifies how the principal and interest will be re-paid on the borrowing end date.

7.4 There is a cashflow risk to capital schemes funded from future capital receipts, the cost to the Council of the short to medium term cashflow impact needs to be recognised at the start of each scheme.

7.5 Regular monitoring and reporting of spending against the capital programme will seek to mitigate the above risks.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Schemes within the capital programme will have climate change implications, these will be reported and presented at the time the specific scheme is approved by Council.

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Executive Board |
| DATE: | 11 July 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Executive Director Environment & Regeneration |
| PORTFOLIO: | Deputy Leader/Climate Change |
| SUBJECT: | Kingsway Quarter, Widnes Town Centre |
| WARD(S) | Central and West Bank |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek agreement to progress delivery of Kingsway Quarter development. This includes capital funding to undertake the demolition of Kingsway Leisure Centre, following its relocation to the new Halton Leisure Centre in 2025.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

The Board:

- 1) **Recommend Council adjust the Capital Programme for the sum of £750,000.00 to enable demolition of Kingsway Leisure Centre and associated preparation works to aid formal land disposal;**
- 2) **Endorse the vision for Kingsway Quarter site for residential led development, as set out at para 3.6 and in accordance with the wider Widnes Town Centre Strategy;**
- 3) **Approves delegated responsibility to Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, for site marketing and disposal; and**
- 4) **Authorises the Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property to arrange for all required documentation for the transactions to be completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At its meeting on the 7th December 2023, Executive Board endorsed a new Vision and Objectives for Widnes Town Centre and agreed to a number of next steps to progress implementation. This included the preparation of a Masterplan with a focus on the agreed priority development sites and establishment of Widnes Town Centre Panel to guide regeneration proposals.

- 3.2 The Kingsway Quarter was identified as a priority development. With reference to the redline plan at Appendix A, this 2.4 hectare (5.9 acre) site is located at the southern edge of Widnes Town Centre. It comprises three land parcels:
- Site of the former Widnes Police Station and Magistrates Court;
 - Site of former Broseley House;
 - Site of Kingsway Leisure Centre.
- 3.3 Since the decision by the Ministry of Justice to close the Magistrates Courts in 2011, the Council has taken a strategic and proactive approach to assemble the Kingsway Quarter site, remove eyesore buildings and prepare the whole site for redevelopment. This included working in partnership with Cheshire Police on the relocation of Widnes Police Station to more fit for purpose premises on Gerrad Street.
- 3.4 The opening of the new Halton Leisure Centre at Moor Lane in Spring 2025 means the Kingsway Leisure Centre will be vacated and the site redundant. This unlocks the final parcel of land required to enable disposal of Kingsway Quarter for comprehensive redevelopment. The only remaining encumbrance on the land disposal being the need to demolish the leisure centre building following its relocation.
- 3.5 To get a better understanding of the design and development options for the Kingsway Quarter site, Architects have been commissioned to undertake a feasibility study and engage with Planning and Highways. A series of technical survey and viability appraisals are also being undertaken. This pre-development work has been jointly funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in recognition of the importance of bringing forward residential led development on brownfield land. Pre-development design feasibility will be used to inform site marketing and disposal and prepare a 'Development Framework' to help de-risk and accelerate the planning process for developers.
- 3.6 Whilst design feasibility is still on-going, a vision for the Kingsway Quarter is emerging:

Kingsway Quarter presents a unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to regenerating and revitalising Widnes Town Centre. Through delivering a high quality residential led development that makes a positive first impression on a prominent site at the southern threshold into the town centre.

The site can introduce a contemporary residential offer, promote more sustainable urban living and increase footfall and activity into the Town Centre. The size and location of the site presents an opportunity to meet a need for more older-persons and family housing. Bringing these different housing requirements together into a single new neighbourhood can seek a place which exceeds minimum requirements and through built environment and shared public space design recognise the growing importance of promoting intergenerational connections.

