

Directorate Overview Report – Enterprise, Community & Resources

Reporting Period: **Quarter 4 – 1st January 2021– 31st March 2021**

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:-

Financial Services

- 2.2 The 2021/22 net budget of £111.446m was approved by Council on 03 March 2021. The net budget will be part funded from an increase of 1.99% in general Council Tax plus a 3.0% Adult Social Care Precept. The 2020/21 council tax requirement is £54.509m; Band D council tax level (before local and major precepts) is £1,549.34 and continues to be the fourth lowest in the North West.
- 2.3 The Council has and continues to support businesses through the pandemic by making Government funded business support grant payments to eligible businesses. During the first national lockdown, grants totalling £17.5m were paid to 1,196 small businesses and a further 312 grants paid to those businesses in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors.
- 2.4 Following the first national lockdown and up to 31 March 2021, a further £6.9m of grants have been paid to help support local businesses through further local and national restrictions. In total grants of £24.4m have been administered through the Business Rates Team, this excludes discretionary grants administered by the Investment and Development Division.

In addition to above, from 01 April 2021 the team will start administering the Business Support Re-Start Grant programme to help businesses re-open following the third national lockdown. Businesses will receive levels of grant of up to £18k dependent on the type of business and rateable value banding.

- 2.5 The economic impact resulting from the pandemic initially had an adverse impact on both council tax and business rate collection rates. The council has actively continued to collect older debt but the temporary closure of magistrate courts slowed the process of obtaining liability orders, which helps with progressing debt collection. From February 2021 the Council have been given access to one virtual court hearing per month in order to obtain liability orders, which has helped improve overall collection towards year-end.

Including major preceptors, the amount of council tax billed at 31 March 2021 was £64.3m. The cash collection rate for the period is £59.5m (94.14%). A further £1.695m has also been collected from previous year arrears. Including preceptors the amount of billed business rates as at 31 March 2021 is £47.2m. The cash collection rate for the period is £45.4m (96.18%).

- 2.6 On 28th September 2020 the government introduced Self-isolation Support Payments whereby a payment of £500 will be made to those on low incomes to support them if they cannot work during their self-isolation period, and currently this scheme is scheduled to end on 30th June 2021. At 31st March 2021 the table below shows the number of awards paid.

SIP Awards	Mandatory	Discretionary
Fund available	£310,000	£239,999
No. of awards	414	190
Current spend	£207,000	£95,000

- 2.7 The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) statistics indicate at 11th March 2021 there were 16,459 people within Halton claiming Universal Credit. By way of providing context, in March 2020 there were 10,918 Halton residents claiming Universal Credit, and this illustrates the financial impact of Covid19 within the borough.

Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency

- 2.8 During 2020 – 21 considerable resources were required to support the management of staffing scenarios related to absence, working practices, and restrictions. The resourcing of priority service activity (e.g. Public Health and Adult Care) has been an ongoing feature of the departments work. The resourcing of the two asymptomatic rapid COVID testing centres in the Borough featured significantly in January 2021.
- 2.9 The policy framework developed earlier in 2020 to enable the Council to safely return physical premises and work spaces to operation following the ‘lockdown’ between March and July 2020 and November – December 2020 has proved effective. It is being implemented again to manage re-openings as lockdown 3 is eased.
- 2.10 E-learning take-up continues to be strong and 2,542 modules were completed during the reporting period. In addition a number of Virtual Modules have been delivered to support staff specifically related to remote working. These have included Behavioural Science and how it can support remote working, Conflict resolution, and Change and Stress Management in remote working environments.
- 2.11 During 2020 – 21 a total of 37 new apprenticeships starts were undertaken 25 in the Council and a further 12 in schools. This equates to 39% of the annual Public Sector target and is broadly in line with the national position outlined by the Local Government Association of 40 – 60% being achieved by most Local Authorities.
- 2.12 The Council has published the statutory Gender Pay Gap report for the snapshot date of 31 March 2020. For the Council the median gender pay gap is 10.4%. This is significantly lower than the average Public Sector and whole economy figures of 15.8% and 15.5% respectively. Further information on the calculations and interpretation can be accessed at: <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/EandD/genderpaygap.pdf>.
- 2.13 The Council has considered its options around how employee capability, working practices, premises and technology can be combined to ensure an effective organisation for the future. The basis of a structured ‘Future Work’ change programme has been developed during the quarter, and will start to be progressed in Quarter 1 of 2021/22 alongside the Council’s COVID recovery Roadmap, and the national easing of COVID restrictions.

