

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

Reporting Period: 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 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

HPIJ submitted its Delivery Plan to the LCR CA for use of UKSPF to continue delivery of the Ways to Work programme from April 2024, although the funding will require a revised focus on working with economically inactive residents. CA SIF funding secured to deliver Ways to Work from January 2024 – March 2024.

HPIJ negotiated with the CA on a proposal for delivery, at local level, of the Metro Mayor's Young Person's Guarantee, which will support those aged 18-24, and anyone who is unemployed and inactive and seeking support. Following discussions with G4S/DWP, plans have been put in place to return the underspend on the Restart programme. A number of factors have contributed to this, including JCP referrals being much less than anticipated at the start of the programme.

Following successful delivery of the Adult Education Budget (AEB), Halton Adult Learning have been successful in securing 'growth' funding for the next academic year.

The LCR CA consulted with a range of stakeholders in developing its forthcoming 'Long Term Skills Plan'. Consultation included a HBC officers session, with a range of services represented (Employment, Learning & Skills, Business Support, HR and adult social care). The Plan is scheduled to be finalised by spring/summer 2024 and will inform what the CA commissions around skills.

Halton Adult Learning co-ordinates the LCR CA Pathways to Teaching project. A city region wide celebration, to award those trainee tutors that had completed the first cohort, took place in Q3 at Calderstone's Park Reading Room, with 34 learners being recognised for their achievements. A number of these learners have gone on to gain employment in their respective LA Adult Learning service or are continuing with their trainee teacher studies.

## **Community & Environment**

### **2.3 Culture - Brindley Theatre**

This year's sponsored fireworks display was the best ever, set against the backdrop of the iconic Silver Jubilee Bridge. With an estimate of over 40,000 people viewing the fireworks across the borough. The Silver Jubilee Bridge was closed for the day and used at the launch site for the display.

The Events Team could not have put on this year's event without the sponsorship and support of the below local companies:

- Beesley & Fildes ltd
- Halton Housing
- Langtree
- Marshall CDP
- Tarmac

The Events Team in partnership with the Mayoral Office supported the local British Legions Remembrance Day Services at both Victoria Park and Runcorn Cenotaph. Both services were very well attended with the numbers gathering to pay their respects is increasing each year.

An update on Halton 50th Year (2024) Activities was provided to Executive Board on 16.11.23 and to Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board on 23.11.23.

Peter Kay performed two Surprise Christmas shows at the Brindley on 7 December.

Works completed on the Bridgewater Canal Towpath to provide temporary public access during the extension works in 2024. The works included safety railings, towpath widening, lighting and a safety handrail.

A large recruitment drive was completed to increase both Casual Theatre Stewards and Casual Production Technicians.

The new extension is out to tender, with a closing date of 19 January.

### **2.4 Community Centres**

Mike Amesbury MP moved into The Old Police Station in December 2023. A new lease agreement is in place. This brings the building to maximum occupancy. We are in the process of securing a new tenant for the vacant space at Murdishaw Community Centre.

### **2.5 Library Service**

The monthly Bereavement Café in Halton Lea was launched in October with over 30 adults attending. An article was published in Inside Halton.

Also, the recently launched Dungeons and Dragons role-play club, in Halton Lea, is continuing to be popular with over 240 adults and children taking part in weekly sessions.

Warm Welcome free coffee mornings began in November and have seen over 245 people attend the sessions for a hot drink in both Halton Lea and Runcorn

Ditton Library pc replacement is near to completion. Once Ditton is completed the project will roll out to other libraries in Halton.

### **2.6 Leisure**

Construction of Halton Leisure Centre is progressing to time. The external fabric, including the glass façade is nearing completion and the internal structure is taking shape.

Positioning of power and data points and all internal fixtures and fittings have been selected and confirmed. The Active Halton website has a dedicated page for the development, the picture gallery is regularly updated and social value reports continue to be posted every month.

Active Halton APP will launch on 2nd January 2024. The APP will give customers quick access to booking fitness classes and swimming sessions, accessing exclusive member perks, and tracking their progress. It is a great tool for staying motivated, organised, and connected to all the amazing activities the sites offer. To celebrate the launch of the APP, those downloading the APP can claim 50% of the first month on a full membership or have the admin fee waived on any of other memberships. This is time limited but hoped to significantly boost sales.

### **Sports Development**

Volunteer Walk Leaders won Volunteering Team of the Year award at Halton & St Helens Voluntary and Community Action annual awards ceremony, and to celebrate they were invited to afternoon tea with Halton's Mayor and Consort. Around 100 people a week attend a health walk across Widnes and Runcorn.