Where the design of a place can help relieve isolation, bring people together in community activities to exchange life skills and experiences and to improve general health and wellbeing, as evidenced by research by bodies including Care England and Intergenerational England.

- 3.7 As one of the first town centre priority development sites coming forward it can provide the catalyst for further investment and change. Alongside the opening of the new Halton Leisure Centre on Moor Lane, it can support the renewal attractiveness of the wider Kingsway Quarter and Southern Widnes area.
- 3.8 The Kingsway Quarter is a prominent site. It provides an important pedestrian route between Riverside College and the town centre through the site. Once vacated, it is important that the Leisure Centre is promptly demolished so that it does not become an empty building liability and drain on the resources of the Council or our blue light partners. To enable demolition work to be programmed for Spring 2025, agreement is sought that Executive Board recommend Council adjust the Capital Programme to enable demolition of Kingsway Leisure Centre and associated works. The financial implications for this recommendation are set out in section 5.
- 3.9 With demolition works programmed, the land disposal process can be progressed in parallel. To help expedite the site's redevelopment, it is recommended that Executive Board approves delegated responsibility to Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property in consultation with the Deputy Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Housing Strategy/Development, for site marketing and disposal on the basis of residential led development. This will include a soft market exercise to test a range of developers appetite to realise the development vision and requirements.
- 3.10 Following the land disposal process, and once a preferred developer has been appointed, community consultation will be undertaken prior to submission of any formal planning application by the developer.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The delivery of the Kingsway Quarter will make a positive contribution to use Council (land) resources to realise the Corporate Plan. It will support Priority Six: Valuing and appreciating Halton and our community by supporting Halton's residents to live in decent and affordable homes, surrounded by safe and thriving communities.
- 4.2 The inclusion of older people accommodation as part of the wider vision for the site to create an intergenerational neighbourhood, contributes to Priority One: Improving health, promoting wellbeing and supporting greater independence. The Council's social care commissioning team will be involved in shaping the precise type/offer of any older people accommodation (such as extra care / supported living) to ensure it meets identified need and has a net positive effect on social care budgets.
- 4.3 As a brownfield site, development of the Kingsway Quarter will support realising Halton's Spatial Strategy as set out in the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP). The site lies within 'South Widnes' one of the five Key Urban Regeneration Areas where the majority of new development in the borough is expected to be located.
- 4.4 The DALP exempts brownfields sites from providing an affordable housing requirement. Given the vision for the Kingsway Quarter, it can help meet the need for affordable local housing and the Council will seek to bring forward the site in accordance with this policy and (subject to viability) provide 25% affordable housing.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council's Capital Strategy require new Capital Programme schemes to provide the following information:

5.2 (i) Gross cost of the scheme before any external contributions, reimbursements, or capital grants and estimated cash

An independent estimate for the demolition of Kingsway and associated works has been obtained. Adjusting for inflation and incorporating capital design and project management fees, and site disposal costs, a total gross capital budget cost of £750,00.000 is required.

5.3 (ii) Estimated cashflows over the life of the scheme

Spend is anticipated over three financial years 2024/25 – 2026/27. The majority of capital expenditure is anticipated within financial year 2025/26, when the main demolition works will be undertaken.

5.4 (iii) Expected revenue expenditure consequences of the scheme and how these will be funded

This capital project will lead to the disposal of Council assets (land), and it is not anticipated will generate any direct revenue expenditure consequences for the Council. The construction of new homes on the site will generate additional Council Tax income for the Council, it is too early to estimate what that income will be.

5.5 (iv) Details of any specific funding attributable to the scheme such as from capital grants, external contributions and other reimbursements

Capital funding for this project is anticipated to be met from a combination of external capital grant and capital land receipt.

