

# Environment and Regeneration PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report

Rep

Reporting Period: **Quarter 3 – 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December 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 third quarter of 2023 / 24 for those service areas within the remit of the Environment and Regeneration 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 the Environment & Regeneration Policy & Performance Board i.e.:
  - Development & Investment Services
  - Open Spaces and Waste and Environmental Improvement
  - Highways, Transportation & Logistics and Physical Environment
- 1.4 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 within the Directorate during the period which include:-

### **Economy Enterprise & Property**

#### **2.2 Regeneration Town Centres**

##### Halton Lea

Public/Private Partnership now established to tackle the very real problem of ASB. Partners include HBC, Shopping City, “Right to Succeed”, “Vibe” as well as the Police and Riverside Housing Association. It is expected that an educational project, on how ASB can affect local communities, will be taken into local schools and discussed at length. This hopefully will be a sustainable Project that can embed itself within the school curriculum going forward.

##### Runcorn

Work to progress the programme of projects called “Reconnecting Runcorn” funded by the £23.6m Runcorn Town Deal is progressing with all proposals achieving traction. The projects are continuing to progress through the design phases, with all the associated surveys, consents, agreements, working with multi-disciplinary

consultant teams, with a wide variety of colleagues / Council teams, and numerous external stakeholders involved.

The next phase of the Creative and Digital Skill Centre, the Youth Centre at 57- 59 High Street, has been tendered and a tender appraisal is being completed. Work on site is expected to start in February 2024. The Brindley Theatre extension is ready to tender with a start on site (subject to tender appraisal) estimated to be April 2024.

### **Runcorn Station Quarter**

For the Enterprise Centre work has continued to secure an operator, the documents for this are planned to be issued on the chest in January 2024. Once an operator is in place the internal design can be restarted to progress to RIBA stage 3.

Runcorn Station Redevelopment – Network Rails Capital Delivery Team have now published an ITT pack for their subcontractor to respond to via their Framework, who pricing is due to be received by 29th January 2024, following a mid-tender workshop due mid-January, with contracts estimated to be signed at the end of March 2024.

An application by DLA Piper has been made on the Council's behalf to HMLR to register land which has been highlighted as unregistered.

### **Widnes Town Centre**

The Widnes Town Centre Vision was completed by the BE Group and presented to members.

### **Programmes Office**

In this quarter the Team has developed a new tracking system for funding enquiries and bid development, ensuring a more effective service for enquirers and enabling more meaningful statistics and tracking to be produced.

8 new requests for support provided in the quarter and draft bids in progress to the value of £3.5m

The Team workload remains high with a number of initiatives and projects being supported:

- ~ bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund for £900k to revamp a gallery
- ~ supporting Regen NTC colleagues with Brownfield Land funding
- ~ development and circulation of monthly Funding Bulletins to colleagues and voluntary sector partners
- ~ supporting a number of churches in the Borough with grant bids
- ~ leading on Visitor Economy campaigns for Halton in liaison with LCR colleagues, including Visit Halton website and socials
- ~ working with Regen NTC colleagues on a Mid Mersey Park feasibility study
- ~ working with Directorate ODs/DMs on a model for supporting Departmental priorities
- ~ providing colleagues with funding stream info to support the delivery of Halton's Climate Action Plan

The Team continues to monitor a number of programmes on behalf of HBC, including Destination Marketing funded through SIF, Ways to Work funded through SIF/UKSPF, Town Deal and UKSPF

We have delivered training for the voluntary sector in partnership with Halton and St Helens VCA and have a joint programme or training planned with them for 2024.

## **2.3 Regeneration Non-Town Centres**

### **Sci-Tech Daresbury**

The Liverpool City Region Investment Zone was confirmed in July 2023 and the Combined Authority continue to liaise with Government on the business case. Executive Board approved Sci-Tech Daresbury's inclusion in the IZ as a tax site in October 2023. Work is currently ongoing to finalise the Full Business Case for IZ funding to

support Project Violet Phase 2. The Joint Venture have commenced tendering and a start on site is anticipated in Q1 2024

### **Astmoor**

Work is ongoing to secure the development agreement and liaise with partners to commence scheme design.

### **Foundry Lane**

Foundry lane is fast approaching the construction phase with the remediation phase completed in the third quarter of 2023 stroke 2024. The total number of dwellings to be built remains at 360 however phase one has been pared back to 63 but the shortfall is mitigated weather increase indwelling units in phase two.

### **Energy Retrofit Programme**

The team continue to manage a number of grant schemes to enable Halton residents, private landlords and Registered Providers access funds to improve the energy performance and decarbonise homes within the Borough. These schemes are being delivered in partnership with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, with grant funding secured from Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy;

The Sustainable Warmth Fund closed down on 31<sup>st</sup> September 2023. Through this grant scheme over an 18 month period £2.77 Million of Govt. Grant has been invested in 332 homes in Halton to make them warmer, more energy efficient and reducing carbon emissions. Measures have included solar panel (250 homes), Loft insulation (140), air source heat pumps (12) and external Wall Insulation (12).

A new grant scheme was opened to residents in December 2023, called the Home Upgrade Grant Round 2 (HUG2), with a target to improve between 50 – 100 properties 'off gas' properties, with insulation and renewable energy measure. A delivery / managing agent, Ecogee has been appointed by the Combined Authority, HUG2 runs until March 2025.

Residents' queries and applications for grant funding remain high.

### **Business Support Service**

Halton Business Support Service was launched in this quarter to support Halton businesses with a range of solutions, including:

- Strategic Management, Strategy & Business Planning
- Digital Marketing
- Environmental Performance
- HR Support
- Manufacturing Process & Efficiency
- Strategic Marketing & Sales
- Tendering & Bid Writing
- Financial Management
- Business Start Up Support

The service will offer fully-funded consultancy support to eligible businesses in the Borough of Halton, with a focus on growing small and medium sized businesses. Delivery will be both via 1-2-1 and one-to-many sessions. The aim is to allow every business access to the service where funds and eligibility allow.

This project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority as the lead authority. The project is expected to run for until March 2025.

### **Sector Specific Networks**

The Business Investment and Growth Team successfully Launched the first Green Breakfast Network in October which offered an opportunity for businesses to learn more about projects happening across the Liverpool City Region and beyond providing a valuable insight and the event was well received by those who attended.

The team will be looking to host further sector specific networks during the course of 2024/2025 as part of the outward facing engagement.

### **Freeport and 3MG**

The Freeport sites are being actively promoted by the Freeport team the great platform investment team and Halton council's business investment and growth team. In total there are four significant sites being promoted ranging in size from 140,000 square feet to 500,000 square feet. Exeter 295 on Matheson Rd has been completed, fitted out and is being actively marketed to secure a tenant.

