

Employment, Learning, Skills and Community PPB – Priority Based Monitoring Report Q2

Reporting Period: 1st July to 30th September

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the second quarter of 2024 / 25 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 2024 - 25 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 5 of this report.

1.4 Corporate Priorities



Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029
Our Community, Our Priorities, Our Future

Plan on a Page



2.0 High Priority Equality Actions

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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>



3.0 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



Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need. Employment, Learning & Skills
ERD 9	To promote access to learning to those who need it most and create employment opportunities for Halton residents

Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Deliver six accredited ESOL and two Pre-ESOL courses across Widnes and Runcorn to help our BAME residents improve their English skills between 1 st August 2024 and 31 st July 2025		Three ESOL accredited courses and one pre-ESOL course launched in September 2024. Recruitment of an additional ESOL tutor is ongoing – previous attempts to recruit have been unsuccessful.
Utilise a budget of £11,300 LCR Devolved ESFA Hardship Funding for adult learners between 1 st August 2024 and 31 st July 2025		£1050 across August and September was used to support learners with provision of Warm Hub, Travel, Study Supplies (Stationery,

		Reuseable Water bottles) and Childcare. The remaining budget of £10249 continues for the remainder of the 24/25 academic year.
Commence learning programme for those aged 19+ by 1 st August 2024		Adult Learning academic year 2024/25 delivery commenced on 4 th September 2024. Over 250 enrolments recorded by the end of September, with further courses commencing in October and November.
Commence year 3 of the Supported Internship Programme by August 2024		Programme delivery began on 17 th September, with a range of pre-programme onboarding activities having taken place over the summer. There are 7 learners on programme.
Learners passing courses = 92% by July 2025		Adult Learning delivery commenced in September 2024. First set of achievement data to be captured after October half term and reported fully in Q3. Data this year is split into Adult Skills Fund (accredited) and Tailored Learning (non-accredited) - an average will be taken to report on KPI.
Number of learners successfully placed into Employment = 330 by July 2025		93 residents were supported into work through HPIJ employment programmes in Q2. There were more job starts, however we are awaiting evidence from employers for audit.
Percentage of people engaged in Learning from most deprived areas increased from 29% to 48% by July 2025		44.2% of Adult Learners enrolled onto Adult Learning programmes by end of Q2 are from Halton's target wards: Central and West Bank, Halton Lea, Appleton, Halton View and Grange. These wards were identified using LSOA data. Individual Ward Data (% of residents from each ward area) will be captured at the end of Autumn Term (Q3)

Corporate Priority	Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need. Employment, Learning & Skills
ERD 10	To promote access to learning to those who need it most and create employment opportunities for Halton residents


Milestone	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Deliver six accredited ESOL and two Pre-ESOL courses across Widnes and Runcorn to help our BAME residents improve their English skills between 1 st August 2024 and 31 st July 2025		Three ESOL accredited courses and one pre-ESOL course launched in September 2024. Recruitment of an additional ESOL tutor is ongoing – previous attempts to recruit have been unsuccessful.
Utilise a budget of £11,300 LCR Devolved ESFA Hardship Funding for adult learners between 1 st August 2024 and 31 st July 2025		£1050 across August and September was used to support learners with provision of Warm Hub, Travel, Study Supplies (Stationery, Reuseable Water bottles) and Childcare. The remaining budget of £10249 continues for the remainder of the 24/25 academic year.
Commence learning programme for those aged 19+ by 1 st August 2024		Adult Learning academic year 2024/25 delivery commenced on 4 th September 2024. Over 250 enrolments recorded by the end of September, with further courses commencing in October and November.
Commence year 3 of the Supported Internship Programme by August 2024		Programme delivery began on 17 th September, with a range of pre-programme onboarding activities having taken place over the summer. There are 8 learners on programme.
The % of residents accessing Halton Adult Learning courses and achieve will increase from 88% to 92% between 1 st August 2024 and July 2025.		Adult Learning delivery commenced in September 2024. First set of achievement data will be captured after October half term and reported fully in Q3.

		Data this year is split into Adult Skills Fund (accredited) and Tailored Learning (non-accredited) - an average will be taken to report on KPI.
The % of learners (average across all target wards) who are of unemployed working age residing in the LSOAs, and who access Halton Adult Learning will increase from 29% to 48% between 1 st August 2024 and end July 2025.		44.2% of Adult Learners enrolled on Adult Learning programmes at the end of Q2 are from Halton's target wards: Central and West Bank, Halton Lea, Appleton, Halton View and Grange. These wards were identified using LSOA data. Individual Ward Data (% of residents from each ward area) captured at the end of Autumn Term
330 residents who access HPIJ employment programmes to obtain employment between April 2024 – March 2025.		93 residents were supported into work through HPIJ employment programmes in Q2. There were more job starts, however we are awaiting evidence from employers for audit.




