

Environment and Urban Renewal PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report

Reporting Period: **Quarter 2 – 1st July 2020 – 30th September 2020**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the second quarter of 2020 / 21 for service areas within the remit of the Environment and Urban Renewal (E&UR) Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2019-20 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board i.e.:
 - Development & Investment Services
 - Open Spaces and Waste and Environmental Improvement
 - Highways, Transportation & Logistics and Physical Environment
 - Housing Strategy
- 1.3 The emergence of the global COVID19 pandemic early in 2020 has had a significant and unavoidable impact upon Council services the full extent of which is yet to become known. The Council, along with key partner agencies, has prioritised its resources upon mitigating the serious risks to public health, the protection of vulnerable residents, and the social cohesion of the local community. In developing appropriate responses to emerging national and local priorities this situation is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future.
- 1.4 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 8 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

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

Regeneration / External Funding

- 2.2 Procurement of Project Violet concluded during this quarter and the selected contractor, Wilmott Dixon, started on site in August 2020. Campus occupancy has dropped due to Covid-19 however there has been some evidence of growth and strong interest. The JV are looking to progress proposals for the next phase, including land acquisition, infrastructure and further office space
- 2.3 Astmoor Masterplan and Delivery Strategy was adopted by Executive Board in September. Approval was also given for £1.5m capital funding over 2 years to refurbish Astmoor Road and the extension of the Discretionary Business Rates Relief scheme by one year to March 2025
- 2.4 A Strategic Investment Fund application to the Combined Authority for £110K for desktop site investigation studies on 5 Council owned sites is currently being finalised.

- 2.5 The Future High Street Fund business case for Runcorn town centre was submitted at the end of July 2020. This is a competitive bid for up to £25million for physical regeneration projects in the town centre which met the Government Criteria and satisfy the Green book appraisal.
- 2.6 Work continues at the Station Quarter to support colleagues in Open Spaces gain sign off from Network Rail and Avanti for the proposed Station Piazza and At Halton Lea work continues to implement the Liverpool City Region £1million grant to strengthen the centre by attracting and consolidating non-retail uses.
- 2.7 An ERDF grant for opening up High street safely fund of £114,260 has been allocated to Halton and a planning application for Gorse Point has been submitted and given its size interest in the site remains strong despite COVID and Brexit.
- 2.8 External Funding work has been focused on supporting organisations to apply for emergency funding streams. The Team attends the fortnightly Voluntary and Community Sector calls organised by the VCA and we know from this that there are other emergency funds being accessed by the sector; the Team is pulling together an overview of funding secured by the sector in Halton. From the information we have gathered to date, we understand that 133 projects/individuals have been funded in Halton totalling £1,215,382 through COVID emergency funds
- 2.9 A weekly COVID emergency fund bulletin has been released every Tuesday since March and this has been well received by the sector – latest version is available via the website at: <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/business/businesssupport/pdf/Funding/CoronavirusFunds.pdf> .

Highways, Transportation & Logistics and Physical Environment

- 2.10 As a consequence of the COVID pandemic the Development Control Committee have been undertaking meetings virtually and a number of major application have been determined with others concerning housing and employment schemes still under consideration.

Total Applications Received: (Includes those Withdrawn and Returned 193	
Applications Decided 172	Applications On-Hand (Undecided) 163
Pre-Applications Received 33	Pre Applications Closed 23

N.B. There are certain applications (such as tree preservation orders) that are not counted in the statutory CLG speed of processing statistics. This accounts for the difference between the figures reported above and the figures given for PPT LI 01.

- 2.11 Following submission of the Local Plan Officers are currently working to formulate responses to queries which have been raised by the planning Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State.
- 2.12 The new roundabout which has been installed as part of the Runcorn Demolition and Dde-linking projected opened during quarter 2 and the new junction for the Widnes Loops link road is due to be opened early in October.
- 2.13 As part of the Runcorn Station Quarter development the Cavendish Street / Shaw Street development is now due to commence with an expected completion of late summer 2021.
- 2.14 Reconfiguration of the carriageway over SJB has progressed, with renewal of the deck waterproofing and surfacing completed. The new splitter islands for the cycle lane and carriageway markings should be completed in October.
- 2.15 Work has progressed on Runcorn Approach Viaduct (RAV) including the STEP and LGF1 works. The new structural plinth for a parapet along the western side of RAV has been completed, and work to install the adjoining safety fencing commenced.

- 2.16 On the SJB arch, 'contact point' painting has been completed which concludes the arch superstructure maintenance painting project. Additionally a Listed Building Consent application has been submitted for the work art Waterloo Bridge that was necessitated by the removal of Queensway as part of the Runcorn De-linking project.

