

Corporate Policy and Performance Board– Priority Based Monitoring Report

Reporting Period: **Quarter 4 - 1st January– 31st March 2022**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the final quarter of 2021 / 22 for service areas within the remit of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 It covers key priorities for development or improvement in the various functional areas reporting to the Board in relation to the Council's priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency i.e.:
- Financial Services
 - Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency
 - ICT Infrastructure
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
 - Property Services
- 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 during the period which include:-

2.2 Financial Services

Benefits Division

Covid19 Self-isolation Support Payments

In February 2022 the Government announced that the Self-isolation Support Payment scheme would be extended up to 6th April 2022. The table below shows the number of awards paid since the beginning of the Scheme in September 2020, up to its closure on 6th April 2022.

SIP Awards	Mandatory	Discretionary
No. of awards	1,384	563
Current spend	£692,000	£281,500

Universal Credit Implementation

The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) statistics indicate at 10th February 2022 there were 15,257 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 impact of Covid19.

Processing Times

At 31st March 2022 processing times for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction were as follows: new claims 16.71 days and changes in circumstances 9.82 days.

2.3 Revenues and Financial Management Division

2022/23 Budget & Council Tax Setting

The 2022/23 net budget of £113.9m was approved by Council on 02 March 2022. The net budget will be part funded from an increase of 2.99% to Council Tax, of which 1.0% relates to the Adult Social Care Precept. The 2022/23 council tax requirement is £57.2m and the Band D council tax level (before local and major precepts) is £1,595.67.

2021/22 Quarter 3 Spending

For the financial year to 31 December 2021, overall Council operational net spending (excl Covid) was £80.5m against a budget of £79.5m, resulting in an overspend position to date against budget of £1.0m. The forecast position for the year to 31 March 2022 was an estimated overspend of £1.5m.

Covid costs and loss of income for the third quarter of the year is a total of £14.3m, with forecast costs through to the end of the year of £17.9m. It is expected there will be a shortfall in Government Grant of approximately £1.5m in funding Covid costs and loss of income for the year.

This provides a total forecast outturn overspend of £3m.

Capital spending at 31 December 2021 totalled £13.3m, which is 96% of the planned spending of £13.9m at this stage. This represents 61% of the total Capital Programme of £21.8m (which assumes a 20% slippage between years).

Council Tax and Business Rate Collection

Council tax collection for the final quarter of the year is 94.15%, marginally up by 0.01% on this point last year. Cash collection for the year to date is £68.4m, this includes £2.2m collected in relation to previous year debt.

Business rates collection for the final quarter of the year is 97.38%, up by 1.2% on this point last year. Cash collected for the year to date is £53.2m, this includes £1.1m collected in relation to previous year debt.

Breathing Space

From May 2021 the Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space) gives someone in problem debt the right to legal protections from their creditors. As at 31 March 2022 the Council has in place 79 Breathing Space applications for debts totalling £0.128m (56 applications totalling £0.101m as at December 2021). They are analysed as follows:

Council Tax – 41 applications, value of debt £0.073m

Sundry Debts – 1 applications, value of debt £0.001m

Mersey Gateway – 37 applications, value of debt £0.054m

Omicron Business Support Grants

On 21 December 2021 the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) announced a new business support grant scheme for business. The scheme provides support to hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses, in recognition that the rise of the Omicron variant means that some businesses are likely to struggle over the winter period. In total to 31 March 2022 grant awards of £0.431m were made to 118 businesses.

Covid Additional Relief Fund

In December 2021 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced a new COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) of £1.5 billion. The fund is available to support those businesses that pay business rates, who are affected by the pandemic but that are ineligible for existing support linked to business rates. Halton has been allocated an amount of £3.087m. On 17 February 2022 Executive Board approved a discretionary scheme allowing eligible businesses to apply for the support relief. Businesses have up to 31 May 2022 to submit an application.

2.4 Audit, Procurement & Operational Finance Division

Client Finance

The Client Finance team provides an Appointeeship and Deputyship Service to around 340 vulnerable individuals who lack the capacity to make decisions about their financial affairs.

The team was recently inspected by the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) - the body that supervises public authority deputy arrangements to make sure that appointed deputies are carrying out their legal duties and are acting in the very best interests of clients at all times.

Following their visit to Halton, the OPG said they were making no recommendations for improvement in any of the four standards that were assessed as part of the review. In summarising their inspection, the OPG emphasised that the Council has a well-run and dedicated Deputyship service, in particular praising the “extremely well organised” systems in place.

They said it was evident that staff had “detailed knowledge” and it was clear they were “dedicated to their clients”. There was direct praise from the clients themselves too, who highlighted the excellent communication and close working relationships that had been formed.

Finance Support Services

Arrangements for settling Suppliers’ invoices via card payment and the rebate generated from the early payment scheme, generated more than £130k in income for the Council in 2021/22.

During the financial year, 92.57% of all Council supplier invoices were paid within 30 days.

Procurement Policy Note on contracts with Suppliers from Russia or Belarus

The Cabinet Office published Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 01/2022 regarding contracts with Russian or Belarusian suppliers. The PPN applies to central government departments and executive agencies and is advisory for all other public contracting authorities.

In response to the PPN, the Council has reviewed its contracts with Russian or Belarusian suppliers. Two small sites were identified as using Gazprom for the supply of gas. These sites have since been switched over to the Crown Commercial Service Framework, which does not include any suppliers from Russia or Belarus.

Direct Payments

The Direct Payments team delivers a support service to over 800 individuals who have opted to have their assessed care and support needs met by receiving a Direct Payment. As part of their role, the team undertakes an ongoing programme of audits of individual Direct Payment accounts to provide assurance that funding has been used in compliance with support plans and agreed outcomes. The audit process also involves recovering surplus funds where appropriate.

