

Performance Overview Report - Policy & Resources Directorate

Reporting Period: **Quarter 4 – Period 01st January 2013 to 31st March 2013**

1.0 Introduction

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

2.0 Key Developments

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

- The 2013/14 budget of £115.114m was approved by the Council on 6th March 2013. The net budget will be part funded from an increase of 1.9% to Council Tax which will result in a 2013/14 Council Tax requirement of £36.165m. In balancing the budget further savings of £2.57m were approved.
- The Medium Term Financial Forecast has been updated for 2014/15 and 2015/16. The funding gap for 2014/15 as included in the budget report is £15.54m. As part of the Chancellor of the Exchequers 2013 budget, published on March 20th, he announced Local Government spending would be reduced by a further 1% in 2014/15 which will add approximately £0.70m to the budget gap for the Council
- The processing of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme applications, and the collection of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates, continue to follow a positive trend and performance at year-end remains favourable when compared to our regional neighbours.
- The final phase of the 'Tell Us Once' programme, led by the Department of Work and Pensions, will be implemented during quarter 1 (2013-14). This will allow residents to provide information to central government and local authorities only once in relation to bereavement thereby simplifying the process and minimising the emotional impact upon individuals at a time of loss.
- Grant Thornton, the Councils external Auditor, have provided assurance on the work of Internal Audit and confirmed the authority's compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice.
- Changes are being made to the way the personal injury claims are handled through a 'package of reforms' to be introduced in stages up until August 2013. As a result the authority's existing processes are being reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

- New legislation came into effect in March which is intended to encourage debtors to settle accounts as soon as possible. Should the Council fail to settle accounts within 30 days (currently over 90%) it will be required to add a daily interest payment to any outstanding amount due. As a result current processes and systems are being reviewed in order to maximise compliance.
- The Operational Fleet & Client Transport Efficiency Workstream concluded during quarter 4 with savings of £400, 000 being achieved. Additionally the new structures in relation to the review of Policy & Performance, Research & Intelligence, and Communications & Marketing will be implemented during the first quarter (2013 – 14). This will see the devolution of the Policy and Performance functions and the creation of a new Customer Intelligence Unit which will sit alongside a Marketing Design and Communications Unit within the Legal & Democratic Services Department. As a result savings of £580, 000 have been achieved.
- Following the closure of consultation on budget proposals that had staffing implications staff affected where placed at risk on the 4th January 2013. They then had a period of 90 days to apply for alternative posts within the Council or to seek voluntary redundancy / early retirement. The slight overrun of the Policy & Performance, Marketing & Communications efficiency work stream has resulted in a small number of staff remaining at risk at the time of writing this report.
- The final stage of the transfer of Public Health to the Council continued with the statutory exchange of information between the two organisations and communications with employees and their representatives to ensure a smooth transfer of staff to the Council on 1st April. In addition, the TUPE transfer of employees at The Wade Deacon School was implemented on 1st March with staff transferring to the new Academy.
- Phase I of the Wi-Fi upgrade, to the Municipal Building, Runcorn Town Hall and Rutland House, has now been completed. In addition Wi-Fi installations for those schools with a Service Level Agreement are now underway. These chargeable upgrades are aimed at setting the platform for future service provision as well as meeting the demands of imminent curriculum requirements for mobile devices.
- The new Picow Farm Data Centre, which will accommodate the Records Management Unit, the new Data Centre, and the Printing Team, is now at the planning stage with the building is expected to be operational in September.
- In relation to Information Governance the annual report by the Senior Information Risk Owner (Strategic Director Policy & Resources) has been published. The report summarises progress in relation to information risk management across the Council and concludes that *'Halton Borough Council is in healthy position with regards to Information Security and the public can be assured that all the requirements placed up on the Council are being adhered to, monitored and improved upon constantly'*. The report can be accessed via <http://intranet/search/Pages/Results.aspx?k=SIRO%20REPORT&s=All%20Sites>

