

Environment and Regeneration PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report

Reporting Period: **Quarter 4 – 1st January to 31st March 2024**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the final quarter of 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

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 High Street Housing project is now on site and being delivered by Halton Housing. The next phase of the Creative and Digital Skill Centre, the Youth Centre at 57- 59 High Street, has been tendered. A soft strip out has been completed in advance of the award of the contract. Work on site is expected to start in April 2024. The Brindley Theatre extension has been tendered with a start on site (subject to tender appraisal) estimated to be June 2024.

Runcorn Station Quarter

Approval of Town Deal funding for an enterprise centre was obtained in October 2022. A procurement exercise has been undertaken to secure an operator; however, HBC were unable to appoint an operator so further discussions are taking place in respect of the most appropriate way to proceed. In the interim a roof survey has been completed and report is being reviewed.

Runcorn Station Redevelopment – Network Rail’s Capital Delivery Team have now received a price to complete the GRIP3 design stage and proceed with further detailed design. This is currently being considered.

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

Currently RIBA2 Design Options Appraisal & Development Framework is being carried out for the Kingsway Quarter site to support current and future funding bids. A bid has been submitted to the CA for funding to progress a more detailed masterplan for the town centre.

Freeport and 3MG

The Freeport sites are being actively promoted by the Freeport 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 195 on Matheson Rd has been completed and is being actively marketed to secure a tenant and HBC Field is on site.

Sci-Tech Daresbury

The Joint Venture continues to progress proposals for Project Violet Phase 2. The project will be funded via Investment Zone and Chrysalis loan. The Investment Zone was launched in Q4 at MIPIM and work is ongoing to finalise the Memorandum of Understanding between Government and the Combined Authority. The process to secure investment will continue in Q1 of 2024-25.

Astmoor

The Development Agreement has now been completed and work is ongoing to establish a partnership board and to agree scheme delivery.

Foundry Lane

Planning permission was secured in March paving the way for development to commence later in the year (the remediation phase is now complete). 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.

Focus this quarter has been on promoting a new grant scheme 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 measures. A number of targeted letter drops have been undertaken to raise awareness of the grant.

2.3 Regeneration Non-Town Centres

The Business Investment and Growth Team successfully Launched the first Green Breakfast Network in March which offers an opportunity for businesses to learn more about projects happening across the Liverpool City Region and beyond 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 including logistics, advanced manufacturing and a UKSPF Economic Conference.

2.4 Asset Management

Unit 10 former Catalyst Trade Park, Widnes – licence to Tarmac completed 19 March 2024

Unit 4, St Pauls Mews, High St, Runcorn – surrender of the lease completed 16 January 2024

Parklands Club, Chapel Lane, Widnes – completion of the lease variation 13 March 2024

2.5 Policy Planning & Transportation

2.6 Highway Development

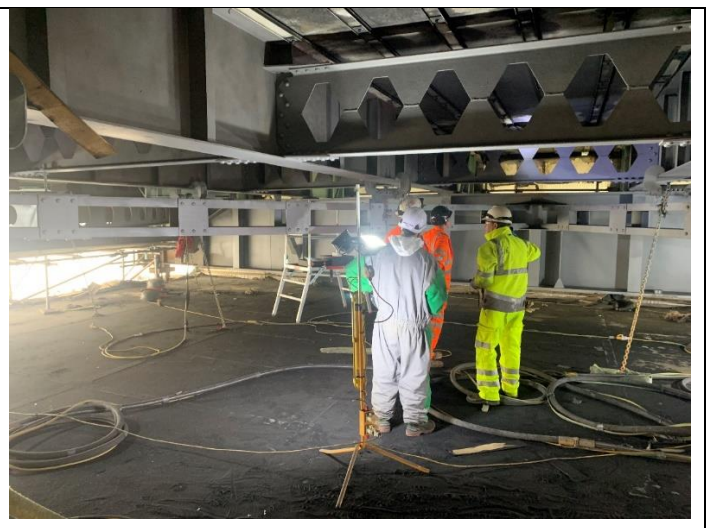
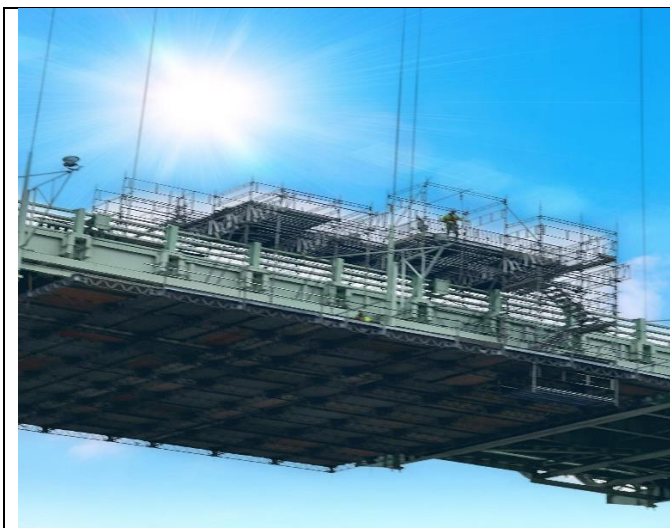
Winter Maintenance

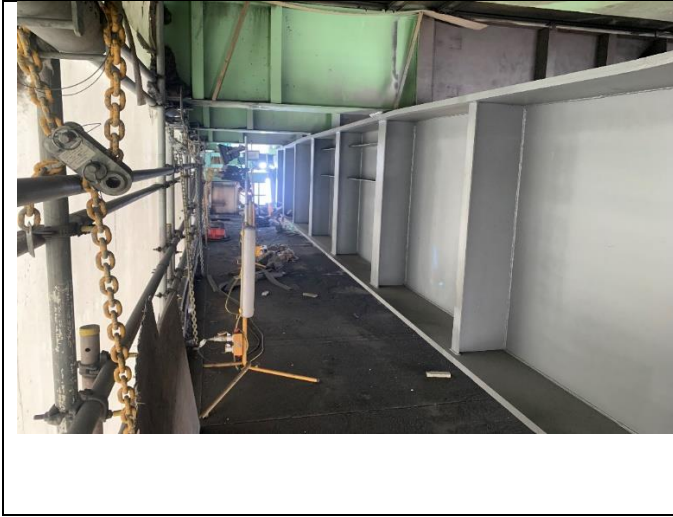
Q4 has seen the completion of winter maintenance operations, including gritting. There have been a number of storms over the winter period that have required a pro-active response, for example responding to flood events during periods of heavy rainfall.