ICT and Support Services

- 2.14 The ICT teams covered all emergency calls over this period of lockdown effectively, with all calls resolved quickly without any disruption to key services. Software Systems and Hardware maintenance plans remain in place linked to out of hours and weekend working to compliment extended front-line working hours
- 2.15 The Halton Cloud continues to support all 2600 desktop users with an average of 1800 concurrent users connected into services at any one time from home. The system uptime over this quarter has been excellent, whilst accommodating a considerable number of changes and adaptations to the requirements profile of our user base over this extended period of the pandemic.
- 2.16 The Records Management Facility remains fully operational and supporting the authority and its clients with new services being developed supporting the authority through centralising data and improving secure access to physical as well as digital data sets. These include for example mail and hybrid mail provision and linkages to new digitised postal services and a review of software solutions and support to Cemeteries and Open Space Services.
- 2.17 A focus upon the support of schools within the authorities SLA is in place to improve their ability to promote on-line learning and enabling those schools yet to put online learning solutions in place. Additionally reactive support to schools is ongoing and extremely busy and schools have been asked if they would prefer work to be undertaken outside of school hours to assist with social distancing and minimize the risks of exposure to pupils and staff.

Legal and Democratic Services

- 2.18 The significant majority of staff remain working remotely and the provision of legal support across the authority remains undiminished. However the departure of a number of key members of staff during quarter 4 has presented significant challenges in terms of business continuity. Short-term temporary support has been in place whilst the process of recruitment can be completed.

Economy, Enterprise and Property

External Funding / Regeneration

- 2.19 The Council has continued to work closely with the Voluntary and Community Sector in providing support to organisations to apply for emergency funding streams available as a consequence of the COVID pandemic. From information gathered it is understood that 145 projects / individuals have received funding to a total value of just over £1.5M during 2020 – 21.
- 2.20 Additionally during Quarter 4 Halton secured just in excess of £8M of external funding with the total for the financial year 2020 – 21 being £13.0M.
- 2.21 Construction of Project Violet at Sci-Tech Daresbry continues to programme with completion expected in November 2021 with the Chrysalis loan-funding agreement being agreed during Quarter 4. Additionally the Warburton's new build at Viking Park, 3MG, is continuing and completion is expected in summer 2021.

Adult learning

- 2.22 Monies from the Skills Capital Improvement Grant have been used to refurbish the upper floors of Kingsway Learning Centre and works were completed during Quarter 4. These include the installation

of a new lift and new reception and break out areas in addition to a wide range of digital equipment that will provide up to date facilities for learners.

- 2.23 A further £40K has been made available from the Combined Authority to support access to learners following lockdown. These monies will be used to facilitate a return to learning which will include new and targeted marketing campaigns and the production of videos to support a consistent induction to learners and 1:1 support for the most vulnerable.
- 2.24 A meeting took place with the Education and Skills Funding Agency during quarter 4 regarding the delivery of the High Needs Support Internship Programme which will be delivered by the Adult Learning Team. This project will support 10 young people aged 16 – 24 and who have an Education and Health Care Plan into a supported internship placement with a local employer.
- 2.25 The first ‘Kickstart’ opportunities were filled during the quarter 4 period with the Halton People into Jobs service acting as a gateway between employers and the Department of Work and Pensions by supporting local residents aged 18 – 27 and in receipt of Universal Credit into paid 6-month job placements.

Property Services

- 2.26 £1.3m has been secured for decarbonisation works at Halton Stadium. Design works are progressing and it is hoped works on site can start within the next couple of months. The programme requires works to be complete by late September 2021 (*please also refer Emerging Issues section of report regarding Government decarbonisation targets*).
- 2.27 Planning approval is in place for the proposed new Leisure Centre at Moor Lane, Widnes and the costs and timescales have been agreed. However the project can’t commence on site until the date of vacant possession is known and in respect of this there is an ongoing Compulsory Purchase Order process taking place. Subject to the successful outcome of the CPO it is anticipated that we will be in a position to enter in to a contract with Wates prior to 31st December 2021, with a start on site sometime early in 2022.