- New contracts have been put in place for advertising services – spend on advertising has been reduced annually through keener contract rates, negotiation with suppliers, use of online alternatives and a more targeted approach to use of advertising. The current contract value is estimated at £75k reflecting a spend reduction of almost 90% when compared to 2004-05.
- New social media monitoring software is now operational and will provide a more detailed analysis of our emerging social media presence. To demonstrate the growing influence of social media, during the recent bridge closures (due to snow), our Facebook updates had a reach of more than 20,000 users, with over 300 retweets of our update on the bridge closure.
- Due to the loss of staff within the Legal and Democratic Services Department recruitment will need to take place during the forthcoming first quarter period in order that continuity of service can be maintained.
- The jointly-procured Contracts for the provision of highway improvement and maintenance works in Halton and Warrington have been awarded to Lafarge Tarmac Ltd. Initial meetings and mobilisation processes have commenced with a view to contract start on 1 June 2013.
- Lafarge Tarmac submitted a highly rated bid which it is anticipated will allow both authorities to achieve their objective of providing a high quality, value for money service which focuses on delivering continuous improvement in highway maintenance.
- During the highways winter maintenance season 64 primary gritting runs were undertaken using approx. 1400 tonnes of grit, a 60% increase compared to last year resulting in a significant impact upon budget costs. Current stock of grit is approx. 550 tonnes and deliveries are programmed to increase this to 1300 tonnes by the end of April 2013.
- In March, the DfT confirmed £1.67m funding under the Local Pinch Point Programme for Halton's proposal to increase traffic capacity, at three junctions on the Daresbury Expressway which will support housing and employment growth in the Daresbury Enterprise Zone. This is one of only ten schemes across the country, approved under the first tranche of schemes as part of the Budget.
- Trials are currently underway, in collaboration with the Halton's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), using the Council's in-house fleet spare capacity in the evenings and weekends to provide patient discharge journeys from both Warrington & Whiston hospitals to the patients' respective place of residence. A review meeting to consider usage and options, including the continuation of the service, have been scheduled during the first quarter of 2013 – 14.
- The Mersey Gateway Project Team entered into a Competitive Dialogue procurement process with three bidders in March 2012. The current Dialogue programme will extend into 2013 with the Final Tenders expected to be submitted in spring 2013.

- Following extensive consultation, draft Directorate Business Plans (2013-16) were presented and approved by Executive Board on 7th February 2013. Following some organisational restructuring the plans will be slightly revised during quarter 1 before final publication.
- The Draft Housing Strategy has been approved for consultation with adoption being expected toward the end of quarter 1. Work is also underway with the Procurement Team colleagues to develop a Social Value Policy for Halton in response to the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, which came into effect in January 2013.
- Processes in relation to identifying Assets of Community Value have been developed and approved by Executive Board and a first request has now been received and is being progressed in collaboration with colleagues from Property Services.
- Work has now been completed to gather and analyse data on the Council's workforce profile and information has been updated on the Council's website in order to ensure continued compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- In addition to a number of presentations being provided on the subject the Welfare Benefit reforms were discussed by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board at its March meeting. As a result a programme of activity has been endorsed including the mapping of provision and the production of information leaflets and online resources

3.0 Emerging Issues

- 3.1 A number of emerging issues have been identified during the period that will impact upon the work of the Directorate including:-
- I. The changes to the Welfare Benefits system begin to be implemented as of 01st April and the heavy demand on the Revenues and Benefits service is expected to grow during the first half of the year. This situation will be closely monitored in order to remain alert to any resource issues which may arise
 - II. As part of the changes a local Discretionary Support Scheme has been established for Halton and will be implemented from 1st April 2013. A booklet containing a summary of the Scheme has been circulated to Members and other interested parties. Detailed monitoring of applications and decisions will be undertaken and reported regularly to Members via the Corporate Policy and Performance Board.
 - III. Additionally changes in Council Tax (unoccupied property discounts) and Non-Domestic Rates (50% local retention) arrangements will also increase resource demand. Systems will be reviewed regularly to ensure collection rates, which have historically been high, remain effective.