SJB Maintenance

Site works commenced during Q4 on the 2023/24 SJB maintenance painting contract. Due to the logistical challenges of painting the below-deck steelwork over the River Mersey, it was necessary to install site access and material storage facilities on the deck of the bridge. This necessitated the closure of the northbound traffic lane (via 2-way traffic signals) for the duration of the works. A new suspended decking system is being used below the bridge to create a working platform for the various grit blasting and painting operations. This has reduced the load on the structure and enabled working efficiencies which have reduced the works programme (and cost) compared to existing systems. Progress is generally on target with the agreed programme (completion by the end of July), although there have been several delay events associated with high winds and external factors (such as the effect of maintenance issues on the Mersey Gateway bridge). By the close of Q4, blasting and painting operations were underway.

The pictures below show the painting work being undertaken beneath the bridge deck, where a 'false floor' has been constructed from scaffold to allow work to take place.





Streetworks

The role of the Streetworks is to control and coordinate all works on the highway through the permit scheme. This includes inspecting all the various utility undertakers who have assets within the highway network to ensure they adhere to the conditions of their permit and reinstate the highway to meet the published standards. Due to staff leaving the authority, the team of five reduced down to just one during December 2023. A stabilisation plan was put in place to address the capacity shortage and modernise the service. Following a successful recruitment campaign the team has returned to full strength. Not only is this a critical team in terms of traffic management in the Borough, it is also a net zero cost service due to the income and charges levied through the permit scheme.

2.7 Planning

The Local Plans Team has seen significant staffing changes. The team of 5 has reduced to 2. The Team Leader left to take up a position with High Peak Council. Another team member is now on maternity leave, and a third team member has now retired. An interim arrangement has been put in place from within the team to provide management cover, and the team are working on a work programme to provide monitoring on the local plan and production of ancillary guidance documents.

One of the two Principal Officers in Development Control has handed their notice in, having accepted a new role at CWAC.

Of the two solicitors who support Planning, one has started maternity leave, and the other has given notice, having accepted a new role at CWAC. Locum arrangements are being put in place to cover these vacancies.

2.8 Community & Environment

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.

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

- Further funding, called The Long Term Plan for Towns was announced in the Spring Budget for Runcorn. The funding, up to £20million over 10 years, is 75% capital and 25% revenue and is to be spent on local priorities; reviving high streets, tackling anti-social behaviour, improving transport and growing the local economy. The process will involve establishing a new town board, setting a strategy and a 10-year vision with a 3-year investment plan. Access to consultancy-style support through a new High Streets and Towns Taskforce (HSTTF) will follow after Town Boards have submitted their Long-Term Plan to provide hands-on place making assistance to deliver projects.

3.3 Policy Performance Transportation

Production of monitoring reports and future policy guidance. This was presented to the Environment & Urban Renewal PPB in February and comprises the forward plan of planning policy work. It is known as the LDS (Local Development Scheme).

Planning Application Statistics (Q4 23/24):

Given the number of cases on hand a backlog of applications is leading to an increase in time taken to process applications. This will start to hold up development and investment in the borough.

Work is being undertaken to increase resources however this will take time.

Total Applications Received: (Includes those Withdrawn and Returned) 119

Applications Decided 118 Applications On-Hand (Undecided) 185

Pre-Applications Received 30 Pre Applications Closed 34

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.

3.4 Community & Environment Services

Non documented at this time.

4.0 High Priority Equality Actions

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




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

5.0 Performance Overview



- 5.1 The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that fall within the remit of the Board.

Development and Investment Services




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

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Spend the £23.6m by 31st March 2026 .		Projects across the programme are working through key stages. Spring 2024 will see the first projects start on site. Following the May 2024 board there will be a review to access if all projects can be delivered on time and too budget.
To secure additional funding for key projects (Enterprise Centre and Creative and Digital Skills Centre) by September 2023 . To secure vacant possession by July 2024 .		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 funding. A review of the proposal for 63-65 High Street has been made to bring the overall project within budget. The funding from Liverpool City Region CA for the RSQ Enterprise facility is still unsecured, discussions are ongoing. Vacant possession of a shop on the High Street was secured in January 2024.
To review all projects (program and budgets) to make key delivery decisions by September 2023 .		No change since Quarter 3 update.

Ref	Objective: To deliver Runcorn Station Quarter
EEP 04	Environment and Urban Renewal





Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
To provide a new station building by December 2025		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
EEP 05	Corporate Resources: To maximise and maintain external funding resources 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.



