

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING, SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 20 September 2010 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Edge (Chairman), P. Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chairman), Austin, C. Carlin, Horabin, A. Macmanus, Parker and J. Roberts

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Findon, Howard and Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Simpson, W Rourke and G. Fitzpatrick

Also in attendance: Cllr Jones in accordance with Standing Order 33

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

ELS13 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 9 June 2010, were taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to it being noted that Cllr Jones was present in accordance with Standing Order 33.

ELS14 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was reported that no public questions had been received.

ELS15 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board Sub-Committee relevant to the Community Portfolio.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

ELS16 SSP MINUTES

The Board considered the minutes from the Specialist Strategic Partnership. In receiving the minutes Members

noted the date from the last meeting and requested that the Partnership Team ensured tie in of when to meet so the minutes from SSPs would be more relevant in terms of timescales.

RESOLVED: That the SSP minutes be noted.

ELS17 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2011-2026

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources which updated Members on the progress of the new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2011-2026 and presented the emerging vision, key objectives and long term priorities that the plan sought to deliver upon.

The Board was informed that the implementation of the Strategy would be from April 2011 and a five year delivery plan for the Strategy would provide the details of planned interventions and activities. The Board received a presentation from the Operational Director Employment, Economic Regeneration and Business, which outlined the following –

- The 5 priorities - Members were advised that the current Urban Renewal priority would be re-named to “Regeneration and the Quality of Halton’s Environment”;
- The process;
- Timetable;
- The emerging issues and challenges, current Halton situation employment;
- Lifelong learning and skills;
- Policy drivers; and
- Considering the policy in context for example, aging population and high levels of unemployment.

Arising from the presentation the Board considered schemes where volunteers working in colleges could help adults with basic skills, large scale interventions in terms of local level delivery and whether the wording could be altered in terms of saying “public can expect” as the Council had to be careful when making statements in the current climate regarding what could be delivered.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Members note the five overarching priorities for the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026; and

(2) Members note the suggested vision, strategic objectives and challenges contained in Section 6.0 of the report and their alignment with their knowledge of local needs.

ELS18 3MG SKILLS & RECRUITMENT PROJECT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy which updated the Members on the 3MG skills and recruitment project which involved the Halton Employment Partnership handling the recruitment for the new Tesco chilled distribution centre and the Norbert Dentressangle recycling unit associated with it.

It was reported that the Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) was established to offer a one stop shop service to local businesses and residents. The HEP could support companies and individuals with pre-recruitment training, skills training, sourcing of apprenticeships and other workforce development needs. It also provided employers with recruitment and selection package of support.

The report noted that this was the first major recruitment project that the HEP had managed and it was undertaken in a number of stages which were detailed in the report for information.

A full evaluation report was appended to the agenda for information and in summary the following job outcomes were noted:

- there were 377 new job starts at the Tesco distribution centre, 75% of these were Halton residents;
- 46% of the starters were previously unemployed and 82% of these were Halton unemployed residents i.e. nearly 38% of the total new starters at Tesco were previously unemployed Halton residents; and
- there was a Widnes Runcorn job outcome split of 60:40, and 30% equalled 111 of the new starters were registered as Halton People Into Jobs (HPIJ) clients.

It was also noted that of the 20 available jobs for Norbert Dentressangle 7 of the jobs were offered to local people.

The Board was advised that the HEP and its activities were funded through Working Neighbourhood Funding

(WNF) which was due to cease on 31st March 2011.

Members raised concerns in relation to the service once funding had ceased after March 2011 and stressed the importance of trying to obtain ways to maintain the HEP activities and wished for their support to be noted for this credible achievement. The Board agreed to make a recommendation to the Executive Board to investigate other sources of funding for the continuation of the services provided by the HEP.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) a report be submitted to the Executive Board requesting that funding options be explored for continuation of the services of the Halton Employment Partnership.

Strategic Director
- Environment
and Economy

ELS19 HALTON PEOPLE INTO JOBS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy which provided information on the progress achieved by Halton People Into Jobs (HPIJ) during the ten years that it had been providing a job brokering service for employers and residents seeking work in Halton.

The Board was informed that HPIJ was established and launched in April 2001 as a nil cost "local jobs for local people" job brokering service. It was noted that the HPIJ service was recognised as an exemplar of best employment practice by customers, employers and partner organisations and had, over the last ten years, assisted more than 6,000 residents into employment. It was also noted that HPIJ was on target to achieve the figure of helping 500 people into jobs this year.

The Board discussed alternative funding opportunities for the HPIJ service which was mainly funded from external earned income and was supported by a contribution of £203,000 from Council revenue funding.