- IV. Changes will shortly be introduced to reduce the threshold for advertising via the procurement Chest to £1,000 in order to bring about increased savings and the Council's procurement processes will be made fully automated and web based from 1st May 2013. Additionally work is underway to develop more joint procurement arrangements with other public sector partners and the Council's updated Procurement Strategy will be presented to the Business Efficiency Board in May 2013.
- V. An extensive communications exercise will be undertaken during to the coming quarter to inform all staff by letter of their individual position in relation to new arrangements for Pension's Auto Enrolment.
- VI. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has now replaced the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and is responsible for assisting employers in making safe recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. National guidance from the DBS has now been delayed until summer 2013 and in the meantime discussions are taking place with Directorates concerning the cost implications and options available to the Council in dealing with referrals.
- VII. ITC related work will progress across a number of areas during the coming year including:
- The continued development of the HBC Website to enable greater integration of documentation and enhance the interactive experience for service users. Additionally the development of the SharePoint based Extranet will allow the secure transit and sharing of information between local partner organisations e.g. the NHS, Care Agencies etc.
 - The Agile office environment is a key element of the corporate strategy enhancements to technology and Home Working opportunities will continue to be developed and supported. In addition Phase 2 of the Wi-Fi upgrade will see an expansion into all Council owned buildings and it is intended to further develop public access in buildings used for community purposes;
 - The next Microsoft and Apple Operating systems will be tested, looking at the suitability of application deployment through the HBC Cloud, which would allow users to log onto a normal web browser and access an application e.g. Windows 7. Additionally application enhancements to major systems such as CareFirst, Agresso and Revenues and Benefits will continue to be a priority together with a considerable number of smaller applications supported by the technical and administrative teams.
- VIII. The latest phase of major bridge maintenance work within the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) Complex using DfT Major Maintenance Capital funding commences on 8th April 2013. The majority of work in the next two quarters is confined to below deck level so the traffic management consequences for SJB users will be less significant than in previous years. There will however be a

need for some weekend lane closures in May to finish off painting in areas of the Widnes side span which were obstructed by scaffold last year.

- IX. Bids have been submitted to the Liverpool City Region (LCR) for four major local transport schemes in Halton. These are SJB Maintenance, the M56 Junction 11A, the Daresbury Enterprise Zone (EZ) Access Bridges (over Bridgewater Canal) and the Widnes Waterfront Employment Access (Johnsons Lane - Bayer). Further information concerning the bid will be provided as this becomes available.
- X. An 'expression of interest' has also been submitted in the Local Infrastructure Fund & Affordable Homes Guarantees Programme, administered by the Homes and Communities Agency. This is for the provision of two new bridges over Bridgewater Canal to access employment and Housing land at the Daresbury Enterprise Zone. Further information is anticipated late in quarter 1 (2013).
- XI. From April 2013 the element of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) which has previously been paid to operators for the operation of bus services under contract will now be paid directly to the Council. This change in practice could result in operators now seeking compensation from the Council in the form of increased subsidy or through increases in passenger fares.
- XII. During 2013, the Council will establish a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) which will manage the Mersey Gateway Project during the construction and operational phase of the development. It is expected that the SPV will be operational prior to financial close.
- XIII. The fire at JL Sorting in October 2012 has left a large amount of waste on site at Johnsons Lane. Discussions have been taking place with the Environment Agency with a view to resolving the situation as soon as is possible.
- XIV. Due to the imminent demise of Remploy Managed Services, the CCTV Monitoring service is being transferred in-house from 1 June 2013. This will involve seven staff being transferred and the service will continue to operate from the CCTV Control Room at Runcorn Town Hall.

4.0 Risk Control Measures

Risk control forms an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and performance monitoring arrangements. During the development of the 2012/13 Business Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all key service objectives with high risks included in the Directorate Risk Register.

As a result, monitoring of all relevant 'high' risks has been undertaken in quarter 2 and quarter 4.

Currently all high risk mitigations measures are being implemented as planned and therefore there are presently no mitigation measures being reported by exception.

5.0 High Priority Equality Actions

The Council must have evidence that it reviews its services and policies to show that they comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011. The PSED also requires us to publish this information as it is available.



As a result of undertaking a Departmental Equality Impact Assessments no high priority actions were identified for the Directorate to quarter 2 2012 – 2013.

6.0 Performance Overview

The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate.

Financial Management





Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
FS O1	Report Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board November 2012	
FS O3	Complete the Draft Abstract of Accounts for certification by Chief Financial Officer by 30th June 2012 . Publish the Abstract of Accounts by 30th September 2012 .	

Supporting Commentary

The Medium Term Financial Strategy will be reported to Executive Board on 29th November and the Abstract of Accounts was approved and published as planned.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	11 / 12 Actual	12 / 13 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
FSLI 05	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected	97.11	96.00%+	97.11		
FSLI 06	The % of Business Rates due that were collected	97.11	96.00%+	97.13		

Supporting Commentary

The established trend of consistently high rates of collection has been maintained. This is a notable achievement given the prevailing economic conditions and levels of individual disposable income.