Milestone	Progress Q4	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 Directorate managers; meetings held with 3 Directorate ODs; a number of meetings held/planned with DMs
To ensure effective systems are in place and understood for the monitoring of the Town Deal		Monitoring systems well established; comprehensive Project Guide developed and distributed to project leads; bi-annual claim

programme to minimise the risk of clawback/non-compliance		being completed; DLUHC assurance documentation being completed and risk registers developed; regular meetings with Government rep. Currently further developing risk registers and project progress review systems. Also managing a Marketing and Comms commission for the Reconnecting Runcorn website.
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Ref	Objective
EEP 06	Corporate Resources: To provide a comprehensive and strategic asset management service 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.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Commence re tender process July 2023 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 30 April 2023 .		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 July 2023 for the contract to appoint property advisers to prepare asset valuations.		With support from colleagues in Procurement a direct award has been made under the Crown Civil Service framework to supplement the contract awarded for Estate Management Services. Contract awarded Feb 2024
By 30 June commence marketing of 'hand back' sites in Widnes for disposal.		Site investigation reports have been completed and the impact of information supplied by United Utilities on the easements across the plots is being assessed by the marketing agents. The easements adversely affect the developable areas and in turn the capital receipt and level of potential business rates. Further discussions are ongoing with United Utilities which will delay the marketing of the sites further into 2024/25

EEP 09	Corporate Priority: To design, manage and deliver a place-based business support programme for Halton
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Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Scheme in Place September 2023		Internal procurement delays slowed down the commissioning of the service but with one exception the service is fully up-and-running now.
Scheme finalised March 2025		Scheme is now starting to deliver priorities and will meet targets by the end of 2024 - 2025.

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

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
Funding Secured Q3 2023 / 2024		Discussions with the CA are ongoing in relation to Investment Zone funding however the earliest anticipated approval has now been pushed back to Q1 2024-25
Procurement Q4 2023 / 2024		A procurement exercise has been completed by the Joint Venture using the Procure Partnerships Framework.
Groundbreaking Q1 2024 2025		The start on site is likely to be delayed by the funding situation.

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
High Unemployment	2.7% of economically active people are unemployed (2021 Census)			HBC's contribution: HPIJ delivery of Welfare to Work & Health programmes (Ways to Work, Restart, Work & Health, Pioneer Programme and Supported Internships Programme)	Percentage unemployed (aged 16-64 years). Percentage of economically inactive of working age
Low wage residents	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.
Low-income households	Data??			HBC's contributions: HPIJ delivery of Welfare to Work & Health programmes (Ways to Work, Restart, Work & Health, Pioneer Programme and Supported Internships Programme). Better off calculations for HPIJ jobseekers. In work support to help low-income 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.
Good employment	Data not available from Census 21?	HPIJ unable to implement new		Employers signing up to the LCR Fair Employment Charter HBC's contribution:	Proportion of employed in permanent and non-

	Current Data from Adzuna – 26.93% in Permanent Employment, 9.68% in Contract Employment and 63.39% unspecified	employer engagement strategy due to staffing related issues highlighted above		Employer Engagement Strategy to be updated to recognise and celebrate 'good' employers in the borough.	permanent employment. Adzuna data??
(appropriate) External Funding Maximised	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.	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.
Climate change agenda and carbon emissions	CO2 emissions for 2022/23 amounted to 8740 tonnes.	Reduce emissions by 1%	Reduce emissions by 5%	Submit a funding bid and obtain funding to carry out decarbonisation works to various buildings. Continue to deliver the LED lighting replacement programme. Carry out further rationalisation of our property portfolio to reduce emissions. Help carry out education programme for officers and Members alike	Percentage reduction in CO2 emissions from Council activities. The emissions for 2022/23 were 6.29% lower than for the previous year.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES	BASELINE POSITION	OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 1	OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 3	INTERVENTIONS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>Low skills levels in LSOAs are not being addressed in line with need.</p>	<p>No. of unemployed of working age population compared to number of actual HBC Adult Learning enrolments (Top 5 LSOAs for unemployment)</p> <p>Central and West Bank – 145 claimants, only 56 enrolled (38%)</p> <p>Appleton and Halton View – 100 claimants, only 35 enrolled (35%)</p> <p>Grange – 95 claimants, only 17 enrolled (18%)</p> <p>Halton Lea – 90 claimants, only 30 enrolled (38%)</p>	<p>Central and West Bank - 43%</p> <p>Appleton and Halton View - 40%</p> <p>Grange –25%</p> <p>Halton Lea – 38%</p> <p>Q4 Update</p> <p>Central and West Bank 41.5%</p> <p>Appleton 38.6%</p> <p>Halton View 40.7%</p> <p>Grange 45%</p> <p>Halton Lea 46.1%</p>	<p>Central and West Bank – 48%</p> <p>Appleton and Halton View - 45%</p> <p>Grange – 35%</p> <p>Halton Lea – 43%</p>	<p>HBC's contribution:</p> <p>Targeted marketing of LSOAs – working with Customer Intelligence Team and use of Adzuna dashboard.</p> <p>Outreach and engagement schedule.</p>	<p>To increase the number of Adult Learning enrolments from residents aged 19+ living in Halton's LSOA areas</p>
<p>The number of HBC adult learning withdrawals has shown a year-on-year increase. Withdrawals adversely affect income levels.</p>	<p>14% overall withdrawals in the year 21/22</p>	<p>12%</p> <p>Q4 Update</p> <p>5% currently (academic year so far)</p>	<p>10%</p>	<p>HBC's contribution:</p> <p>Early intervention for learner issues. Implementation of 'Extensions in Learning' process. Reviewed onboarding process – distance learning.</p>	<p>To reduce the number of withdrawals in the Adult Learning Service</p>
<p>Halton adult Learner Voice does not consistently get used to promote the service</p>	<p>19 limited detail success stories provided in 21/22. Format does not</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Meaningful case studies</p> <p>Q4 Update</p> <p>9 total – 6 social media</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>Annual marketing strategy. Promotional videos of learning.</p>	<p>To increase the number of Adult Learning Case Studies produced each year</p>