Policy, Planning & Transportation

- 2.28 Throughout 2020 – 21 there has been a steady and unavoidable decline in the condition of the highway network across the borough and this is reflective of the fiscal constraints that have been prevalent for a number of years. The department will continue to utilise programmed maintenance works to mitigate against this as far as possible.
- 2.29 Following works being undertaken in regards to repainting and the reconfiguration of carriageways and approaches and parapet renewal works the Silver Jubilee Bridge was successfully reopened to traffic on 26th February.
- 2.30 The first 2 weeks of hearings were undertaken in Quarter 4 with regards to the examination of the Council’s Delivery and Allocations Local Plan. Further Examination hearing sessions will take place in May and June which will take place as a virtual hearing sessions and livestreamed.

Community & Environment

Open Space Services and Waste and Environmental Improvement

- 2.31 During the first part of Quarter 4 both the Parks and the Streetscene sections were affected by absence that was related to Covid-19. The result was that the 2020/21 Winter Works programme (which in the

main related to coppice and pruning works) was not completed. Missed works have now been scheduled for winter 2021/22 and regrettably this had led to some public complaint.

- 2.32 Waste collection services continued to operate through the previous 12 months. As was experienced in the previous 3 quarters, tonnages of waste and recyclable materials collected were significantly higher compared to the same periods in previous years. The table below shows details of the actual increases that were experienced;

Waste Stream	2019-20 Tonnage	2020-21 Tonnage	Additional Tonnage	Increase
RESIDUAL WASTE	27,047	30,034	2,987	11%
KERBSIDE RECYCLING	10,211	12,108	1,897	19%
GARDEN WASTE	4,351	5,155	804	18%

With more and more people working from home, and with the likelihood that many will continue to do so, it is expected that households will continue to produce increased tonnages of waste and recyclables and this will have both resource and financial implications moving forward.

Library, Stadium, and Culture and Leisure Services

- 2.33 Digital Library use continues at a high level due to movement of activities online and the resulting changes in customer behaviour. ‘Restart’ events, including the Borough of Culture and reconnecting communities with physical library spaces are now being co-ordinated and scheduled.
- 2.34 During the Quarter 4 period Grangeway and Ditton Community Centres continued to operate as Covid-19 SMART testing sites. Since the sites were opened in December, a total of 58,067 lateral flow tests were carried out.
- 2.35 The West Stand of the Halton Stadium is being used as a COVID Vaccine Centre. This arrangement, which has received extremely positive feedback on Social Media, will remain open for the foreseeable future and is likely to be used for additional booster sessions planned for the Autumn
- 2.36 The Council’s 5 Community Centres reopened on 12th April but only for limited pre-booked children’s group activities. The centres remain closed to the general public but as of 12th April the cafes at Castlefields, Upton and Murdishaw will begin providing a take-away service for members of the public. In accordance with the Government’s ‘roadmap’ to easing lockdown restrictions, it is planned that the Centres will reopen for indoor café provision and adult group sports and exercise classes on 17th May.
- 2.37 As would be expected sports and recreation activity has been significantly and unavoidably disrupted during the 2020 – 21 financial year as a result of the COVID situation. However every effort has been made to facilitate ongoing provision of services supporting community health and fitness and it is recognised that such activities can take on added meaning for individuals and families during times of relative isolation.
- 2.38 Support has continued to help adults stay active at home through updating, motivating and sharing content for online access and through the use of various Social Media channels and for example the Halton Zoom Community Exercise timetable has been disseminated including through the Active Halton webpage.

- 2.39 Welfare calls have been completed by Fitness staff to all Direct Debit members and these have been extremely well received and feedback from users who welcomed both the interaction itself, particularly for those who are relatively isolated in normal circumstances, and the motivation it provided to keep active during lockdown. Welfare calls have been completed by Fitness staff to all Direct Debit members and these have been extremely well received and feedback from users who welcomed both the interaction itself, particularly for those who are relatively isolated in normal circumstances, and the motivation it provided to keep active during lockdown

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:-

Financial Services

- 3.2 From 04 May 2021 the Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space) will give someone in problem debt the right to legal protections from their creditors. There are two types of breathing space: a standard breathing space and a mental health crisis breathing space.

