

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING, SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 9 January 2013 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

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

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: H. Coen, C. Dinsdale, N. Goodwin, J. Hatton, P. Reilly-Cooper, W Rourke, M. Simpson and S. Saunders

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

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

ELS29 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 12 November 2012, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

Arising from Minute ELS28, it was noted that information had been obtained from Halton People Into Jobs and the reason for the discrepancy of hidden unemployment levels was that Halton had a high percentage of people claiming incapacity benefit due to ill health. Members requested a report be brought to a future meeting around what measures were being implemented to help individuals and what steps were being taken to encourage them back to work.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes and comments made be noted.

ELS30 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was reported that no public questions had been received.

ELS31 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.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

ELS32 SSP MINUTES

The Board received the minutes of the Employment Learning Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership from 10 December 2012.

RESOLVED: That the minutes and comments made be noted.

ELS33 COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK FOR FURTHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided details of the new Common Inspection Framework, advising Members on the preparations underway within the Employment, Learning and Skills Division should they receive a two day notification of inspection and informed the Board on how they could support the Ofsted inspection process.

Siobhan Saunders, Divisional Manger, Employment, Learning and Skills (ELS) reported that services provided by the ELS Division were governed by a number of contract management and inspection frameworks. The Adult Learning and Skills Development services operated within the Further Education and Skills sector. On 10th September 2012, Ofsted published the framework for the inspection of Further Education and Skills (The Common Inspection Framework), which came into effect in the same month. It set out the judgements that inspectors could make and the principles that applied to Further Education and Skills inspections.

The report further set out the overall aim of the inspection framework, the principle criteria that inspectors must consider when inspecting, the inspection programme and what would happen on the day of inspection, information required, how findings were reported, the proposed role of the Policy and Performance Board and the impact for Local Authorities and Providers.

Arising from discussion of the report Members queried the next steps should the outcome be rated 'inadequate'. In response it was noted that the service would receive help in the areas required then be re-inspected after a period of time, similar to when a school went into special measures. However, it was reported that it was unlikely that the service would be rated 'inadequate'.

RESOLVED: That consideration be given to the role of and support provided by the ELSC PPB to the inspection process as set out within the Common Inspection Framework.

ELS34 COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which provided an annual report on the Community Development Service for the period up to 31 March 2012.

Nicola Goodwin, Community Development Manager and Clare Dinsdale, Senior Community Development Officer, reported that Community Development supported the creation, development and sustainability of independent local community groups. This generated the capacity for effective and inclusive community engagement with Council departments and services thus enabling the delivery of many hundreds of community initiatives to tackle strategic objectives and community needs. It was noted that the Community Development team had both a strategic and neighbourhood role in co-ordinating partnership support to respond to community concerns and create cohesive neighbourhoods which were participative and vibrant with a strong sense of community connectedness.

It was further reported that locality working was introduced to the service in April 2010 linked to the expiry of the neighbourhood management initiative. It was noted that this mechanism involved community development which supported an increased role for partners and community involvement in the Area Forums which contributed £45k per annum to Community Development for this support.

The report set out membership of the team and informed Members of the budget for Community Development which was £284,590 with an income target of £42,490 and a net budget of £242,100. Community Development Officers (CDOs) were neighbourhood based and worked to the Area Forum patches. Details of work carried out was set out in the report for information.

Members were further advised of the performance framework in place for community development activity and the 2011/12 performance indicators were provided in the report.

The report further set out details of Grass Roots delivery and provided a snapshot of neighbourhood activity extracted from the annual reports of each Area Forum area, in addition to details of voluntary youth and bursary grants.

The Board was also informed of service evaluation, community development grants, strategic approaches and future challenges.

Arising from discussion of the report Members queried whether any additional monies could be brought in to the Council for the support provided to the local community. In response it was noted that this would be explored. The Board also requested further detailed information be provided in relation to the youth and bursary grants to demonstrate further how the funding was spent.

RESOLVED: That the information and comments made be noted.

ELS35 EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND 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 with related topics.