	showcase effectively the impact of the service	celebrations and 3 Learner of the month celebrations with half of the academic year to go.			
A reduction of HBC AEB funding due to performance levels only achieving 98%	£14,197.92 (2% of overall budget)	0% Q4 Update Currently at 55.5% of total allocation with half of the academic year to go	0%	To increase enrolment numbers. To reduce withdrawals. To deliver more accredited provision.	To reduce our Adult Education Budget threshold level, year on year
Marketing and promotion of the Adult Learning Service is inconsistent	10 Marketing events attended in 21/22	38 Q4 Update 15 attended (10 in target wards) with half of the academic year to go	38	Attendance at partner events Increased social media presence and followers. Increase to at least one marketing activity per week during term time.	To deliver an annual programme of outreach and engagement adult learning activities
Targeted employer engagement activity to increase the number of opportunities made available to HPIJ customers accessing employment programmes	51 employer visits made by appointment 272 sales calls made to employers 35 speculative visits made to employers	200 2000 Q4 update Unable to provide accurate data for end of year 1 due to staffing related issue highlighted above	300 3000	Targeted employer visits Targeted sales calls made to employers	To review HPIJ Employer Engagement Strategy, implement improvements and increase the number of opportunities sourced by local employers for local residents
Increase the number of Economically Inactive customers that we engage with on programmes not just for unemployed people	12% of Ways to Work participants on programme were Economically Inactive	25% Q4 update Achieved 23% at end of years (of Ways to Work participants on programme were Economically Inactive)	75%	Attendance at Jobcentres on a weekly basis (engaging with Work Coaches that support Economically Inactive customers) Attendance at partner/community events Attendance at Jobs Fairs	'Economically inactive individuals are those not in work and not actively seeking work (unlike unemployed individuals who are actively seeking work). Not all economically inactive

(focused on Economically Inactive)				Increased social media presence and followers Community Engagement Plan and Outreach Based Approach	individuals claim benefits. For those that do, this would include those claiming either "legacy" benefits or those within specific conditionality regimes in Universal Credit: The former includes Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support (IS). The latter includes claimants within the Preparation Requirement or Work Focused Interview Requirement conditionality regimes.
Marketing and promotion of HPIJ services for programmes that allow self-referrals is inconsistent	Ad-hoc partnership working across the Borough Leaflets posters and and stands displayed across community venues for some programmes but not all	48 Q4 update Minimum of 50 activities took place across the HPIJ team	48	Attendance at Jobcentres on a weekly basis Attendance at partner/community events Attendance at Jobs Fairs Increased social media presence and followers Increase to at least four marketing activities per month	To deliver an annual programme of outreach and engagement activities to market and promote HPIJ programmes that local residents can self-refer to
Place Based Business Support Programme Delivered Targeted flexible place-based business support for existing businesses	Lead Officer nominated. Specialist advice commissioned in order to support businesses	9	58	Diagnostic sessions performed by trained staff and appropriate support sources for the business. Specific support can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy • Corporate Marketing • Procurement • Finance 	Diagnostic approved by CA April 2024. Business Start Website agreed March 2024.

<p>with growth ambitions and employment potential which provide equitable access across the city region. To include all businesses including social enterprises</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to funding • Business Start • Digital Marketing 	
<p>To provide support to Start-ups, with a focus on enterprise ready entrepreneurs (within 3 months of establishing a business) and a focus on founders who are looking to employ people within 24 months, export and/or generate high turnover growth. To include all businesses including social enterprises.</p>	<p>This service is currently not delivered by Halton BC</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>Business Starts being delivered in all sectors (non-specialised)</p>	<p>TBA by CA</p>
<p>Programmes Office fully resourced</p>	<p>Programmes Office established Oct 1st, 2022.</p> <p>Two positions remain unfilled.</p>	<p>Team fully recruited and operational.</p> <p>Programmes Office systems fully embedded in EEP Dept.</p>	<p>Programmes Office systems fully established across the Council.</p>	<p>Full team recruited.</p> <p>Roles and Responsibilities fully understood by Dept.</p> <p>New systems established – see strategic issue above.</p>	<p>to establish the Programmes Office Team, ensuring the full team is in place and competent, with clear roles and responsibilities.</p>

<p>Externally Funded schemes effectively monitored</p>	<p>Programmes Office established as monitors of the Town Deal programme.</p>	<p>Two claims successfully submitted and annual draw down received.</p> <p>GFAs issued to relevant projects.</p> <p>Roles and Responsibilities clearly allocated and understood.</p>	<p>Six claims successfully submitted and annual drawdowns received.</p> <p>No clawback/issues.</p> <p>Audit issues successfully dealt with.</p>	<p>Regular Town Deal catch ups with relevant staff.</p> <p>Roles allocated and understood within Programmes Office.</p> <p>Systems established to successfully record and complete claims.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Reduction in Market occupancy levels</p>	<p>Market Hall 92% occupied at 31st Dec 2022</p>	<p>Maintain occupancy at 92%</p>	<p>Increase occupancy to 95%</p>	<p>Continue to promote the Market as a positive location to trade from.</p> <p>Maintain competitive rental rates compared to other town centre rental costs</p>	<p>The Market Hall occupancy is at 87.6% as of 31st March 2024. The slight reduction is down to the continued difficult trading conditions. There have been a number of recent enquiries, so we are anticipating this figure increasing in due course.</p>
<p>Reducing Ex-Trader Market Debt.</p>	<p>£29,833.69 as at 13th March 2023</p>	<p>Reduce debt by 5%</p>	<p>Reduce debt by 15%</p>	<p>Continue to work with the finance recovery team to put payment plans in place.</p> <p>Continue to actively manage existing traders' debt so they are not in debt if they decide to leave the Market.</p>	<p>Percentage of Ex-Trader debt outstanding. The figure at year end has increased slightly to £30,971, this is as a result of a couple of traders leaving within the year with some outstanding debt.</p>
<p>Level of satisfaction with repair & maintenance service delivered via the FM team</p>	<p>75% of surveys returned were rated as either good or excellent</p>	<p>80% Of surveys returned rated as either good or excellent</p>	<p>85% Of surveys returned rated as either good or excellent</p>	<p>Issue questionnaires to building managers in order to rate the level of service provided.</p> <p>Continue to deliver a repairs and maintenance service in a timely manner, with quality contractors.</p>	<p>Percentage of surveys returned in 2023/24 where the service was rated as either good or excellent was in excess of the 85% target figure.</p>