## **2.4 Asset Management**

Acquisition of nos 43,45,47,49, Waterloo Road Widnes completed 1 December 2023. Site required for the Widnes Loops highway scheme

Disposal of the former bus depot, Moor Lane, Widnes completed 21 November 2023

Lease of Unit 5 the Hive, Widnes to Serious Fun Ltd completed 1 December 2023 for 10 years

Academy lease of Weston Point primary school, Runcorn completed 14 December 2023 to the Wade Deacon Trust

## **2.5 Policy Planning & Transportation**

### **2.6 Highway Development**

- Contractual and design processes were completed during Q3 for the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) (below the bridge deck / carriageway) maintenance painting contract. Stakeholder notifications were made in December in preparation for the start of work on site in January 2024.
- The bonfire night fireworks display was launched from the deck of SJB, accompanied by a display by the bridge's new architectural lighting system. The event was well received by the public.
- General inspections of the Council's bridge stock were completed during Q3, and principal inspections were carried out on five bridges over the Bridgewater Canal in Runcorn.
- Construction work has progressed on the new bridge on A558 for the junction being constructed on behalf of Redrow Homes, including a closure of the expressway for the installation of the bridge beams by crane.
- The Street works team (who regulate all work by utilities and others on the highway) has recruited a new permit technician and a new manager (agency) in order to maintain a full complement of staff. One of the two inspectors will retire in March, so there is a need to recruit another inspector to ensure road works are undertaken safely, quickly, and are excavations are reinstated properly.
- The red light / speed on green camera, paid for by the Police and Crime Commissioner, was installed during Q3.

### **2.7 Planning**

- The team are working with developers on a number of major schemes including: Howarth at Hale Bank, Miller in North Widnes, Redrow in North Widnes, Warrington BC / Peel on the Fiddlers Ferry site, Morris Homes at Preston Brook, SOG at Heath Park, Homes England at Sandymoor, and Magenta at Widnes Waterfront.

## **2.8 Community & Environment**

### **Community Engagement/Campaigns**

The Waste Management Team was involved in a number of activities during October and November; including the National Recycle Week campaign. Officers visited 10 locations and engaged with over 300 residents, handing out information leaflets and offering advice.

The team also carried out a Christmas Campaign visiting 5 locations and engaging with circa 300 residents about waste and recycling matters, giving out information leaflets - including a Christmas Quick Tips Guide and Christmas Collection Timetable.

During this period social media posts were put on the Waste Management account with messages around the Recycle Week theme and messages targeted around Christmas - including reducing food waste, what to do with old electronics and clothes, what types of materials can be recycled in the blue bin and what to do with the extra waste that is generated over the holidays. These messages reached an audience of over 7,000.

Engagement activities and social media posts aim to help reduce confusion around what can be recycled in blue bins and boxes in Halton – trying to promote the Right Waste Right Bin message.

### **School Litter Pick Activities**

The Waste Management Team arranged 11 school litter pick activities in this last quarter.

For each session, the team members took out a class size group to an area close to the school and litter picked for about 30 minutes. We provided pupils with litter pickers, hoops and Hi-Viz vests and each school received a certificate of participation.

418 pupils and teachers took part and more than 100 bags of rubbish were collected over all the sessions.

### **Community Walkabouts**

The Waste Management Team has been involved in 6 walkabouts along with a total of 22 volunteers. The walkabouts are in joint working with local Housing Associations and other partner agencies.

Community Engagement Officers meet partner colleagues and walk around areas to discuss/make note of any issues they find, engage with residents, door knock and report back anything that may need to be actioned.

### **Veterans Clean-Ups**

The team organised the schedule for 11 Halton Veteran Community Clean Ups in the last quarter. Along with abandoned trollies and general fly tipped items, 200 bags of waste and litter were collected.

### **Recycling Campaigns**

A Liverpool City Region-wide 6 week marketing campaign, led by the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority, began in October; which coincided with National Recycling Week. This campaign promoted clear recycling messages that residents should not dispose of bagged waste and food waste in recycling bins. Additionally, in Halton, a booklet was produced that clearly identified what materials can, and what cannot, be recycled in household blue bins. Distribution of the booklet to all Halton households commenced at the end November.

### **Community Development**

Community Development have supported 42 existing groups/organisations and assisted in setting up 7 new groups. 143 volunteers have been directly supported. Bids totalling £73,860 have been submitted and £32,900 has been awarded this quarter.

## **2.9 Cemeteries**

The new method for the transfer of 'exclusive rights of burial' has been implemented; bringing the service into line with recommended industry guidance.

Volunteers groups have begun working with the cemeteries team looking after Widnes, Birchfield Road Cemetery.

### **2.10 Open Spaces**

Town Park - scheme to better connect Holt Lane entrance with the wider park and Palacefields area is at early design stage.

Brindley Theatre - enabling works for temporary pedestrian access to building during extension construction have been completed.

Birchfield Gardens - Refurbishment/landscape and pond improvements is now underway.

This year's round of small-scale playground improvements has been completed (renewing safer surfacing and replacing outdated equipment).

## **3.0 Emerging Issues**

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

### **Economy Enterprise & Property**

#### **3.2 Regeneration Town Centres**

No issue's documented

#### **3.3 Regeneration Non-Town Centres**

##### **Business Support Service**

Procurement for service delivery consultancy commenced.

##### **Programmes Office**

Key pieces of work for Quarter 4

~ Town Deal Monitoring – next claim due May 2024; 2 Board meetings scheduled this quarter; also rolling out a Marketing Plan for projects

~ UKSPF Monitoring – next claim due April 2024; Quarter 4 chasing end of Year 2 spend; developing publicity and promotion for projects

~ Destination Marketing programme delivery and monitoring – next claim due April 2024; Quarter 4 delivery includes a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary campaign and a Halton Food and Drink spring campaign

~ Catalyst NLHF bid submission (£900k) – bid deadline May 2024

~ Develop a training programme for 2024 in partnership with the VCA

~ support a range of bids to be submitted by HBC colleagues and voluntary sector partners

~ developing the next Climate Change Funding Bulletin

### 3.4 Asset Management

From 30 October 2023 marketing commenced for the disposal of the former swimming pool, Bridge St, Runcorn

### 3.6 Policy Performance Transportation

Recruitment to roles to bolster capacity to deliver the Local Plan, LTP3, and Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy remains a challenge. A recruitment drive was undertaken during Q3, but no suitably experienced candidates were available for any of the 17 roles. Feedback from the recruitment exercise cited salary expectations as the primary issue delaying recruitment.

