

Employment, Learning, Skills and Community PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report

Reporti
ng
Period:

1st July to 30th September 2023

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the second quarter of 2023 / 24 for service areas within the remit of the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023 - 24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to Employment, Learning, Skills and Community (ELSC) Policy & Performance Board i.e.
 - Employment, Learning and Skills
 - Library and Culture and Leisure Services
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 7 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

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

2.2 Employment, Learning and Skills

Divisional

The first desk top exercise to test out the updated Kingsway Learning Centre Lockdown & Evacuation Plan was undertaken in Q2 with all agencies based within the building. This was a key priority given the impending Protect Duty (Martyn's Law) and Halton's preparedness for implementation of this. All HBC staff in the centre have been mandated to undertake the Protect Duty e-learning module to raise awareness of the Duty. The centre is awaiting the installation of a Public Address System in Q3, which will make implementation of the Lockdown & Evacuation Plan much more straightforward.

Halton People into Jobs

A redesign of the long-standing Ways to Work programme continues to be worked up with the Combined Authority as a result of European funding ending and being replaced by SIF and then UKSPF; this will be very different from the existing programme as it will focus on working with inactive residents rather than unemployed (which make up the majority of the current Ways to Work customer base). Inactive residents are much more of a challenge to engage with. The unemployed cohort we currently work with will no longer be eligible for Ways to Work under UKSPF.

HPIJ is a subcontractor of Ingeus, the Prime Contractor for the DWP Work & Health Programme. Ingeus have been asked to manage a new pilot programme called 'Pioneer' focusing on inactive customers and Ingeus asked HPIJ to be the provider in Halton. This was commercially confident until the end of August meaning Halton could not discuss this new provision with the CA. Additional recruitment is required.

Adult Learning

A full review of the Adult Learning full/part time tutor contract was undertaken in Q2 and was rubberstamped by Steering Group, with implementation from the 1st August 2023. The original contract needed to be updated to reflect changes to Ofsted's inspection framework and HBC policies and procedures.

Halton Adult Learning received its first Ofsted inspection for the first time in 6 years in June 2023. The inspection was challenging but very successful, with Halton maintaining its 'Good' status. This was a great outcome not only for Halton adult learners and adult learning staff but also for the Council as a whole.

Halton Employment Partnership (HEP)

In September 2023, members of HEP were invited to attend a site visit to the new Widnes Leisure Centre being constructed by Wates. Members were given a detailed presentation about the scheme and were then walked around the site to be able to see progress for themselves. Wates personnel attend all HEP meetings to report on progress against any social value or employment/skills key performance indicators they are working towards with local groups etc. So the site visit was a great opportunity to see some of these come to life (e.g. cleaner on site referred by HPIJ; Widnes young person now on work experience on site).

Community & Environment

2.3 Culture - Brindley Theatre

The Brindley extension obtained planning consent on 31 July and the procurement is underway to find a contractor.

2.4 Community Centres

Day Services left Murdishaw Community Centre on 1 September. Officers are trying to attract a new tenant.

2.5 Library Service

The Library Strategy for 2023-2028 was considered by Employment Learning & Skills & Community PPB on 19 June and adopted by Executive Board on 14 September. Summer Reading Challenge went exceptionally well and we saw more completers than in previous years.

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:-

Employment, Learning & Skills

3.2 Employment, Learning & Skills

HPIJ

The new Ways to Work programme will be implemented from 1st October 2023 focusing primarily on inactive customers. The approach will be quite different to the other employment programmes HPIJ deliver, which focus mainly on unemployed residents.

HPIJ is working with the CA on a proposal linked to the Metro Mayor's Young Person's Guarantee. This proposal will need to go to the SIF Panel for review. If successful, HPIJ will be able to offer a number of wage incentive work placements for young people aged 18-24 who require more intense employment support.

Adult Learning

Following the introduction of the revised Adult Learning Tutor Contract, an overhaul of the Tutor Handbook is required. Adult Learning managers will work with HR to produce this key guide for tutors.

Community & Environment

3.3 Culture Services

Brindley Theatre

As part of the budget savings, the Brindley reduced its Monday – Friday opening hours to 11am – 3pm for the Box Office and Café from 1 September.

3.4 Community Centres

Old Police Station – MP Mike Amesbury is moving into the 3 vacant rooms in December 2023. This will bring us to maximum capacity in the building.