				Continue with the procurement of contractors, when necessary, based on best value principles.	
Continued Successful Delivery of Capital schemes if workload increases due to accelerated regeneration	3 Projects Managers currently in post managing external consultants to help deliver various schemes	90% of schemes delivered within the contractual completion date and within the contract sum.	95% of schemes delivered within the contractual completion date and within the contract sum.	Additional Lead Officer post created with Lead Officer now appointed. Currently 2 vacant project manager posts however, with 1 agency surveyor covering in the interim. Increased use of consultants to help deliver various schemes	Monitoring successful delivery of individual projects within work programme. Over 90% of projects completed were delivered on time and within the contract sum.

Policy, Planning and Transportation


Ref	Objective
PPT 01	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.

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
To deliver the 2019/30 LTP Capital Programme March 2023.		



Ref	Objective
PPT 02	Highway programmed maintenance.

Milestone	Progress Q4	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.		Footway resurfacing work completed, Dans Road, South Lane, Picow Street, Castlefields Avenue east, Prescott Road, Sea Lane, Ridgeway, Poplar Close Lapwing Grove, Derby Road, Stonebarn Lane.









Ref	Objective
PPT 03	Highway Routine and reactive maintenance

Milestone	Progress Q4	Supporting Commentary
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 4 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).


Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022 / 23	Target 2023 / 24	Quarter 4 Position	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
PPT LI 06		No. of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	28.8	N/A	26		 Continued 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	3.2		 Child KSI numbers continue to fall. Historically very low
PPT LI 08		No. of people slightly injured in road traffic collisions. (5 Year Av.)	219	N/A	161		 Rolling average for slight casualties show a significant drop.
PPT LI 09		No. of people slightly injured in road traffic collisions.	157	N/A	150		 Rolling average for slight casualties show a significant drop.


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 Q4	Supporting Commentary
Manage greenspace areas as per the agreed specification - March 2023.		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 Q4	Supporting Commentary
Continue to deliver communications and awareness raising initiatives to ensure that participation with the Council's recycling services is maximised and that residents comply with the requirements of the Council's Household Waste Collection Policy - March 2024.		Activities to meet this objective have remained on-going. This includes the production and delivery of a booklet to Halton households providing information and advice on how to 'recycle right' by setting out the details of the materials that residents can recycle at home in their blue bin or box.

Appendix 2: Progress Against Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Quarter 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
CE LI 12	Residual household waste per household.	625kg	625kg	591kg			This is an estimated figure but it does show that household waste levels are lower than those in Q4 in the previous year.
CE LI 13	Household waste recycled and composted.	39.3%	40%	37%			This is an estimated figure but it does show that recycling levels are slightly higher than in Q4 in the previous year, but the annual target will not be met.

7.0 Financial Statements

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget at 31 March 2024

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employee Related Expenditure	5,611	5,453	158
Repairs & Maintenance	2,034	2,149	(115)
Premises	161	158	3
Energy & Water Costs	1,781	1,560	221
NNDR	738	635	103
Rents	195	297	(102)
Economic Regeneration Activities	19	15	4
Security	551	625	(74)
Supplies & Services	445	429	16
Supplies & Services - Grant	597	597	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	168	168	0
Capital Finance	60	60	0
Transfer to Reserves	592	592	0
Total Expenditure	12,952	12,738	214
Income			
Fees & Charges Income	-1,146	-1,210	64
Rent - Commercial Properties	-878	-847	(31)
Rent - Investment Properties	-44	-39	(5)
Rent - Markets	-831	-802	(29)
Government Grant	-1,260	-1,260	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-718	-718	0
Schools SLA Income	-299	-264	(35)
Recharges to Capital	-305	-324	19
Transfer from Reserves	-1,566	-1,566	0
Total Income	-7,047	-7,030	(17)
Net Operational Expenditure	5,905	5,708	197
Recharges			
Premises Support	2,006	2,006	0
Transport Support	23	25	(2)
Central Support	1,710	1,711	(1)
Asset Rental Support	1,266	1,266	0
Recharge Income	-7,728	-7,728	0
Net Total Recharges	-2,723	-2,720	(3)
Net Departmental Expenditure	3,182	2,988	194

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's outturn has reduced from a projected £0.397m under budget at Quarter 3 to £0.194m under budget at financial year end. There are two reasons for this.

A rent review was carried out for Rutland House. As the rent review was later than the time frame specified in the lease agreement, the review was backdated to 2017 which incurred a cost £102k which was not projected in quarter 3.

The final quarter of the year witnessed an increase in the repairs and maintenance programme.

Supporting Information

The Department consists of 154fte of which 66fte are core funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.134m, 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. Various projects have been identified and staff time has been charged accordingly. The Department has also delayed the recruitment of vacancies to help achieve a balanced budget. As a result, the employee expenses this year is £0.158m under budget at financial year-end.

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, the final quarter of the year has seen an increase in urgent repairs and maintenance, as a result the budget is £0.115m over budget. There is a risk that this budget will remain volatile in financial year 24/25 and will need to be reviewed on a regular basis.