Human Resources & Organisational Development

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
HRLD O1	To further enhance the existing coaching programme - September 2012	
	Further develop the capacity for e-learning opportunities and undertake promotional activities December 2012	
	Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Corporate Peoples Plan March 2013	
HRLD O2	Further develop the HR Self-serve portal - September 2012	

Supporting Commentary

Accreditation for the delivery of coaching skills has been successfully achieved and this now forms an element of the ILM programme. In addition to the continued delivery of the actions within the Corporate Peoples Plan there are now a total of 31 e-learning modules available to staff which provides a greater flexibility and whilst minimising the costs associated with staff travel and time away from the workplace.

In relation to the HR Portal The Amendment to Establishment process has been delayed as iTrent was implemented. It is intended to now commence to test the new electronic process during the coming year

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	11 / 12 Actual	12 / 13 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
HRLD LI 1	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness.	9.03	8.5	10.06		
HRLD LI 6	a) women	58.27	50.00	55.04		
	b) From BME communities.	2.73	1.0	2.91		
	c) With a disability	0.61	5.0	0.65		
HRLD LI 7	No of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act as a % of the total workforce.	2.21	7.50	1.36		
HRLD LI 8	Minority Ethnic community staff as % of total workforce.	0.89	1.0	0.89		

Supporting Commentary

In relation to the workforce profile the position remains, as expected, broadly in line with that of the preceding year, and with the exception of disabled people, is reflective of the wider community profile.






When compared with the position for Q4 last year there has been a slight increase in the levels of sickness absence. As we move into 2013 – 14 work will continue with managers to determine cause and effect relationships in order that as far as possible steps can be taken to promote individual health and well-being and to reduce levels of absence where possible.

These include recognising good attendance and analysing patterns of absence in order to undertake root cause analysis. This provides the opportunity to develop alternative means by which situations can be managed e.g. considering reasonable adjustments, variation of working patterns, mutually agreeable reduction in working hours etc.

The HR / Employee Relations teams currently offer surgeries to assist managers with specific issues and develop appropriate action plans.

ICT Infrastructure

Key Objectives / milestones











Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
ICT O1	Upgrade of the virtualization platform to version V6 – Dec 2012	
	Development of Cloud Application Distribution Platform - Feb 2013	
	Site to site dual Backup system - September 2012	
	Schools Cloud Services Trial and the development of a future primary trial site - September 2012	
	Interactive Web Services and SharePoint Integration – June 2012	

Supporting Commentary

The upgrade to V6 has been completed as has the dual back up system which will further enhance the strategic management of the Council's Data Assets. Additionally SharePoint is now the Council's intranet platform and old services have been decommissioned.

The Cloud Application Distribution Platform will be deployed as proof of concept in April 2013 and following a period of testing is expected to become fully operational later in the year. The Schools Cloud Services Trial, which will provide bespoke ICT solutions to Schools, and is anticipated to provide a source of income for the Council, is now underway with a Primary School and additional services are in development.

Key Performance Indicators




Ref	Measure	11 / 12 Actual	12 / 13 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
ICT LI 1	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	100	99	99		
ITC LI 2	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	100	99	99		
ITC LI 4	% Of all responsive repairs completed within 2 working days.	92	80	92		
ITC LI 6	Member Support: % of calls responded to within 1 working day	95	99	99		
ITC LI 8	Average working days from order to completion of a new PC	10	10	9		

Supporting Commentary

The position at year-end is very positive with a number of measures achieving their ceiling. This provides an assurance that the ICT infrastructure remains resilient and provides the necessary capability and foundation for the successful and consistent delivery of front line services to residents.

Legal & Democracy

Key Objectives / milestones







Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
LD O1	Secure renewal of Lexcel & ISO Accreditation January 2013	
LD O3	To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting March 2013	
	To induct all new members – by October 2012	

Supporting Commentary

Both Lexcel and ISO accreditations have been secured as planned providing the authority with continuing assurance of professional standards of practice are being maintained.