Liverpool FA Active Through Football Recognition Award for delivery of activity in Halton during 2023.

## **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**

Additional AEB funding will be used to grow the ESOL provision within the Adult Learning service from Q1 24/25, to support increasing numbers of ESOL residents. Provision will include conversation clubs and art sessions.

Adult Learning's annual Self-Assessment Report will be completed in Q4, shared with relevant senior officers and Portfolio Holder and uploaded to the Ofsted portal.

In Q4, discussions will take place with the Combined Authority on year 6 AEB allocations for Halton Adult Learning. It will be important that proposals and allocations reflect the requirements of the CA's Long Term Skills Plan.

Tarmac have been awarded the Highways & Maintenance contract for Halton & Warrington councils. Discussions in Q4 will commence with Tarmac, Employment, Learning & Skills and Procurement regarding social value outcomes and ELS KPIs to benefit Halton residents. A plan will be developed and monitoring of outcomes will be undertaken, with Tarmac attending Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) meetings to report on progress.

During Q4, the CA will be inviting partners to contribute to a number of 'deep dive' discussions on key topics, with a view to formulating some plans for action. Initial deep dives will cover: Economic Inactivity; Support for those with experience of care; and transport issues.

A number of Investment Zones are being developed across the LCR. Partners, including LAs, are invited to attend an Investment Zones – Access to Opportunity Plan event in Q4, to better understand what benefits/positive outcomes Investment Zones will bring to local areas.

LCR Chambers of Commerce led on the submission of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), which aims to represent the views of local employers regarding their skills requirements. In Q4, an LSIP conference will take place at Aintree Racecourse with a range of stakeholders, including LAs, colleges, employers, Chambers etc to set out progress to date and next steps. Local Skills Improvement Funds have been successfully secured by LCR colleges to deliver on some of the employer skills 'asks'.

A new public address system will be completed in Q4 in Kingsway Learning Centre to comply with the requirements of the Protect Duty (Martyn's Law). The PA system will be tested and then key staff in the centre will be trained in its operation. Following this, the KLC Bomb & Fire Evacuation Plan will need to be updated accordingly.

## Community & Environment

### 3.3 Culture Services

#### Brindley Theatre

We are currently noticing a change away from advanced ticket purchases to much nearer to the performance date. We suspect this is due to the current financial climate.

The changing summer climate will now be a consideration when identifying event locations managed by the Events Team.

### 3.4 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.

### 3.5 Library Service

Funding has been secured to provide 540 packed lunches for children during the next half term at all 4 libraries secured from Public Health.

Changing Places facility, installation complete in Halton lea and awaiting final plaque instalment before launch and official opening.

### 3.6 Leisure

Good footfall continues through both centres. However, the reduction in free and proposed increases in prices for all activities from 1st April is likely to widen the affordability gap. A review of Halton Leisure Card is taking place, it is expected that new criteria will be proposed to help those most in need.

### Sports Development

Savings target for 2024/25 has been achieved. There is a reduction in Officer hours and sports coaching budget, thus the support service to community groups will reduce. Charges for activities will continue.

Inactivity levels are still higher than before the pandemic, women's activity levels have recovered slower than men's. Active Lives survey results identify that the gap between most and least affluent continues to grow. Changes to Adult Active Lives survey, Sport England recently reviewed the survey allocation approach. As a result, every local authority identified by the Place Need Classification as falling within the top 20% (top 2 deciles) for both a sporting and physical activity need and social need will receive a minimum sample of 900 (previously 500). Halton is within this classification thus 900 surveys should impact on the precision of estimates and granularity of future reporting. Recent Active Lives survey results for Children and Young People reports participation levels nationally remain unchanged compared to 12 months ago, although they're up compared to five years ago, activity levels are the lowest for those in school Years 3-4 (ages 7-9, 40%).