The energy costs budget increased significantly in 2023/24, as costs have not risen as much as expected the department is £0.221m under budget. It is worth mentioning that costs are still £0.501m higher than 2022/23, which is an increase of nearly 50%.

This financial year has witnessed an increase in 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 and fourth 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 rent reviews and licence fees. There is also a focus within the team to fill the vacant properties within the portfolio. The budget reveals that the income target for commercial properties was not achieved by £0.031m. Although this is offset by the reduction in vacant properties reducing the level of business rates payable by the Council.

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%. We have seen a uplift of rental income in the final quarter of year. This could be due to the promotion of the service. The School Cleaning Service Level Agreement (SLA) is not covering its costs this year due to the need to employ agency staff to cover sickness and leave and the pay award. The demand for the service is also decreasing as schools move to Academies. A review of the service provided is currently being conducted.

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 of 31 March 24

Project Title	2023/24 (Outturn)		
	2023/24 Capital Allocation	Actual	Total Allocation Remaining
	£'000	£'000	£'000
3MG	24	16	8
Murdishaw	30	8	22
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	32	32	0
Equality Act Improvement Works	289	289	0
Property Improvements	269	269	0
Waterloo Building Runcorn	109	109	0
Woodend Unit 10 Catalyst Industrial Estate	204	204	0
Police Station Demolition	406	406	0
Foundry Lane Residential Area	2,471	1,310	1,161
Runcorn Station Building Development	80	30	50
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	82	30	52
Runcorn Waterfront Residential	291	22	269
Changing Places	212	188	24
Runcorn Town Deal	2,303	1,829	474
Totals	6,802	4,742	2,060

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.

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.

Kingsway Learning Centre - The works to upgrade the public address system are now complete.

Equality Act Improvement Works - All works included in the programme for 2023/24 have been completed.

Property Improvements - All works included in the programme for 2023/24 have been completed.

Waterloo Building, Runcorn -The demolition works are complete, there will be some retention monies due for payment next year circa £3k.

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.

Woodend Unit 10 - The works are complete, and the tenants have moved in however the new gas connection is still outstanding and is due to be completed soon. This is not affecting the office space as the gas heating is just to the main warehouse area.

Police Station demolition - The demolition works were completed some time ago. The overage payment has now been made.

Foundry Lane – Foundry Lane is moving to a crucial stage with reserved matters to enable the beginning of construction on the site. Planning permission has been approved to allow the construction company to start on site in the near future.

Changing Places - The works are complete, the final facility at Victoria Park has yet to be registered, this will be due very soon.

Runcorn Town Deal - Work continues to develop and deliver all Runcorn Town Deal projects by March 2026.

Runcorn Station Development





A Cost Estimate Summary Report was produced by Network Rail providing two options as a way forward, Option 1 a full scope of works (costing £1.5m for GRIP 3 validation and surveys and GRIP 4 outline design, approvals and close down), option 2 a phased approach (costing £480k, which is the total amount of development funding that we have available)

It was decided to progress with the full scope of works so not to delay the programme further and potential for increased costs between stages

A meeting with the LCR CA Capital Development Team took place to review Gateway 3 criteria to allow the project to access capital funding earlier in order to commit to full scope of works for outline design stage. Gateway criteria evidence has been submitted to LCR CA for review.

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		
EP1	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.
			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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.
Total Economy, Enterprise & Property Department				307	152	0		

COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE
Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employees	16,785	16,064	721
Premises	3,913	3,321	592
Supplies & Services	1,446	1,740	(294)
Hired & Contracted Services	963	1,121	(158)
Book Fund	140	140	0
Food Provisions	371	353	18
School Meals Food	1,965	2,221	(256)
Transport	117	123	(6)
Waste Disposal Contracts	6,885	5,623	1,262
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	170	142	28
Grant to Norton Priors	174	174	0
Other Agency Costs	498	477	21
Other Expenditure	61	79	(18)
Transfers to Reserves	459	459	0
Total Expenditure	33,947	32,037	1,910
Income			
Sales Income	-1,305	-1,244	(61)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,099	-5,248	149
Rental Income	-213	-236	23
Government Grant Income	-1,132	-1,135	3
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-876	-912	36
School SLA Income	-2,061	-2,081	20
School Meals Income	-3,576	-3,427	(149)
Internal Fees Income	-418	-406	(12)
Capital Salaries	-166	-96	(70)
Transfers from Reserves	-78	-78	0
Total Income	-14,924	-14,863	(61)
Net Operational Expenditure	19,023	17,174	1,849
Recharges			
Premises Support	1,825	1,825	0
Transport	2,046	2,087	(41)
Central Support	3,856	3,856	0
Asset Rental Support	3,006	3,006	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-540	-540	0
Net Total Recharges	10,193	10,234	(41)
Net Departmental Expenditure	29,216	27,408	1,808

Comments on the above figures

The net departmental expenditure is £1.808m under budget at the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

Spend on employees is £0.721m under the annual budget. Management-level restructures have taken place across the Department during the year, with further a further restructure taking place within the Community Safety Division, and another underway within the Stadium and Catering Division. In order to facilitate these restructures, posts have been held vacant on a temporary basis, leading to a reduction in costs. There have also been difficulties recruiting to certain roles due to a lack of qualified applicants, which has led to some posts being vacant for longer than planned.

Spend on premises costs is £592k under budget in 2023/24. The Department was provided with an increase of £1.2m in utility budgets for 2023/24, based on an estimated increase in energy bills, however, the actual increase in costs was not as high as anticipated. Additionally, £0.126m of credits for prior-year gas costs were received by the Department following a reconciliation of energy bills which has increased the level of the underspend significantly. This underspend is unlikely to occur in future years as utility budgets have been reduced for 2024/25.