In February 2024, the Council submitted a grant funding bid to the HM Government for the eligible expenditure for the capital demolition works. This bid to the One Public Estate (OPE) Brownfield Land Release Fund was for £517,500.00. The bid was prepared in partnership with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. Formal support for the bid included the Member of Parliament and Riverside College. The project had a strong Benefits Cost Ratio (BCR), which the HM Government use to evaluate grant applications. A grant funding decision is expected in Summer 2024, however it is not clear at this stage if the election will delay any announcement.

In addition to any external grant secured the land disposal is also anticipated to generate a capital land receipt. This is supported by preliminary viability appraisals, though will be subject to market conditions and any abnormal costs.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Kingsway Quarter will include good quality housing to enable children, young people and families to thrive.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Riverside College are intended to be a key partner in this project, sitting across the road from the site. The College (and its students) will not only benefit from a safer and more attractive link to the town centre they will also be integral to achieving its social value outcomes through embedded construction skills and apprenticeship/training requirements within the land disposal.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The vision for a new intergenerational neighbourhood seeks to integrate health and wellbeing outcomes within the DNA of the scheme design. This includes accommodation for older people and desire to tackle social isolation and promote a sense of community.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

By seeking to increase footfall and activity within Widnes Town Centre and bringing back into productive use vacant land to increase natural surveillance.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The Kingsway Quarter will contribute to the regeneration of Widnes Town Centre and will utilise vacant brownfield land to deliver more homes.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Capital Project risks, such as project overrun and inflationary pressures will be managed by the Council's Property Capital Project Team. Financial risks associated with the capital project will be managed as part of the Council's overall treasury and risk management activity.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are none.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The site is in Widnes Town Centre and will support a housing offer which gives residents choice to live more environmentally friendly and sustainable lives. The Kingsway Quarter is brought forward to contribute to the Council's Climate Change Action Plan (2022-2027). In the Homes and Regeneration Theme, the following action is identified:

H2 - Develop a strategy to accelerate delivery of Net Zero new build homes within the Borough ahead of UK Government targets and introduction of new Future Homes Standards, including use of Council land to deliver a demonstration project.

9.2 Within the Action Plan Update three candidate sites for potential inclusion of a net zero demonstration project are identified: Rutland Street, Runcorn Old Town, Priory Meadow, Castlefields and Kingsway, Widnes. In implementing policy H2, the following requirements, subject to viability, will be sought within the Development Framework and site disposal: "A minimum of 10% of housing units will be built to the "Net Zero Carbon – Operational Energy Standard". This is nationally recognised best practice standard and is defined by the Good Homes Alliance and UK Green Building Council.

9.3 As the first planned net zero housing demonstration project in Widnes, opportunities for local engagement with the community, schools and specifically Riverside College will be sought as part of the delivery of the scheme.

9.4 One opportunity for realising the net zero carbon commitments for Kingsway Quarter is connecting the development into the Council's Smart Micro Grid.

The Council is currently undertaking a technical study for upgrading and extending the micro grid into a Smart Energy Network. Initial advice from the consultants undertaking this study is that it would be feasible to connect the Kingsway Quarter development into the micro grid. The inclusion of older persons' development would be beneficial, as this accommodation could be a single electrical connection and 'off-taker'.

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

The demolition work will result in significant expenditure by the Council.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

For the demolition and site clearance to proceed as soon as the site is vacated, to ensure that the risk of ASB is minimised, HBC need to start commissioning work now. A key requirement is a bat survey which can only be carried out at specific times of the year when bats are active between May and September but ideally completed by end of August. Any delay risks ASB in the building following its decommissioning and ultimately a delay in the site being offered to market.