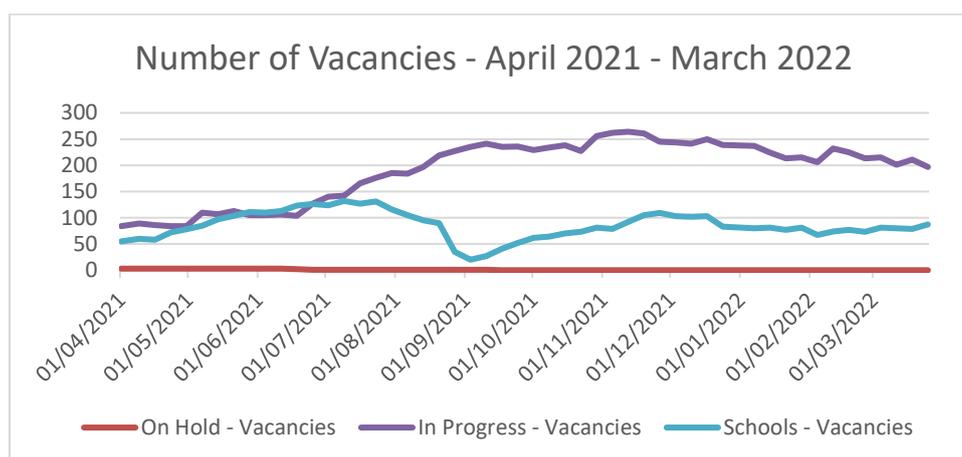
During 2021/22, the team completed a total of 568 audits and recovered over £1.8m.

Insurance

The Council's Personal Accident and Travel policy and the Crime policy were recently retendered. The Personal Accident and Travel policy has been awarded to AIG via Risk Management Partners. This has resulted in a premium saving of approximately £5k when compared to the expiring premium. The Crime policy has been awarded to Aviva via Maven Public Sector, who were the incumbent provider. This has resulted in a premium increase of just £450. All other policies were renewed with the existing insurers.

2.5 Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

Whilst the Efficiency, Resourcing & Recruitment Service has provided significant support to the organisation throughout 2021/22, with notable success (e.g. Chief Executive recruitment, Operational Director Community & Environment Recruitment and Director of Public Health recruitment), the service continues to see unprecedented demand across the council during quarter 4. As we enter the new financial year, there are likely to be in excess of 400 vacancies in the system during Q1 of 2022/23. The service was not designed and is not resourced sufficiently to deal with this level of demand, consequently this situation is not sustainable and will inevitably lead to service degradation and requests for recruitment not being fulfilled. This combines with a difficult market for many role types. The average time to recruit indicator (PPPE LI 12) is showing a longer timescale at the year end point. The situation in Halton reflects the general trend across the Local Government sector. The graphic below shows the pattern of demand in Halton over the year. Other than applying additional resources – for which there is no funding stream – the only way to deal with this situation is through selective demand management.



As referenced in Q3, in order to explore the changing dynamics of the sub-regional labour market, a strategic group led by the Chief Executive of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has now convened and the LCR CA and 6 local authorities are pooling expertise and knowledge to consider ways in which prevailing workforce challenges can be met. Current focus is on three key areas; The creation of a common LCR approach, principles and brand for recruitment, exploring opportunities for collaboration on leadership, coaching, mentoring graduate and talent management programme, and identifying workforce, resource and succession planning challenges. Thereafter exploring opportunities for career development pathways for business-critical roles that are difficult to recruit and retain to.

Aligned to the above, the Department is undertaking a project to identify key areas in the Council where succession planning is required to ensure that services remain stable into the medium and long-term. It is envisaged that up to a third of the Council's workforce could retire in the next ten years, which means that action is required now to ensure a continuity of skill, experience and knowledge in a wide range of roles and functions into the future. A report is due to be considered by Management Team in May / June 2022.

The Organisational Development & Performance Service supported the successful appointment of the Council's new Chief Executive, deploying a range of psychometric tools as part of the recruitment process, including detailed feedback to all shortlisted CEO candidates.

The quarter saw the completion of marking, claiming certificates for Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) level 5 students (ILM Presentation event arranged for 12th April). External Verification Sampling by the ILM inspector produced a positive report. The service is planning and has shortlisted for two ILM level 3 cohorts starting April and Sept 2022 (2 x 15 students on each), with a further ILM level 5 planned for Feb 2023.

Delivery of the Leadership & Management Framework continues to go well with 43 managers current working through the Framework. Planning and preparation for a further 60 managers has been completed with the launch event being delivered in April 2022.

During the quarter, the OD team has been working with services to develop role specific training for employees that don't have a corporate IT account. Specifically, development of an electronic Data Protection sign off for operational staff has been completed to ensure compliance around GDPR for those employees without a corporate IT account – this is designed to strengthen the Council's information governance arrangements.

The On-boarding and the Corporate Induction e-learning modules have been updated with the new Chief Executive's video messages to provide an inclusive approach to new staff and demonstrate senior support to the principles of learning and OD.

1941 e-learning modules were completed during the quarter, demonstrating an increase over the previous quarter and evidencing a continued high rate of engagement with e-learning as a personal development method. This has now become embedded as an efficient way to provide wide-scale learning and development

Following the Government relaxing all COVID-19 restrictions during Q4, the Council has started to revert back to office based working. There remains some nervousness around transmission risk and office space remains limited to 50% capacity. Take up of the opportunity to return to office based working has been variable across the organisation. A more structured approach will be required and this will be developed in Q1 of 2022/23. A working group that was in place during 2020/21 to manage the re-opening of services after lockdowns 1, 2 and 3 will reconvene to consider how to safely integrate staff back into office spaces. It should be noted however that prior to 2020 the Council had actively moved towards an agile working principle in office areas as a result of property rationalisation. The matter of return to office spaces has attracted much media attention, however the Council cannot mandate the return of all staff to offices at all times as there is not sufficient workspace available. The changes that the Council had made prior to 2020 lend themselves to a more formal model of agile working and this will be focused upon in the delivery of the Council's structured 'Future Work Programme' in 2022/23.

COVID-19 has inevitably caused absence issues across the organisation, however these have been managed effectively with no major disruption for extended periods of time in service areas. At the end of Q4, COVID-19 was the reason for circa 20% of all staff absence in the year. By the end of December 2021 there has been a total of 1219 recorded absences due to COVID-19 in the Council and schools since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, 916 of these occurring since April 2021.

It was reported in Q3 that new legislation requiring that all people working in care homes must be fully vaccinated against COVID19, or have evidenced clinical exemption, came into force on 11th November 2021. During Q4, this was revoked. Despite the unpredictability of this whole issue, the Adult Care services, HR and Trade Unions have managed this situation effectively and without major disruption.