A standard breathing space is available to anyone with problem debt. It gives them legal protections from creditor action for up to 60 days. The protections include pausing most enforcement action and contact from creditors and freezing most interest and charges on their debts.

A mental health crisis breathing space is only available to someone who is receiving mental health crisis treatment and it has some stronger protections. It lasts as long as the person's mental health crisis treatment, plus 30 days (no matter how long the crisis treatment lasts).

When the Council is notified (through the Insolvency Service) of an individual entering Breathing Space it will be required to update systems and records to ensure that all recovery action is immediately suspended for the requisite amount of time. During the Breathing Space period the Council will work with the individuals appointed debt advisor to seek ways in which the debt can be paid i.e. through an agreed payment plan.

- 3.3 The impact of COVID-19 and lockdown measures has resulted in a notable shift in the payment channels used by customers in 2020/21. As reported previously, there has been a significant reduction in the number of customers making payments through the kiosks located at the One Stop Shops, with the volume of payments received decreasing by 89% compared to 2019/20.

In contrast, in 2020/21 the Council experienced a 47% increase in touchtone telephone payments, a 22% increase in Internet payments and a 27% increase in Contact Centre telephone payments when compared to 2019/20.

It is recognised that a minority of customers are likely to continue to prefer to make payments in cash. The recent introduction of PayPoint as another payment channel will therefore provide such customers with more local payment options, as there are currently 59 PayPoint outlets located across the Borough

Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency

- 3.4 The Council has received clarity on the implications of the 'McCloud judgement' of the Court of Appeal, stating that public sector pension reforms implemented by government in recent years (2014 for LGPS) unlawfully treated existing members differently based upon their age on the 1 April 2012. A significant amount of work is now required to review payroll records for all employees in the Council, schools, and those third party organisations that we provide a payroll service to under a commercial arrangement.

- 3.5 Following the UK's exit from the European Union Revised rules around eligibility to work in the UK have now been clarified and will be effective from 1st July 2021. The Councils recruitment procedures have been amended to accommodate these.
- 3.6 The engagement of Agency workers to meet increased service demand in areas such as Adult Social Care continues and the advent of the COVID pandemic unavoidably delayed the implementation of processes to support services in minimising agency usage. However work is now underway to support service restructuring and the delivery of the necessary corporate processes to reduce the reliance upon the use of Agency staff going forward.

ICT and Support Services

- 3.7 A major project started December 2020 and completed the 1st phase of the development for all hardware systems allowing for the considerable task of upgrading the Virtual Desktop infrastructure software platforms, this upgrade will allow major developments such as the release of Teams and the Office 365 Suite within this virtual environment to compliment the use of Skype and the delivery of other conferencing mechanisms compatible with both home and office environments.
- 3.8 One Stop Shops remained open during the National lockdown as they are seen as an essential service within Halton. Opening hours have been reduced over this quarter to allow the team to support the Contact Centre in managing inbound/outbound calls for COVID Support from Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) individuals.

Legal and Democracy

- 3.9 The Government has announced that it will not be in a position to bring forward new legislation to allow the continuation of remote meetings beyond 7th May 2021. Lawyers in Local Government, the Association of Democratic Services Officers and Hertfordshire County Council have brought High Court proceedings for a declaration that remote meetings will continue to be lawful. The hearing is to take place on 21st April with judgement expected shortly after. Of course, the outcome will be very significant for all local authorities.

Economy, Enterprise and Property

- 3.10 Consultation on the Right to Regenerate and the Public request to Order Disposal 1980 s98 by Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government may result in a request to the Secretary of State to direct the Council to dispose of land and buildings that are defined under the Order as unused. Further information will be provided as this becomes known.
- 3.11 Government is to bring into law by the end of June 2021 a new carbon emissions reduction target of a 78% reduction over 1990 levels by 2035. This brings forward the previous target and will have the effect of speeding up the need to switch away from fossil fuels to heat and provide hot water to our buildings and move to electrically run heat pumps and funding is being made available via the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for such works and there will be a need to assess all Council buildings to establish where further works could be undertaken to help meet this agenda.
- 3.12 Halton People Into Jobs made a number of applications during Quarter 4 to become a subcontractor for the Government's new flagship employment programme – Restart. Decisions will be announced in the next quarter and if successful, HPIJ would need to recruit a new team to deliver this programme, given its size/value and the accommodation of the team will need to be considered and arranged.