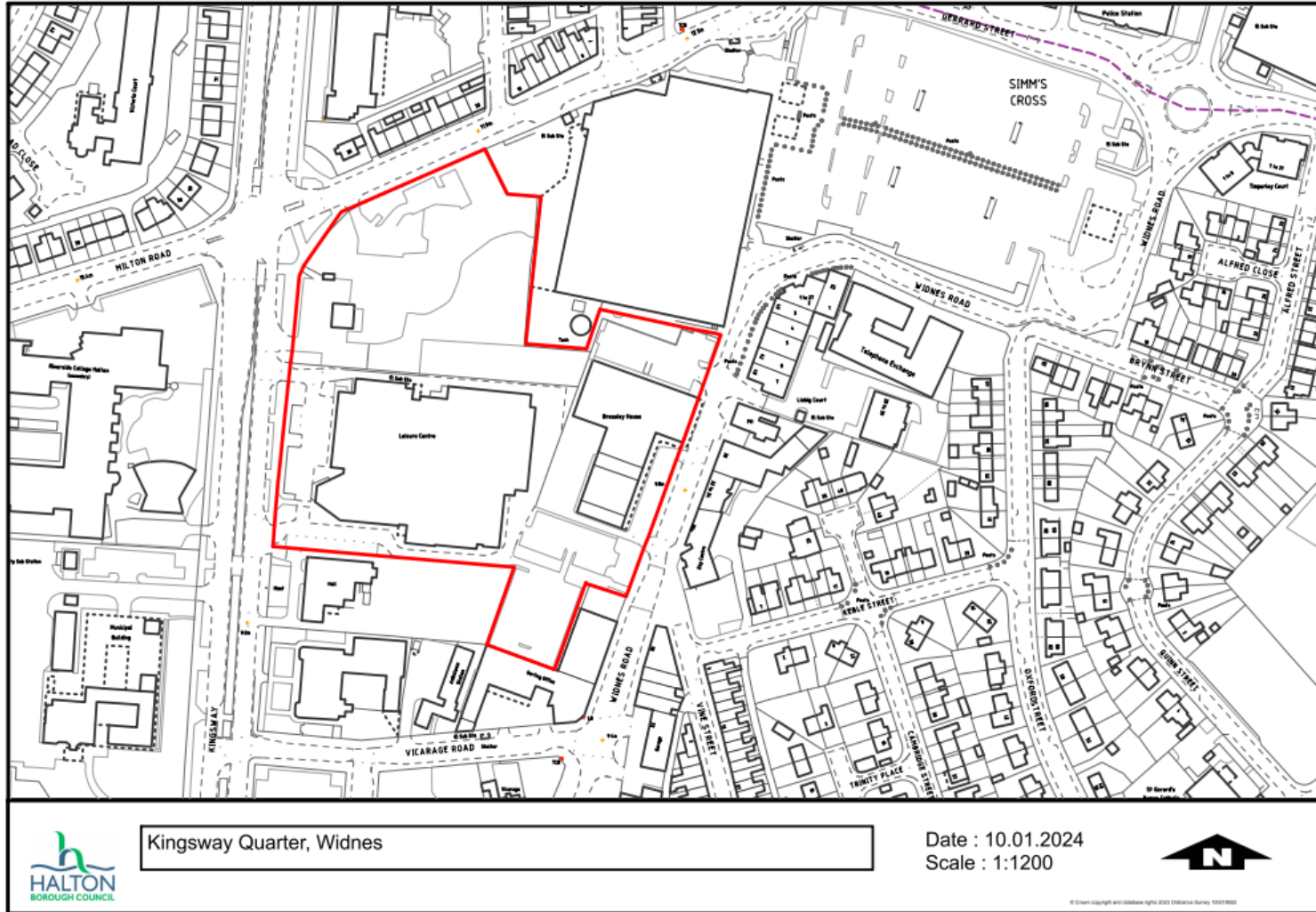
12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The bat survey work needs to be commissioned mid-july to ensure timescales are met.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| Executive Board Report 19 September 2019, Leisure Centre at Moor Lane | Council Website | Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property |
| Executive Board Report 7 December 2023, Widnes Town Centre Vision | Council Website | Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property |