All Members were provided with the opportunity of a MAP meeting and all newly elected Members taking part in the induction programme.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	11 / 12 Actual	12 / 13 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
LDLI 01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (51 Total)	51 (100%)	50 ¹ (100%)	46 (79%)		
LDLI 06	Members of Public attending Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums) – For information	138	N/A	204		
LDLI 07	No. Of Questions asked by Members of the Public at Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums) – For information	20	N/A	42		

Supporting Commentary






Although the annual target has not been achieved all Members were given the opportunity of having a MAP meeting during the course of the year. Additionally it is recognised that personal choice and individual circumstances will also be influential and Members views of existing support arrangements remains positive.

Both attendance and the number of questions being asked by members of the public have increased as compared to the same period last year. Whilst both measures can be influenced by the nature of an agenda item work continues to ensure meetings and agendas remain publicly accessible.

¹ 6 Members have expressed a wish not to partake in this programme.

Policy, Planning and Transportation

Key milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
PPT O1	Progress the Core Strategy to adoption October 2012 Progress the Waste Development Plan document to adoption February 2013	 
PPT O4	Respond as appropriate to the Munro Review of Child Protection to ensure that the Children and Enterprise Directorate have effective quality assurance and performance management frameworks in place by September 2012 . Support statutory inspections in CYP Directorate March 2013	
PPT O5	Review progress, revise SJB maintenance strategy document and deliver 2012/13 major bridge maintenance works programme. March 2013	
PPT O7	Commence the procurement process for the construction of the Mersey Gateway : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidders submit draft final tenders November 2012 • Issue invitation to submit final tender February 2013 • Deadline for return of key tenders March 2013 	
PPT O9	To deliver the 2012/13 LTP Capital Programme. March 2013	

Supporting commentary















Both the Core Strategy and Waste Development Plan documents have been completed and will be presented to Members for consideration / formal adoption during quarter 1 of the new financial year.

In light of the Munro review support has been provided to developing revised performance management arrangements along with support for the inspection of the Warrington Rd Children's Centre during quarter 4.

The major bridge work programme was delivered as planned within budget availability.

The delivery of the Mersey Gateway Project has largely progressed as planned although receipt of final tenders will now occur during quarter 1 (2013-14) rather than Q4 (2012-13). The impact of this slippage will be negligible.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	11 / 12 Actual	12 / 13 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
PPT LI 07	Processing of planning applications (major / other % < 13 weeks / minor % < 8 weeks)					
	a) 'major' applications	25	60	66.7%		
	b) 'minor' applications	34	80	60.9%		
	c) 'other' applications	55	80	70.4%		
PPTLI 07	To ensure a 5 year rolling supply of housing land available for 2,000 homes over 5 years (%)	128.8	100	158.0%		
PPT LI 28	No. of passengers on community based accessible transport	253,682	267,000	275,518		
PPT LI 31	Local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area in one year (000's)	6,060	6,200	5,491		
PPT LI 16	% dangerous damage to roads & pavements repaired within 24 hours.	94.4	98.0	74.0		

Supporting Commentary

Additional resources have been allocated to the processing of planning applications with permanent staff recruitment scheduled for quarter 1 (2013-14). This will have a positive effect upon processing times as illustrated by the year-end position.




A total of 199 housing sites were deemed deliverable within the five-year period, yielding a total of 4270 dwellings and one traveller site yielding 12 plots.

The year-end position in relation to the use of Community Based accessible transport is very positive and has been influenced by services being marketed more widely e.g. through Area Forums and the distribution of leaflets. Additionally the improved scheduling and optimisation of the in-house fleet has resulted in less use of external providers. Local bus passenger journeys have been adversely affected by the current economic climate and the need for operators to rationalise services in order to maintain financial viability of their operations.

Due to an increase in inspections the number of identified road defects has increased which has impacted upon repairs, however the most safety critical repairs are given priority. Additionally the new term contract (effective in June 2013) includes features which will provide greater contractual control to the Council, and incentives to the provider, which are likely to have a positive impact on performance as we move forward into the new financial year.




7.0 Application of symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress		<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
Green		Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the annual target <u>is on course to be achieved</u>.</i>
Amber		Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> , whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the annual target is on course to be achieved.</i>
Red		Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain</u> that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the target <u>will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</i>

Direction of Travel Indicator

Where possible performance measures will also identify a direction of travel using the following convention

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