Policy, Planning & Transportation

- 3.13 Runcorn Station Quarter works continues to make good progress, with works to the Piazza having now commenced and highways have switched to Picow Farm Road and northern section of Cavendish Street. All agreements to carry out works have now been finalised with Avanti West Coast and Network Rail. Detailed design of the Active Travel Links from Cavendish Street to Dukesfield have commenced along with detailed design of the demolition of the footbridge across the Expressway

Community & Environment

- 3.14 With regards to culture and leisure services Officers are now considering the future delivery of services in light of the situation that has prevailed for the preceding 12 months. Work will now be undertaken to implement any 'rebalancing' measures that may result from experiences to date particularly with regards to remote / digitalisation of the Council's service offer.

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 Directorate high-risk mitigation measures were reported to the relevant Policy and Performance Boards at quarter 2.

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 have been identified by the Directorate. It should be noted that given the significant and unrelenting downward financial pressures faced by the Council there is a requirement for Departments to make continuous in-year adjustments to the allocation of resources in order to ensure that the Council maintains a balanced budget.
- 6.2 Whilst every effort continues to be made to minimise any negative impact of such arrangements upon service delivery they may inevitably result in a delay in the delivery of some of the objectives and targets contained within this report. The way in which the Red, Amber and Green, (RAG), symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained at the end of this report.

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
FS 01a	Report 2020-23 Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board - November 2020.	
FS 01b	Report 2020/21 revenue budget, capital programme and council tax to Council - March 2021.	
FS 03a	Publish the Statement of Accounts following external audit by 31st July 2020.	
FS 04a	Establish Treasury Management Policy and report to Council - March 2020.	
FS 05a	Establish and report prudential indicators to Council - March 2020.	

Supporting Commentary

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was reported to Executive Board on 19 November 2020. The financial forecast is being regularly updated. Revenue budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax was reported on 03 March 2021.

2020/21 Q3 overall budget information was reported to Executive Board on 25th February 2021.

As a result of the Covid19 pandemic the deadline for completion of the audit of accounts was deferred to 30 November 2020. The draft Statement of Accounts was provided to the External Auditor on schedule on 28 August 2020. A very positive report was received by the Business Efficiency Board from the external auditor on 24th March regarding the year-end accounts and the Council's value for money assessment. The Council's draft 2019/20 Statement of Accounts were approved and any subsequent additions or amendments will be approved by the Operational Director - Finance, in liaison with the Chair of the Business Efficiency Board

The 2019/20 Treasury Management Policy was approved by Council on 04 March 2020.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 01	Receive an unqualified external audit opinion on the accounts.	Yes	Yes	Awaited	-	
FS LI 02	Receive positive comment (annually) from the External Auditor relating to the financial standing of the Council and the systems of internal financial control.	Yes	Yes	Yes		
FS LI 03	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected.	94.75%	94.25%	94.14%		

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 04	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received	98.32%	97.50%	96.18		
FS LI 05	Average time for processing new claims (Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction)	16.90 (Days)	20 (Days)	16.22		

Supporting Commentary

External Audit of 2019/20 accounts is being finalised following the draft Statement of Accounts being approved by Business Efficiency Board on 24 March 2021.

The Council's external auditor concluded in the 2019/20 Audit Findings Report that *'The Council operates under significant financial pressures, however, it continues to have effective arrangements in place to routinely monitor its budget and take appropriate action to mitigate against any significant variances or additional calls on resources'*.

Council Tax collection and business rates collection have both fallen when compared to March 2020. The impact of Covid and payment deferral of approximately 4,000 accounts has had a direct negative impact on these measures.

The processing of new claims, and also of changes in circumstances, are both showing improvement when compared to the same period last year.

Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
PPPE 01a	Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy May 2020	
PPPE 02b	Establish 20 new existing employee apprenticeships to enable up-skilling in a range of business areas, compliant with the requirements of apprenticeship legislation March 2021	
PPPE 04b	Implement resourcing plans with service management in appropriate areas September 2020 .	
PPPE 04c	Ongoing monitoring of agency usage and spend April, September, December 2020, and March 2021 .	
PPPE 05a	Identify service areas with highest consistent recruitment demand, turnover, and low attraction rates September 2020 .	

Supporting Commentary

The actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy forms the basis of the workplan for the year and a new Organisational Development Strategy for 2020 – 23 has been approved by Executive Board.

25 new Apprenticeship ‘conversions’ have been established in the period since 1st April 2020. Refer to Key Developments section above for further detail and context.

Resourcing plans have been developed on a priority needs basis with services most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. Public Health and Adult Care). Agency usage continues to be monitored and figures on spend are included within the table below.

HR services working with services most affected by COVID-19 pandemic to support resourcing decisions in a post-pandemic environment and additional detail regarding agency usage is provided in the table below

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
PPPE LI 01	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	11.66 (Days)	10 (Days)	10.02 (Days)		
PPPE LI 04	Total Full Time Equivalent Staffing Establishment.	3,431	For information On	3,317	N/A	N/A
PPPE LI 05	Total Staff (head count)	4,575	For information Only	4,207	N/A	N/A
PPPE LI 07	Total Agency Worker Cost (cumulative cost – year to date)	£2.21M (Gross Cost)	£1.5m (Gross Cost)	£3.70m (Gross Cost)		
PPPE LI 10	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are:					
	a) Women	61.78	55	63.19%		
	b) from BME communities	3.45	2.0	2.78%		
	c) with a disability	0.9	8.0	0.89%		
PPPE LI 13	Average time to recruit (Applicant Tracking System reported figure)	15 days	15 days	11 (Days)		

Supporting Commentary

Paradoxically, the impact of COVID-19, and changes to working patterns and practices had a positive impact on absence levels although the annual target for working days was marginally missed. The periods of lockdown across the year will inevitably have meant that people were not mixing with others both in and outside of the workplace, reducing the incidence of many illnesses, as well as COVID infection.

Number of agency worker placements and spend has been unavoidably and adversely affected by the COVID situation and the need for additional resources. Please see the emerging issues section of this report for additional contextual information.

With regards to top 5% of earners there is positive movement on part (a) and fluctuation exists in (b) and (c), due to turnover. It should be noted that recruitment in to 5% of earners is very limited, and as such scope for significant change is low.

Average time to recruit is presently within the expected range.

ICT and Support Services

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
ICT 01a	Continued Enhancement of the virtualization platform to enhanced or new technologies - March 2021 .	
ICT 01b	Further development of Cloud Services Platform - March 2021 .	
ICT 01c	SharePoint and Records Management enhancements - March 2021 .	
ICT 02c	Improvement and enhancement of all web based customer interfaces - March 2021 .	

Supporting Commentary

The extension of the new desktop facilities continues with over 2,600 Virtual Desktop users now utilising the RDSH Platform and this will continue over the coming months to cover all users.

SharePoint and Records Management enhancements have been successfully implemented with technical upgrades to the server infrastructure being planned in line with the release of vendor software. Web services are now deployed using the latest version of the infrastructure.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
ICT LI01	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	99.5%	99.00%	100%		

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
ICT LI02	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	100%	99.00%	100%		

Supporting Commentary

Availability of servers and infrastructure remains at ceiling.

Legal & Democracy

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
LD 01	Review constitution - May 2020 .	
LD 02a	To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting where desired.	
LD 02b	To induct all new members by October 2020 .	

Supporting Commentary

The revised Constitution was approved at annual Council as planned and all Members have had the opportunity to have a MAP meeting and the cancellation of the 2020 Elections has meant that no new Members joined the Council.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
LD LI 01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total).	55 (98.21%)	56 (100.00%)	55 (98.21%)		
LD LI 03	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days).	10 (Days)	10 (Days)	10 (Days)		
LD LI 04	Average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department (working days).	3 (Days)	3 (Days)	3 (Days)		
LD LI 05	% of Executive Board minutes published within 5 working days after the meeting.	100%	100%	100%		

Supporting Commentary

All indicators are showing positive performance at the end of 2020 -21 financial year.