Members commented that the service was an excellent service and also contributed to the Employment Learning and Skills key priorities contained in the Halton Sustainable Communities Strategy in addition to contributing to performance against National Indicators relating to employment, enterprise and learning. Members wished to

place on record their support for the project and that its service be continued.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Board note the progress that had been achieved by Halton People into Jobs in assisting Halton residents into work over the last ten years; and

(2) the Board support the continuation of the project.

ELS20 ENTERPRISING HALTON PROGRAMME

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy which provided an update on the progress achieved by the Enterprising Halton Programme in promoting a culture of enterprise across the Borough and supporting the creation of new business start ups since it was launched in April 2007.

The report detailed an action plan that had been carried out after a study which considered why Halton had performed so poorly on key enterprise indicators. The study addressed several issues that were prevalent at the time which were as follows:-

- Consistent low levels of new business start-ups and self-employment in the Borough;
- The rate of new vat registered businesses which were among the lowest in the region; and
- Low self employment rates.

It was further noted that the Enterprise Strategy Action Plan had been developed following extensive consultation as part of the study to identify the number of key recommendations aimed at supporting the vision of *“developing a culture of enterprise and improving business performance in Halton”* details of which were outlined in the report for information.

The report also set out the refreshed strategy called ‘Connections, Connectivity and Communication: The Building Blocks of an Enterprise Strategy for Halton’ which identified that the most effective way of driving the enterprise agenda forward in Halton was to build a strategy around the key strategic assets that the Borough had to offer.

Members were informed that since the Enterprising Halton Programme was launched in April 2007, 362 new businesses had been established which had created 106 new jobs in addition to the business owners. Since April 2009, 110 which was 52% of the 214 new businesses had been set up in priority lower super output neighbourhoods. A schedule of the projects achievements since it was launched on 1st April 2007 to August 2010 was appended to the report for information.

The Board was advised that the project was highly regarded as an exemplar of enterprise best practice and the grants regime developed by Halton had since been adopted by both Liverpool Vision and North Liverpool and South Sefton LEGI Board to support new start ups in their respective areas.

Members commended that grant scheme as not only did it provide £500 for business start ups, and if businesses were still trading after 12 months a further £500 sustainability was provided.

Members raised concerns in relation to the grant regime not being available after March 2011.

The Board also queried how many businesses were operating after five years. In response, it was noted that the scheme had not been running that long. However, 68% of the businesses trading over two years were still trading which was higher than the national average.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the significant contribution the Enterprising Halton Programme has made to promoting enterprise development activity, supporting new business start ups and job creation.

ELS21 1ST QUARTER MONITORING REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive on the progress against service plan objectives and performance targets. Performance trends/ comparisons affecting services for Economic Regeneration and Culture and Leisure for the first quarter 2010/11.

The Board was advised that a Performance Sub-Group met on the 23 August 2010 and discussed the type of

information and the level of information that would be reported to PPBs in the future. Some valid points were raised during the meeting and various templates were considered. These would be provided to the next group and set out for consideration to ascertain which would be most effective, and would be brought to the next Policy and Performance Board for information.

The Board noted that some indicators were not always relevant and an economic summary which pre-faced the report would be beneficial.

The Board also stressed the need for a glossary of abbreviations at the start of performance monitoring as not all acronyms were known to all Members, especially new Members.

It was further noted that it would be useful to have a summary for progress against the objectives and milestones etc should have be appended with the supporting commentary in order to scrutinise the progress further.

Members referred to page 86 of the Performance Report and asked for details of the business perception survey in terms of the results. It was noted that these could be brought to the next meeting of the Policy and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the first quarter monitoring reports be received;
and

(2) the analysis of the results of the Business Perception Survey 2009/10 be brought to the November meeting of the PPB.

Strategic Director
- Environment
and Economy

ELS22 PPB SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUP TITLES

Members considered a report which presented the Scrutiny Topic Group Titles for the remainder of the 2010/11 Municipal Year. The proposed topics for this year were as follows:

- 1) Barriers to employment from an employers' perspective; and
- 2) Deficit policies and the impact of the recession.

For the Barriers to Employment from an employers' perspective, the following Councillors nominated

themselves:

Councillor Edge - Chair
Councillor Carlin,
Councillor Roberts,
Councillor Horabin, and
Councillor Parker.

For the Deficit Policies Topic Group the following Councillors nominated themselves:

Councillor P. Lloyd Jones - Chair,
Councillor McManus, and
Councillor Austin.

It was reported that Councillors Rowe, Howard and Findon would be contacted to see if they were happy to sit on the Deficit Policies Topic Group.

The Board discussed the Topic Groups in detail and felt that the Barriers to Employment from an employers' perspective would be a short Topic Group which could be completed within the next four or five months as a lot of the information had already been gathered as a result of the Topic Group from 2009/10.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Scrutiny Topic Groups titles, presented in the report.

Meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.