2.6 ICT and Administration

Sickness levels, across Admin, ICT, Data Compliance and Customer Services remained over this quarter at a manageable level, with only 4 long term sick cases more importantly decreasing numbers of staff testing +ve with COVID symptoms over the last period. Q3 One Stop Shop staffing issues have now been resolved but leaving the department with a recruitment issue that will need to be resolved.

The ICT teams **covered all emergency** calls over this continued period of home working 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.

The Halton Cloud continues to support all 2600 internal/external desktop users with an average of 2000 concurrent external non-HBC/HBC Employee users connected into services at any one time from home, 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 and beyond.

The Records Management and Print Facility is 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.

- Incoming mail scanning (corporate)
- Hybrid mail (corporate)
- RMU Office now open at Picow Farm Road
- Sefton invoicing contract services delivered throughout the lockdown
- Cemeteries support
- Open Spaces Service support
- Courier service

Warehouse: RMU staff, observing social distancing, are continuing to work on warehouse tasks as required.

Data retention in SharePoint (SP): creating a process to prepare SP data for migration to the new SP environment is underway. This will align with the Corporate wide Records Retention Policy.

Data audit: The scope of the Electronic records review increased to include data quality. Looking to further develop the IAR to include all Council records data not just personal data.

Post room consolidation (corporate): completed with linkages to new digitised postal services together with a review of software solutions to enhance this facility and create a corporate solution. **Courier service for Libraries:** Fully operational delivering services to the public. **Hybrid mail (corporate):** Care Home and CYPD Contracts teams added. Monthly HM data is being recorded to compare alongside physically franked mail to check correlation.

Schools ICT Programme: Halton Borough Council (HBC) ICT Services following the restructure has adapted and changed its services to schools and academies in order to meet the changing requirements of schools.

The service offers a comprehensive package of support ranging from basic admin machine connection to the council network to scheduled technician visits, and have added services and key personnel supporting the technical requirements to improve the overall support package from HBC. This service will now continue with the extended offer of GDPR support SLA's for all schools.

Contact Centre

Service Area	Contact Centre	Percentage
Adult Social Care	4765	20.10%
Council Tax	4441	18.74%
Waste Management	4001	16.88%
EDT	2520	10.63%
Childrens Social Care	1850	7.80%
Corporate Processes	1149	4.85%
Registrar	716	3.02%
Benefits	705	2.97%
Highways	609	2.57%
Environmental	545	2.30%
Housing Solutions	351	1.48%
Open Spaces	287	1.21%
Unknown	262	1.11%
HBC - OOH Procedures	261	1.10%
Halton Housing Trust	192	0.81%
Finance and Support Services	162	0.68%
Property Services	134	0.57%
Education	129	0.54%
Planning and Building Control	121	0.51%
Transportation	112	0.47%
Revenues	108	0.46%
Community And Leisure	101	0.43%
External Agencies	44	0.19%
HDL - internal procedures	32	0.13%
ICT Services	29	0.12%
Legal and Licensing	29	0.12%
Families Information Service	16	0.07%
Economy	15	0.06%
Risk and Emergency Planning	8	0.03%
Human Resources	4	0.02%
Tourist Information	2	0.01%
Youth Services	2	0.01%
Fleet Management - MOT	1	0.00%
HHT OOH	1	0.00%
Grand Total	23704	100.00%

One Stop Shops

Service Area	HDL Halton Lea	HDL Widnes	Grand Total	Percentage
Council Tax	1399	1632	3031	23.27%
Adult Social Care	1021	1736	2757	21.17%
Finance and Support Services	750	1001	1751	13.44%
Waste Management	349	433	782	6.00%
Benefits	407	244	651	5.00%
Corporate Processes	235	348	583	4.48%
Environmental	211	223	434	3.33%
Highways	166	254	420	3.22%
Open Spaces	193	153	346	2.66%
Unknown	210	85	295	2.26%
Education	118	119	237	1.82%
Transportation	124	113	237	1.82%
Housing Solutions	103	125	228	1.75%
Childrens Social Care	141	82	223	1.71%
Human Resources	74	100	174	1.34%
HDL - internal procedures	56	87	143	1.10%
Property Services	44	80	124	0.95%
Planning and Building Control	44	59	103	0.79%
Registrar	38	59	97	0.74%
Halton Housing Trust	52	34	86	0.66%
Revenues	33	43	76	0.58%
Legal and Licensing	21	48	69	0.53%
Community And Leisure	32	32	64	0.49%
External Agencies	33	21	54	0.41%
Economy	13	20	33	0.25%
HBC - OOH Procedures	3	6	9	0.07%
Tourist Information	1	6	7	0.05%
Families Information Service	3	3	6	0.05%
Risk and Emergency Planning	1	4	5	0.04%
EDT		1	1	0.01%
Grand Total	5875	7151	13026	100.00%

Agresso:

The upgrade to Agresso ERP Milestone 7.8: continues over the next quarter the Agresso team will be working closely with all system users to define and design the major upgrade of the Agresso services to the latest version and then move to ERP Version 8.0 once available for all clients, together with a review of Income Manager and the potential move to the HayCentric payments modules enhancing online payment facilities. This is a considerable undertaking given the complexity associated with all partners now within the system – this upgrade will release added levels of security – functionality and user driven services.

2.7 Legal and Democracy

The Audit and Governance Board considered the revised draft of the Members Code of Conduct at its meeting in March and recommended its approval by Annual Council.

Executive Board at the April meeting will consider minor revisions to the constitution, and make a recommendation to Annual Council.

Council approved the updated Members Allowance Scheme in March. It will take effect on 1st April, for a period of 3 years.

2.8 Community & Environment

Catering, Stadium and Registration Services

School Meals Service

The service is still experiencing a high turnover of staffing, we continue to use casuals and agency as and when required. This along with still COVID absences and general sickness is putting pressure on certain catering outlets, however we still continue to offer an excellent service and have not had to resort to a cold service in any school for several months.

Civic Catering

It was agreed at full council in March 2022 that Civic Catering would close at Municipal Canteen and also Halton Lea. Consultation over the reorganisation is due on the 30/03/22 with all Civic Catering employees.

DCBL Stadium

The stadium has continued to host events under guidelines and more recently fully opened up for meetings and conferences. Enquiries we have received for meetings & conferences are vastly down on previous years however this was to be expected.

Widnes Vikings season began in January with a friendly match against Batley and the so far the attendances for the first 2 games are significantly up on the matches during the pandemic and on a par with that of pre pandemic fixtures.