Economy, Enterprise and Property

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
EEP 01b	To manage and sustain employment support programmes Work Programme by March 2021	
EEP 02c	To prepare a Town Investment Plan for Runcorn Old Town by January 2021	
EEP 02f	To prepare a Masterplan and Delivery Strategy for the Astmoor Industrial Estate by September 2020	
EEP 02g	To deliver the Liverpool City Region Town Centres' Fund in Halton Lea by 31st March 2021	
EEP 07c	Deliver Education / Corporate maintenance programme 21 by March 2021	

Supporting Commentary

The DWP Work and health Programme and Jets Programme will continue to be delivered beyond March 2021 and Halton People into Jobs has also secured a new 5 year DWP Restart Programme.

The Town Investment Plan has been completed and submitted and further information from Government is awaited. The Astmoor Masterplan has been completed and a joint-venture partner is currently being sought to move forward into the delivery phase.

The Halton Lea project continues to progress although some projects have been unavoidably impacted by the COVID situation and the LCR have extended the scheme until the end of December 2021.

The planned maintenance programme was delivered successfully as detailed within the Key Developments section of this report.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 01	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions indicator (Tonnes CO ₂ e).	11,730 tonnes CO ₂ e (actual 18/19)	11,613 tonnes CO ₂ e (target 19/20)	11,354 tonnes CO ₂ e (actual 18/19)		

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 04	Occupancy rates of commercial and investment portfolio.	99% Investment and 93% commercial	99% Investment and 93% commercial	100% Investment and 90% commercial		
EEP LI 06	Unit Costs – office accommodation (reported annually).	£1,135	£1078	£1069		
EEP LI 09	Number of People supported into work.	351	300	333		
EEP LI 10	Percentage of learners achieving accreditation.	25%	42%	12%		
EEP LI 13	Number of Businesses Supported.	220	500	514		
EEP LI 14	Number of individuals supported into paid work placements (ILMs)	23	22	47		

Supporting Commentary

CO2 emissions for 2018/19 amounted to 11,730 tonnes. The emissions for 2019/20 were 11,354 tonnes which equates to a 3.2% overall reduction. Energy consumption did actually increase slightly, which in effect was as a result of the Authority acquiring 2 additional care homes within the accounting period. Emissions fell however as the kw/h-CO₂ conversion factor has been amended to reflect the greater mix of renewable energy being generated the overall CO₂ emissions have reduced.

The annual figure for this indicator is a year behind and therefore only reported in the following year.

Occupancy rates of commercial portfolio has dropped slightly and there are currently a number of vacancies and marketing has now commenced on Frankie and Bennies unit and 6 Church Street.

The average accommodation cost figure across main office buildings has reduced by 5.8% during the year. This has to be put in context however as the vast majority of staff have been home based for the majority of 2020 – 21.

Whilst the number of people supported into work is positive at year-end the number of learners achieving accreditation has been severely impacted by the COVID pandemic with some learners lacking the IT equipment / skills to undertake learning remotely with other preferring to wait for buildings to re-open before re-engaging with learning opportunities.

Both the number of businesses supported and individuals supported into paid employment are both showing positive at the end of year.

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
PPT 02	To deliver the 2019/20 LTP Capital Programme March 2021	
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 2021	

Supporting Commentary

PPT 02 / 03 / 04

Works on the LTP continue and Active Travel Scheme works are shortly due to commence at Runcorn Busway to improve cycling links between Halton Hospital and Murdishaw Centre and design work is underway for cycle routes between Murdishaw Centre to Castelfields and the Whitehouse Industrial estate.

Works have also begun to move from design to construction on works to the route from Runcorn Old Town to Sci-Tech Daresbury.

Highways and footways resurfacing and reconstruction works have now been completed on Town Lane to Curlender Way in Hale and a number of footway reconstruction works have been completed including Bishops Way, Shakespeare Rd, and Julian Way with works to Ditchfield Rd being at design stage.