Halton Day Services will result in a loss of income for Murdishaw. We are currently looking for new customers to take over the space.

3.4 Library Service

Changing Places facilities installation in Halton Lea library commenced hoping the works will be complete in November followed for a launch to the public.

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

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.


Employment, Learning & Skills



Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective: To facilitate & create employment To deliver a range of local/national externally funded employment programmes to increase the number of unemployed and economically inactive Halton residents to gain employment. To support local employers with sourcing local people for local jobs.
EEP 01	Employment Learning and skills

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
To deliver year 3 of the Supported Internship programme by September 2023		There are currently 8 learners registered on the Supported Internship programme for the academic year 2023-24.
To achieve the required outputs and customer service standards on the DWP/G4S Restart Programme contract to cease the Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP by June 2023		Referrals have remained low which has impacted on job start and sustained job outcome performance this quarter. The Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP was extended (progress is reviewed monthly with G4S).
To review HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy and implement improvements by June 2023 .		Review of the HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy commenced this quarter. Due to staffing issues this will be implemented next quarter.
Implementation of new contracts within required deadlines (UKSPF/Home Office Refugee Programme if contracts secured) by July 2023 .		The new DWP/Ingeus Pioneer programme (an extension of the Work and Health Programme contract) went live on 13 th September. Pioneer will focus on supporting Economically Inactive residents.
To deliver a Pathways to Teaching programme, which will create adult learning tutor employment opportunities by September 2023		The first year of the Pathways to teaching project is complete, with 34 learners across the CA completing the programme. The project has been approved for another year of delivery for 23/24; promotion of this has begun.

Ref	Objective: To promote access to learning to those who need it most To provide a curriculum offer designed on intent, which is effectively marketed and implemented and has maximum impact on Halton's adult residents.
EEP 02	Employment Learning and skills

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
To deliver an Adult Learning Marketing Strategy by April 2023		The Adult Learning strategy was delivered in the academic year 22/23, with 3yr targets carried into 23/24. Marketing Strategy targets have been built into termly quality monitoring meetings to ensure clear accountability for targets and clearer alignment to overall service targets



To review the Quality Assurances processes within the Adult Learning Service by July 2023		Quality Assurance processes reviewed and implemented from September '24. Observations for the academic year 23/24 have started using the new format and the new Performance Management procedure has been implemented with all tutors
To review the adult learning tutor contracts by July 2024		The adult learning tutor contract has been reviewed, updated and agreed by steering group and relevant senior managers. We are now awaiting details from HR regarding sharing new contracts with staff and awarding the associated back pay. Contract came into play 1 st August 2023. The sessional tutor contract will be prioritised next for an overhaul, in line with the full time/fractional contract.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Community Services

Community Services

Ref	Objective
CE 01	To manage a successful Theatre for the benefit of Halton residents and the sub region.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.		Report received by PPB and it was agreed it could be forwarded to Executive Board.
Programming report to Executive Board July 2023.		Report has been submitted.

Ref	Objective
CE 02	Develop a new library strategy for 2023-2028.

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Report received by PPB and it was agreed it could be forwarded to Executive Board.
Programming report to Executive Board September 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Report to be submitted in August.

CE 03	Increase the occupancy levels at the Old Police Station
-------	---

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Improve the accessibility of the building June 2023 .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good progress is being made by the contractor.
Negotiate with new tenants to secure a tenancy agreements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Soft marketing testing underway. Six submissions received on 30 June 2023. Officers will review.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/ 23	Actual 2022/ 23	Quarter 2 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Direction of Travel
CE LI 01	% occupancy of tenants at Old Police Station	93%	100%	93%			We expect the position to remain static until December 2023 when the new tenant moves in.
CE LI 02	Brindley - Total number of tickets sold	74,962	100%	30,844			Tickets are purchased in advance for shows so they will fluctuate depending on when a show goes on sale.
CE LI 03	Brindley - Total number of days Hired days	182	100%	109			Figures in line with expectation.
CE LI 04	Brindley - Total number of Council Promotions	120	100%	39			Figures in line with expectation.
CE LI 05	Footfall for all libraries: Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library	Total 320,600	Total 320,600	Total 131,140 10,507 38,987 25,049 56,597			55,875 in total in Quarter 2. There is a trend of footfall reducing and digital issues increasing. The service is trying to buck this trend. Based on the first and second quarter, we are below where we want to be.
CE LI 06	Library Digital issues	1,350,119	1,500,000	1,900,897			Target met by end of Quarter 2. Correlates with the reduction in person visits and issues.
CE LI 07	Library Issues in branch: Ditton Widnes Runcorn Halton Lea	Total 203,595	Total 203,595	Total 113,146 3,729 21,266 3,634 23,945			Improvement in Quarter 2 with issues of 60, 572 in total. On track to meet target. There is a trend of footfall and in person issues reducing and digital issues increasing.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	5,311	2,666	2,633	33	65
Repairs & Maintenance	1,940	983	990	(7)	(11)
Premises	122	110	116	(6)	(10)
Energy & Water Costs	1,768	680	570	110	207
NNDR	793	684	645	39	39
Rents	170	127	128	(1)	(1)
Economic Regeneration Activities	37	3	3	0	0
Security	509	187	202	(15)	(30)
Supplies & Services	356	183	190	(7)	(14)
Supplies & Services - Grant	962	262	262	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	105	53	53	0	0
Capital Finance	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	38	38	38	0	0
Total Expenditure	12,111	5,976	5,830	146	245
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-840	-409	-449	40	81
Rent - Commercial Properties	-906	-356	-334	(22)	(43)
Rent - Investment Properties	-44	-22	-20	(2)	(5)
Rent - Markets	-852	-429	-406	(23)	(46)
Government Grant	-1,229	-318	-318	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-990	-413	-416	3	6
Schools SLA Income	-300	-284	-235	(49)	(49)
Recharges to Capital	-251	-63	-70	7	14
Transfer from Reserves	0	-732	-732	0	1
Total Income	-5,412	-3,026	-2,980	(46)	(41)
Net Operational Expenditure	6,699	2,950	2,850	100	204
Recharges					
Premises Support	2,006	1,003	1,003	0	0
Transport	23	12	12	0	0
Central Support	1,710	856	856	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-7,728	-3,864	-3,864	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,985	-1,993	-1,993	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,714	957	857	100	204

Comments on the above figures

Budget monitoring is undertaken on a monthly basis with budget holders to ensure that unapproved overspends are avoided, developing action plans to achieve efficiencies and address areas of budget pressure.

Finance works closely with the department to manage and analyse underspending to identify potential savings that could help meet current and future years' priorities.

Comparison to Previous Quarter

Economy, Enterprise & Property outturn has improved from a forecasted outturn of £0.125m over budget to £0.204m under budget at the end of the financial year with a current figure of net spend being £0.100m under budget for the second quarter of the year. A positive variance of £0.329m.

Supporting Information

The Department consists of 154fte of which 66fte are core funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.134m. There has continued to be delays in recruiting across the department, and so the projection is currently that the department will be under budget by £0.065m at financial year-end.

By carefully monitoring the accounts, the department has utilised grant/external funding where possible to try and relieve the pressure on the core Council budget. This is reflected in employee expenses this quarter where various projects have been identified and staff time has been charged accordingly. This process will continue throughout the year. As in Quarter 1 it is important to note that forecasts include an allowance for the 2023/24 pay award.

As inflation is running much higher than originally predicted at the time of budget setting, the department will be expected to absorb any price increases that may arise from within the budget allocations made. This is proving difficult for repairs and maintenance due to the continued increase in the price of materials. The Repairs and Maintenance programme is constantly under review to keep within budget. However, there is a risk that unexpected events may occur which require expenditure to be incurred, that has not been allocated for.

The Asset Management Service has incurred one off expense this year, due to the vacant unit at The Hive, that was previously occupied by Frankie & Benny's. Costs relating to NNDR, Repairs and Maintenance and Service Charges have had to be paid by HBC until the unit is leased.

Due to the energy costs budget increasing significantly in 2023/24, the department is forecasting that it will be £0.207m under budget in year as costs have not risen as much as expected, but costs are still predicted to be £0.502m higher than 2022/23, which is an increase of over 50%. The forecast will change over the following two quarters depending on the change in energy usage over this time.

This financial year has witnessed an increase in the security costs. This is due not only to inflation, but the need for additional security in Halton Lea, due to anti-social behaviour. The need for security at all locations is reviewed on a regular basis and if necessary, advice is provided from the Police.

As in previous years, and the long recovery from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the financial challenges of commercial property rent continue to present a significant financial challenge, though the second quarter of the year has seen an increase in the amount of commercial property income. This is due to Agency Staff within Asset Management being able to focus predominantly on the rent reviews and licence fees. There is also a focus within the team to fill the vacant properties within the portfolio. The current projection is that the income target will not be achieved by £0.046m. This is a £0.144 lower than the figure projected in Quarter 1

Due to adverse trading conditions in the retail sector which have been made worse due to inflation and increased utilities costs, the department is projecting to under achieve on market rental income targets this budget year. The occupancy rate is approximately 89%.

The School Cleaning Service Level Agreement (SLA) is not covering its costs this budget year due to the need to employ agency staff to cover sickness and leave and the pay award. A review of SLA charges has been undertaken ahead of the next budget year. The demand for the service is also decreasing as schools move to Academies.

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Capital Projects as of 30 September 23

	Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Expenditure				
3MG	151	12	12	139
Murdishaw	30	0	0	30
Equality Act Improvement Works	282	84	84	198
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	36	0	0	36
Halton Lea TCF Roof Top Garden	35	0	0	35
Property Improvements	223	23	23	200
Waterloo Building Runcorn	93	0	0	93
Woodend - Former Unit 10 Catalyst Trade Park	200	161	161	39
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2634	1303	1303	1331
Police Station Demolition	406	0	0	406
Runcorn Station Building Development	515	30	30	485
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	17	0	0	17
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	291	0	0	291
Changing Places	212	52	52	160
Town Deal	2,740	585	586	2154
Total Capital	7,865	2,250	2,251	5,614

Murdishaw – The department has worked in partnership with Onward Homes to develop a community scheme which includes the establishment of a new CIC who will run a new venture from the former boxing club. A scheme of environmental improvements has been initiated across the estate with some signage improvements completed. Discussions are ongoing with Community Development and Murdishaw Community Centre to make improvements to the external space and refurbish the allotment space to allow for the local community to develop its allotment project.

Equality Act Budget- It is anticipated that the equality act budget will be fully spent by year end as the department have a number of projects that are currently on site or have yet to start which should be complete by year end.

Kingsway Learning Centre - There are plans for a PA system to be installed in October.

Property Improvements- It is anticipated that the Property Improvement budget will be fully spend by year end, the department have a number of projects which have been allocated to that budget, some of which are on site some of which have yet to commence on site nevertheless they will be complete by year end.

Waterloo Centre - Approval has now been obtained to demolish the building, as such works will commence prior to Christmas with the demolition. Final costings will be known during quarter 3.

Woodend - All works are complete except for the installation of the new gas supply which has been ordered and will hopefully be done prior to Christmas. The cost of the gas supply is circa £40k.

Foundry Lane – Project progressing on schedule with all ground remediation works now complete. Slight underspend against projected expenditure at 2022/23 year-end due to remediation works delays incurred during Q2 and Q3. Expenditure will fall back into line in 2023.

Police Station Demolition – Legal are in the process of finalising the overage payment for Cheshire Police

Runcorn Station Building Development –A detailed delivery programme up to Approval In Principal stage has been produced and is 3 weeks ahead of schedule. A sponsor’s instruction has also been sent to partners to be signed off.

UKSF – Halton submitted an Investment Plan to the CA for three strands of its UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme – Town Centres; Local Culture, Arts and Heritage; Green, Resilient, Safe Communities. This amounts to £608k up to March 2025 and is a mix of capital and revenue.








Runcorn Waterfront Development - Preparation work is currently ongoing in respect of getting all the tender documentation ready to go through a procurement exercise in respect of the demolition of both Belvedere and Churchill Hall. It is hoped that the tender documents will be issued via the Chest in November with a realistic start on site not being until the New Year.

Changing Places - The changing places facility at the Stadium is now complete and operational. Works are progressing well on site at Victoria Park with completion due in late October. Works have also started on site at Halton Lea Library, completion being due by the end of November.

The Town Deal programme –. The Town Deal programme covers a number of projects to strengthen the town centre economy, including Brindley Theatre Enhancement, Creative and Digital Skills Centre, Health and Education Hub, High Street Connectivity, Town Centre New Homes, Station Enterprise Facility, and Unlock Runcorn. Business cases for all projects have been submitted and approved. Work will continue on site for the next 3 years.

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EEP1	Capital Works Team	N/A	Increase the level of fee income by increasing the percentage charged or charging by time, including those works not currently charged for.	10	0	0		On target.
EEP4	Cleaning Services – Council Buildings	580	Review cleaning arrangements, with a focus on only emptying bins and cleaning toilets daily.	0	100	0		Until the accommodation review is complete, only limited savings will be made in 2024/25
EEP2	Caretaking & Security Services	641	A review and restructuring of caretaking arrangements.	0	52	0		Restructure will take place in 24/25. It is anticipated the full saving will not be met in year. Cannot achieve savings for security due to anti-social behaviour in Halton Lea. Police have advised security is kept on site until this is resolved.
			Reduce security cover at Halton Lea to provide opening/closing and then static guarding 7.00am to 7.30pm Monday to Friday, and 9.30am to 3.00pm on Saturdays to cover the opening hours of Halton Direct Link.	35	0	0		
EEP5	Corporate Buildings	927	Generate additional rental income by providing additional office space for external organisations at Rutland House, by letting out the remaining three floors.	120	0	0		Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP6	Facilities Management	165	Restructure the team in light of an expression of interest for retirement.	44	0	0		Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP8	Technical Support & Market Team	392	Restructuring of the team	98	0	0		Reflected in 2023/24 budget.

Total Economy, Enterprise & Property Department	307	152	0		
--	------------	------------	----------	--	--

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2023

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	17,085	7,607	7,428	179	358
Premises	3,685	1,483	1,479	4	8
Supplies & Services	1,598	837	882	(45)	(90)
Hired & Contracted Services	607	231	286	(55)	(111)
Book Fund	140	86	86	0	0
Food Provisions	371	117	181	(64)	(127)
School Meals Food	1,965	841	858	(17)	(32)
Miscellaneous Transport Costs	117	55	68	(13)	(26)
Other Agency Costs	601	182	209	(27)	(53)
Other Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Disposal Contracts	6,885	106	57	49	98
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	67	18	14	4	8
Grant to Norton Priory	172	86	87	(1)	(1)
Capital Financing	201	41	0	41	83
Total Expenditure	33,494	11,690	11,635	55	115
Income					
Sales Income	-3,962	-1,950	-1,402	(548)	(1,095)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,752	-3,488	-3,614	126	251
Rental Income	-221	-98	-108	10	19
Government Grant Income	-695	-646	-774	128	256
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-665	-383	-389	6	12
SLA Income	-2,391	-2,260	-2,139	(121)	(242)
Internal Fees Income	-592	-96	-176	80	161
Capital Salaries	-173	-46	-46	0	0
Transfers From Reserves	0	51	51	0	0
Total Income	-14,451	-8,916	-8,597	(319)	(638)
Net Operational Expenditure	19,043	2,774	3,038	(264)	(523)
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,825	913	913	0	0
Transport	2,046	1,027	1,047	(20)	(41)
Central Support	3,856	1,933	1,933	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-540	-274	-274	0	0
Net Total Recharges	7,386	3,599	3,619	(20)	(41)
Net Departmental Expenditure	26,429	6,373	6,657	(284)	(564)

Comments on the above figures

Financial Position

The net department spend is £0.284m over budget at the end of Quarter 2 and the estimated outturn overspend against budget for 2023/24 is £0.564m.

Net employee spend is estimated to be under the approved budget at the end of the financial year. The forecast outturn includes the pay increase proposal of £1,925 for all grades (a 3.5% increase for DM and above scales has already been agreed).

Whilst the proposed pay deal is over what had been included within the budget this is mitigated by the number of vacancies within leisure services and reduced casual usage in line with 2022/23 actual data.

Food Provisions is overspent due to the increasing inflationary food costs from suppliers.

Whilst it is currently forecast that waste disposal spend will be within the approved budget for the year this comes with a certain amount of caution. Waste disposal forecast cost is based on estimated tonnage of waste and the department is still waiting on invoices to be presented for previous years.

Sales income for the year is expected to underachieve compared to the budgeted income target. Shortfalls in income at the Stadium, school meal sales plus a reduction in room hire at Community Centres and Libraries are forecast to contribute towards lower income levels.

Additional grant Income has been received from Sport England under the Swimming Pool Support Fund initiative to ensure the continued provision of leisure centres in the Borough.

School Meals SLA income is forecast to underachieve over the course of the year, but this will be mitigated by reduced staffing costs.

Trade Waste fee charges are expected to overachieve with the increased uptake of green waste collections.

Approved 2023/24 Savings

Please see Appendix A for details of progress towards achieving budget efficiency savings agreed by Council in February 2023.

Capital Projects as at 30 September 2023

Project Title	2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	34	17	18	16
Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment	28	14	13	15
Halton Leisure Centre	15,056	7,528	8,014	7,042
Open Spaces Schemes	851	426	137	714
Children's Playground Equipment	105	53	15	90
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12	2	1	11
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	30	0	340
Runcorn Town Park	284	142	106	178
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,023	512	20	1,003
Pickerings Pasture Café	520	250	0	520
Litter Bins	20	5	0	20
Totals	18,286	8,978	8,324	9,962

Comments on the above figures

Halton (Moor Lane) Leisure Centre

The project is making good progress and on track. Total project cost has increased slightly due to increase in provisional sum items. Totals costings for the project are continually being reviewed.

Open Spaces

This covers spending on a variety of externally funded projects: Birchfield Gardens refurbishment, Upton Rocks access works, The Big Halton Forest, and some small minor works contracts. Spending is behind target due to capacity issues.

Children's Playground Equipment

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

Upton Improvements

Open space improvement works undertaken. Work has been delayed due to capacity issues.

Crow Wood Park

The main contract is now completed, outstanding balance will cover final and retention payments.

Landfill Tax Credits Schemes

Currently used to support improvements for a rolling programme of existing playgrounds/open space schemes across the Borough.

Runcorn Town Park

Project to renew park infrastructure. Project is ongoing with 2 contracts on site. Carry forward to complete work in season and for contingency payments. INEOS funding of £300k was deferred - £10k each to 2023/24 & 2024/25 plus £280k to 2025/26.

Wigg/Spike Island Recovery Works

The programme was slightly behind due to staff capacity issues. However, a consultancy is in place and have begun site investigation works ahead of finalising designs/contract documentation for tender.

Pickerings Pasture Café

Creation of Café Facility at Pickerings Pasture, a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), which would be operated as a franchise. The Council has been asked to include £520k within the Council’s Capital Programme to fund the construction of the café facility. Funded over seven years, the capital financing cost would be £87,500 per annum. This sum could be realised through a bid to the Environment Fund (paying £87,500 pa for seven years). Once completed and opened the café would generate income for the Council from the franchise rental, which could be used to offset the running costs of Pickerings Pasture.

COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX A




Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
COMM 1	The Brindley Theatre	64	Reduce Box Office opening hours from 10am-5pm Monday-Friday to 10am-2pm. Currently 80% of tickets are purchased online or by telephone and this is increasing each year.	10	0	0		Box Office core opening hours were reduced to 5 hours (Mon – Fri) 10am – 3pm. They will be realigned to 4 hours daily 11am – 3.00pm (Mon – Fri) from 1 September onwards. No LED lighting has yet been installed but is planned for later in the financial year.
			Replace all non-LED lighting in the building. This is estimated to reduce on-stage energy costs by 75%.	10	0	0		
COMM 3	Sport & Recreation	471	Restructuring the roles and responsibilities of the Sports Development Team	0	36	0		On track to meet savings identified for 2024/25.

Ref.	Service	Net	Description of Saving	Savings Value			Current	Comments
COMM 4	Stadium & Catering Services	751	Franchise the concourse only catering services to an external operator. An organisational restructure is currently being implemented for Stadium & Catering Services to reflect recent service changes.	50 40	0 0	0 0		
COMM 6	Area Forums	170	Reduce the base budget provision to £50k temporarily for one year, with all unspent monies in 2022/23 (currently £120k) being carried forward to be spent by the relevant Area Forums in 2023/24. The base budget position will then be reviewed for 2024/25.	120	-120	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Implemented in 2023/24 budget setting.
COMM 5	Stadium & Catering Services – School Meals	12	Cease to deliver the school meals service, which has made significant losses of over £200,000 for a number of years and is forecast to make a similar loss by year-end. Work would be undertaken with schools over the next two years to support them to secure an alternative means of delivery, whether in-house or via an external provider.	0	0	12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Work underway in school meals being delivered through alternative means





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 intervention or remedial action taken.</i>

Direction of Travel Indicator

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