

**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, 12 November 2012 in the The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Edge (Chairman), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chairman), Cassidy, Howard, P. Lloyd Jones, Logan, Macmanus, Parker, Roberts and Zygadlo

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: E. O'Meara, C. Patino, S. Saunders and M. Simpson

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

	<i>Action</i>
ELS19 MINUTES	
The Minutes from the meeting held on 17 September 2012, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
ELS20 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
It was reported that no public questions had been received.	
ELS21 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The Board considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board relevant to the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Portfolio, since the last meeting of the Board.	
In relation to EXB73 Members discussed possibilities of using a refundable grant from Council reserves and the importance of much needed improvements to Halton Castle.	
The Board requested information regarding charges and income levels at Norton Priory.	

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted and information regarding income and charges at Norton Priory Museum be brought to a future meeting.

Strategic Director  
- Children and  
Enterprise

## ELS22 SSP MINUTES

The Board received the minutes of the Employment Learning Skills, Specialist Strategic Partnership from the 22 October 2012.

Arising from the minutes Members discussed the following:

- measures being taken to improve the accredited skill level of the workforce aged 24 and under;
- the difficulties in Council departments being encouraged to take on apprenticeships when there were recruitment freezes in place; and
- 3 bids had been submitted for the Mersey Gateway Consortium, and staff were being trained how to evaluate those bids and results would be publicised in March 2013.

The Board also requested for details to be provided of the types of 'asks' of the bidders in terms of the ELS opportunities. In response it was noted that this information would be circulated to Board Members.

RESOLVED: That the minutes and comments made be noted.

## ELS23 JOINT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING STRATEGY

The Board received a report of the Director of Public Health, which presented Halton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It was noted that the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) had been working on the development of the Strategy for Halton which involved gathering and analysing information and intelligence from a variety of sources.

It was reported that the analysis produced a comprehensive list of health and wellbeing needs for Halton. The list was then prioritised in a transparent way by the HWB through the use of a 5 Prioritisation Framework. This enabled the Board to agree 5 priorities for the next 12 months as follows:

- prevention and early detection of cancer;
- improved child development;
- reduction in the number of falls in adults;
- reduction in the harm from alcohol; and
- prevention and early detection of mental health conditions.

It was further noted that the priorities would be reviewed and either continued or changed depending on progress. Following agreement of the priorities a draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy was developed and approved by the HWB on 12 September 2012. The Strategy was appended to the report for information along with details of how the priorities would be taken forward.

Arising from discussion of the report the following points were noted:

- PALS would still be effective in the new structure;
- the HWB would be governed by Healthwatch; and
- mental health in young people was an issue and work was being carried out within schools to look at recognition and intervention;

Members discussed performance targets and action plans for tackling mental health issues and requested that an update report be brought to the Board in 6 months, which detailed progress made.

RESOLVED: That the report and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy noted.

#### ELS24 BUSINESS PLANNING 2013-16

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which provided the opportunity for Members to contribute to the development of Directorate Business Plans for the coming financial year.

Members were advised that each Directorate of the Council was required to develop a medium-term business plan, in parallel with the budget that was subject to annual review and refresh. The process of developing such plans for the period 2013-2016 was just beginning.

The Board was further advised that at this stage Members were invited to identify a small number of priorities for development or improvement (possibly 3-5) that they would like to see reflected within those plans.

It was reported that Strategic Directors would then develop draft plans which would be available for consideration by Policy and Performance Boards early in the new year.

The report further set out the timeframe for plan preparation, development and endorsement.

Members discussed training for teachers in relation to identifying pupils that could be NEET and development of sector specific skills to fill gaps in the scientific technology industry.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the content of the report be noted.

## ELS25 CITY DEAL IMPLEMENTATION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which provided an update on the implementation of the Liverpool City Region Deal (LCRD) and outlined how it related to Halton's Employment, Learning and Skills priority.

It was reported that the Liverpool City Region Deal was launched with Government on 5 July and was signed off on 18 September. The LCRD sat alongside and complemented the Liverpool Mayoral Deal and had various elements which were set out in the report for information.

Tabled at the meeting was information that had been released that day that provided further details on the following:

- establishment of a Skills for Growth Bank;
- piloting payment by results in the skills system;
- customer choice in the Work Programme;
- extension of New Enterprise Allowance eligibility; and
- Youth Unemployment Task Force.