Appendix A – Kingsway Quarter Approximate Site Boundary



| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Executive Board |
| DATE: | 11 July 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Executive Director Environment & Regeneration |
| PORTFOLIO: | Climate Change |
| SUBJECT: | Liverpool City Region Strategic Place Partnership |
| WARD(S) | Borough wide |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Executive Board of the ongoing work by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Homes England to create a Strategic Place Partnership for the City Region. The purpose of this new partnership model is to provide improved governance arrangements to prioritise and coordinate support and investment for residential-led development and housing renewal projects across the Liverpool City Region. This report seeks approvals for the Council to take the necessary steps to contribute to formation of the new Partnership.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board:

- 1) Note the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Homes England are working with local authority partners to create a Strategic Place Partnership for the Liverpool City Region.**
- 2) Approves entering into a Strategic Place Partnership Memorandum of Understanding with partners, leading to production of a Business Plan and new governance arrangements to be established; and**
- 3) Provides delegated authority to the Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Climate Change to agree details for the formation of the Strategic Place Partnership and finalise Halton's Priorities (Appendix A).**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2023 the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) proposed that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) form a Strategic Place Partnerships (SPP) with Homes England (HE). SPP's are a relatively new model of joint working at the sub-regional scale in England. The purpose is to facilitate greater collaboration at a sub-regional scale to support

delivery of place-based housing growth and regeneration ambitions. This support includes allocation and 'pooling' of grant funding from LCR CA and HE. Combined Authority areas which already have a SPP established include Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire.

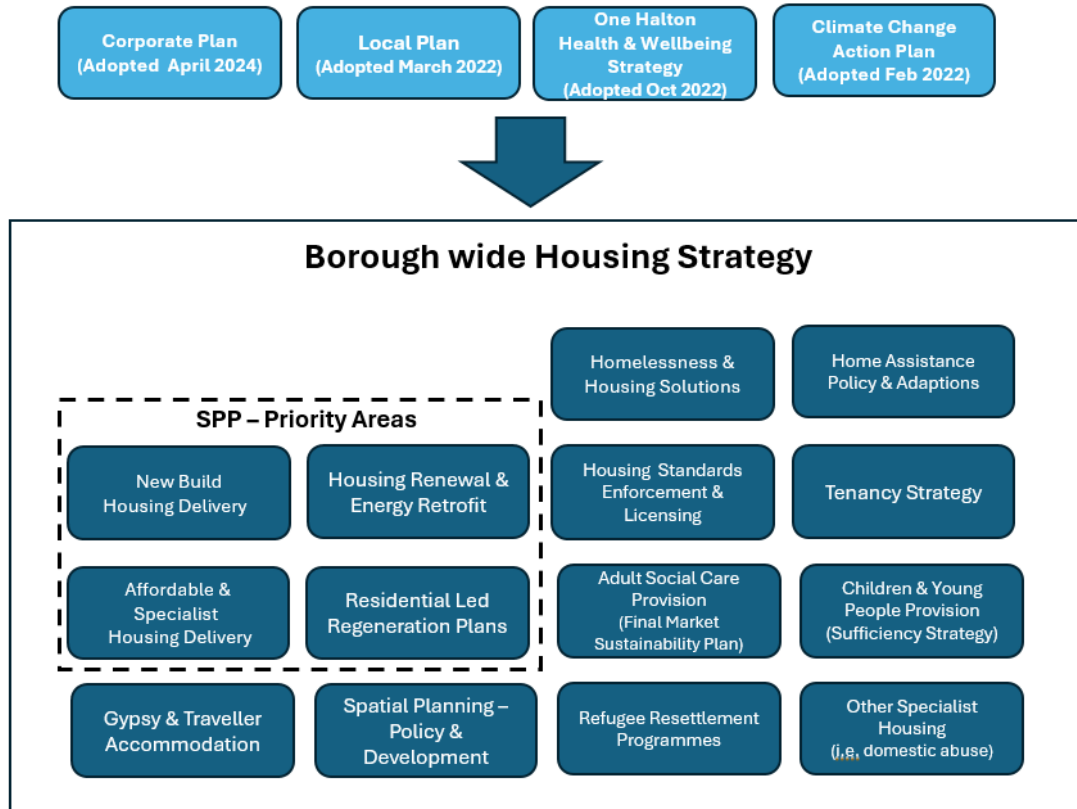
- 3.2 At its meeting on 11 January 2024, the LCR CA Housing and Spatial Planning Advisory Board endorsed the creation of an officer working group to develop a SPP. Halton's input into this working group has been led by the Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property, in liaison with the Director of Planning and Highways.
- 3.3 The working group are finalising a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between HE, LCR CA and the six constituent local authorities. The purpose of the MoU is to provide the broad parameter for how these parties will work together to establish a SPP for the Liverpool City Region. The MoU set outs:
- Purpose and Strategic Objectives for the SPP;
 - MoU will have a term of three years from signing;
 - Requirement that parties will collaborate to co-develop a Partnership Business Plan and deploy resources to aid delivery.
 - Requirement that parties agree joint working principles and governance arrangements, including the creation of a SPP Board.
 - Legal matters, including Freedom of Information, Anti-bribery and non-binding nature of the MoU.
- 3.4 The purpose of the SPP is to enable parties to "work collaboratively and flexibly at all levels of their organisations to explore creative ways to deliver more high-quality homes that will support economic growth, place making and regeneration within the Liverpool City Region". This work is guided by three Strategic Objectives:
- Develop a robust pipeline of investment ready proposals to unlock and accelerate housing delivery and regeneration in the Liverpool City Region – supporting the regions levelling up, economic growth and inclusivity objectives.
 - Realise opportunities to support place-based growth and holistic regeneration solutions to create and grow sustainable neighbourhoods contributing to the region's net zero carbon ambitions; and
 - Improve the supply of high-quality, energy efficient and affordable homes providing greater choice and opportunity for people to access a home in the Liverpool City Region that meets their housing needs.
- 3.5 These strategic objectives align with the Council's own housing regeneration and growth ambitions, with the MoU providing a strong basis for further developing and defining the SPP. It is recommended that Executive Board approves entering the MoU.