Open Spaces and Waste and Environmental Improvement

- 2.17 The delivery of Open Space Services has faced significant challenges during the first half-year period as whilst some technical and design staff were able to work from home the large majority of staff were required to work from various depots and on-site locations and this was exacerbated by the need to induct 13 new members of staff to posts that had become vacant during the period. However the swift and effective introduction, for example, of split-shift working arrangements and additional vehicle hire has meant that service delivery has continued whilst attaining appropriate social distancing.
- 2.18 During the period 1 April – 30 September 2020 the Borough's parks were extremely busy. A combination of periods of good weather and varying covid-19 restrictions meant that parks were for much of this period the option of choice for social interaction. In the earlier part of the period facilities such as equipped children's play areas, bowling greens, tennis courts and skate parks had to be closed. However all aspects of park management (grass cutting, cleansing, fine horticulture etc) were delivered to schedule.
- 2.19 A 'love your park' social and mainstream media campaign, led by the council's media team, was used to get messages out to the public about how they could help the council to look after the Borough's parks. The campaign was well received by the public and the Open Space Service received a lot of recognition from the public verbally and in writing.
- 2.20 Such feedback clearly demonstrated the significant impact that the often taken for granted accessible, well maintained open spaces has had in terms of the mental and physical health of residents during these challenging times.
- 2.21 There was also a notable increase in demand for streetscene services during the first half-year and staff from other departments, such as leisure centres, were successfully redeployed to assist in delivering increased service capacity which maintained the aesthetic appearance of open space areas.
- 2.22 Open spaces design and development work has continued throughout the period and a number of large scale projects were completed. These included the upgrading of a mile of footpaths at Runcorn Town Park, further boundary works at Runcorn Hill Park, footpath works at Victoria Park and the completion of the Peel House Cemetery.
- 2.23 At the beginning of the Covid-19 emergency staff from the Streetscene section built the body storage facility at the Silver Blades Ice Rink and they dismantled it when it was no longer required. The quality of the facility that the service put together was commented on by a number of professional emergency service organisations. The Open Space Service, using redeployed staff from the Waste & Environmental Improvement division ran the facility whilst it was open.
- 2.24 The Cemeteries & Crematorium section was also extremely busy during this period and an additional crematorium technician took up post in April 2020. During the period there were 905 cremations (in the same period last year 674) and 320 full body burials (293 in the same period last year).
- 2.25 Waste Collection Services continued to operate as scheduled throughout Quarters 1 and 2. To enable all services to be maintained safely, a number of new operational measures were introduced. This included specific measures to ensure that social-distancing rules could be adhered to, including, but not limited to, the use of additional vehicles for staff to travel to and from site independently to reduce the number travelling together in vehicle cabs.

- 2.26 Household waste collected during quarter 1 increased by 1,500 tonnes (16%) and fell back to normal levels during the second quarter period. However, with regards to the blue and green bin services, an increase in tonnage was seen across the whole of Q1 and Q2, with an additional 1,000 tonnes of recyclable materials and an additional 600 tonnes of garden waste being collected during that period; a 20% and 18% increase respectively.
- 2.27 At the end of Quarter 2 there were 17,700 households subscribed to the garden waste collection service, which is over 1,200 more subscriptions than at the end of Q2 last year and represents a take up rate of 40%; which is the highest participation level since it became necessary for this to become a charged service.
- 2.28 Following the reopening of the Council's two household waste recycling centres in quarter 1 it was necessary to introduce new arrangements to manage volumes of traffic and queuing times and social distancing measures and it has been necessary to limit access for some vehicle types. Moving through quarter 2 has seen traffic numbers and visits now returning to levels that would normally be expected for the time of year. However this situation will need to be kept under review in light of any further COVID related developments.

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:-

Regeneration / External Funding

- 3.2 The Sci-Tech Daresbury Science, Innovation & Growth Strategy will be refreshed to take account of the impact of Covid on the economy. In tandem with this, specific action plans such as the Talent & Skills Action Plan will be refreshed to respond to priorities for economic reset and recovery. As part of the masterplan process, the JV will consider the response to environmental sustainability.
- 3.3 The outcome of the Future High Streets Fund bid for Runcorn should be known in Autumn 2020 and this will help inform future project work and staffing requirements. Projects which are unsuccessful can, subject to them meeting certain criteria, be re-considered as part of the project prioritisation process for the Town Investment Plan submission.
- 3.4 With regards to external funding Emergency funds are still being released by grant funders, for example, Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) launched a new pot this week, and the team continues to monitor and promote these, as well as supporting with bid writing where appropriate.
- 3.5 Additionally the team is also looking at the longer term picture and how external funding might support recovery and resilience measures for the voluntary and community sector, as funders start to reopen their 'normal' grant programmes, as well as managing our core workloads.

Highways, Transportation & Logistics and Physical Environment

- 3.6 Additional site work has been identified on Runcorn Approach Viaduct for the renewal of an existing run of parapet on the western lead-in to SJB. There have been significant design issues in developing a solution that meets current technical standards, but this has been achieved. The proposal has been issued to the contractor for pricing and programming.
- 3.7 At this stage it is unclear whether the additional work will potentially delay the re-opening of Silver Jubilee Bridge and possible mitigation measures to alleviate this risk are presently being considered.

Open Spaces and Waste and Environmental Improvement

3.8 The cremators at Widnes Crematorium saw unprecedented use during the Quarter 1 and 2 periods and will require extensive overhaul during Q3 and 4. There will involve significant cost but it is anticipated that this can be met by the additional income that has been received.

4.0 Risk Control Measures

- 4.1 Risk control forms an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and Performance Monitoring arrangements. As such Directorate Risk Registers were updated in tandem with the development of the suite of 2019 – 20 Directorate Business Plans.
- 4.2 Progress concerning the implementation of all high-risk mitigation measures relevant to the Board are included as Appendix 1 to this report.

5.0 High Priority Equality Actions

- 5.1 Equality issues continue to form a routine element of the Council's business planning and operational decision making processes. Additionally the Council must have evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011.
- 5.2 The Council's latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives is published on the Council website and is available via:

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

6.0 Performance Overview

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

Development and Investment Services

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
EEP 02a	To prepare a Town Investment Plan for Runcorn by January 2021	
EEP 02b	To prepare a Masterplan and Delivery Strategy for the Astmoor Industrial Estate by September 2020	
EEP 02c	To deliver the Liverpool City Region Town Centres' Fund in Halton Lea by 31st March 2021	

Supporting Commentary

EEP 02a

Halton has been invited to submit proposals under the Town Deal initiative to deliver a regeneration programme in Runcorn Old Town.