## 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

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

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objective: To facilitate &amp; create employment</b> 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.
<b>EEP 01</b>	<b>Employment Learning and skills</b>

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
To deliver year 3 of the Supported Internship programme by <b>September 2023</b>		Year 3 delivery commenced September 2023
To achieve the required outputs and customer service standards on the DWP/G4S Restart Programme contract to cease the Enhanced Performance Regime/PIP by <b>June 2023</b>		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 <b>June 2023</b> .		Review of the HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy is ongoing. Due to staffing issues actions are likely to be implemented next quarter.
Implementation of new contracts within required deadlines (UKSPF/Home Office Refugee Programme if contracts secured) by <b>July 2023</b> .		Gap funding to bridge the transition from ESF to UKSPF has been secured (SIF funding). Grant Funding Agreements for continued funding from UKSPF will be in place for April 2024 delivery of Ways to Work. The Home Office bid was not secured by the Prime Contractor so Halton will not be a sub contracted provider for this programme.
To deliver a Pathways to Teaching programme, which will create adult learning tutor employment opportunities by <b>September 2023</b>		Year 2 of the project has officially launched, with enrolments in Halton, Sefton, Liverpool, Wirral, and Knowsley. Celebration event for the first cohort took place on 8/11/2023.

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



<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q3</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
To deliver an Adult Learning Marketing Strategy by <b>April 2023</b>		Marketing colleagues continue to work towards the overarching targets set out in the Marketing strategy. Progress on Marketing KPIs now included in half termly Quality and Income reporting.
To review the Quality Assurances processes within the Adult Learning Service by <b>July 2023</b>		Adult Learning QA processes and documentation reviewed and launched in September 2023.
To review the adult learning tutor contracts by <b>July 2024</b>		The new full time/fractional Tutor Contract was implemented from 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2023. Liaison with HR is underway on revising the sessional tutor contract, to be signed off by July 2024 at the latest.

## Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

### Community Services

#### Community Services

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

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progress Q3</b>	<b>Supporting Commentary</b>
Programming report to PPB June 2023.		Update was provided.
Programming report to Executive Board July 2023.		Update was provided.

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

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Programming report to PPB June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Update was provided.
Programming report to Executive Board September 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Update was provided.















Ref	Objective
CE 03	To improve the access to affordable fitness and health facilities through the provision of leisure centres and sports development services.

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
New Halton Leisure Centre to Open Spring 2025	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The external fabric is approaching completion. Internal brick work commenced.
New Leisure Management System to be operational by November 2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tender documents drafted.





CE 04	Increase the occupancy levels at the Old Police Station
-------	---

Milestone	Progress Q3	Supporting Commentary
Improve the accessibility of the building June 2023.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Works complete.
Negotiate with new tenants to secure a tenancy agreements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MP move in December 2023. Building is now fully occupied.

## Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/ 23	Actual 2022/ 23	Quarter 3 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Direction of Travel
CE LI 01	% occupancy of tenants at Old Police Station	93%	100%	100%			MP took vacant space. Now at 100% occupancy.
CE LI 02	Brindley - Total number of tickets sold	74,962	100%	60,439			Tickets are purchased in advance for shows so fluctuate depending on when a show goes on sale.
CE LI 03	Brindley - Total number of days Hired days	182	100%	157			Figures in line with expectation.
CE LI 04	Brindley - Total number of Council Promotions	120	100%	97			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 212,854  4,907 21,483 19,737 35,587			Footfall figures for Q3 total 81,714. This is an improve on Q2.
CE LI 06	Library Digital issues	1,350,119	1,500,000	2,856,132			955,235 digital issues for Q3 exceeding expectations.
CE LI 07	Library Issues in branch:  Ditton Widnes Runcorn Halton Lea	Total 203,595	Total 203,595	Total 161,182  3,552 20,144 5,924 18,416			Issue figures for Q3 total 48,036. On track to meet target but down on Q2.



Ref	Description	Actual 2022/ 23	Actual 2022/ 23	Quarter 3 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Direction of Travel
CE LI 08	Footfall for Leisure Centres: Brookvale Kingsway	188,937 205,344	100% 100%	140,089 196,342			OBA continue to book out sports hall for school exams, this results in reduced participation, but income is generated.
CE LI 09	Sports Development - community bookings at Frank Myler	n/a	1,500	1,047			On track to meet target, but a number of groups have cancelled. MUGA continues to be well used in winter months.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY

#### Revenue Operational Budget at 31 December 2023

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	5,491	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**

	<b>Capital Allocation £'000</b>	<b>Allocation to Date £'000</b>	<b>Actual Spend £'000</b>	<b>Total Allocation Remaining £'000</b>
<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 providing additional office space for 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
EEP8	Technical Support & Market Team	392	Restructuring of the team	98	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflected in 2023/24 budget.
<b>Total Economy, Enterprise &amp; Property Department</b>				<b>307</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>0</b>		

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE DEPARTMENT

#### Revenue Budget as 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	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		
COMM1	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		
COMM3	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.
COMM4	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 Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
COMM6	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		Implemented in 2023/24 budget setting.
COMM5	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		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>		





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