Decarbonisation work has nearly finished at the stadium with only snagging to be completed. This should greatly reduce the stadium's carbon footprint

PCN have been in touch with the possibility of using the stadium again for booster vaccinations, this is still to be confirmed.

Widnes FC are near the end of their playing season with only 2 matches remaining, again we have seen an increase in attendances and a rise in concourse bar income.

2.9 Economy Enterprise & Property Services

Property Services Operations

Millbrow Care Home- Proposed refurbishment

The proposed refurbishment works at Millbrow, at an estimated cost of £1.5m, have been on hold since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Adults Services are now looking again at their model of delivery and further feasibility works are being undertaken in respect of the service requirements going forward.

Proposed New Leisure Centre Moor Lane

The Compulsory Purchase Order has now been approved and the general vesting declaration has been executed. The anticipated main start on site date is early August 2022, however some enabling works will be completed prior to then, the tree felling work having already been undertaken.

Education maintenance programme 2021/22

The 2021/22 Education maintenance programme was approved by Council in March. The programme consists of 18 separate projects at a total cost of circa £1.36m. 15 of the projects have now been completed and it has been agreed that the remaining 3 which are all window replacements will be deferred to next year in order to fit in with the schools to cause as little disruption as possible.

Education maintenance programme 2022/23

The 2022/23 Education maintenance programme was approved by Council in March. The programme consists of 12 separate projects at a total cost of circa £780k. Design works will now commence in respect of delivering these projects throughout the year, but primarily over the summer holiday period.

Corporate Maintenance programme 2021/22

The 2021/22 corporate maintenance programme was approved by the AMWG in January. The programme consists of numerous projects most of which are now complete, a couple have had to be deferred however the budget will be spent up at year end.

Corporate Maintenance programme 2022/23

The 2022/23 corporate maintenance programme has been drafted and is awaiting final approval which is expected in early April. The programme consists of numerous projects which will be completed throughout the year.

Mersey Gateway Handback Sites

The settlement deed, in respect of the remaining outstanding works on the handback sites has now been executed and signed by all parties so the majority of the land has been deemed to be handed back to the Council. There are some minor exceptions associated with land where third parties have an interest and where United Utilities are carrying out some remedial works on site A on Ditton Road, once complete this site also will have been handed back. All necessary outstanding work on the handback sites, mainly, Wigg Island and Spike Island will be completed by HBC using the funds set aside by the agreement.

71 High Street Runcorn- Refurbishment

Works started on site in late January with completion being due in late July. All works are progressing well and on programme.

Camden Buildings, High Street- refurb to create digital/creative hub

Design development works are on-going in respect of the above to ensure we meet the next stage of the Town Deal Funds requirements which requires the business case to be submitted by August 1st. RIBA stage 2 report provided indicating various options which are now being considered.

Decarbonisation scheme- Halton Stadium

£1.3m has been secured from the Government's decarbonisation fund for works at Halton Stadium, a further sum has also been approved, bringing the total funding to circa £1.7m. Works have progressed well on site, and whilst the delivery of the air source heat pumps was delayed, they did arrive in January and all works have now been completed.

Brookvale Rec- Proposed Artificial Pitches

The works have now been completed and the facility is now in use.

Pickering Pastures- Proposed new pavilion building

A revised feasibility study has been provided following close consultation with Open Spaces, funding options are now being considered.

Cavendish School - 2 class extension

A feasibility study has been provided, the budget cost being circa £500k. The project has been approved by Exec board and design development works are now progressing.

6 Church Street, Runcorn Old Town- Refurbishment to form HPIJ Offices

Works started on site in February with completion now being due in late April/early May

The Brindley- Proposed extension

Design development works are on-going in respect of the above to ensure we meet the next stage of the Town Deal Funds requirements which requires the business case to be submitted by August 1st. A preferred option has been agreed with a budget estimate of £2.9m.

Changing Places Facilities

Funding has been secured for 3 Changing Places facilities which will be in Victoria Park, Shopping City and the Stadium respectively. Design work has now started in respect of these and they will be delivered over the coming months.

2.15 Asset Management

Elite House, Shaw Street, Runcorn – the lease with Inflata Nation as terminated 8 March 2022 as the tenant went into liquidation

65 High Street, Runcorn – the acquisition of the property and lease back to the vendor was completed 10 March 2022

3.0 Emerging Issues

3.1 A number of emerging issues have been identified during the period that will impact upon the work of services including:-

3.2 Financial Services

Benefits Division

Household Support Fund

On 1st April 2022 the Government announced an extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF) for the period 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022, for which Halton has been allocated funding of £1,297,880. The Government's guidance states that at least one third of the fund must be spent on vulnerable households with children, at least one third on vulnerable pensioner households and up to one third of the fund can be spent on other vulnerable households.

A spending plan is currently being developed, similar to that used for the Household Support Fund during the previous six months. This will involve a number of Council Departments and Voluntary Sector Partners, to deliver support to vulnerable households across the Borough.

3.3 Revenues and Financial Management Division

Energy Bills Rebate Scheme

On 03 February 2022 Government announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate Scheme to help households with rising energy bills. This included:

- A £150 non-repayable grant payment for households in council tax bands A to D, known as the Council Tax Rebate Grant.
- £144 million of discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who are in need but are not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate Grant, known as the Discretionary Fund.

The scheme provides some immediate relief for rising energy costs, while targeting those most likely to require support, the Government requires council tax billing authorities to provide a £150 one-off grant payment to liable council taxpayers for every household that occupies a property which meets certain criteria.

The Council Tax and Benefits teams are working on a process to enable payments to be made as soon as possible and in line with Government guidance. It is expected where the Council holds bank details these payments will start to be made during week commencing 02 May 2022. At the same time the team will be contacting households to request bank details (where none are held currently) to enable payments to be made.

The Council is also providing a discretionary scheme related to the Energy Bills Rebate Scheme, for which the eligibility criteria are currently being developed and approved by Executive Board.

3.4 Audit, Procurement & Operational Finance Division

Income Collection

During 2021/22 there continued to be a notable change in the way that customers make payments to the Council. The value of payments taken through the payment kiosks has now fallen by over 66 percent when compared to pre-pandemic levels. This is largely due to an increasing number of customers electing to pay via Direct Debit. Customers wishing to pay in cash also now have the option to make payments at approximately 60 PayPoint outlets located across the Borough.