Members were advised that the Deal and the associated Implementation Plan were a culmination of a significant amount of effort from colleagues across the City Region and Government and indicated the desire of the City Region to work together cohesively to drive the economic growth of the City Region.

It was further noted that the City Region would need to report quarterly to Government on the delivery of its

element of the implementation plan which would need to be done by the end of December.

Set out in the report for information were a number of elements that related to the Employment, Learning and Skills agenda and the Board.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) consideration be given to how Halton can best respond to the implementation plan so that the Borough can maximise any opportunities arising from the City Region Deal.

## ELS26 EMPLOYMENT LEARNING & SKILLS QUARTERLY POLICY UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which informed Members of recent national policy announcements relevant to employment, learning and skills.

It was noted that a steady flow of policy announcements, consultation exercises, reports and ministerial statements were issued by government departments and agencies with varying degrees of relevance to issues on the employment, learning and skills agenda and related topics.

The report set out brief summaries of key announcements as follows:

- Changes to AGE (Apprenticeship Grant to Employers) criteria for 16 to 24 apprenticeships;
- Holt Review: Support for small businesses to take on apprentices;
- Research report into proposed changes to the welfare system by the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP);
- National Minimum Wage;
- Government consultation on implementing employee owner status;
- BIS Retail Strategy;
- Regional Growth Fund ('RGF') Update; and
- Growth and Infrastructure Bill

In relation to the proposed welfare reform Members

raised concerns regarding job seeker allowance claims having to be made on line and the knock on effect and delays that could be caused by it. In response it was noted that libraries and housing trusts were working with local residents to upskill them and prepare them for the proposed changes.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## ELS27 GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK IN HALTON

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which informed Members of the activities and events taking place in Halton during Global Entrepreneurship Week (12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2012).

Members received a presentation from Siobhan Saunders, Divisional Manager, Employment Learning and Skills which set out the following:

- aim of Halton's Global Entrepreneurship Week,
- key partners / organisations supporting the week's events,
- marketing activities such as press releases, radio, interview, HBC website, Facebook and Twitter
- adult learners award ceremony and a mapping exercise,
- case studies from people on kick start courses who had set up their own businesses; and
- contact details for the employment officers and their manager.

It was reported that Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) was taking place across 115 countries between 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November which was the world's largest campaign to promote entrepreneurship. In the UK the campaign was hosted by Youth Business International – a global network of initiatives that helped young entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. The theme for 2012 was *'Pass it on'*.

Members were advised that GEW was being used to pass on the practical help and support needed by early start-ups and individuals who were considering starting self-employment. The aim was for Halton to create a

collaborative, local and practical week of activities and events that enabled people to learn more about the wealth of support that was available to entrepreneurs.

It was further noted that to achieve the desired results, organisations would be working in partnership to 'pass on' skills, contacts, knowledge, confidence and resources to Halton residents.

Tabled at the meeting was a timetable which set out all the activities provided for the week.

RESOLVED: That the events and activities during Global Entrepreneurship Week be noted.

## ELS28 HIDDEN UNEMPLOYMENT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which informed Members of a report produced by Sheffield Hallam University entitled the "Real Level of Employment".

It was reported that this was the fourth report in the series and attempted to identify 'hidden' groups of unemployment in addition to those groups that were officially counted. It was noted that overall, the real level of unemployment was estimated to be higher in 2012 than at any point since 1997.

Members were advised that the report looked at three groups of unemployed and it was the sum of the three groups that acted as the 'real level of unemployment'. The groups were reported as claimant count, additional unemployment from the Labour Force Survey (now called the Annual Population Survey), and some claimants of Incapacity Benefits (those deemed to be able to return to work eventually). Full descriptions of the categories were detailed in the report for consideration.

The Board considered a breakdown of the three categories for Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton St Helens and Wirral and the report showed that in April 2012 Halton's real level of unemployment was estimated at 11,200, which equated to 14.4% of the working age population.

It was further noted that when compared to the unemployment figure which was most commonly quoted for Halton the real unemployment figure was more than double. It was reported that this trend mirrored that found within all North West local authorities as well as at regional and

national levels.

Arising from discussion of the report Members queried the percentage of people who were on capacity benefits due to mental ill health. In response it was noted that this statistic could be sought and circulated.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted.

*Meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.*