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

- Ofsted report on findings from inspections of initial training of further education and skills teachers;
- Small business scheme launched through Regional Growth Fund;

- Publication of BIS Retail Strategy;
- Government consultation on implementing employee owner status;
- Regional Growth Fund (RGF) Round three winners announced;
- Growth and Infrastructure Bill;
- The Heseltine Review; 'No stone unturned.... In Pursuit of Growth'
- The Richard Review of Apprenticeships; and
- The Chancellor of the Exchequer's 2012 Annual Autumn Statement.

In relation to the recent visit to Daresbury and the jobs created at Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre Members asked whether they had actually created new jobs or whether they had been transferred from within the site. In response it was noted that an answer would be sought.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

ELS36 MATRIX ACCREDITATION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Children and Enterprise which informed Members that the Employment, Learning and Skills (ELS) Division had been reaccredited with the Matrix Quality Standard. The report also provided Members with information on the assessment criteria and the positive assessment outcome.

It was reported that the purpose of the Matrix Standard was to provide a benchmark for organisations to assess/measure their advice and support services, which ultimately supported individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals. The Standard was a requirement for being awarded particular external contracts, for example the National Careers Service. It was noted that it was also an advantage for organisations when bidding for other contracts and would certainly contribute positively to an Ofsted Inspection.

Members were advised of 4 elements in the Matrix Standard as follows:

- leadership and management;

- resources;
- service delivery; and
- continuous quality improvement.

The report further set out examples of strategic aims and objectives and how each element could be gained, details of the Baseline Assessment, the Matrix Accreditation Assessment, strengths of good practice and areas for continuous improvement.

It was noted that if Members wished to read the document they could contact Siobhan Saunders for a copy.

The Board wished to congratulate the team for being re-awarded the Matrix Accreditation.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and Members welcome the outcome of the assessment.

ELS37 LIBRARY SERVICES STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which provided Members with information on the review process and indicative timetable for the Library Services Strategy and provided feedback of results of the first phase of public consultation.

John Hatton, Divisional Manager, Leisure and Recreation and Paula Reilly-Cooper, Library Services Manager reported that since the national library standards were abolished local authorities had been able to determine the level and priorities of their own public library service. Several authorities had done this already. However there was a need, as a statutory service, to comply with the requirement to provide a “comprehensive and efficient service“. A number of authorities had found themselves subject to legal challenge with their proposals for change being overturned in the courts.

It was noted that the process aimed to ensure that the review of Halton Library Services was carried out with due regard and that a Local Library Services Strategy was prepared which identified the vision, developments and priorities of the service over the next 3-4 years with budgetary constraints.

The report further set out the process overview and details of the public consultation which was undertaken in August 2012 to help inform the strategy. Members were advised that 402 people responded to the survey and

feedback of how people used and viewed the service was set out in the report for information.

Arising from discussion of the report the Board made the following comments:

- Members had visited the library during the consultation period and felt that service users could have been made more aware of the survey;
- The effect of e-readers reducing number of books loaned from the library;
- Of the completed survey how many were actual service users?

In response it was noted that out of the 402 respondents to the survey 329 were actual service users. It was further noted that this was a small survey used as a starting point for the strategy. Members were advised that the strategy would come back to the Board to provide the opportunity for Members input before it went out for consultation.

RESOLVED: That the information and comments made be noted.

ELS38 ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which informed Members of the Armed Forces Community Covenant which was appended to the report for information.

It was noted that in referring to Armed Forces it encompassed the Army, Royal Navy and Air Force.

Members were advised that Halton was part of a pan Cheshire Covenant which covered the Local Authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Cheshire, Warrington and Halton. In addition Local Authorities (LA's), Health, Probation and Job Centre Plus were involved in supporting the covenant.

It was noted that each LA was required to have a nominated Armed Forces Champion, the Community Development Manager had been designated this role in Halton. The role was to provide representation on a Community Covenant working group that covered the Cheshire area and provided a point of liaison for the forces.