Early Payment Scheme

The Council currently operates an Early Payment Scheme for supplier invoices in partnership with Oxygen Finance Ltd. Under the Scheme, suppliers benefit from having their invoices paid ahead of the Council's standard payment terms in exchange for a small rebate on the invoice value.

The Council's five-year contract with Oxygen expires in August 2022 at which point the Council will take the Scheme fully in-house. This will provide the Council with more control and also ensure that 100% of the rebate generated from the Scheme is retained by the Council.

3.5 Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

Further to references in previous reports, there remains an absence of clear direction in legal terms on the matter of holiday pay entitlement resulting from voluntary overtime. Whilst further advice has been awaited from Local Government National Employers, none has been forthcoming. The HR service will need to address this issue and the matter will be considered during Q1/Q2 of 2022/23. The aim will be to develop an approach that is within the spirit of fairness whilst protecting the Council from any future legal challenge.

As reported in Q3, in another significant legal case, the Supreme Court heard an appeal in the case of Brazel – v- Harpur Trust on 9th November 2021. This case led to changes to the holiday pay calculation for employees on Term Time Only and Part-Year contracts of employment. The Council (and many other Council's) currently has a number of Employment Tribunal claims pending in the tribunal system, which were stayed pending a judgement from the Supreme Court. That judgement has not yet been published. The Council cannot act until it is, and the judgement will determine how the Council will need to deal with those claims.

The outcome of government consultation from summer 2021 on measures to restrict 'Special Severance Payments' is still awaited.

The continual need to engage agency workers to meet increased service demand in several services continues. There has also been significant amount of COVID related agency spend as the Borough's testing centres were resourced through agency staffing arrangements. It is the case however that spend on agency workers for the financial year 2021/22 has totalled £8.3m. This is an unprecedented amount and contrasts starkly with the reduction to £2.2m which was achieved following Efficiency Review in 2015/16.

There are two key cost drivers within the agency area; the first being a large number of vacancies being covered in the Council's Care Homes (80+), and also in the Council's Child Protection Service (31 Social Work vacancies at the time of writing). Whilst the budget attached to the vacancies covers a large proportion of the agency cost, it does not cover it all. Nor does it promote stable workforce arrangements. To tackle these issues, a coordinated recruitment exercise is to be delivered by the Recruitment & Resourcing team in conjunction with the Care Homes Division in May 2022 with the aim being to fill as many vacancies as possible with permanent staff, and then to rationalise agency supply arrangements as far as is possible. The Children's Social Work issue is more complex as there are several factors restricting the supply of permanent social workers to all Councils, namely workers leaving the profession, or leaving established local government employment to work on an agency basis – this commands a higher income for the individual and the agencies placing social workers have become involved in a 'bidding war' to achieve the highest rates for their placements. This has resulted in an overheated market and it is now not unknown for a Children's social worker placement to be offered to a Council by an agency at a rate in excess of £40 per hour. The Directors of Children's Services in the North West are considering this matter, however options are limited because demand outstrips supply by a fair margin so market forces have taken over.

One strand of the Council's Organisational Development Strategy is the engagement and development of apprentices. A redirection of resources with the Policy area to deal with more pressing matters, combined

with the continuing impact of Covid-19, have both played a role in this being a very quiet year, which has had a knock on effect in terms of our overall levy spend reducing and our expired levy increasing. As referenced in the Key Developments section above, the work around succession planning will bring forward a number of proposals to utilise apprenticeships more as an opening to a career pathway in the Local Authority. In the 2022/23 financial year a further six opportunities have been identified as follows; Heavy Vehicle Service & Maintenance Technician x 1, Children`s Services x 2, Cemeteries officer apprentice x 1, Finance Services x 2.

The 2020/21 NJC pay claim was finally agreed nationally in March. The timing of the agreement was very close to the payroll deadline, however the service worked hard to ensure that the pay award was processed so that staff received it in the March payslip.

The 2022/23 pay claim has yet to be submitted by the 3 trade unions involved in the national negotiations, despite the fact that it should be effective from 1st April 2022. Should this round of pay negotiations also prove to be protracted, it has the potential to frustrate the budgeting process, reduce the level of confidence that staff have in the collective bargaining process, and add to the recruitment issues of the sector as advertised salaries are even less competitive than they should be.

The unfortunate unfolding of military conflict in Ukraine, and the UK Government response to that in the form of the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme has led to the Department's Partnerships Officer taking on a coordinating role for that programme in Halton. This is proving quite challenging as the interface between potential sponsors, the immigration system (Home Office), the funding regime (Dept for Levelling-up, Communities and Housing), and local authorities is not sufficiently mature to operate efficiently. This Department has supported the design of processes and procedures, local decision making, and the DBS element of the sponsor checks, to try and ensure that the process runs as smoothly as possible for potential sponsors and Ukrainian nationals seeking refuge. This remains an ongoing project. Additional resource is likely to be required in the medium term to support its coordination.

3.6 ICT and Administration

Third party software licensing:

Unfortunately we are coming to the end of the negotiated three year **Microsoft licensing agreements** - now renewed in March 2022/Go-Live June 2022. Negotiations completed for this considerable contract with "new" annual costs of £800'000 per annum for the use of Microsoft Office and associated services such as email and SharePoint together with essential Server based software packages, up from £680'000 previously.

This considerable negotiation impacts upon all ICT related systems and solutions as many of these packages form the base platform for all electronic services and packages used across the whole authority.

Negotiations have focused upon the delivery of improved and innovative Hybrid working solutions that will enhance the current experience and allow for innovative changes into the future as working practices and organisational demands evolve. This will involve the role out of the Office 365 E5 cloud based licensing solution encompassing Teams Telephony and the removal of Skype as the authority's telephony solution by September this year, enabling enhancements to the authorities Contact Centre and changes to the look and feel of the operational desktop simplifying accessibility and integrating systems such as SharePoint further within the experience for all Members and Officers.

The service had been negotiating the high value service contracts for the VMware software packages that managed our desktop estate, these negotiations hit an impasse due to the astronomical prices expected by the supplier of £480'000per annum, up from £70'000 per annum. The supplier expected the authority to relinquish ownership of the current licencing bundle to move into a considerably more expensive revenue based external cloud solution, based upon a leased licensing arrangement.