EEP 02b

Astmoor is identified as a key impact area in the Council's Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan. There will be a requirement to develop a masterplan and delivery plan for the area which will be used to invite potential developer interest to bring forward employment sites in the area.

EEP 02c

Halton bid for £1m of Strategic Investment Funding to deliver a programme of initiatives in Halton Lea.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19 / 20 Actual	20 21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 04	Occupancy rates of commercial and investment portfolio.	TBA	TBA	100% Investment and 90% commercial		
EEP LI 05	Occupancy of Widnes Market Hall.	TBA	TBA	91%		
EEP LI 07	Number of companies benefitting from the Council's intensive Key Account Management Service.	TBA	TBA	56		

Supporting Commentary

Current Vacancies of commercial and investment portfolio –71 High St Runcorn, 6 Church St Runcorn, Frankie and Bennies the Hive, plot at Black Cat and the former bus depot Moor Lane. Marketing to commence in Q3 of Frankie and Bennie's unit and 6 Church St potential to use to open up the upper floors of 4, 6, 8, Church St. Refurbishment scheme for 71 High St underway. Unlikely to find tenants within Q3, Q4 due to economic climate.

Occupancy levels in the indoor Market remain very strong despite the 3 month closure due to COVID-19

Because of competing priorities the current resource dedicated to KAM is reduced and therefore the number of companies receiving KAM support has remained static.

Policy, Planning and Transportation

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
PPT 02	To deliver the 2019/20 LTP Capital Programme March 2020	
PPT 03	Ensure continued unrestricted availability of the Highway network and to allow future maintenance to be delivered on a steady state, lifecycle planned basis.	
PPT 04	Continue to maintain the Highway Authorities statutory duties in accordance with Section 41 and 58 of the Highways Act.	
PPT 05	Consult on a revised draft Delivery and Site Allocations Local Plan (DALP)	
PPT 06	To ensure that at least one exercise is carried out each financial to test the COMAH plans March 2019	

Currently the authority have a statutory duty to ensure the 9 Upper Tier COMAH Sites within the Borough are compliant in relation to the COMAH Regulations 2015. As part of these Regulations, exercises are planned as part of the 3 year COMAH Cycle.

For 2020/2021, both the Runcorn Site COMAH Operators Site and Univar Ltd, Widnes had scheduled Exercises to take place as part of this cycle.

However, due to Covid-19, both scheduled Exercises were suspended and rescheduled.

- Runcorn Site COMAH Operators rescheduled exercise from March 2020 to 16th October 2020.
- Univar Ltd, Widnes rescheduled exercise from July 2020 to 26th November 2020.

Both exercises will take place via MS Teams as part of a table top format. The COMAH aim and objectives will be used to structure the framework to validate the External COMAH Plan. A Multi-Agency Command and Control format with specific questions and answer sessions to be used, which in-turn will aim to validate the COMAH External Plan. A structured debrief will take place via an online document and an Exercise Report will be completed as part of the validation process. All arrangements including exercise scenario (taken from the Safety Report) have been agreed with the Competent Authority (HSE / Environment Agency).

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19 / 20 Actual	20 / 21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
PPT LI 02	Net additional homes provided	450	552	See comment below	N/A	N/A
PPT LI 03	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	75	--		N/A	N/A
PPT LI 04	Processing of planning applications (%) as measured against targets for, a) 'major' applications	100%		75%		

Ref	Measure	19 / 20 Actual	20 / 21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
	b) 'minor' applications	92.85%		64.7%		
	c) 'other' applications	88.17%		53.53%		
PPT LI 05	To ensure a rolling five year supply of housing land. (Deliverable supply (units) as a % of rolling 5 year requirement).	307	100	See comment	N/A	N/A
PPT LI 06	No. of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	31.2	N/A	31.2 (See comment)		
PPT LI 07	No. of children (<16) killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 year Av.)	3.8	N/A	3.6		
PPT LI 08	No. of people slightly injured in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	243	N/A	238		
PPT LI 12	Damage to roads and pavements (% above intervention levels) repaired within 24 hours.	100	100	100		
PPT LI 15	% of network where structural maintenance should be considered: a) Principal Roads b) Non-Principal Roads c) Unclassified Roads	1.6 2 4	2 4 9	See comment	N/A	N/A
PPT LI 16	The proportion of non-frequent scheduled bus services on time (%): a) Percentage of buses starting route on time b) Percentage of buses on time at intermediate timing points	TBA TBA	99.00 95.00	See comment See comment	N/A N/A	N/A N/A
PPT LI 18	% of bus stops with Quality Corridor accessibility features. (No. of stops – 603)	461 (79%)	472 (81%)	461 (79%)		

Supporting Commentary

PPT 02/03

With regards to net additional homes provided there were 600 completions recorded in 16 month period April 2019 to July 2020 suggesting 12 month average of 450. 555 target in adopted Core Strategy. Proposed revision = 350.

With regards to affordable homes completions were monitored for 2019/20 as at 31st July 2020 and reported in August this year (2020).

PPT 04

The processing of planning applications has slowed when compared to the same period last year which were Major 100%, Minor 100% Other 85.7%.

This is largely due to the effects of a member of staff leaving in December 2019 and an increase in workload. A new member of staff has now been recruited and will take up post during quarter 3 and this will positively impact upon processing times.

PPT 05

The 5 year supply of housing land will be reported in quarter 3.

PPT 06/07/08

The traffic collision data being reported reflects the quarter 1 position as quarter 2 data is not yet available from Cheshire Police.

Whilst the total number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) has remained fairly static there has been a slight reduction in the number of children KSI and a slight upturn in the number of people slightly injured.

PPT 12/ 15

Repairs to damage of roads and pavement remains on track but the annual surveys required to monitor the network structure have been delayed as a consequence of the present COVID situation.