It was further reported the Armed Forces Community

Covenant was a voluntary statement of mutual support between the civilian community and its local armed forces community. The aim was to provide awareness of the role of the armed forces, the sacrifices that in service and ex service personnel and their families made, encourage activities that integrated armed forces and local communities together and continue to foster civic pride in our armed forces.

The report informed Members that the Covenant set out twenty pledges around five key themes as follows; housing, employment and benefits, education, health and well-being. Each theme was described further in the report.

Members were further advised of the Community Covenant Working Group and the wider context of armed forces for Halton.

Arising from discussion of the report Members noted the proposed redundancies from the armed forces and the effect this would have on the Borough. Members were advised that at a PPB Chair's briefing it was agreed a topic group be formed with members from Safer, Health and Employment, Learning, Skills and Community PPB's.

Furthermore Members noted the importance of making contact with personnel when they left the armed forces and the importance of joint working with Registered Social Landlords.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

ELS39 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which set out the Priority Based Performance Management Report for the second quarter of 2012/13 to September 2012. The report detailed progress against service objectives / milestones and performance targets and described factors affecting the service, structured by key priorities as stated in section 3.3 of the report.

It was reported that in line with the Council Performance Framework for 2012/13, the PPB had been provided with an ELS&C Priority Based Overview Report which identified the key issues that arose from performance in Quarter 2. The priorities and common areas of focus were set out in the report as follows:

- supporting growth and investment;
- raising skill levels and reducing unemployment; and
- enhancing resident's quality of life.

Members were advised that the two department quarterly monitoring reports for Economy, Enterprise and Property, and Community and Environment were available via a link provided in the report.

Arising from discussion of the reports Members noted the following:

- the figure for occupancy of industrial units was below target due to the economic climate and the asset management group were currently exploring ways to improve occupancy;
- in relation to the budget it was noted that the figures in red were a non-achievement of saving target, rather than a deficit. It was reported the staff costs target was difficult to achieve when various job cuts had been made; and
- in respect of lottery grants the Board requested further information around where the grants were used in order to feedback to their constituents.

RESOLVED: That the quarterly monitoring report and comments made be noted.

ELS40 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which provided information on the progress in achieving targets contained within the 2011-2016 Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Halton, and highlighted the annual "light touch" review of targets and measures.

The Board was advised that a new SCS (2011-26) had been approved by the Council on 20 April 2011. The new SCS and its associated "living" 5 year delivery plan (2011-16), identified the five community priorities that would arise from the basis of collective partnership intervention and action over the coming five years. The strategy was informed by and brought together national and local priorities and was aligned to other local delivery plans such as that of the Halton Children's Trust. By being a "living" document it would provide sufficient flexibility to evolve as continuing changes within the public sector continued to emerge.

Appended to the report for information was progress for the six month period April 2012 – September 2012, which included a summary of all indicators for the Employment, Learning and Skills Priority within the SCS.

It was further noted that the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board was also asked to consider the inclusion of any additional measures to the set contained in the report to “narrow gaps” in performance where appropriate or respond to legislative / policy changes; thereby ensuring that all measures remained “fit for purpose”.

Members discussed the percentage of people in the Borough with NVQ Level 4 and the reduction in the average earning income.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

ELS41 DIRECTORATE PLANS - CHILDREN AND ENTERPRISE & COMMUNITIES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which provided an update on Business Planning for the period 2013-16 and provided the opportunity for Members to consider Directorate priorities, objectives and targets for services for the period that fell within the remit of this Policy and Performance Board.

It was reported 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. Draft Service Objectives and Performance Indicators and targets had been developed by each department and the information had been included in the appendices to the report. It was noted that these objectives and measures would form the basis of the quarterly performance monitoring received by the Board during the future year.

Members were requested to forward any proposals for additional objectives to the relevant Operational Director by 18 January 2013 and the draft Plans would be revised following Member comments during January and would go to Executive Board for approval on 7th February 2013 along with the budget. Furthermore all Directorate plans would be considered by Full Council on 6th

March 2013.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report be noted; and
2. Members of the Board pass any detailed comments that they may have on the information in the report to the relevant Operational Director by 18 January 2013.

Meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.