A number of surface dressing works to carriageways are planned for summer 2021 across the borough and highway safety inspections continue to be undertaken.

PPT 05

The DALP was submitted for examination on the 5th March 2020. The Department has been working to complete outstanding evidential documents and is awaiting receipt of the Matters, Issues and Questions from the appointed independent Planning Inspectors. The first two Hearing Sessions have taken place with a further 3 to take place in May and June.

PPT 06

As part of its COMAH testing programme the Council has undertaken an exercise to test compliancy with COMAH Regulations (2015).

This involved 2 of the 9 COMAH sites in the borough which form part of the 3 year testing cycle using a table top format and Microsoft Teams software. The COMAH External Plan was tested and a structured debrief took place and an Exercise Report was produced as part of the validation / learning process. All arrangements were subsequently agreed with the Competent Authority (i.e. The Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency)

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	19/20 Actual	20/21 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 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	100	80.52		
	b) 'minor' applications	92.85	96	63		
	c) 'other' applications	88.17	98	71.4		
PPT LI 06	No. of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	31.2	N/A	28.8		
PPT LI 07	No. of children (<16) killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 year Av.)	4.0	N/A	4.2		
PPT LI 08	No. of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	238	N/A	219		
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:					
	Principal Roads	1.6	2	N / A	N / A	N / A
	Non-Principal Roads	2	4	N / A	N / A	N / A
	Unclassified Roads	4	9	N / A	N / A	N / A

Supporting Commentary

PPT 02/03

Completions were monitored for 2019/20 as at 31st July 2020 and reported in August 2020. Completions have reverted to being monitored annually as at 31st March 2021 and will be reported in the first Quarter of each year

PPT 04

The processing of planning applications has shown a downward trend when compared to 2019 – 20. However Officers have been working to reduce the accumulated backlog and following the use of agency staff and the appointment of a new member of staff processing times have improved considerably in quarter 4 with 100% of major and minor, and 95% of other applications being determined on time.

PPT 06/07/08

Whilst the five year average total number of people, and of children killed or seriously injured (KSI) in traffic accidents has remained fairly static there has been a reduction in the number of people slightly injured.

PPT 12/ 15

Repairs to damage of roads and pavement remains on track but as reported within the key developments section of this report available resources are negatively impacting upon the proportion of the network where structural maintenance should be considered.

Community & Environment

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
CE 0 1a	Deliver a promotion and educational campaign (School Meals Service) - September 2020 and January 2021 .	See comment
CE 02a	Deliver a programme of extended informal learning opportunities meeting identified local targets - March 2021	
CE 02b	Develop a programme of cultural activity meeting identified local targets – March 2021	
CE 03a	Manage greenspace areas as per the agreed specification - March 2021 .	See comment
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 2021 .	

Supporting Commentary

In light of the COVID pandemic the promotion campaign for FSM was unavoidably suspended for 2020 – 21.

Full activity / engagement of informal learning programme delivered online including Makefest, Readathon & bespoke author events. Additionally the Borough of Culture programme has successfully been delivered online

As reported in the Key Developments section this report the Winter Works Programme of managing greenspaces has been unavoidably disrupted as a result of COVID related staff absence during the quarter 4 period.

Restrictions that have been in place during periods of lockdown have impacted upon the ability to deliver the full range of recycling communications and awareness raising activity, such as householder engagement, school visits and roadshows. However, 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	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 05	Residual household waste per household.	607kg	610kg	634kg		
CE LI 06	Household waste recycled and composted.	40%	40%	37.8%		
CE LI 07	Number of active users (physical & digital resources) of the library service during the last 12 months.	614, 391	615,000	1,779,950		
CE LI 08	Number of physical and virtual visits to libraries (annual total)	636, 827	700,000	1,485,023		

Supporting Commentary

As reported in the Key Developments section of this report the tonnage of household waste has increased. Although there has been an increase in the tonnage of recycled / composted waste as a proportion of all waste the figure has remained relatively static when compared to the previous year.

People continued to use libraries during the pandemic and the Council's iterative approach to delivery and the agile allocation of resources ensured Halton continued to have a modern vibrant library service even when building access was limited.

7.0 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 <u>intervention or remedial action</u> 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	N / A
	Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year.