PPT 16/18

Due to the COVID pandemic bus punctuality checks were postponed and the initial lockdown period forced operators to significantly reduce service frequency as a result of much reduced passenger numbers. It is unlikely that this indicator can be reported during quarter 3.

The number of bust stops with accessibility features has remained static as alternative COVID related initiatives have taken precedence.

Waste and Environmental Improvement

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q2 Progress
CE 03a	Manage greenspace areas as per the agreed specification - March 2020 .	
CE 04a	Continue to deliver communications and awareness raising initiatives to ensure that participation with the Council's recycling services is maximised and that residents comply with the requirements of the Council's Household Waste Collection Policy - March 2020 .	

Supporting Commentary

Despite extreme challenges the Open Space Service was able to deliver all works within the councils agreed specification for green space management.

Restrictions that have been in place during Q1 and Q2 have impacted upon the ability to deliver the full range of communications and awareness raising activity, such as householder engagement, school visits and roadshows. However, throughout the first two quarters, messages and advice about waste and recycling have been regularly posted on the Council's social media sites.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19 / 20 Actual	20 / 21 Target	Q2 Actual	Q2 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 05	Residual household waste per household.	TBA	TBA	314kg		
CE LI 06	Household waste recycled and composted.	TBA	TBA	38.9%		

Supporting Commentary

Residual waste per household is an estimated figure but shows slightly higher than that at quarter 2 last year which was 307kg. As detailed earlier in this report, residual waste to the half-year point was much higher than normal and it is unclear what impact this will have on the achievement of this annual target.

Again the recycling figure is estimated and at this point it is difficult to predict what the potential effect of the COVID situation may be by year-end.

7.0 Financial Statements

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget as at 30 September 2020

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	4,472	2,129	2,145	(16)	(31)
Repairs & Maintenance	2,205	995	895	100	200
Premises	76	64	64	0	0
Energy & Water Costs	694	252	234	18	33
NNDR	472	464	486	(22)	(22)
Rents	179	63	63	0	1
Economic Regeneration Activities	34	5	0	5	10
Security	471	168	168	0	0
Supplies & Services	260	212	197	15	15
Supplies & Services - Grant/External Funded	1,022	386	386	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisation	150	19	19	0	0
Covid-19 Discretionary Business Support Grants	831	831	831	0	0
Capital Financing	21	21	21	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	210	122	122	0	0
Total Expenditure	11,097	5,731	5,631	100	206
Income					
Fees & Charges	-876	-301	-301	0	(1)
Rent - Commercial Properties	-780	-319	-221	(98)	(216)
Rent - Investment Properties	-39	-17	-17	0	0
Rent - Markets	-570	-200	-198	(2)	(2)
Government Grant Income	-1,615	-1,012	-1,012	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Income	-1,044	-178	-178	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-440	-434	-434	0	0
Recharges to Capital	-206	-67	-67	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-794	-244	-244	0	0
Total Income	-6,364	-2,772	-2,672	(100)	(219)
Net Operational Expenditure	4,733	2,959	2,959	0	(13)
Covid Costs					
Staffing	0	0	1	(1)	(1)
Repairs & Maintenance	0	0	26	(26)	(51)
Security	0	0	16	(16)	(16)
Supplies & Services	0	0	74	(74)	(84)
Covid Loss of Income					
Rent - Commercial Properties	-197	-197	0	(197)	(312)
Rent - Investment Properties	-5	-5	0	(5)	(5)
Rent - Markets	-209	-209	0	(209)	(235)
Covid Grant Funding	0	0	-528	528	704
Net Covid Expenditure	-411	-411	-411	0	0
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,777	888	888	0	0
Transport Support	28	14	14	0	0
Central Support	2,082	1,041	1,041	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-6,592	-3,296	-3,296	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,701	-1,353	-1,353	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	1,621	1,195	1,195	0	(13)

Comments on the above figures

Finance continue to work closely with the Department to ensure that a balanced budget is achieved.

Whilst effective control over expenditure can be maintained, income remains a budget pressure, as the majority of the income is generated externally.

It is projected that the saving measures put forward by the Department for 2020/21 will be met.

However, future revenue savings are becoming increasingly hard to find, given the number of employees within respective business units. In addition, the department consists of 134.4 staff, of which 73 are externally funded, through grant/capital or external sources. There are three vacancies in the department at present. One vacancy is being recruited to whilst the remaining vacancy within the Investment & Development Division will not be filled and any savings will be used towards meeting the staff turnover saving target of £0.092m

The Repairs & Maintenance Programme is projected to be under budget this financial year. An assessment has been carried out to identify work that is not committed and which can be delayed until the next financial year to help balance the budget.

The negative variance in recent years for Energy & Water Costs was addressed at budget setting time. Due to the majority of staff now working from home the budget continues to show a positive variance this financial year. This may increase during the next few months depending on the working from home situation.

Some buildings have been acquired as part of a particular regeneration scheme and currently remain vacant. As a result, in the interim, operating costs will have to be funded internally until the buildings are demolished. This with the additional cost of NNDR on empty buildings is causing a significant budget pressure.

The report shows how much Grant/External Funding the Department receives for Supplies & Services. This highlights the difficulties the department is faced when making savings on controllable budgets.

Adult Learning Division has contributed £0.122m as match funding towards the Ways to Work Programme. During the last 4 year this has generated £1.808m in matched funding, creating an employment programme of £4.773.

Commercial Property rent continues to be the main budget pressure for the department. During the last few years, the Council has disposed of many properties, either in preparation for regeneration projects but also to generate capital receipts, which have been reinvested in Council services. This loss of rent has not been reflected in the future setting of income targets.