This offer was firmly refused, the authority still retains ownership of the current set of licenses as of the 31st December 2021. The department will continue to look at on-premise options with VMWare if no solution is realised over the coming months the authority as noted still owns the asset in question and over the next 24 – 30 months will review the product set and look to alternate software solutions to manage the on-premise Halton Cloud facility.

In summary **3rd party software licensing** in some cases is no longer an asset but subject to named user pay as you use subscription models this is increasingly becoming the case with the more obvious and essential system providers such as Microsoft, OLM for Social Care, and potentially VMware into the future. This will lead to increased costs as staffing numbers churn and the increased use of external and Agency staffing increases as all licences and associated services are charged by the 3rd parties on a named basis with, in some cases 3 month changeover periods levied per user depending upon the services and the licenses used. A recharging proposal is being developed in line with the new licensing and service use proposals levied upon the council.

OLM and the Eclipse software package currently being implemented within Children’s Services, Following on from numerous technical and operational meetings it was agreed that OLM would provide a breakdown of some of the Major deliverables identified within a proposed plan of enhancements that has been drawn up for Halton and the wider user community.

Considerable discussions have surrounded updating the plan to show those actions that have already been completed, breaking down the larger enhancements into incremental changes to show what can be delivered when and highlighting which actions weren’t achievable within the timeframes specified and why, pointing out the dependencies at each stage.

Sticking points such as the proposed changes, have been pushed back as a requirement during a meeting with Divisional and Operational managers, it was felt early Q1 was not a realistic timeframe for the majority of the other proposed changes, ideally the proposals made will come to some kind of compromise around this development, again looking at incremental changes to improve the experience and to try and deliver the customisation Halton care management require with some immediacy.

3.7 Legal and Democracy

Work continues on preparations for the local elections in May, and the subsequent induction of new Members. The work carried out by officers across Merseyside and Cheshire will result in new joint scrutiny arrangements for health being brought before Council in May.

Major projects will continue to demand considerable involvement from Legal Services.

Recruitment to key posts will continue within the Department.

3.8 Property Services

External Funding

Bids to the value of £6.1 million are currently being developed by the Team, including:

- Ineos hydrogen bid to the CA for £3.4m
- Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Museum – bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund for £800k
- St Bertelina’s Church Windmill Hill – reconfiguration of the church to accommodate community use £100k
- Open 360 – Reaching Communities Fund bid - £250k

The team continues to lead on the following:

Delivery of the Celebrating Halton's Heritage project funded through National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of the Borough of Culture celebrations; this runs to September 2022.

Delivery of the Welcome Back Fund programme for Halton – due to complete by the end of March 2022

Lead for the Visitor Economy for Halton at LCR level and delivering a Destination Marketing programme funded by SIF and worth £115k

Sit on the LCR Culture Working Group and input to the delivery of two schemes currently – The World Reimagined and Bridge2Bamboo

Continue the monitoring of a number of schemes, including Ways to Work employment programme and Town Deal.

Supporting the Council's Climate Change Action Plan by producing a complementary funding plan

3.9 Property Services Operations

Energy Supplies

Wholesale energy costs have risen over the past 12 months. Halton procures its gas and electricity via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) framework arrangements and as we are on a fixed rate contract we have been protected from any price increases in 2021/22. From the 1st April 2022 however the rates have gone up dramatically, the price of gas has increased by 207% and electricity by 64%. Based on the above percentage increases our energy costs for our corporate buildings will increase by circa £1.76m in 2022/23. As a result of the dramatic rises CCS have introduced a contract with a 24 month purchase window to help reduce the impact of volatile markets in the future as such Halton will be moving to those new arrangements in future.

Carbon emission targets

A Carbon Strategy Board was established following the assessment APSE carried out last year, and a Climate Change Action Plan has now been produced and approved by Exec Board. This sets out the Council's intentions over the coming years in respect of embedding carbon reduction in to decision making but also sets a target of the Council's own emissions being carbon net zero by 2040 in line with the Liverpool City region. Government have brought into law 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 options such as heat pumps.

Agile working/return to the office

COVID-19 necessitated the need for home working which in the main has proved successful. As life returns to something a bit more near to normal this shift in working arrangements has presented us with the opportunity to embrace more flexible working arrangements on a more permanent basis in the future. This in turn could enable us to make better and more cost effective use of our accommodation and potentially enable us to vacate space and generate more income from renting that space out to other organisations, hence it is important that this opportunity is acted upon. The COVID reset group will be looking at arrangements going forward and setting out guidance on how the opportunity presented can be best acted upon

Asset Management

Commercial Rent (Coronavirus) Act 2022 – has come into force bringing a new arbitration process to resolve certain pandemic related rent debt.

Regeneration – Town Centres

Due to the status of the Runcorn Towns Fund £23.6m currently the team is focused on the full business case deadline submission of 3rd August 2022. This limits the short term capacity to look at other potential Town Centre Projects

4.0 High Priority Equality Actions

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

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

5.0 Performance Overview

- 5.1 The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.

Financial Management

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
FS 01a	Report 2022-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board - November 2021.	

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
FS 01b	Report 2022/23 revenue budget, capital programme and council tax to Council - March 2022 .	
FS 02c	Provide quarterly monitoring and forecasting reports on the overall budget to Executive Board.	
FS 03a	Publish the Statement of Accounts following external audit and the Annual Governance Statement by 30th September 2021 .	
FS 04a	Establish Treasury Management Policy and report to Council - March 2021 .	
FS04b	Provide monitoring reports to Executive Board on a bi-annual basis .	
FS 05a	Establish and report prudential indicators to Council - March 2021 .	

Supporting Commentary

FS 01a

Medium Term Financial Strategy was reported to Executive Board on 18 November 2021. The financial forecast continues to be regularly updated.

FS 01b

2022/23 revenue budget, capital programme and council tax was reported to Council on 02 March 2022.

FS 02c

Quarter 3 monitoring report on the overall budget was reported to Executive Board on 17 February 2022.

FS 03a

The Council's External Auditor (Grant Thornton UK LLP) commenced with the audit of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts in November 2021 which resulted in the deadline not being met. This was primarily due to a lack of staffing resources on their part. The Statement of Accounts and Audit Findings Report were however reported to Audit and Governance Board on 23 March 2022.