Library & Culture Services

Corporate Priority	Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy. Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families. Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need. Leisure Services
ERD 23	To provide a new leisure centre for Widnes




Milestone: One new leisure centre open	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
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Opening February 2025		<p>The construction programme remains on track. The service redesign has commenced. January 6th is the anticipated handover date. Onsite staff training will be required and the creation of documentation, such as, Safe Systems of Work, Risk Assessments require completion. Programme of use has been drafted. Social value report, updates and progress pictures</p> <p>https://activehalton.co.uk/new-leisure-centre/</p>
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Corporate Priority	<p>Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.</p> <p>Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy.</p> <p>Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families.</p> <p>Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need.</p> <p>Leisure Services</p>
ERD 24	Increase footfall at the Brindley

Milestone: Increase footfall at the Brindley	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Brindley - Total number of tickets sold.		53 (Both Theatre and Studio hires per day)
Brindley - Total number of days Hired days.		53 (Both Theatre and Studio hires per day)
Brindley - Total number of Council Promotions		11 (Both Theatre and Studio promotions per day)

Corporate Priority	<p>Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.</p> <p>Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy.</p> <p>Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families.</p> <p>Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need.</p> <p>Leisure Services</p>
ERD 25	Increase footfall at the Libraries

Milestone: Increase footfall at the Libraries	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
<p>Footfall for all libraries:</p> <p>Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library</p>		<p>Total footfall was 125,772. Footfall is on track to meet target, with significant increase in footfall from Q1 data, notably at Halton Lea with an increase of 14,677, resulting in a total libraries' footfall increase of over 25,000 from Q1.</p> <p>Ditton - 10,510</p> <p>Widnes - 38,991</p> <p>Runcorn - 25,102</p> <p>Halton Lea - 51,169</p>
Library Digital issues		<p>Total Digital Issues: 1,010,252 Compiled from: BorrowBox ebooks & eaudio issues, Ancestry, Picture Halton, Access to Research and Pressreader articles read. Increase on Q1 data (figure was 1,0009,991) as expected with trends of summer issues</p>
<p>Library Issues in branch:</p> <p>Ditton Library Widnes Library Runcorn Library Halton Lea Library</p>		<p>Total 54,236 Stats are up on previous quarter by over 5,000- on track to meet the target.</p> <p>Ditton - 4,775 Widnes - 22,145 Runcorn - 7,247 Halton Lea - 20,069</p>

Corporate Priority	<p>Priority One - Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence.</p> <p>Priority Two – Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy.</p> <p>Priority Three – Supporting Children, Young People and Families.</p> <p>Priority Four – Tackling Inequality and Helping those who are most in need.</p> <p>Community Centres</p>
ERD 26	Increase footfall at the Community Centres

Milestone: Monitor footfall, hires and events at Community Centres	Progress Q2	Supporting Commentary
Community Centres - Total number of users in attendance (including drop-ins, events and hires)		<p>Total for Q2 is 49,321: - Castlefields 9,813 Ditton 10,184 Grangeway 10,893 Murdishaw 9,813 Upton 8,618</p> <p>Based on the previous quarter, Murdishaw has increased its footfall in Q2, this is due to a new booking from the Growth Company for 2 full days per week and are hoping to increase this to a 5-day week booking. All other Centres remain consistent in their quarterly footfall.</p>
Community Centres - Total number of hires		<p>Total for Q2 is 1,918: - Castlefields 363 Ditton 387 Grangeway 358 Murdishaw 351 Upton 459</p> <p>All Centres are performing well with the bookings as expected. However, Q3 figures are expected to increase at Upton due to the outdoor activities moving indoors for the winter period to the Sports Hall.</p> <p>There is some capacity available in the afternoons across community centres the service is promoting via social media and word of mouth.</p>
Community Centres - Total number of Centre organised events		Each Centre held a Fun Day for Halton's 50 th Anniversary, Grangeway and Upton

	<p>are running their own bingo sessions for the community. Grangeway bingo session is well attended, the attendance is likely to improve at Upton bingo, as we have completed a leaflet drop in the area to assist with increasing the footfall. Overall, the Community Centres service directly delivered 39 events in the quarter.</p>
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4.0 Financial Statements

ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Operational Budget at 30 September 24

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	4,805	2,549	2,390	159	329
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	154	(154)	(320)
Agency - in addition to establishment	0		0	0	0
Repairs & Maintenance	1,706	917	967	(50)	(99)
Premises	136	119	119	0	0
Energy & Water Costs	1,247	471	417	54	107
NNDR	690	670	660	10	10
Rents	173	92	89	3	7
Economic Regeneration Activities	21	0	0	0	0
Security	544	251	278	(27)	(55)
Supplies & Services	555	194	186	8	17
Supplies & Services - Grant	1,931	367	367	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	59	59	59	0	0
Capital Finance	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	185	185	185	0	0
Total Expenditure	12,052	5,874	5,871	3	(4)
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-833	-396	-427	31	63
Rent - Commercial Properties	-872	-233	-223	(10)	(20)
Rent - Investment Properties	-38	-19	-19	0	0
Government Grant	-2,311	-1,041	-1,041	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-148	-76	-73	(3)	(6)
Schools SLA Income	-227	-201	-197	(4)	(8)
Recharges to Capital	-295	-198	-201	3	5
Transfer from Reserves	-1,120	-1,120	-1,120	0	0
Total Income	-5,844	-3,284	-3,301	17	34
Net Operational Expenditure	6,208	2,590	2,570	20	30
Recharges					
Premises Support	2,074	1,037	1,037	0	0
Transport	30	14	14	0	0
Central Support	1,947	973	973	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-7,927	-3,963	-3,963	0	0
Net Total Recharges	-3,872	-1,939	-1,939	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	2,336	651	631	20	30

Comments on the above figures

Finance communicates with the department on a regular basis to manage and analyse spending, identifying potential savings that could support current and future priorities.

In an era of constrained budgets, achieving these goals is essential. The above report indicates that the department net spend will be under budget by £0.030m at year-end, compared to the month 4 projection of £0.025m under budget.

Supporting Information

The department consists of 139fte, of which 69fte are externally funded, with a staff turnover savings target of £0.126m. The employee figures in this report incorporate the projected pay award for 24/25.

Through diligent account monitoring and the success of utilising grant and external funding to alleviate pressure on the core budget is evident in employee expenses. Specific projects have been identified, and staff time has been allocated accordingly. Always ensuring that the Council is compliant with the grant conditions. This approach will continue throughout the year.

To fulfil statutory and contractual obligations and support the borough's regeneration, maintaining a complete staff establishment is essential. However, the challenge of filling surveyor and project manager roles, even with a market supplement, has resulted in a lack of suitable candidates. Consequently, the engagement of agency personnel has been necessary, anticipated to cost £0.320m this financial year. Without these personnel, the borough's regeneration efforts would be hindered, potentially leading to a loss of business rates and council tax. Where possible, these costs are reimbursed through capital and external funding grants.

The recruitment of agency staff has increased commercial rental income by enabling the completion of pending rent reviews. All units at The Hive are now tenanted, although a rent-free period was provided to secure lease completions, resulting in a £0.019m shortfall.

A reconciliation of service charges at Rutland House and the relocation of Connect to Halton to the Municipal Building have increased the fees and charges income. As a result, the department is forecasting an overachievement against the income target of £0.063m by year-end.

Managers have asked to identify and implement measures to reduce unnecessary spending, whilst also ensuring the needs of the service are met leading to the department's projecting a positive variance amounting to £0.017m within supplies and services.

A recent exercise was conducted to determine the costs associated with empty properties within the Borough. Consequently, a new cost centre was established to monitor these expenses. In addition to the loss of rental income whilst the properties remain vacant, the Council also incurs costs for utilities, repairs, and maintenance. As of the end of September, the total cost related to these properties amounts to £0.182m. To reduce the expense, action needs to be taken to accelerate the leasing or explore temporary uses for properties, such as short-term rentals or community projects, which will generate some income and reduce costs.

The Department highlighted the necessity of expert advice to advance regeneration projects. Additionally, the change in Government highlighted the need for an up-to-date Housing Strategy for the Borough. Following a meeting with the Director of Economy, Enterprise, and Property, it was decided to use the Department's reserves to cover these one-off costs.

Seeking external advice will assist with future grant funding requests from the LCR and Government and enable the department to fulfil its obligations regarding the borough's regeneration strategy.