Capital grant conditions allowed the Council to recharge staff time to projects.

A balanced budget is forecast this financial year.

Covid Costs

The majority of the costs for COVID are related to loss of income. The market tenants and some commercial property tenants were given a three month rent free period in April. The department is forecasting that the Flea Market at Widnes Market will not open until at least January.

Additional costs for the department relate to the purchase of PPE equipment, adaptations to corporate buildings plus security on the Ice Rink whilst it was being used by the Council. It is also projected that additional cleaning will be required in the next few months.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2020

	2020-21 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
3MG	72	21	21	51
Foundry Lane Residential Area	150	112	112	38
Equality Act Improvement Works	303	58	58	245
Widnes Market Refurbishment	149	88	88	61
Broseley House	24	20	20	4
Solar Farm	699	637	637	62
Solar Farm Extension	67	49	49	18
The Croft	30	0	0	30
Murdishaw Redevelopment	38	0	0	38
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	470	321	321	149
Kingsway Learning Centre Equipment	281	10	10	271
Halton Lea TCF	721	8	8	713
Sci Tech Daresbury – Project Violet	6,389	128	128	6,261
Runcorn Town Centre Redevelopment	750	34	34	716
Total	10,143	1,486	1,486	8,657

Comments on the above figures.

Sci Tech Daresbury Project Violet- Project Violet commenced on site in August 2020 and the groundworks are commencing to schedule

Widnes Market - Evaporative cooler works completed. Initial redecoration works completed. Further phases of works planned for the remaining allocation

3MG -Alstom have confirmed they will expand on their existing site rather than purchase more land from the Council. CDP have confirmed they will acquire all the remaining land, including the public open space.

Solar Farm - All commissioning and testing has been completed. The system passed the Plant Performance Ratio test in September 2020 and the commissioning certificate was completed in August 2020.

The Council formally took over the site in September 2020.

Equality Act Improvement Works - The installation of a stair lift to improve access within Kingsway Learning Centre is currently on site and the Council is planning for various upgrade works to be undertaken later in the year following on from the various access audit reports carried out by consultants Cassidy & Ashton

Broseley House - Only one tenant now remains and notice has been served on them with a view to having them vacate the building when their lease expires in June 2021. Once vacated the building will be demolished and the site brought forward for redevelopment. Minimum works will be carried out until then so there should be little expenditure over the short term.

Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities – Works are progressing well and on budget, phases 1 and 2 have been handed back to the end user, The Council have a delay on the lift installation and the sliding folding partition but the rest of the works are progressing well

Halton Lea TCF – The project for the Community Shop is near completion.

Foundry Lane – The Foundry Lane project relates to the regeneration of the Foundry Lane industrial estate in Halebank. Over the next 5-10 years, the aim is to regenerate the 8ha site from its current low quality/value industrial usage, to a thriving mixed tenure housing estate of approx. 400 units. The project is currently at procurement stage in order to appoint a long term Development Partner.

Murdishaw –The Council is awaiting confirmation of the masterplan in partnership with Onward Homes. Outcome delayed due to Covid. Currently liaising with Onward to agree priority schemes. Hope to identify quick win projects for delivery in Q3/4.

PLANNING, PROVISION & TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget as at 30 September 2020

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	4,449	2,014	1,713	301	602
Premises	161	81	71	10	19
Hired & Contracted Services	129	94	204	(110)	(220)
Supplies & Services	125	61	80	(19)	(39)
Street Lighting	1,623	152	260	(108)	(217)
Highways Maintainance	2,532	1,108	1,040	68	135
Fleet Transport	1,363	663	450	213	426
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	197	98	98	0	0
Bus Support	560	128	136	(8)	(15)
Contribution to Reserves	440	45	12	33	65
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	61	61	61	0	0
NRA Levy	67	67	67	0	0
LCR Levy	882	441	441	0	0
Total Expenditure	12,589	5,013	4,633	380	756
Income					
Sales	-133	-83	-31	(52)	(104)
Planning Fees	-426	-316	-316	0	0
Building Control Fees	-217	-109	-67	(42)	(74)
Other Fees & Charges	-518	-348	-299	(49)	(97)
Grants & Reimbursements	-104	-98	-98	0	0
Government Grant Income	-98	-37	-37	0	0
Halton Hopper Income	-197	-98	-98	0	0
School SLAs	-45	-43	-41	(2)	(4)
Recharge to Capital	-317	-43	-5	(38)	(75)
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-882	-441	-441	0	0
Contribution from Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
Efficiency Savings	-28	-14	0	(14)	(28)
Total Income	-2,965	-1,629	-1,433	(196)	(382)
Net Operational Expenditure	9,624	3,384	3,200	184	374
Covid Costs					
Employees	0	0	107	(107)	(159)
Fleet Transport	0	0	25	(25)	(30)
Bus Support	0	0	41	(41)	(41)
Contribution to Capital Reserves	0	0	378	(378)	(852)
Covid Loss of Income					
Planning Fees	-131	-131	0	(131)	(131)
Fees & Charges	-317	-203	0	(203)	(317)
Grants & Reimbursements	-75	-38	0	(38)	(75)
Government Grant Income	0	0	-923	923	1,605
Net Covid Expenditure	-523	-372	-372	0	0

Recharges					
Premises Support	572	286	286	0	0
Transport Support	692	309	281	28	55
Central Support	876	455	455	0	0
Asset Rental Support	1,244	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-4,299	-1,771	-1,670	(101)	(202)
Net Total Recharges	-915	-721	-648	(73)	(147)
Net Departmental Expenditure	8,186	2,291	2,180	111	227

Comments on the above figures

The net Department spend is £0.111m below the profiled budget at the end of Quarter 2 and the estimated outturn position for 2020/21 is for net spend to be £0.227m under the annual budget.