FS04b

Treasury Management monitoring reported to Executive Board on 18 November 2021

FS 05a

Prudential indicators reported to Council on 03 March 2021

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 01	Receive an unqualified external audit opinion on the accounts.	Yes	Awaited	Awaited		N/A
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	Awaited	Awaited		N/A

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 03	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected	94.14%	94.25%	94.15%		
FS LI 04	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received	96.18%	97.50%	97.38%		
FS LI 05	Average time for processing new claims (Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction)	16.22	18	16.71		
FS LI 06	Proportion of all supplier invoices paid within 30 days (including disputed invoices)	92.6%	93.0%	92.6%		

Supporting Commentary

FS LI 01

Due to a national issue on accounting for Infrastructure Assets the external auditor is not yet in a position to provide an unqualified external audit opinion.

FS LI 02

The Council is awaiting the value for money conclusion from the external auditor.

FS LI 03

Proportion of council tax collected to 31 March 2022 is 94.15%. This is up marginally by 0.01% compared with the same point last year.

FS LI 04

Proportion of business rates collected to 31 March 2022 is 97.38%. This is up by 1.2% compared with the same point last year.

FS LI 05

The average time for processing is marginally lower than the previous year, primarily due to the increased numbers of applications received following the Covid 19 pandemic.

FS LI 06

Payment performance in respect of Council invoices was maintained at the same level as for 2020/21.

Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Service

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
PPPE 01	Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy June 2021	

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
PPPE 02	Embed knowledge and skills gained from first phase of Senior Leadership and Management Development Programme (MBA) December 2021.	
PPPE 03	Establish 20 new existing employee apprenticeships to enable up-skilling in a range of business areas, compliant with the requirements of apprenticeship legislation March 2022	
PPPE 04	Implement resourcing plans with service management in appropriate areas December 2021.	
PPPE 05	Ongoing monitoring of agency usage and spend April, September, December 2021, and March 2022.	

Supporting Commentary

PPPE 01

This is progressing well.

PPPE 02

On track. Projects delivered in Autumn 2021 by Cohort 1 will be evaluated and assessed. Themes and outputs will be reported and utilised corporately.

PPPE 03

11 conversion apprenticeships have commenced since April 2021. Refer to commentary

PPPE 04

Refer to narrative in Emerging Issues section above.

PPPE 05

Refer to narrative in Emerging Issues section above.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
PPPE LI 01	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	10.02 (Days)	9.5 (Days)	12.94 (Days)		
PPPE LI 02	Percentage of Employees without sickness	73.74	70.00	68.19		
PPPE LI 03	Total Agency Worker Usage (number of placements – year to date)	746	650	Refer to comment		
PPPE LI 04	Total Agency Worker Cost (gross cumulative cost – year to date)	£3.7m	£2.5m	£8.3m		
PPPE LI 105	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are: ¹ a) Women	63.1.9%	55.00%	64.2%		

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
	b) from BME communities	2.78%	2.00%	2.67%		
	c) with a disability	0.89%	8.00%	1.25%		
PPPE LI 06	Average time to recruit (Applicant Tracking System reported figure)	11 days	13 Days	19 Days		

Supporting Commentary

PPPE LI 01

This figure has been difficult to predict, and manage, during the current year given the prevalence of COVID-19 and the fluctuating social restrictions applied by government outside of the workplace. Please refer to Key Developments above for more contextual information.

PPPE LI 02

Largely positive, and aligned with anecdotal information elsewhere in report (was 77.45% at this time last year)

PPPE LI 03

Target has been missed. Please refer to Emerging Issues section above for relevant narrative. Year-end placement totals not yet available as some have been procured off contract where corporate contract has not been able to deliver.

PPPE LI 04

Target has been missed. Please refer to Emerging Issues section above for relevant narrative around total spend.

PPPE LI 05

It should be noted that recruitment in to the top 5% of earners is generally very limited, and as such scope for significant change is low.

PPPE LI 06

This outturn is to be expected in the face of escalating demand. Whilst the team make every effort to complete recruitment as quickly as they can, service degradation is inevitable when the balance of demand versus available resources shifts as it has done.

ICT and Administrative Support Services

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
ICT 01a	Continued Enhancement of the virtualization platform to enhanced or new technologies - March 2022	

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
ICT 01b	Further development of Cloud Services Platform - March 2021.	
ICT 01c	SharePoint and Records Management enhancements - March 2021.	
ICT 01d	Interactive Web Services Enhancement and further SharePoint Integration - March 2021.	
ICT 02a	Continuing improvements, enhancements and commercial use of Cloud system - March 2021.	

Supporting Commentary

ICT 01a

Enhancements to the Halton Cloud platform continues at pace with the integration of Vendor cloud-based systems and services within our own platform.

ICT 01b

Enhancement planned in line with vendor software release up to and inclusive of the 31st December 2021 to enhance functionality and the user experience

ICT 01c

Enhancement planned in line with vendor software release to enhance functionality and the user experience

ICT 01d

Enhancement planned in line with vendor software release to enhance functionality and the user experience

ICT 02a

This will remain a focus together with the development of existing client opportunity. Mersey Travel, Sefton and now the Cemeteries system deployed to a 3rd party. Other opportunities for the deployment of Agresso together with other systems are currently under discussion.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q3=4 Progress	Direction of travel
ICT LI01	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	99.98%	99.00%	99%		
ICT LI02	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	99.97%	99.00%	99%		
ICT LI03	School Support SLA: % of calls responded to within <u>agreed</u> target*:					
	a) Priority 1	100%	85.00%	85%		
	b) Priority 2	100%	90.00%	90%		

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q3=4 Progress	Direction of travel
	c) Priority 3	100%	90.00%	95%		
	d) Priority 4	100%	95.00%	95%		

Supporting Commentary

ICT LI01

Remains in line with target and SLA, linked to Halton Cloud Data Centre configuration. A real achievement given the considerable levels of work undertaken over this period mainly out of hours.

ICT LI02

Remains in line with target and SLA. Inclusive of planned down time out of hours. Especially during these times of new working arrangements when connectivity to the centre is key.

ICT LI03

Again, this has been an unusual time with schools impacted by the pandemic and the support required evolving to support our clients within the boundaries of the SLA. New working practices are now in place to safeguard staff and clients – these service solutions will be retained as our clients prefer the new working models.