Although the Council has seen a significant increase in energy costs over the last few years, it is anticipated that costs this financial year will be £0.185m lower than in 2023/24, representing a decrease of over 14%. The department is forecasting that it will be £0.107m under budget by year-end. Since contract prices are fixed until March 2025, projections are based on 2023/24 usage, using the unit price quoted by the supplier. However, if usage increases as more staff return to the office, these prices may rise.

Due to a delay in securing a new security contract, the current provider has been granted a one-year extension. Based on spending over the last six months, spend is projected to exceed budget by £0.055m by the end of the year.

The Repairs and Maintenance program is under continuous review to ensure it stays within budget. This financial year is particularly challenging because the 2024/25 budget did not include an inflation

adjustment and was further reduced by 10%. An exercise was conducted with the service to distinguish between capital and revenue expenditures, and the budgets have been adjusted accordingly. Despite these adjustments, revenue expenditure is projected to exceed the budget by £0.098m by the end of the year.

Similar to previous years, the school cleaning service’s level agreement (SLA) is not meeting its financial targets due to the employment of agency for covering absences and leave, as well as the anticipated pay award. A reassessment of the SLA charges is in progress in preparation for the forthcoming budget year. Additionally, the demand for the service is declining as more schools transition to academy status.

Approved 2024/25 Savings

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

APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EEP4	Cleaning Services – Council Buildings	580	Review cleaning arrangements, with a focus on only emptying bins and cleaning toilets daily.	100	0	U	A review of the cleaning service is underway with some positions removed from the structure. The full savings will not be achieved until the accommodation review is complete.
EEP2	Caretaking & Security Services	641	A review and restructuring of caretaking arrangements.	52	0	U	The restructure can now take place following the retirement of a member of staff. The full saving will not be made until financial year 25/26.
Total Economy, Enterprise & Property Department				152	0		

Capital Budget at 30 September 24

Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation £000	2024/25 Revised Allocation £000	Q1 Spend £000	Q2 Spend £000	Q3 Spend £000	Q4 Spend £000	Total Spend £000	Allocation remaining £000
Environment & Regeneration Directorate								
Economy, Enterprise & Property								
3MG	134.5	134.5	0.0	0.0			0.0	134.5
Murdishaw redevelopment	21.2	21.2	5.4	0.0			5.4	15.8
Waterloo Building	0.0	75.0	46.0	66.0			112.0	-37.0
Equality Act Improvement Works	293.2	93.2	8.7	17.6			26.3	66.9
Foundary Lane Residential Area	1,160.0	1,160.0	1.8	464.8			466.6	693.4
Property Improvements	360.2	460.5	4.3	131.1			135.4	325.1
Town Deal	11,352.9	11,552.9	174.9	261.8			436.7	11,116.2
Runcorn Station Quarter	484.7	484.7	0.0	60.5			60.5	424.2
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	178.2	178.2	0.0	0.0			0.0	178.2
Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development	484.7	268.7	8.6	122.9			131.5	137.2
Changing Places	24.1	24.1	2.5	0.1			2.6	21.5
Sci-tech Daresbury Project Violet	2,200.0	2,200.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	2,200.0
Port of Weston	0.0	3,960.0	0.0	1.3			1.3	3,958.7
Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition	0.0	750.0	0.0	30.7			30.7	719.3
Total EEP	16,693.7	21,363.0	252.2	1,156.8	0.0	0.0	1,409.0	19,954.0

Comments on above figures

3MG

3MG is in its final stages for development with HBC Field being finalised this year and developments for Liberty Park and the Mound not presently forthcoming. No significant levels of expenditure this quarter.

Foundry Lane

Resolving some of the site and financial issues remains the main focus of the work of this project in the quarter resulting in minimal expenditure with a view to being back on track in the next quarter.

Murdishaw

The allocation has been brought forward to continue work to improve the amenity at Murdishaw Community Centre as part of the wider community project. Work has been completed to provide allotment space and further work is due to be undertaken to provide secure and accessible spaces, enhancing the allotment offer. It is intended to allocate and spend the remaining balance within the financial year.

The improvements are part of the wider Murdishaw community regeneration scheme which has supported the delivery of the Tea Tree community café, improvements to bungalows on the estate and environmental improvements.

Sci-Tech Daresbury Project Violet

Project Violet is currently being reviewed and a full business case is in development. As a result of increased costs, the development appraisal is being reviewed and the funding requirements being reviewed. The programme anticipates a procurement exercise in the next quarter and the revised delivery programme proposes a 26 month build with construction commencing in August 2025 and completion in Q4 2026.