Budget holders have been working closely with the Department to try to ensure a balanced budget is achieved. Wherever possible capital expenditure has been prioritised in order to relieve pressure on the revenue budgets.

Employee spend is projected to be largely under budget this financial year due to various vacancies across the whole department, in particular the Planning and Traffic divisions. Vacant posts are currently being held and not advertised in a bid to make further savings. Across the department, there are 96.5fte's and of these, 14.4fte's are currently vacant, including a Divisional Manager post. It is important to note, however, that 3fte's are currently being filled via a contractual shared Building Control service between Halton and Knowsley. It is anticipated that the majority of these posts will be filled following a complete restructure in 2020/21.

Premises related expenditure is projected to come in under budget due to a reduction in running costs for Lowerhouse Lane Depot.

Hired & contracted services and supplies & services spend is projected to be over budget due to survey costs and plans that have been required in the Planning division. Halton also has a contract with MEAS (Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service) which is hosted by Sefton LA. This is used to provide Halton with advice in relation to ecology, waste, environmental impact assessments and local plans. To provide this advice internally would cost Halton more than the contract, but at the moment, it is significantly over the allocated budget. Legal fees are also currently projected to be over budget due to external legal advice needing to be procured for unauthorised traveller sites / Factory Lane, Widnes.

Street lighting spend will be over budget by the end of the financial year. This is due to a significant increase in utility costs. There is a capital street lighting upgrade programme in place that if implemented quicker could help to produce a revenue saving.

Highways maintenance budgets are projected to be under budget this financial year due to the capitalisation of expenditure as mentioned above.

Fleet transport costs are projected to be under budget this financial year. This is mostly due to fleet being replaced for newer models that are much more efficient and this has led to a reduction in consumables such as vehicle parts, tyres and fuel. This in turn then has an impact on the costs recharged out to other services within the Council.

Sales income is projected to be under the budgeted target by the end of the financial year due to a lack of permit and Section 50 income.

Building control income is also likely to under achieve due to a reduction in income from the shared service arrangement with Knowsley Council. This is being closely monitored in year.

The recharge of salaries to capital programmes is likely to not achieve its income target this financial year due to a lack of capital grants. In 2019/20, the £10.8m Runcorn Station Quarter project took up a large proportion of the Highways and Planning team's time which was then used to offset staffing costs. This project is smaller in value in 2020/21 and therefore there is less opportunity to capitalise.

There is an unachieved savings target in relation to a saving put forward a number of years ago regarding costs within schools transport. A saving target of £0.028m was put into the budget, achieved by educating special educational needs pupils to travel independently to school rather than by public transport.

COVID Costs and Loss of Income

Employees have worked additional hours to provide support to the various sections within the Council, which increased staffing expenditure. There has also been a significant increase in overtime within the Logistics division, which is all in relation to transportation. This is ending and has been reflected in the above figures.

Bus Support will have additional costs in 2020/21 due to services having to be provided during school holidays for the children who were identified as being in a key worker family.

There has also been a large increase in transfers to capital reserves due to two of the main highways contractors increasing costs due to the current situation. Costs are in relation to contractors having to spend additional time cleaning tools and operatives, additional time for loading and unloading, staggered starts and finishes. Lastly travel time to pick up materials has increased significantly due to plant closures being put in place due to lack of staff, this has meant contractors have had to travel further afield in order to pick up required materials. These additional costs are being monitored and projected costs have already reduced greatly from Q1. This will continue to be monitored in year.

Planning income was expected to come in under target due to the current climate. It was envisaged that there would be fewer applications made which as a result means fewer payments from house builders or members of the public. Applications seem to have picked up in the past quarter and therefore there is no further projection of loss of income past the first quarter of the financial year.

Lowerhouse Lane Depot was closed for the best part of three months and therefore the income likely to be received is projected to be under budget. Although the Depot is now open, again it is anticipated that business will not pick up as in previous years for another couple of months. This is affecting MOT, repairs and taxi testing income targets.

The Highways division are expected to achieve a lower amount of supervision fees because the work being carried out by third parties is not at the same level as in previous years.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2020

	2020-21 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
<u>Local Transport Plan</u>				
Total Bridge & Highway Maintenance	4,810	968	968	3,842
Integrated Transport	1,169	240	240	929
STEP Schemes	0	0	81	(81)
SJB MM – Arch Painting	641	320	320	321
SJB – Deck Reconfiguration	453	502	502	(49)
SJB – Decoupling	10,247	5,686	5,686	4,561
KRN – Earle Rd Gyratory	233	0	0	233
Widnes Loops	4,258	1,113	1,113	3,145
Total Local Transport Plan	21,811	8,829	8,910	12,901
Halton Borough Council Schemes				
Street Lighting	527	0	0	527
Lighting Upgrades	2,957	66	66	2,891
Silver Jubilee Bridge - Lighting	500	0	0	500
Risk Management	355	31	31	324
Fleet Vehicles	2,586	32	32	2,554
SUD Green Cycle	469	225	225	244
Windmill Hill Flood Risk Management Scheme	240	54	54	186
Total Halton Borough Council Schemes	7,634	408	408	7,226
Total Capital Expenditure	29,445	9,237	9,318	20,127

Comments on the above figures.

The SJB MM (Silver Jubilee Bridge Major Maintenance) arch painting programme is almost complete, although it has been delayed due to various unforeseen circumstances such as bad weather.

Works are continuing for the lighting upgrade programme.

Spend on capital projects has picked up slightly when compared to Q1, this follows the trend from previous financial years and is expected to continue.