Legal & Democracy

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
LD 01	Review constitution - May 2021 .	
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 2021 .	

Supporting Commentary

LD 01

The revised constitution has been approved

LD 02a

All Members have been offered a MAP meeting.

LD 02b

All Members have been inducted.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 /21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
LD LI 01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (54 Total).	48 (89%)	54 100%	48 89%		
LD LI 02	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days).	10 (Days)	10 (Days)	51 94%		
LD LI 03	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)	10 (Days)		
LD LI 04	% of Executive Board minutes published within 5 working days after the meeting.	100%	100%	100%		

Supporting Commentary

LD LI 01

All Members have been offered a PDP. It is a matter of personal choice.

LD LI 02

51 of 54 Members have attended at least one organised training event. Training is provided using Teams, ELearning portal and face to face where appropriate. The very high target was almost reached, but it is a matter of personal choice, and all Members have been invited.

LD LI 03

The target has been met.

LD LI 04

The target has been met.

Community & Environment

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
CE 0 1a	Deliver a promotion and educational campaign (school meals) - September 2021 and January 2022 .	N/A

Supporting Commentary

CE 0 1a

Not applicable due to Covid-19

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 01	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Primary Schools.	Data unavailable	75%	72.15%		
CE LI 02	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Secondary Schools.	Data unavailable	60%	57.60%		
CE LI 03	Take up of school lunches (%) – primary schools.	Data unavailable	60%	54.27%		
CE LI 04	Take up of school lunches (%) – secondary schools.	Data unavailable	50%	45.84%		

Supporting Commentary

CE LI 01 - CE LI 04

Although the figures are not on target COVID impacted the uptake and school numbers in general during the last 12 months.

Property Services

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q4 Progress
EEP 02a	Proposed new Leisure Centre, Moor Lane- Commence works on site by 31st March 2022	
EEP 02b	Crow Wood Lane, Assisted residential development- commence on site by 31st December 2021	
EEP 02c	Deliver agreed programmed maintenance programme to Corporate Buildings by 31st March 2022.	
EEP02d	Deliver agreed programmed maintenance programme to schools by 31st March 2022.	
EEP 02e	Deliver agreed decarbonisation works to Stadium by 31st December 2021.	

Supporting Commentary

EEP 02a

The CPO has delayed the start date which is now likely to be August 2022, with completion by September 2024

EEP 02b

This project has been put on hold by the Intermediate Care and Rehabilitation Service hence has not progressed

EEP 02c

The majority of projects were delivered, there was a slight underspend on the budget however, as a couple of projects were deferred.

EEP 02d

The majority of projects were delivered, there were a couple of projects deferred by agreement with the schools.

EEP 02e

The project was completed by 31st March 2022

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	20 / 21 Actual	21 / 22 Target	Q4 Actual	Q4 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 01	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions indicator (Tonnes CO ₂ e).	9770	9675	N/A		
EEP LI 02	Capital receipts	£614,532, 82% of the target achieved	£1.5m based on an estimate for the amount and timing of receipts as at 20/5/2021	£280,000		
EEP LI 03	Commercial and investment portfolio – rent receivable against the budget to monitor receipt of income of rents and service charges.	Investment £39,325 Commercial £319,573	Investment £44,740 Commercial £609,270	Investment 44,300 Commercial £574,916		
EEP LI 04	Occupancy rates of commercial and investment portfolio.	100 % Investment 90% commercial	100 % Investment 90% commercial	100 % Investment 89% commercial		
EEP LI 05	Occupancy of Widnes Market Hall.	93%	94%	95%		
EEP LI 06	Unit Costs – office accommodation (reported annually).	1069sqm	1058sqm	1317sqm		

Supporting Commentary

EEP LI 01

The emissions for 2020/21 were 9,770 tonnes which equated to a 13.9% overall reduction on the 2019/20 emissions. Energy consumption in buildings actually fell by 7.6%, but with reductions in each of the other sectors together with a reduction in the kw/h-CO₂ conversion factor due to the increasing mix of renewable energy being generated the overall CO₂ emissions have reduced by almost 14%.

COVID had a significant impact on CO₂ emissions in 2020/21 with reductions across all sectors. Clearly the majority of staff have been homeworking and some buildings were closed for a period of time during lockdown. Fleet transport and business mileage were also significantly down due to homeworking.

The breakdown is as follows:- School Buildings 2798t, Corporate buildings 4385t, Unmetered supply 1502t, Fleet Transport 937t, & Business Mileage 148t. The target for 2021/22 has been set at 9672 tonnes CO₂e, a 1% reduction, this will be difficult to achieve given the very unusual circumstances in 2020/21 as a result of Covid.

The annual figure for this indicator is a year behind and therefore only reported in the following year, figures for 2021/22 are expected to be reported in the 1st quarter 2022/23.

EEP LI 02

Transactions underway of Linner Cottage and outbuildings and yard, Widnes; ; 50 Halebank Road Widnes; land Croft St Widnes is remarketed. Sales completed 4/5 Dock Road, Widnes and land adjacent to Aldi Widnes

EEP LI 03

The income received has been affected by request from a number of occupiers for further rent holidays and non-payment of rent due to Covid situation. Asset management are working with colleagues in income recovery. The tenant of no 5 Granville Street has vacated and the unit is on the market. Other vacant units are, 6 Church Street Runcorn to be used for HPIJ and the former Frankie and Bennies unit at the Hive.

It is unlikely that the units will be re-let before end Q4 . The rent figures included are rents invoiced

EEP LI 04

There are 11 vacant properties which will be on the market or unable to market until refurbishment works eg 71 High St Runcorn or clarifying planning status eg the former bus depot Moor Lane Widnes have been completed. Elite House, Shaw St Runcorn is included although will be converted into a business centre and the land at Croft St Widnes is on the market as the discussions with the potential occupier over a lease fell through.

EEP LI 05

Occupancy levels have increased over the past 12 months during lockdown and reached 93% at year end. At present this has increased to 95% which is up on the same period last year.

EEP LI 06

There are 2 main reasons the figure has increased, firstly last years' figures included a significant period when we were in lockdown so expenditure was reduced and secondly we have had a programme of LED lighting upgrades this year at the 3 main office buildings, The Municipal Building, Rutland House & Runcorn Town Hall, which has resulted in a spike in spend.

7.0 Financial Statements

*Not currently available at this time.

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 <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 	Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year.