Waterloo Building All works complete, site now sold, retention monies left to pay in March 2025 circa £2.5k

Equality Improvement Works All budget will be spent by year end, £0.200m allocated to The Brindley.

Property Improvement The budget has been adjusted to accommodate two new unforeseen projects: replacing the platform lift at Kids Planet and fully refurbishing the public lift at Halton Lea.

Changing Places

Works all complete, Grant money fully spent, some retention monies left to pay circa £5k.

Runcorn Station Quarter

The Runcorn Station Development Project will formally be passed over to the CA Rail team as a Merseytravel project from 30th September.

A final invoice is estimated to be submitted during quarter 3 2024 period for Network Rail Project Management fees.

This is estimated to be no more than £10k. Once this has been paid and claimed, the CA Investment Team will formally end Halton's GFA. Halton's role will continue as strategic partner and actively be involved in the design process.

Town Deal

Although at different stages work is progressing with all Town Deal funded projects. The Brindley started on site mid-August and the next phase of the Creative and Digital Skill centre started on site in September. The Health Hub design work is completed, and the next stage is to tender the work. Design work progresses on the remaining projects.

Runcorn Waterfront Residential Development

A contractor for the demolition works was appointed in March 2024, with Planning Consent gained in May 2024. Following a period of services disconnections and liaison with Halton Housing (who is adjoining building Church Mansions is connected to Churchill Hall), the demolition works commenced in mid-July 2024. The main demolition works are now completed, with practical completion anticipated in mid-Oct 2024. This will bring to a close the Council capital element of the project. The Council continues to work on developing residential proposals for the site in partnership with Halton Housing, community consultation is anticipated in Winter 2024.

Kingsway Leisure Centre Demolition

Preliminary work is underway, with a submission of an application for demolition works to the Local Planning Authority and the procurement of the demolition contractor both anticipated to commence in Autumn 2024. The demolition works are on track to commence in Spring 2025, following relocation of the Leisure Centre and period of decommissioning of the building.

Port of Weston

An outline business case has been developed and finalised which demonstrates the viability of the Port of Weston as a business location with a mixture of uses including high-barn warehousing and a business park.

Within the quarter a full business case was commissioned with a view to carrying out a green book assessment to secure the funding for site purchase and development.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Work has commenced at The Brindley. The allocation for the education room will be reflected in the forecast. The allocations for the High Street solar panels and Church Street works are projected for the end of the financial year.

COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	17,358	8,358	7,845	513	1,024
Agency - covering vacancies	0	0	124	(124)	(249)
Agency - in addition to establishment	0	0	134	(134)	(268)
Premises	3,521	1,609	1,644	(35)	(60)
Supplies & Services	2,108	987	1,032	(45)	(90)
Hired & Contracted Services	510	418	418	0	0
Book Fund	128	80	80	0	0
Food Provision	388	213	195	18	37
School Meals Food	1,960	693	716	(23)	(45)
Transport	117	14	18	(4)	(9)
Other Agency Costs	441	247	247	0	0
Other Expenditure	0	0	58	(58)	(60)
Waste Disposal Contracts	7,002	1,598	1,470	128	255
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	64	32	18	14	29
Grant to Norton Priory	172	87	87	0	0
Transfers to Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	33,769	14,336	14,086	250	564
Income					
Sales Income	-1,373	-755	-734	(21)	(44)
Fees & Charges Income	-5,470	-3,091	-3,129	38	83
Rental Income	-235	-108	-123	15	30
Markets Income	-910	-462	-437	(25)	(50)
Government Grant Income	-1,165	-1,165	-1,165	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-703	-323	-323	0	0
School SLA Income	-1,313	-404	-404	0	0
School Meals Income	-3,598	-1,383	-1,283	(100)	(200)
Internal Fees Income	-286	-29	-59	30	60
Capital Salaries	-173	-43	-33	(10)	(20)
Transfers from Reserves	-15	-15	-15	0	0
Total Income	-15,241	-7,778	-7,705	(73)	(141)
Net Operational Expenditure	18,528	6,558	6,381	177	423
Recharges					
Premises Support	1,675	837	837	0	0
Transport	2,257	1,097	1,111	(14)	(28)
Central Support	3,897	1,949	1,949	0	0
Asset Rental Support	199	0	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-1,148	-574	-574	0	0
Net Total Recharges	6,880	3,309	3,323	(14)	(28)
Net Departmental Expenditure	25,408	9,867	9,704	163	395

Comments on the above figures

The net Departmental Expenditure is estimated to be £0.395m under the approved budget at the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

The largest contributor to the underspend is in relation to spend on Employees, this is currently forecast to be £1.024m under the approved budget profile by the end of the financial year. There are several restructures taking place across the Department, in order to facilitate these, a number of vacancies arising are being held vacant for the current financial year until the new structure is implemented, the most notable being the new structure being realised when the Halton Leisure Centre is opened.