The STEP programme funding programme ended in 2019/20 but the contractors are still on site with the remaining schemes expected to finish soon. This will be offset by carry forward by grant funding from previous years.

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT**Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2020**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	13,636	6,570	6,165	405	493
Premises	2,176	1,314	924	390	463
Supplies & Services	979	491	475	16	9
Book Fund	155	40	40	0	0
Hired Services	541	155	66	89	179
Food Provisions	85	15	12	3	2
School Meals Food	1,384	154	134	20	0
Transport	157	86	91	(5)	(10)
Area Forum	210	34	34	0	0
Contribution to Archives	57	0	0	0	0
Levies	31	31	30	1	1
Waste Disposal Contract	6,188	0	0	0	136
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	84	0	0	0	65
Grant to Norton Priory	172	86	87	(1)	(1)
Capital Financing	0	0	50	(50)	(50)
Rolling Projects	0	0	86	(86)	(86)
Total Expenditure	25,855	8,976	8,194	782	1,201
Income					
Sales Income	-737	-450	-203	(247)	(325)
School Meals Sales	-1,274	-100	-86	(14)	(40)
Fees & Charges Income	-3,484	-2,281	-2,128	(153)	(345)
Rents Income	-78	-39	-28	(11)	(22)
Government Grant Income	-1,077	-1,077	-943	(134)	(134)
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-547	-108	-95	(13)	44
Schools SLA	-1,208	-1,208	-1,309	101	101
Internal Fees Income	-380	-166	-37	(129)	(320)
School Meals Other Income	-130	-22	2	(24)	(31)
Catering Fees	-14	-9	-9	0	0
Capital Salaries	-173	-60	-57	(3)	(7)
Transfers from Reserves	-133	-38	-38	0	18
Total Income	-9,235	-5,558	-4,931	(627)	(1,061)
Net Operational Expenditure	16,620	3,418	3,263	155	140

Covid Costs					
Community Development	0	0	1	(1)	(1)
Community Safety	0	0	9	(9)	(9)
Leisure & Recreation	0	0	7	(7)	(16)
Open Spaces	0	0	248	(248)	(299)
Schools Catering	0	0	19	(19)	(19)
Waste & Environmental Improvement	0	0	3	(3)	(592)
Shielding Hub	0	0	25	(25)	(25)
Avoided Costs					
Commercial Catering	98	24	0	24	98
Community Development	35	27	0	27	35
Leisure & Recreation	368	126	0	126	368
Open Spaces	712	245	0	245	712
Schools Catering	972	651	0	651	972
Stadium	451	92	0	92	451
Covid Loss of Income					
Commercial Catering	-110	-34	0	(34)	(110)
Community Development	-269	-147	0	(147)	(269)
Leisure & Recreation	-1,091	-653	0	(653)	(1,091)
Open Spaces	-1,263	-514	0	(514)	(1,263)
Schools Catering	-1,497	-954	0	(954)	(1,497)
Stadium	-682	-215	0	(215)	(682)
Waste & Environmental Improvement	-12	-12	0	(12)	(12)
Government Grant Income	0	0	-1,676	1,676	3,249
Net Covid Expenditure	-2,288	-1,364	-1,364	0	0
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,640	820	820	0	0
Transport Support	2,360	1,184	1,073	111	223
Central Support	4,170	2,085	2,085	0	0
Asset Rental Support	146	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-488	-244	-244	0	0
Net Total Recharges	7,828	3,845	3,734	111	223
Net Departmental Expenditure	22,160	5,899	5,633	266	363

Comments on the above figures

The net Department spend is £0.266m under the available budget at the end of Quarter 2 and the estimated outturn underspend for 2020/21 is £0.363m under budget.

The Department has been greatly affected by Covid-19 in the first half of 2020/21. Many services were halted for at least part of the first half of the year, whilst others have had to make changes to working methods and service delivery, all of which have had an impact on the Department's budgetary position. As such, the estimated Department outturn for 2020/21 has changed considerably from 2019/20, with the caveat that there are many uncertainties around when and how service provision can begin to return to normal. The assumptions used in preparing these figures are that The Brindley will remain closed for the rest of 2020/21; Kingsway Leisure Centre and Brookvale Recreation Centre will remain open for the rest of the financial year with reduced capacity; Runcorn Swimming Pool will remain closed until next year; functions at the Stadium will not be able to take place for the rest of the year and any matches staged will be behind closed doors; Community Centres and Libraries will remain open but will operate with restrictions on services in line with Tier 3 guidance; and a full School Meals service will continue to be offered from September, albeit with disruption caused by increased student absences and partial school closures. Any changes to these assumptions will result in major changes to the Department's financial position.

Employee expenditure is £0.405m under budget at the end of Quarter 2. The underspend relates to a large number of unfilled vacancies in the Leisure Centres, The Brindley and within Open Spaces. Site closures and reductions in service delivery have allowed vacancies across the Department to be held open for longer than

usual which has also contributed to the underspend. As services are now beginning to resume, some of these vacancies have now been filled and it is not anticipated that an underspend of this scale will continue into Quarters 3 and 4. Savings on casual staff and overtime from sites that are currently closed have been classed as costs avoided due to Covid-19 and have been netted off reported Covid-19 income losses.

Premises costs are £0.390m under budget at the end of Quarter 2. Utilities and repair costs have reduced considerably whilst sites have been closed, although these will likely increase again now sites have started to reopen. The outturn position is currently projected to be £0.463m under budget due to ongoing closures at The Brindley and Runcorn Swimming Pool, a reduction in services offered at the Stadium and reduced energy usage at the Leisure Centres due to restricted capacity.