Both Supplies & Services, and Hired & Contracted Services budgets show a significant overspend in 2023/24. This is a budget pressure throughout the Department and is primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years. Software and other essential licence costs now far exceed the budget available, with an overspend of £0.062m occurring in 2023/24. Difficulties in recruiting to some technical roles within the Brindley Theatre have necessitated a large increase in consultancy costs, with spend exceeding £0.074m, although this needs to be considered alongside an underspend on contracted staff.

School Meals food costs have been severely impacted by the high rate of inflation on food ideas during the last 12 months. Expenditure increased by 10% from 2022/23 despite a decrease in the number of schools which contract with the service.

Waste Disposal Contract costs are £1.262m under budget during 2023/24. £0.996m of this underspend relates to a refund received following Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority carrying out a reconciliation of the total contract costs for prior years across the Liverpool City Region. The percentage of contract costs charged to Halton has reduced in recent years, meaning that it is likely that this refund is a one-off occurrence. The remaining £0.266m of the underspend relates to 2023/24. Although costs did increase slightly from 2022/23, this increase was smaller than anticipated given current high levels of inflation.

Sales Income is £0.061m below the income target in 2023/24, primarily due to a shortfall in catering and bar sales at the Stadium. School Meals Income is also significantly under the budget target. 2024/25 is the final year of operation for the School Meals service, so this will cease to be a budget pressure in the medium- and long-term.

Fees and Charges income is £0.149m above the target budget in 2023/24. There were significant increases in the income generated by the Leisure Centres as the service continued to recover from the impacts of Covid-19. In addition to this, management have introduced new recruitment initiatives over the last 12 months which has led to an increase in the number of swimming instructors, allowing more income to be generated. Income at the Brindley also increased during the last financial year, with the theatre once again managing to cover its operating costs.

There was a shortfall of Capital Salary income in year, primarily due to difficulties recruiting to Landscape Architect roles. It is anticipated that income will increase in 2024/25 after a successful round of recruitment towards the end of 2023/24.

Inflationary increases in fuel and repair costs have resulted in an overspend of £0.041m on Transport Recharge budgets.

Capital Projects as at 31 March 2024

Project Title	2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000	Actual £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Minor Works	34	31	3
Open Spaces Schemes	850	314	536
Children's Playground Equipment	107	107	0
Upton Improvements	13	0	0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12	1	11
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	0	340
Town Park	284	125	159
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,023	54	969
Pickerings Pasture Café	520	17	503
Litter Bins	20	20	0
Halton Leisure Centre	15,057	17,260	(2,203)
Brookvale Recreation Centre Pitch	28	13	15
TOTAL	18,288	17,942	346

Comments on the above figures

Stadium Minor Works

A stage, lighting equipment, and crowd barriers have been purchased in year, allowing additional events to be held at the Stadium.

Open Spaces Schemes

This covers a variety of smaller schemes which are all fully-funded from external sources. In 2023/24, projects included work on the Sankey Canal, improvements at Birchfield Gardens, and work on the dog exercise area at Hale Park.

Children's Playground Equipment

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

Town Park

The scheme includes the renewal of footpaths and landscape improvements within Town Park. The next phase of work is due to continue during 2024/25.

Spike Island / Wigg Island

Consultants have now been appointed and the scheme is underway.

Pickerings Pasture Café

Site investigation works are currently ongoing to inform the foundation design.

Halton Leisure Centre

Work on the new leisure centre has progressed well. The contractor is slightly ahead of schedule, which has caused the payments made in 2023/24 to exceed the original allocation, and it is anticipated that the building will be handed over to the Council in the final quarter of 2024/25. The additional expenditure in 2023/24 will be funded by a reduction in the anticipated expenditure during the next financial year.

Brookvale Recreation Centre Pitch

Work on the pitch is complete and the retention payment was made in 2023/24.

PLANNING, PROVISION & TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget as at 31 March 24

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employees	4,957	4,986	(29)
Efficiency Savings	-100	-100	0
Premises	211	145	66
Hired & Contracted Services	356	605	(249)
Supplies & Services	225	327	(102)
Other Expenditure	0	0	0
Street Lighting	2,025	1,685	340
Highways Maintenance - Routine & Reactive	1,699	1,595	104
Highways Maintenance - Programmed Works	565	568	(3)
Fleet Transport	1,410	1,475	(65)
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	52	14	38
Bus Support	458	458	0
Capital Financing	0	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	31	30	1
NRA Levy	73	71	2
LCR Levy	1,059	1,059	0
Contribution to Reserves	1,427	1,427	0
Contribution to Reserves	14,448	14,345	103
Income			
Sales & Rents Income	-101	-67	(34)
Planning Fees	-738	-470	(268)
Building Control Fees	-242	-183	(59)
Other Fees & Charges	-916	-1,065	149
Grants & Reimbursements	-562	-525	(37)
Government Grant Income	-262	-262	0
Halton Hopper Income	-54	-23	(31)
Recharge to Capital	-280	-113	(167)
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-1,059	-1,059	0
Contribution from Reserves	-531	-531	0
Efficiency Savings	0	0	0
Total Income	-4,745	-4,298	(447)
Net Operational Expenditure	9,703	10,047	(344)
Recharges			
Premises Support	509	509	0
Transport	591	668	(77)
Central Support	1,432	1,432	0
Asset Rental Support	10,157	10,157	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-885	-885	0
Transport Recharge Income	-3,764	-4,222	458
Net Total Recharges	8,040	7,659	381
Net Departmental Expenditure	17,743	17,706	37

Comments on the above figures

Department net spend came in at £0.037m under budget at the end of the 23/24 financial year. Budget holders have worked closely with the Finance Officer to ensure a balanced budget is achieved. Wherever possible capital expenditure has been prioritised in order to relieve pressure on the revenue budgets.