- 3.6 It is envisaged that the SPP will run for an initial three-year period. Partners are working towards a formal launch of the SPP in July / August 2024. This requires the following matters to be agreed in advance:
- 3.7 **Year 1 Partnership Business Plan.** To set out how the strategic objectives will be implemented. The Business Plan will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.
- 3.8 The Business Plan will include Halton's housing growth and regeneration priorities for support. Working to the template provided within the Business Plan, draft headline priorities are set out as 'Halton on a Page' (Appendix B). These priorities mirror the Spatial Vision for Halton, as set out in the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP). This recognises a sustainable approach to delivering new homes, which is balanced and complemented by bringing forward a range of employment, retail and leisure opportunities; and supported by ongoing investment in local infrastructure.
- 3.9 Based upon the Halton priorities a more detailed pipeline of housing projects is required. This will provide a site and project specific information to identify the grant funding and capacity support that the LCR CA and HE can 'pool' to help unlock and accelerate housing delivery and regeneration.
- 3.10 **Formalise joint working and governance arrangements.** In line with other Combined Authority area SPP's, it is anticipated that the LCR SPP will be formally chaired by Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor. It is proposed to meet on bi-annual basis, to agree the Business Plan and monitor progress and delivery. These arrangements complement and integrate with the existing governance (and Elected Member representation) provided by the LCR Housing and Spatial Planning Advisory Board.
- 3.11 Delivery of the SPP Business Plan is intended to be coordinated at the City Region level by a Working Group including Officer representation from each local authority area. Additionally, a quarterly 'Halton Place Delivery Group' will provide the opportunity for a single conversation between the Council, LCR CA and HE in respect of Halton's project pipeline. This would include representation from the following Council functions: Planning and Highways; Specialist Housing and Social Care Commissioning; Public Health; and Regeneration Team.
- 3.12 To enable the Council to shape the formation of the SPP, it is recommended that Executive Board provide delegated authority to the Director Economy, Enterprise and Property to agree SPP matters including finalising the Partnership Business Plan and formalising joint working and governance arrangements. This includes final details of Halton's housing growth and regeneration priorities and project pipeline.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As summarised on the diagram below the SPP Business Plan is focussed on support for delivery and implementation of specific areas of the Council's