Spend on Supplies and Services is currently £0.016m under budget and spend on Hired Services is currently £0.089m under budget. This underspend has been generated by reduced spending on services that were temporarily halted, and spending is expected to return to normal once sites reopen.

No invoices have been received for the waste disposal contracts in 2020/21. Estimated expenditure has therefore been calculated based on the average cost per tonne in 2019/20. Any changes to these costs could have a large impact on the Department's outturn budget.

The overspend on Rolling Projects partially relates to emergency works to the Sankey Canal which have been necessitated by the closure of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station. Once the preliminary stages of the work are complete, a report will be taken to the Board which will set out options to fund the project.

An estimate of the income loss due to Covid-19 has been made based on the income received by the Department in 2019/20 and has been reported separately from the normal operational income. The underachievement of Sales Income of £0.247m at the end of Quarter 2 therefore relates to shortfalls in catering income from Commercial Catering and the Stadium which have been ongoing issues for many years.

Minimal income has so far been received for School Meals sales due to schools only being open for a very limited number of children in the summer term. It is extremely challenging to estimate the income which is likely to be received during the rest of the year as the service has been subject to considerable disruption since resuming fully in September, many schools have had to send large numbers of children home to self-isolate. Sales income will also be affected by the economic downturn due to a likely increase in free school meals numbers and possible reductions in the amount of household income available for discretionary spending. These factors mean that any projections relating to the School Meals service are subject to a high degree of uncertainty and could change considerably by the end of the 2020/21 financial year.

Fees & Charges Income is £0.153m under budget at the end of Quarter 2. This relates to historic shortfalls in income in the Leisure Centres and the Stadium, offset by an increase in income for Cemeteries, the Crematorium and green waste licences.

The shortfall in Government Grant income relates to the Universal Infants Free School Meals Grant.

The Department has incurred £0.312m of additional costs due to Covid-19 at the end of Quarter 2. £0.217m of these costs relate to the rental of the ice rink for use as a temporary morgue and the installation of a temporary cremator to cope with additional service demand. There were also £0.020m of additional costs incurred due to the School Meals service requiring to operate throughout the school holidays, and £0.015m of food costs relating to the Shielding Hub for distribution to vulnerable residents. The estimated additional costs for the whole of 2020/21 are £0.961m. The majority of the additional costs are in relation to waste disposal, caused by a significant increase in the amount of waste generated from households during lockdown. This has increased considerably from the estimated cost at Quarter 1 due to the Liverpool City Region being subject to Tier 3 restrictions from October. It has now been determined that the temporary cremator will be required to be in place throughout the rest of 2020/21 at an additional cost of £0.020m. There are also additional costs being incurred relating to PPE and cleaning requirements in buildings which are open to the public.

Covid-19 related income losses across the Department in Quarter 2 are estimated at £2.529m, offset by £1.165m of avoided costs for casual and agency staff, overtime, food and bar provisions, and costs of artists performing at The Brindley.

It has been assumed that all additional costs and loss of external income that can be attributed to Covid-19 will be covered by government grant funding. This includes a grant of £0.231m awarded by the Arts Council to assist with the running costs of The Brindley, as well as to purchase equipment to enable the theatre to reopen safely in 2021/22. The only impact of Covid-19 which is shown as having an effect on the Department's financial position is therefore the loss of internal income which cannot be offset by grant funding. This loss of income will be offset by a reduction in expenditure across other Departments. This has the largest impact on the Stadium and the Community Centres, all of which receive significant income from internal room hire.

Transport recharges are currently £0.111m under budget, which is projected to increase to £0.223m at the end of 2020/21. This is consistent with the historical trend of reduced transport running and maintenance costs within the Department.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2020

	2020/21 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	69	33	33	36
Children's Playground Equipment	120	20	20	100
Landfill Tax Credits	10	0	0	10
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13
Crow Wood Play Area	90	6	6	84
Crow Wood Pavilion	1	1	1	0
Peelhouse Lane Cemetery	349	300	308	41
Victoria Park Glass House	25	20	20	5
Sandymoor Playing Fields	27	0	0	27
Town Park	246	20	14	232
Open Spaces	542	150	154	388
Bowling Greens	5	4	4	1
Widnes & Runcorn Cemeteries – Garage & Storage	3	3	3	0
Litter Bins	20	20	20	0
Brookvale Recreation Centre Pitch	488	0	0	488
Moor Lane Leisure Centre	4,986	984	984	4,002
Total	6,994	1,561	1,567	5,427

Comments on the above figures.

Stadium Minor Works – There have been major works carried out to modernise the Bridge Suite, including upgrading to energy efficient LED lighting.

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

Crow Wood Park – The park building and the external works are substantially complete and the next phase of landscaping works is now under way.

Open Spaces Schemes – This covers spending on a variety of externally funded projects, including works to Sunnybank Park, Hale Lighthouse Approach, Birchfield Gardens and several projects in the Runcorn Hill area.

Peelhouse Lane Cemetery – The major hard landscaping is nearing completion. The final planting needed to complete the scheme will take place in the autumn.

Victoria Park Glass House – Works to the glass house are now complete. Works to the garden are currently being carried out.

Sandymoor Playing Fields – The main work has been completed and the site has now been handed over to the Parish Council. There will be some soft landscape establishment works to complete over the next year.

Widnes & Runcorn Cemeteries - Garage & Storage – Work at both sites has now been completed, with the exception of some final establishment works. There will be a retention payment due in 2020/21.

Town Park – The southern paths phase is nearing completion, with only reinstatement works remaining to be completed.

Bowling Greens – Works related to the removal of the bowling green is now substantially complete.

Moor Lane Leisure Centre – Works currently on hold due to potential compulsory purchase orders (CPO) on site.

8.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

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

Direction of Travel Indicator

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