Employee expenditure was over budget at year end because of an increase in the number of agency staff due to the amount of vacancies within the area. The 2023/24 pay award has been included in the employee figures. Casual staff utilised within the client transport team has also increased but this has been offset by an overachievement of recharge income further down the report.

Supplies and services and also contracted services are over budget as in previous years due to survey costs and plans that have been required in the Planning division. Halton also has a contract with MEAS (Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service) which is hosted by Sefton LA. This is used to provide Halton with advice in relation to ecology, waste, environmental impact assessments and local plans. To have this advice internally would cost Halton more than the contract, but at the moment, it is significantly over the allocated budget. Street lighting expenditure has come in under budget despite an increase in costs over the last few financial years. In order to help reduce running costs, lights are being turned off 12am – 6am on some routes. There remains a capital street lighting upgrade programme in place with the intention the remaining upgrades will be taking place soon. Due to all of the above expenditure has managed to come in within budget and will be closely monitored going forwards into the new financial year.

Highways maintenance budgets have come in under target which is in part due to utilising capital funding wherever appropriate. The report is broken down into routine and reactive schemes and also programmed works so that the two areas can be looked at in more detail. Programmed works came in slightly over budget but has been offset by routine and reactive.

Fleet transport has come in over budget which in turn has an impact on the costs recharged out to other areas of the authority. It is still worth noting that the Council has seen a large continued increase in costs for fuel and parts, also the time it takes from placing an order and receiving the goods has grown.

Sales and rent income has come in under target due to an underachievement of mot testing and taxi testing income. As previously reported Covid-19 is still playing a part in income generation at Lowerhouse Lane Depot due to DfT suspending MOT requirements for 6 months during the lockdown periods. Due to a lack of staff the depot was unable to meet the demand for vehicle tests and therefore customers went to other garages and haven't returned.

Planning income came in lower than anticipated. This is due to a number of factors, the planning income target was increased in order to fund additional staff who would process pre-application and planning performance agreements. To date the department has not managed to successfully recruit to these posts and therefore have been unable to realise the income target. In addition to this, the number of major applications that the LA has seen in previous years have not been replicated in this financial year. Building control income has also seen a reduction in applications in this financial year, which has then had an effect on the amount of income generated.

Other fees and charges has come in over target due to an increase in the number of permits. An agency worker is employed who has been throughout the Borough and issued fines for breaches of permit conditions which also generated additional income.

The recharge of salaries to capital schemes again did not achieve its income target this financial year 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. In the 24/25 budget this income target has been reduced.

Transport income recharges are overachieved but these are offset by overspends in the other departments as mentioned above in fleet transport costs. An increase in income has meant that these areas have had increased costs for the maintenance of vehicles.

Capital Projects as at 31 March 2024

Project Title	2023/24 Capital Allocation £'000	Actual £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Local Transport Plan			
Total Bridge & Highway Maintenance	3,133	1,406	1,727
Integrated Transport	549	12	537
CRSTS	7,140	2,983	4,157
Runcorn Busway	239	556	(317)
East Runcorn Connectivity (ERC)	1,577	2,238	(661)
A56 Reconstruction (Delph Lane)	947	3	944
Dukesfield ATL (Waterloo Bridge)	0	1,518	(1,518)
LCWIP Phase 2 Daresbury	5,783	1,921	3,862
ATF3 Murdishaw to Whitehouse	3,000	611	2,389
ATF4 Widnes Town Centre Accessibility	122	1	121
Total Local Transport Plan	22,490	11,249	11,241
Halton Borough Council Schemes			
Street Lighting	50	100	(50)
Lighting Upgrades	300	423	(123)
Risk Management	100	58	42
Fleet Vehicles	2,500	1,430	1,070
SUD Green Cycle	0	2	(2)
Widnes Loops	0	91	(91)
Total Halton Borough Council Schemes	2,950	2,104	846
Totals	25,440	13,353	12,087

Comments on the above figures

CRSTS (City Region Sustainable Travel Settlement) replaced 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 was low in Q1 and Q2 with a pickup across Q3 and Q4. However, due to a large increase in allocation between 22/23 and current 23/24 financial year there is a significant underspend. Runcorn Busway has now almost finished, the grant is fully spent and the department is anticipating the gap to be funded via LCR but confirmation is pending.

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, shareholders and the public which took place back in October 23. There is an agreement in place between LCR and Halton that further funding of £1.1m over and above the initial grant allocation will be awarded and the department is currently waiting for the GFA to be signed off. Therefore the current overspend will be offset by additional funding as and when it is agreed.

The A56 project is in support of the new junction completion for the Redrow development which overlaps with the ERC scheme mentioned above. Further progress is expected to be made in late summer.

Dukesfield ATL (Waterloo Bridge) came in over budget, however, it has been agreed with Liverpool City Region (LCR) that they will fund £1.2m and the difference of £318k can be offset with the CRSTS underspend. The department is waiting to hear how this will be processed.

LCWIP Phase 2 (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) Runcorn to Daresbury is currently underway on Long Benton Way. A change request was submitted to LCR as reported in Q3 due to the expenditure not being expected to reach £5.7m, but a response has not yet been received.




Street lighting and lighting upgrades expenditure is over budget but the difference will be funded from a reduction in allocation in 24/25 so will be offset.

Liverpool City Region is yet to confirm funding for a number




8.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
Green 	Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the annual target <u>is on course to be achieved</u>.</i>
Amber 	Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the annual target is on course to be achieved</i>
Red 	Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain</u> that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the target <u>will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</i>

Direction of Travel Indicator

Green 	Indicates that performance <i>is better</i> as compared to the same period last year.
Amber 	Indicates that performance <i>is the same</i> as compared to the same period last year.
Red 	Indicates that performance <i>is worse</i> 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.