housing policy responsibilities. At its meeting on the 18th April 2024, the Executive Board approved commissioning a new Borough wide Housing Strategy. A tender exercise for appointment of specialist consultants is currently underway and is anticipated to conclude at the end of July 2024. This will be followed by a 12 month production period including consultation.



- 4.2 Halton’s DALP provides a strong basis for identifying housing growth and regeneration priorities for support via the LCR SPP. This is complemented by housing led development and investment opportunities identified in the Borough wide Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan, and other area-based regeneration plans and strategies. The production of new Borough wide Housing Strategy for Halton will further help define and provide evidence for SPP priorities, particularly in respect of specialist and older people housing.
- 4.3 Notably, the SPP will provide funding and other support to meet housing need in Halton as set out within the DALP. This identifies the need for provision of at least 8,050 (net) additional dwellings from 2014 to 2037, averaging 350 dwelling each year. This includes a net affordable housing need of 119 units each year.
- 4.4 Whilst focussed on housing delivery, funding and support levered into Halton via the SPP can also help achieve wider corporate ambitions. For instance, draft Halton priorities (Appendix A) includes “Town Centre Living”. Housing development which improves the choice and quality of new homes in our town centres, also helps support their regeneration and revitalisation. This approach of bringing wider benefits through residential-led regeneration, aligns with strategies of both the LCR CA and HE.

- 4.5 The establishment of a SPP for the LCR is seen as a precursor to the CA gaining additional housing powers. This would include the CA having strategic oversight of the next Affordable Homes Programme from 2026.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Halton has benefitted significantly for many years from national grant funding from HE and its predecessor organisations (such as English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation). Grant programmes administered by HE include the National Affordable Housing Programme and Specialist Housing Grants. Without HE support regeneration programmes such as Castlefields and Hallwood Park (Southgate), as well as individual developments such as the older people independent living scheme Bakla Fields and Naughton Fields, would not have been viable or delivered.

- 5.2 More recently, LCR CA have enabled access to number of housing related funds including the Brownfield Land Fund, One Public Estate Brownfield Housing Release Fund and home energy retrofit grant schemes. Through pre-development capacity funding, the CA have enabled the Council to undertake development feasibilities to support Council brownfield land disposals for housing.

- 5.3 Whilst the formation of the SPP will not necessarily immediately increase the amount funding available to Halton, it will enable the 'pooling' of LCR CA and HE funding streams, expertise and other resources to support delivering of our priorities. This would also include influencing wider funding decisions, such as CA transportation infrastructure funding.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Adequate and safe housing provides the security to enable children, young people and families to thrive.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The choice, quality and affordability of the Borough's housing offer is a foundation stone for a strong and sustainable local economy.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Housing standards and conditions is recognised as a wider determinant of Health and wellbeing outcomes of people.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Provision of affordable and specialist housing is important to supporting individuals and communities who are most vulnerable.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Utilising vacant brownfield sites to deliver more homes and support regeneration will be supported through the SPP.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no significant risks associated with the production of a new Housing Strategy.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are none.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The SPP will support delivery of housing matters set out within the Climate Change Action Plan. This includes funding for home energy retrofit programmes and supporting delivery of low and zero carbon housing development.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

Appendix A - Halton Place on a Page (DRAFT)

Key Contextual Facts

- Population of 128,964 with 79.9% economically active
- Projected 7% population growth, and 14% household growth.
- Projected change of population of older persons, 2021 to 2040 being increase of 34% (over 65) and 70% (over 75)
- Current delivery at 122% of housing need (at end of 2022/23)

Local Plan Status

The Delivery and Allocations Local Plan was adopted in March 2022 and sets out the long-term spatial vision, strategic priorities and policies for future development in the borough to 2037. The Local Plan is underpinned by desire to contribute to the potential of the Liverpool City Region.