#### Highways

- In Streetworks a programme of coring works is being undertaken to assess the quality of utility reinstatements on the network. The first round of coring saw a failure rate of 50 – 100% for some utilities. Coring allows the quality of an excavation reinstatement to be checked for things like the type of material use, degree of voids, and depth of material.
- A draft strategy for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure will be presented to the EUR PPB in February

#### Logistics

- Procurement of a new Fleet Tyre Contract is nearing completion.

#### Planning

- The Government published a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This has resulted in some changes to national planning policies.
- Following the resignation of the local plans team leader, the senior planner in the team has now retired, and the principal is on maternity leave. There are currently two members of staff out of a complement of six. An agency arrangement has been used to bring in capacity to complete priority work.
- Mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements will commence in Q4 (from 12 February 2024)
- The Annual Monitoring Report on the Local Development Framework will be presented to the EUR PPB in February
- A draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document will be presented to the EUR PPB in February
- **Planning: Planning Application Statistics (Q3 22/23).** The Accelerated Growth Programme is seeking to increase capacity to increase turn-around times for case work, particularly the capacity of internal consultees and also in legal for dealing with planning obligation deeds (S.106).

Total Applications Received: (Includes those Withdrawn and Returned) 115	
Applications Decided 134	Applications On-Hand (Undecided) 201
Pre-Applications Received 33	Pre-Applications Closed 21

N.B. There are certain applications (such as tree preservation orders) that are not counted in the statutory CLG speed of processing statistics. This accounts for the difference between the figures reported above and the figures given for PPT LI 04.

### 3.7 Community & Environment Services

#### Community Centres

Since Halton Day Services have vacated Murdishaw Community Centre, Officers are in negotiation with The Bridge School to take on the space early in 2024.

## **Big Halton Forest**

The second phase of planting of the Big Halton Forest project will see circa 12,000 trees planted in early 2024. The planting will take place on a combination of Council owned sites, housing association and privately owned land, and within a school grounds. The Council's Park Rangers have carried out 4 engagement sessions with partner landowners, with a total of 70 volunteer/engagement hours

### **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 Council's latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives is published on the Council website and is available via:



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

### **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 fall within the remit of the Board.

### **Development and Investment Services**



<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objective: To develop, coordinate and deliver major regeneration programmes</b> To deliver Runcorn Towns Fund programme.
<b>EEP 03</b>	<b>Environment and Urban Renewal</b>

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q3</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Spend the £23.6m by <b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2026</b> .		Projects across the programme are working through key stages. Spring 2024 will see the first projects start on site. At this point in time it looks like all projects can be delivered, with all budget spend in time. This will be reviewed in April 2024.
To secure additional funding for key projects (Enterprise Centre and Creative and Digital Skills Centre) by <b>September 2023</b> .		Additional YIF funding for the Creative and Digital Skills Centre was not achieved. The new youth centre at 57-59 High Street – part of the CDSC – will be delivered with only town deal






To secure vacant possession by <b>July 2024</b> .		<p>funding. A review of the proposal for 63-65 High Street has been made to bring the overall project within budget.</p> <p>The funding from Liverpool City Region CA for the RSQ Enterprise facility is still unsecured, discussions are ongoing.</p> <p>Commercially sensitive negotiations are ongoing to achieve vacant possession of a shop on the High Street. It is anticipated that this will be completed in January 2024.</p>
To review all projects (program and budgets) to make key delivery decisions by <b>September 2023</b> .		<p>All projects were shown at the Reconnecting Runcorn 2023 public information event 9 June in the Brindley. An update report to the Runcorn Town Deal Board 14 September 2023 noted progress on all projects in detail.</p> <p>Projects will be reviewed at the start of the next financial year to ensure all steps possible are being taken to keep the projects within funding budget and time constraints.</p>

Ref	<b>Objective: To deliver Runcorn Station Quarter</b>
EEP 04	<b>Environment and Urban Renewal</b>


Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
To provide a new station building by <b>December 2025</b>		Funding is still to be obtained from CRSTS for stage 5-8 (detailed design and build). Planning consent is also still to be obtained
To progress an Ad Medium Filum application with DLA Piper for various pieces of land within the red line boundary		On going




Ref	Objective
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<b>EEP 05</b>	<p><b>Corporate Resources: To maximise and maintain external funding resources</b></p> <p>To oversee the successful delivery of the Council's externally funded (economic regeneration) programmes, including employment, learning and skills and other schemes identified as corporate priorities.</p>
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Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
To establish the Programmes Office Team, ensuring the full team is in place and competent, with clear roles and responsibilities.		Team now at full complement; regular meetings held to ensure workloads and roles are understood. The Team has reviewed and changed systems where needed to ensure leaner working arrangements
To establish/get endorsed a Business Justification Case for all bids over £50,000 to ensure the relevance and deliverability of externally funded schemes. All bids to be logged with the Programmes Office and all officers within the department to attend the Bid-Writing course before drafting any bids.		Business Justification Case circulated to Dept managers; meetings booked in with 2 out of 3 ODs; two bid-writing training courses delivered for colleagues and further sessions being planned for 2024
To ensure effective systems are in place and understood for the monitoring of the Town Deal programme to minimise the risk of clawback/non-compliance		Monitoring systems well established; comprehensive Project Guide developed and distributed to project leads; bi-annual claim being completed; DLUHC assurance documentation being completed and risk registers developed; regular meetings with Government rep

Ref	Objective
<b>EEP 06</b>	<p><b>Corporate Resources: To provide a comprehensive and strategic asset management service</b></p> <p>Manage the Council's commercial and investment portfolio, implement the Council's disposal programme, support the Council's regeneration team for delivery of projects, provide asset valuation and associated financial reports to feed into the close down process.</p>


Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Commence re tender process <b>July 2023</b> for the contract for external property consultants to provide provision of estate management service.		Award and contract completed October 2023 with commencement of the contract 13 January 2024

Complete the asset management reporting to meet the timetable of financial close down by <b>30 April 2023</b> .		Reports were provided by 30 June to Finance and queries on reports by 9 July. Task was not completed by end of April. Work on the reporting for 2024 have started earlier in December 2023
Commence the re tender process <b>July 2023</b> for the contract to appoint property advisers to prepare asset valuations.		Tender process commenced with instruction to Procurement. Tender process is timetabled with Procurement colleague during Q3 but no further progress as considering a direct award under the Crown Civil Service framework
By 30 June commence marketing of 'hand back' sites in Widnes for disposal.		The marketing agents have updated the disposal strategy dated 23 November 2023, incorporating the information from United Utilities on the line of easement for water pipes. The results of site investigations are to be assessed by the marketing agents. Sites unlikely to be marketed before Q4

<b>EEP 09</b>	<b>Corporate Priority: To design, manage and deliver a place-based business support programme for Halton</b>
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Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Scheme in Place <b>September 2023</b>		Delay in procurement but will be mitigated with delivery over the remainder of the programme.
Scheme finalised <b>March 2025</b>		On-line to be delivered by March 2025

Ref	Objective
<b>EEP 10</b>	<b>Corporate Priority: Secure funding, support procurement and ground-breaking to take place for Ultraviolet at Sci Tech Daresbury</b> Commissioning of Ultraviolet

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Funding Secured <b>Q3 2023 / 2024</b>		Work is currently ongoing to finalise the Full Business Case for IZ funding to support Project Violet Phase 2. The Joint Venture have commenced tendering and a start on site is anticipated in Q1 2024.

Procurement <b>Q4 2023 / 2024</b>		The Joint Venture have commenced tendering.
Groundbreaking <b>Q1 2024 2025</b>		Start on site is anticipated in Q1 2024.


## Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

STRATEGIC ISSUES	BASELINE POSITION	OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 1	OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 3	INTERVENTIONS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<b>High Unemployment</b>	2.7% of economically active people are unemployed (2021 Census)			<b><u>HBC's contribution:</u></b> HPIJ delivery of Welfare to Work & Health programmes (Ways to Work, Restart, Work & Health Programme, Pioneer and Supported Internships Programme)	Percentage unemployed (aged 16-64 years). Percentage of economically inactive of working age
<b>Low wage residents</b>	Data not available from Census 21?  Data from Adzuna – median salary in Halton is £26,000 which is 14.3% less than the national average of £30,000 (although there has been a YOY increase of 8% in Halton)			Employers signing up to the LCR Fair Employment Charter	Percentage of employees' earnings below real living wage.
<b>Low-income households</b>	<b>Data??</b>			<b><u>HBC's contributions:</u></b> HPIJ delivery of Welfare to Work & Health programmes (Ways to Work, Restart, Work & Health Programme, Pioneer & Supported Internships Programme). Better off calculations for HPIJ jobseekers. In work support to help households increase their hours or change their job.	Percentage employees who are local (FTE) employed on contract for one year or the whole duration of the contract, whichever is shorter.
<b>Good employment</b>	Data not available from Census 21? Current Data from Adzuna – 26.93% in Permanent Employment,			Employers signing up to the LCR Fair Employment Charter <b><u>HBC's contribution:</u></b> Employer Engagement Strategy	Proportion of employed in permanent and non-permanent employment. Adzuna data??

	9.68% in Contract Employment and 63.39% unspecified			to be updated to recognise and celebrate 'good' employers in the borough.	
<b>(appropriate) External Funding Maximised</b>	Some bids are logged, some are not.  No strategic view on whether bids should be made.  Officers writing bids which can take them away from core work; not always using skills of Programmes Office.	All potential bids registered on a Business Justification form.  All relevant officers in Department trained in bid-writing.  All project leads logging funding bids on central system.	Increase in appropriate funding secured.  No resource issues in delivering.  No clawback issues.	6 bid-writing courses p.a. scheduled.  3 monitoring and evaluation courses p.a. scheduled.  Central log of all bids maintained.	to establish a Business Justification Case for all bids over £50,000 to ensure the relevance and deliverability of externally funded schemes – to be signed off monthly by OD. All bids to be logged with the Programmes Office and all officers within the Dept to attend the Bid-Writing course before drafting any bids.
<b>Climate change agenda and carbon emissions</b>	CO2 emissions for 2021/22 amount to 9327 tonnes	Reduce emissions by 1%. Actual emissions 8740 tonnes therefore reduction of 6.3%	Reduce emissions by a further 5%	Submit a funding bid and obtain funding to carry out decarbonisation works to various buildings.  Continue to deliver the LED lighting replacement programme.	Percentage reduction in CO2 emissions from Council activities


### Policy, Planning and Transportation

Ref	Objective
PPT 01	<b>Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme – Deliver the LTP Capital Programmes to ensure that the transport system is maintained and developed to meets local needs.</b>

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
To deliver the 2019/30 LTP Capital Programme March 2023.		Design works progressing well on Active Travel schemes at Runcorn Busway to improve cycling links between and

		<p>Murdishaw centre and Halton Lea utilizing SCAPE.</p> <p>Construction work nearing completion at LCWIP route from Runcorn Old town to Daresbury Sci Tech.</p> <p>Construction work in progress for Active Travel, Murdishaw centre to Whitehouse Industrial Estate, Murdishaw Centre to Runcorn East Station and then to Halton Lea to provide dedicated cycling facilities on the Busway.</p> <p>Feasibility/Design works in progress with SCAPE for East Runcorn Connectivity and A56 carriageway Reconstruction</p>
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Ref	Objective
PPT 02	Highway programmed maintenance.

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Ensure continued unrestricted availability of the Highway network and to allow future maintenance to be delivered on a steady state, lifecycle planned basis.		<p>Carriageway resurfacing resurfacing/reconstruction at Prescot Road, Penn Lane, Victoria Road. and Main Street planned to start in the next period.</p> <p>Design works progressing on schemes to rejuvenate the surfacing at Ditton junction, Queensway and new roundabout in Runcorn on A558.</p> <p>Footway resurfacing work completed or nearing completion at, Dans Road, South Lane, Picow Street, Castlefield's Avenue east, Prescot Road, Sea Lane, Ridgeway, Poplar Close Lapwing Grove, Derby Road, Stonebarn Lane.</p>

Ref	Objective
PPT 03	Highway Routine and reactive maintenance

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
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Continue to maintain the Highway Authorities statutory duties in accordance with Section 41 and 58 of the Highways Act.









Ongoing highway safety inspection continuing to maintain a safe and serviceable Highway.

## Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators



Ref	Description	Actual 2022 / 23	Target 2023 / 24	Quarter 3 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
PPT LI 01	Percentage of third party compensation claims due to alleged highway / footway defects successfully defended. Annual Calculation.	Not available	Not available	Not available			Figures not available
PPT LI 02	Net additional homes provided	152	350	N/A	N/A	N/A	Indicator monitored annually as at 1st April. Target is 350 p.a. (2014 to 2037) as per the Delivery & Allocations Local Plan.
PPT LI 03	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	22	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Indicator monitored annually as at 1st April. Target is expressed as a percentage of development on qualifying sites (subject to viability).
PPT LI 04	Processing of planning applications (%) as measured against targets for,	71%	100%	100%			No supporting commentary provided.

	'Major applications'	62%	96%	100%			
	'Major applications'	64%	98%	86%			
	'Major applications'						

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 3 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
PPT LI 05	To ensure a rolling five year supply of housing land.  Deliverable supply (units) as a % of rolling 5 year requirement	130%	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	DALP Policy Requirement (Annual) = 350 (a). Policy 5 Year Requirement (a) x5 = 1750 (b). 5 Year Deliverable Supply (2023-2027) = 2779 (c). (c/b as a %)
PPT LI 06	No. of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	28.8	N/A	26			Welcome drop in KSI numbers after recent plateauing
PPT LI 07	No. of children (<16) killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 year Av.)	4.2	N/A	3.4			Child KSI numbers fall below 4 for the first time in a couple of years. Historically very low
PPT LI 08	No. of people slightly injured in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	219	N/A	165			Rolling average for slight casualties show a significant drop.



## Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

PPT LI 09		No. of people slightly injured in road traffic collisions.	157	N/A	151			Q3 sees the decline in slight casualties continue. These numbers are historically very low.
Ref		Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 3 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
PPT LI 10		Damage to roads and pavements (% above intervention levels) repaired within 24 hours.	100%	100%	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided

## Appendix 3: Major Planning Applications Determined


	PROPOSAL	ADDRESS	DECSN	DATEDECISS
22/00157/FUL	Proposed phase 2 extension to approved planning application 20/00607/FUL comprising an additional 10 mixed-use light industrial units (totalling 1180sqm), 24 parking spaces, associated refuse and cycle storage, and landscaping with access to site via existing crossover at	Land To The East Of Canalside Court Warrington Road Runcorn WA7 1RD	REF	14/07/2023
22/00370/REM	Application for the approval of reserved matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) of permission 20/00337/OUTEIA (Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except for access, for the residential led mixed use development of the site, comprising of residential (Use Class C3), employment (Use Class B1) and local centre uses (Use Class A1-A4/D1) and associated infrastructure, landscaping and land remodelling) for erection of 97 No. dwelling houses and associated works at	Land North Of Red Brow Lane Warrington WA4 4BB	PER	02/08/2023
23/00127/S73	Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act to vary planning condition 3 of outline planning application 21/00166/OUT (Outline planning application, with all matters reserved, for laboratory and office space (Use Class E(g)(i) and E(g)(ii)) development with associated car parking and landscaping) to substitute approved Parameters Plan ref: 20565_P-101 Rev: D dated 27.1.21 for Parameters Plan ref: 20565_P-101 Rev: E dated 27.1.21 at	Daresbury Laboratory Keckwick Lane Daresbury Warrington Cheshire WA4 4AD	PER	15/09/2023
23/00128/FUL	Proposed demolition of existing buildings (including 26 existing dwellings, the existing local centre incorporating the Bethesda Church, and part of the Tricorn Public House), the infilling of the existing subway; the construction of a new local centre (comprising 63 extra-	Land Within And Adjacent To And Surrounding Palacefields Local Centre	PER	21/09/2023

	care dwellings, with associated communal facilities, ground floor retail floorspace (Use Class E) and 2 bungalows (extra care)); a replacement church / community facility (Use Class F1 / F2 / E ); the change of use of the retained Tricorn Public House and associated Stables into 10 dwellings; the erection of a further 59 dwellings together with improved public realm, play facilities, improvements to open space, hard and soft landscaping works; and other associated infrastructure and works at	Runcorn		
23/00134/FUL	Proposed extension to current storage facility at	Diageo Packaging Whitehouse Industrial Estate Murdishaw Runcorn WA7 3BE	PER	21/07/2023
23/00221/S73	Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary Conditions 9, 10, 11B, 12 and 13 of permission 21/00498/FUL (Proposed erection of industrial/storage building for use class B2 / B8 purposes, parking and servicing areas, bunds, fencing, landscaping, ancillary works and retrospective permission for the retention of previously installed bunds) at	Bowman Works Gorse Lane Widnes Cheshire WA8 0YZ	PER	18/08/2023

### Waste and Environmental Improvement


#### Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Objective
CE 06	Manage and Maintain the Borough's green space areas so that they continue to function to their intended purpose.





Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Manage greenspace areas as per the agreed specification - <b>March 2023</b> .		The Environment Services Division was able to deliver all works within the Council's agreed specification for green space management.

Ref	Objective
CE 07	Implementation of actions to ensure that the Council achieves its waste related targets and objectives.

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
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<p>Continue to deliver communications and awareness raising initiatives to ensure that participation with the Council’s recycling services is maximised and that residents comply with the requirements of the Council’s Household Waste Collection Policy - <b>March 2024.</b></p>		<p>Activities to meet this objective have remained on-going. Please see key developments sections of the report.</p>
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## Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 3	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
CE LI 12	Residual household waste per household.	625kg	625kg	452kg			<p>Waste production is subject to season variation. This is an estimated figure but it does show that household waste levels are in line with those in Q3 in the previous year.</p>
CE LI 13	Household waste recycled and composted.	39.3%	40%	37.2%			<p>This is an estimated figure but it does show that recycling levels are slightly higher than in Q3 in the previous year.</p>

**7.0 Financial Statements**

**ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**

**Revenue Operational Budget at 31 December 2023**

	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Budget to Date</b>	<b>Actual Spend</b>	<b>Variance (Overspend)</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	5,491	4,195	4,118	77	103
Repairs & Maintenance	1,980	1,453	1,464	(11)	(14)
Premises	123	110	116	(6)	(6)
Energy & Water Costs	1,782	1,057	860	197	262
NNDR	763	702	639	63	84
Rents	175	167	165	2	2
Economic Regeneration Activities	27	3	3	0	0
Security	501	331	372	(41)	(55)
Supplies & Services	430	300	267	33	44
Supplies & Services - Grant	772	356	356	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	264	120	120	0	0
Capital Finance	44	44	44	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	40	40	40	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,392</b>	<b>8,878</b>	<b>8,564</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>420</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges Income	-860	-488	-562	74	98
Rent - Commercial Properties	-908	-566	-528	(38)	(50)
Rent - Investment Properties	-44	-34	-30	(4)	(5)
Rent - Markets	-852	-644	-609	(35)	(47)
Government Grant	-1,387	-614	-614	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-585	-633	-643	10	13
Schools SLA Income	-299	-294	-258	(36)	(36)
Recharges to Capital	-282	-114	-119	5	7
Transfer from Reserves	-1,270	-1,229	-1,229	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-6,487</b>	<b>-4,616</b>	<b>-4,592</b>	<b>-24</b>	<b>-20</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>5,905</b>	<b>4,262</b>	<b>3,972</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>400</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	2,006	1,505	1,505	0	0
Transport Support	23	16	19	(3)	(3)
Central Support	1,710	1,283	1,283	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-7,728	-5,796	-5,796	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-3,985</b>	<b>-2,992</b>	<b>-2,989</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-3</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>397</b>

### 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 net spend outturn of £0.204m over budget to £0.397m under budget at the end of the financial year.

## **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 employee expenditure across the department will be under budget by £0.103m at financial year-end.

By carefully monitoring the accounts, the department has used 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. This Q3 report includes the 23/24 pay award. Projections for the final quarter of the year have been updated.

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, which 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.

As a result of Tarmac taking up occupancy at Unit 10 Catalyst Park, the Council has received a NNDR refund of £30k. Projections have been updated with regards to NNDR costs at the Markets.

Due to the energy costs budget increasing significantly in 2023/24, the department is forecasting that it will be £0.262m under budget in year as costs have not risen as much as expected, but costs are still predicted to be £0.461m higher than 2022/23, which is an increase of over 43%. The forecast may change during the following quarter depending on the change in energy usage over this time.

A stop on non-essential supplies and services budgets has contributed to the under spend for the Department. It is anticipated that the budget will be under budget by £44k at year end.

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 third 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 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 £0.050m.

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.

### **Approved 2023/24 Savings**

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

## **ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**

### **Capital Projects as of 31 December 23**

	Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>				
3MG	24	14	14	10
Murdishaw	30	8	8	22
Equality Act Improvement Works	282	230	230	52
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	36	0	0	36
Halton Lea TCF Roof Top Garden	35	0	0	35
Property Improvements	254	210	210	44
Waterloo Building Runcorn	93	1	1	92
Woodend - Former Unit 10 Catalyst Trade Park	200	234	234	-34
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2,634	1,308	1,308	1,326
Police Station Demolition	406	406	406	0
Runcorn Station Building Development	80	30	30	50
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	82	20	20	62
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	291	18	18	273
Changing Places	212	180	180	32
Town Deal	2,240	825	825	1,415
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>6,899</b>	<b>3,484</b>	<b>3,484</b>	<b>3,415</b>

**Murdishaw** – HBC supported the capital works to the former Youth Centre/Boxing Club which has been brought back in to use as the Tea Tree Café, a community project supported by Onward Homes. The funding was provided to match fund Onward Homes contribution. A programme of improvements to the external facilities at Murdishaw Community Centre is currently being priced with works anticipated in the Quarter 4.

**Equality Act Budget** - It is anticipated that most of the budget will be spent by year end, as the department has some access improvement works which are adjacent to the Brindley yet to be invoiced.

**Kingsway Learning Centre** – A PA system was recently installed in the building. The department is awaiting the final invoice.

**Property Improvements**- It is anticipated that this budget will be fully spent by year end. The department has already completed a number of projects from this fund, inclusive of the heating/ventilated replacement works at Phoenix Park, the installation of the new safety barrier system, and the new audio equipment at the Brindley and we have allocated the Halton Lea lift replacement project to this code, so all will be spent by year end.

**Waterloo Centre** - The demolition works are likely to commence in February, the Council a date for the disconnection of the services which is late January. The anticipated cost of the work is circa £115k plus fees.

**Woodend Former Unit 10** - All works are complete other than the provision of the new gas supply.

**Foundry Lane** – Foundry Lane is moving to a crucial stage with reserved matters to enable the beginning of construction on the site. Planning permission should be determined in January to allow the construction company to start on site by the end of this financial year.

**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** - All 3 changing places facilities are complete, bar a few minor snags at the Victoria Park facility. The department is still in the process of getting them all registered on the Changing places website, all will be complete by year end.



**The Town Deal programme** –The seven projects which make up the Runcorn Town Deal programme are progressing and are currently on track to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 when the funding ends.

**3MG** - The substantive programme for 3MG in terms of land disposals is now 90%+ complete with up to 900,000 square foot of development in the pipeline some of which will require professional support over the coming years which will continue this as an ongoing project.

## **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.
<b>Total Economy, Enterprise &amp; Property Department</b>				<b>307</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>0</b>		

**POLICY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION**

**Revenue Budget as at 31 December 2023**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	5,149	3,833	3,849	(16)	(21)
Efficiency Savings	-100	-100	-100	0	0
Premises	211	165	109	56	74
Hired & Contracted Services	115	85	177	(92)	(123)
Supplies & Services	163	179	227	(48)	(63)
Street Lighting	1,766	997	758	239	319
Highways Maintenance - Routine & Reactive	1,583	752	1,014	(262)	(350)
Highways Maintenance - Programmed Works	1,712	890	549	341	454
Fleet Transport	1,410	1,058	1,107	(49)	(67)
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	52	39	5	34	45
Bus Support	458	387	387	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	31	30	30	0	0
NRA Levy	73	71	71	0	2
LCR Levy	1,059	750	750	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	359	359	359	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>14,041</b>	<b>9,495</b>	<b>9,292</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Sales & Rents Income	-101	-78	-34	(44)	(59)
Planning Fees	-738	-554	-396	(158)	(210)
Building Control Fees	-242	-182	-125	(57)	(76)
Other Fees & Charges	-932	-704	-731	27	36
Grants & Reimbursements	-179	-220	-220	0	0
Government Grant Income	-197	-196	-196	0	0
Halton Hopper Income	-54	-40	-14	(26)	(35)
Recharge to Capital	-317	-163	-14	(149)	(198)
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-1,059	-750	-750	0	0
Contribution from Reserves	-520	-520	-520	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-4,339</b>	<b>-3,407</b>	<b>-3,000</b>	<b>(407)</b>	<b>(542)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>9,702</b>	<b>6,088</b>	<b>6,292</b>	<b>(204)</b>	<b>(272)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	509	382	382	0	0
Transport	591	444	495	(51)	(69)
Central Support	1,432	1,074	1,074	0	0
Asset Rental Support	686	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-885	-664	-664	0	0
Transport Recharge Income	-3,764	-2,818	-3,189	371	495
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-1,431</b>	<b>-1,582</b>	<b>-1,902</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>426</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>8,271</b>	<b>4,506</b>	<b>4,390</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>154</b>

### Comments on the above figures

### Financial Position

The current position for the PPT department is for net spend to be £0.116m under budget at 31 December 23 with a projected full financial year outturn of net spend to be £0.154m within the approved budget.

### Comparison to Previous Quarter

The projected outturn shows an improved position from Q2 as the forecast is now showing that the department will be under budget by the end of the financial year, moving from a

projected £0.385m overspend to the updated underspend position of £0.154m. The reasons for this will be broken down further later in this report, but it is important to remember that this projection is subject to change during the final three months of the year.

### **Supporting Information**

As in previous years budget holders are working closely with the Finance Officers to ensure a balanced budget is achieved. Wherever possible capital expenditure is being prioritised to relieve pressure on the revenue budgets.

The Q3 report includes the 23/24 pay award agreed in April of a flat £1,925 per full time equivalent. This was above the budgeted 4% increase therefore the outturn reflects the increased staffing costs paid in the current year.

Supplies and services and contracted services are projected to be over budget as in previous years. Halton has a contract with MEAS (Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service) which is hosted by Sefton LA which is used to provide Halton with advice in relation to ecology, waste, environmental impact assessments and local plans. Although the expenditure on the contract is over the allocated budget, it would cost Halton considerably more to provide this advice in house. Legal fees are also projected to be over budget due to external legal advice being required in the Planning section.

The street lighting expenditure is projected to come in under budget as per the previous financial year. Various actions have been taken to decrease the amount of power being used such as lights being turned off 12am – 6am on some routes and over 80% of HBC owned street lighting stock of around 20,500 columns have been upgraded to LED. Current estimates are based on last year's energy usage, this will be confirmed over the next quarter once usage increases over the winter months.

Highways maintenance budgets are projected to be under budget. Capital is again being utilised where appropriate. The report is broken down into routine and reactive schemes and programmed works so the various areas can be looked at in more detail.

Fleet transport has seen an increase in costs across fuel and parts in the current financial year as previously reported, however the projected outturn is now less than in Q2. This then has a knock-on effect to the costs being recharged out to the other areas of the authority. There is also a significant delay in the time it takes from placing an order and receiving the goods. Every effort is being made to prolong fleet replacements, but this has a negative impact on the cost of repairs.

Sales income at the Lowerhouse Lane Depot is not expected to reach its income target. Covid-19 is still playing a part in income generation due to DfT suspending MOT requirements for 6 months during the lockdown periods. When the Depot opened again it was not able to meet the demand for vehicles due to lack of staff, and therefore customers went to other garages and didn't return.

There is a slight downturn in the number of planning applications being received. However, this has been mitigated by Government increasing planning fees at a higher rate than forecast. In Q1 it was originally shown that this would help to balance the income target, however, now that there is a more accurate picture of applications for the year it is now anticipated that this will not be the case, and the target will not be achieved.

Building control income is currently under its income target but it is hoped that a number of major housing schemes will soon be approved and therefore this will filter through to the income target. Again, this is being monitored closely by Halton and Knowsley as part of the

Building Control shared service and will be updated for future reports once an income reconciliation exercise has taken place between both parties.

Other fees and charges are currently expected to exceed income targets due to a backlog of permits in the Traffic division being administered and therefore outstanding income has been recovered over the past quarter. This contrasts with the Q2 outturn that was predicting to be under achieved across fees and charges. This exercise was a one off and this level of income is unlikely to be achieved again.

As in previous years the recharge of salaries to capital schemes will not achieve its income target due to a lack of traditional capital projects and therefore there is less opportunity to capitalise. There is a relationship between the under achievement of income and the lack of staff within the Highways division which means staff are not available to carry out works on capital schemes and therefore cannot be recharged out to generate income.

Transport income recharges will be over on its income target, but these are offset by overspends in the other departments as mentioned in the above fleet transport costs.

### **Approved 2023/24 Savings**

Savings that were put forward for 2023/24 can be seen in Appendix A at the end of this report. There have been no changes since the Q2 report.

### **Risks/Opportunities**

Across the whole department inflation has significantly driven costs up and every division is bearing the cost of this. The Highways and Logistics divisions are seeing the largest impact of this when purchasing materials / fuel / parts for vehicles etc.

## **Capital Projects as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>2023-24 Capital Allocation £'000</b>	<b>Allocation to Date £'000</b>	<b>Actual Spend £'000</b>	<b>Total Allocation Remaining £'000</b>
<b>Local Transport Plan</b>				
Total Bridge & Highway Maintenance	3,133	662	662	2,471
Integrated Transport	549	0	0	549
CRSTS (City Region Sustainable Travel Settlement)	7,140	1,705	1,705	5,435
SJB – Decoupling	0	0	0	0
Runcorn Busway	239	347	347	(108)
East Runcorn Connectivity (ERC)	1,577	1,832	1,832	(255)
A56 Reconstruction	947	0	0	947
Dukesfield ATL (Waterloo Bridge)	0	1,493	1,493	(1,493)
LCWIP Phase 2 Daresbury	5,783	1,468	1,468	4,315
ATF3 Murdishaw to Whitehouse	3,000	154	154	2,846
ATF4 Widnes Town Centre Accessibility	122	0	0	122
SUD Green Cycle	0	2	2	(2)
<b>Total Local Transport Plan</b>	<b>22,490</b>	<b>7,663</b>	<b>7,663</b>	<b>14,827</b>
<b>Halton Borough Council Schemes</b>				
Street Lighting	50	7	7	43
Lighting Upgrades	300	208	208	92
Risk Management	100	17	17	83
Fleet Vehicles	2,500	1,324	1,324	1,176
Widnes Loops	0	84	84	(84)
<b>Total Halton Borough Council Schemes</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>1,640</b>	<b>1,640</b>	<b>1,310</b>
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>25,440</b>	<b>9,303</b>	<b>9,303</b>	<b>16,137</b>

The East Runcorn Connectivity (ERC) project is currently being redefined which will focus on the major maintenance of the A56 and 5 active travel links within Halton. The scheme is on track and communication is in place with LCR to secure additional funding for detailed design and full costing profiling. This included consultation with members, stakeholders and public which took place in October 23. There is an agreement in place between LCR and Halton to cover up to £400k of works over and above the initial grant allocation whilst the scheme is prepared for Gateway 3 funding. It is anticipated that funding will be secured in February 24.

Dukesfield and Waterloo Bridge are now reopened. The original grant funding has now been fully spent and conversations are under way with LCR in relation to further funding for this financial year to offset the expenditure.

CRSTS (City Region Sustainable Travel Settlement) replaces the historical grant funding from the DfT. It is broken down into various areas such as carriageway maintenance, footway maintenance, street lighting and structures. Expenditure is low in Q1 and Q2 as payments will mostly occur towards the end of the financial year as in previous reports.

The A56 project is in support of the new junction completion for the Redrow development which overlaps with the ERC scheme mentioned above. This scheme is in abeyance until further funding for the ERC is announced, therefore expenditure will be minimal.

LCWIP Phase 2 (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) Runcorn to Daresbury is currently underway on Long Benton Way. A change request is currently being put to the CA as the allocation of £5.7m is not anticipated to be fully spent due to reduced scope of the scheme.

ATF3 (Active Travel Fund) Murdishaw to Whitehouse is currently not on site but is due to start imminently.






The fleet replacement scheme is being utilised only when necessary, as every vehicle is being retained if it is cost effective. Only when vehicles are past the point of being economically viable for repair are they then replaced. With the rise of inflation there has been a significant increase in the cost of new vehicles when ordered in comparison to previous financial years. There are also exceptionally long lead times when orders are placed to the time of them being delivered due to the worldwide shortage of semiconductors.

Liverpool City Region is yet to confirm funding for a number of capital projects, this is hoped to be resolved in the next 6-8 weeks. There have also not been any discussions surrounding potential carry forwards of unspent grant to the following financial year due to scheme delivery constraints, again this is hoped to be resolved in the near future.



## POLICY, PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION 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		
PPT1	Fleet Management & Maintenance	400	Reduction in the annual contribution to the Fleet Replacement Reserve.	40	0	0		Budget has already been removed and saving will be met in full
PPT2	Transport Coordination	484	Reduction in the provision of subsidised bus grants. Currently, 14 bus services are subsidised through contracts where there are no commercial services. Passenger utilisation of routes would be assessed to see where reductions can be applied with the least impact upon services.	50	0	0		Budget has already been removed but the expenditure is expected to see a significant rise as mentioned in the Q1 report. However, this is being met by a contribution from Mersey Gateway.
PPT4	Schemes and Maintenance	1,056	Reduction of 6% in the programmed road maintenance budget.	60	0	0		Budget has already been removed and saving will be met in full
PPT5	School Crossings	70	Approach the Schools Forum to seek a contribution of at least 50% towards funding the school crossing patrol service, which is a non-statutory service.	35	0	0		Still waiting to take a report to Schools Forum to discuss further action
PPT6	Traffic	N/A	Consider introducing civil traffic enforcement for traffic violations.	0	150	0		This is a complex piece of work to take forward, it

			Employ private sector civil enforcement officers to issue fines and generate income. It would take 12 months to apply for powers from the DFT and put the scheme in place. The Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board will consider this via a Topic Group.					requires DfT to grant powers to Halton. The project also needs resourcing, and the department is still awaiting capacity from the Accelerated Growth project. No savings were eligible for 23/24 financial year.
<b>Total Policy, Planning &amp; Transportation Department</b>				<b>185</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>0</b>		

## COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACE

### Revenue Budget as at 31 December 2023

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	17,085	12,606	11,991	615	820
Premises	3,817	2,200	2,048	152	274
Supplies & Services	1,609	1,307	1,372	(65)	(86)
Hired & Contracted Services	607	413	637	(224)	(299)
Book Fund	140	108	113	(5)	(7)
Food Provisions	371	158	268	(110)	(147)
School Meals Food	1,965	1,474	1,540	(66)	(88)
Miscellaneous Transport Costs	117	77	96	(19)	(25)
Other Agency Costs	601	490	429	61	81
Other Expenditure	0	0	9	(9)	(9)
Waste Disposal Contracts	6,885	1,146	1,077	69	91
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	67	48	16	32	43
Grant to Norton Priory	172	172	174	(2)	(1)
Capital Financing	201	180	118	62	83
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>33,637</b>	<b>20,379</b>	<b>19,888</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>730</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Sales Income	-3,962	-3,098	-2,292	(806)	(1,075)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,752	-4,691	-5,113	422	564
Rental Income	-221	-149	-182	33	43
Government Grant Income	-827	-3,244	-3,434	190	252
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-676	-445	-496	51	67
SLA Income	-2,391	-2,321	-2,139	(182)	(242)
Internal Fees Income	-592	-158	-275	117	156
Capital Salaries	-173	-106	-73	(33)	(43)
Transfers From Reserves	-20	51	51	0	2
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-14,614</b>	<b>-14,161</b>	<b>-13,953</b>	<b>(208)</b>	<b>(276)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>19,023</b>	<b>6,218</b>	<b>5,935</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>454</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	1,825	1,369	1,369	0	0
Transport	2,046	1,504	1,592	(88)	(117)
Central Support	3,856	2,893	2,897	(4)	(5)
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-540	-409	-409	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>7,386</b>	<b>5,357</b>	<b>5,449</b>	<b>(92)</b>	<b>(122)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>26,409</b>	<b>11,575</b>	<b>11,384</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>332</b>

### Comments on the above figures

#### Financial Position

The net department spend is £0.191m under budget at the end of Quarter 3 and the estimated outturn underspend against budget for 2023/24 is £0.332m.

This represents a significant improvement on the forecast outturn overspend of £0.564m estimated at the end of Qtr2. The variance between the two quarters is largely attributed to employee and premises costs over the year to date being lower than expected.

Net employee spend is estimated to be under the approved budget at the end of the financial year by £0.820m. This is due to the number of vacancies within leisure services and reduced casual usage in line with 2022/23 actual data. The costs included within the report now take account of all 2023.24 pay awards being agreed and paid to employees.

Utilities budgets for 2023/24 were inflated due to the expected rise in energy costs, however, the actual charges to date have not been as high as forecasted. There has also been a considerable saving on Crematorium gas charges as the new cremator is more efficient. Gas usage at the Stadium has been reduced due to using heat source pumps. Energy costs for the year are under review and a prudent approach has been taken in estimates.

Hired and Contracted Services has increased since Q2 due to additional costs of Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme, funding for these costs will be met by additional Government Grant recorded against income.

Food Provisions is overspent due to the continuing increase of food costs from suppliers driven by high inflation over the past year.

Due to delays in receiving waste disposal contract invoices spend for the year has been estimated based on the average costs from 2022/23. Any changes to these estimates could have a large impact on the Department's outturn position.

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. This shortfall against the income target is mitigated by reduced employee costs and casual usage at these establishments.

Other Income categories are estimated to overachieve against budget due to additional income levels for Trade and Green Waste Collection fees plus letting fees and promotions at The Brindley.

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.

### **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 31 December 2023

Project Title	2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	34	20	18	16
Halton Leisure Centre	15,056	12,600	12,550	2,506
Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment	28	14	13	15
Open Spaces Schemes	851	200	150	701
Children's Playground Equipment	105	20	20	85
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12	1	1	11
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	0	0	340
Runcorn Town Park	284	120	117	167
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,023	35	32	991
Pickerings Pasture Café	520	0	0	520
Litter Bins	20	0	0	20
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18,286</b>	<b>13,010</b>	<b>12,901</b>	<b>5,385</b>

### Comments on the above figures

#### **Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment**

This project is now completed - waiting on invoice for outstanding works so project can be closed down.

#### **Halton (Moor Lane) Leisure Centre**

Construction is on track and in line with expected spend.

#### **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.

#### **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.

**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**

Site surveys are on-going, planning application and tender documentation currently being prepared; the anticipated start on site is Spring 2024 with a completion Autumn 2024.

**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.
COMM 4	Stadium & Catering Services	751	Franchise the concourse only catering services to an external operator.	50	0	0		
			An organisational restructure is currently being implemented for Stadium & Catering Services to reflect recent service changes.	40	0	0		

Ref.	Service	Net	Description of	Savings Value			Current	Comments
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
<b>Total Community &amp; Environment Department</b>				<b>230</b>	<b>-84</b>	<b>12</b>		






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