Agency spend is currently sitting at £0.258m for the first half of the 2024/25 financial year. As the Department offers a number of front-line services, including waste collections, in order to continue operations in the event of staff sickness, there is a reliance on agency to reduce the impact on residents within the borough.

Spend on premises costs is forecast to be £0.060m over budget in 2024/25, the new leisure centre is now expected to hand over within this financial year and will begin to incur costs within 24/25. The original plans were for the leisure centre to utilise the solar farm however the extension required to provide energy to the leisure centre has only recently been submitted for planning, so there is a potential budget pressure next year as the energy will have to be supplied from elsewhere until the solar farm extension is functioning.

Supplies and services are forecast to show an overspend against budget of £0.090m, primarily caused by inflationary cost increases of key goods and services over recent years, if the Council were to contain these costs within the budget profile there would be a reduction in the service provided.



School Meals food costs have been severely impacted by the high rate of inflation on food, due to the winding up of the service, the department is likely to see an underspend in regard to its expenditure, however this will be net against a reduction in income.

Waste Disposal Contract costs are forecasted to be £0.255m under the approved budget during 2024/25. Costs are likely to increase slightly from 2023/24, although as invoices are not received until later in the financial year it is difficult to fully indicate what the outturn position will be at this stage. It is also complicated due to reconciliation adjustments for prior year costs being received several months into subsequent financial years. There is scope to further drive down these costs with an increased push to recycle more, when sorted at source the processing costs are reduced.

Income across the Department is expected to be below the approved budget profile within 2024/25 by £0.141m, these are offset against reductions in forecasted expenditure for the year in particular the staffing costs, as the staff are not in place to generate the income, however the full impact of changes of this nature will be realised following the cessation of the School Meals service as this budget pressure absorbs any underspend generated. In comparison to month 4, there is increased confidence in achieving several income targets, thereby reducing the shortfall across the department.

Budget Savings

COMMUNITY AND GREENSPACES DEPARTMENT

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value		Current Progress	Comments
				24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
COMM3	Sport & Recreation	471	Restructuring the roles and responsibilities of the Sports Development Team	36	0		 Restructure is currently underway
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	12		 The cessation of the service is underway with the majority of schools ending their contracts by the end of the calendar year.
Total Community & Environment Department				36	12		

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

Symbol

Objective

Green



Indicates that the saving is on course to be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.

Amber



Indicates that it is uncertain or too early to say at this stage whether the saving will be achieved but work is ongoing.

Red



Indicates that it is highly likely or certain that the saving will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.

Capital




Scheme Detail	2024/25 Original Allocation £000	2024/25 Revised Allocation £000	Q1 Spend £000	Q2 Spend £000	Q3 Spend £000	Q4 Spend £000	Total Spend £000	Allocation remaining £000
Environment & Regeneration Directorate								
Community & Greenspace								
Stadium Minor Works	30.0	30.0	7.9	7.7			15.6	14.4
Halton Leisure Centre	8,997.0	8,997.0	2,030.0	3,045.4			5,075.4	3,921.6
Children's Playground Equipment	67.8	67.8	1.0	1.0			2.0	65.8
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340.0	340.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	340.0
Upton Improvements	13.0	13.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	13.0
Crow Wood Park Play Area	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	12.0
Open Spaces Schemes	600.0	600.0	130.0	154.4			284.4	315.6
Runcom Town Park	468.6	468.6	0.0	6.8			6.8	461.8
Spike Island / Wigg Island	1,933.5	1,933.5	2.4	4.4			6.8	1,926.7
Pickerings Pasture Cafe	503.0	503.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	503.0
Replacement Cremator Widnes	308.0	308.0	0.0	77.3			77.3	230.7
Litter Bins	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0			0.0	20.0
Total Community & Greenspace	13,292.9	13,292.9	2,171.3	3,297.0	0.0	0.0	5,468.3	7,824.6

The Halton Leisure centre capital scheme is currently ahead of schedule with the site aiming to open and be functional by the end of the financial year. Work has also begun under the Replacement Cremator project, this work will reduce the risk of Halton being unable to carry out cremations, which poses risks to income generation and reputational damage.





5.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress Symbols

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

Direction of Travel Indicator

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