The Spatial Vision for Halton seeks a sustainable approach to meeting local housing needs and developing the residential offer. This sustainable approach is achieved with housing allocations balanced and complemented by bringing forward a range of employment, retail and leisure opportunities. Alongside this the Local Plan is supported by ongoing investment in local infrastructure including the Borough's active travel network to improve connectivity.

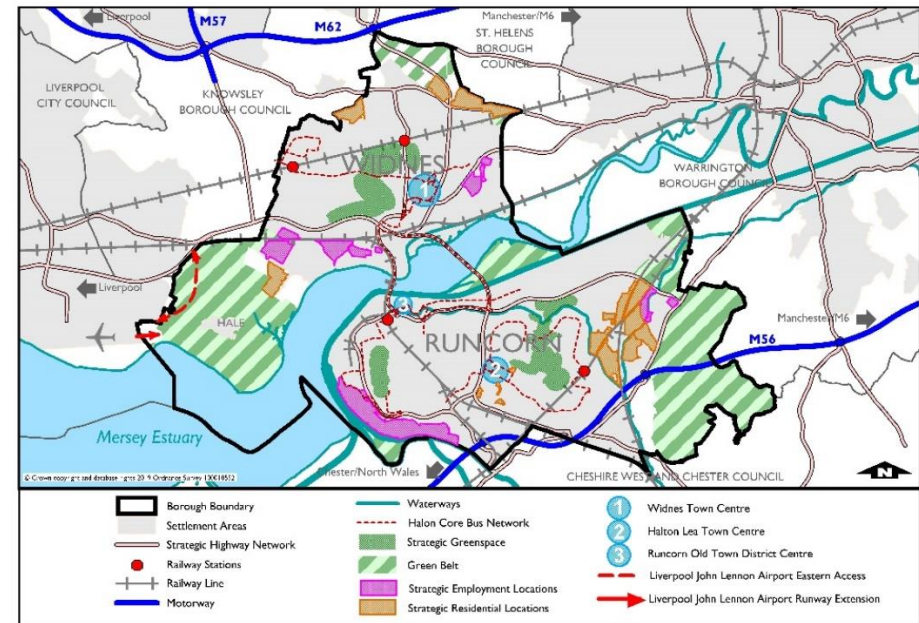
Delivering travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable and low carbon. Halton has a defined transport pipeline to realise these requirements.

The plan defines the need for provision of at least 8,050 (net) additional dwellings from 2014 to 2037, averaging 350 dwelling each year. This includes a net affordable housing need of 119 units each year.

Housing Growth and Regeneration Focus Areas

Ambitious plans to deliver accelerated growth and regeneration that provide a platform for future generations are identified in the DALP, Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan, and area-based strategies such as Runcorn Town Investment Plan and Widnes Town Centre Vision. Spatial housing priorities include:

- Supporting urban regeneration through sustainable urban extension in both Runcorn and Widnes.
- Continued revitalisation of the Borough's town centres as sustainable places to live and focuses for local communities through increasing choice and quality of the housing offer.
- Housing and neighbourhood renewal programmes with a focus on former Runcorn New Town areas and older terraced streets.



Focus Areas for SPP Activity

Sustainable Urban Extensions – East Runcorn (Sandymoor, Daresbury & Preston Brook), North Widnes and Halebank.

Town Centre Living – Widnes, Runcorn, Halton Lea.

Neighbourhood Renewal – West Bank and Southern Widnes, former new town areas (including Palacefields).

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted