

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, 25 March 2013 in the Bridge Suite, Stobart Stadium

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: N. Goodwin, J. Griffiths, N. Mannion, C. Patino, P. Reilly-Cooper, W Rourke and M. Simpson

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

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

ELS42 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 9 January 2013, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS43 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was reported that no public questions had been received.

ELS44 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.

ELS45 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:

- Richard Review of Apprenticeships;
- Coalition Government Mid-Term Review;
- Consultation on pre-Apprenticeship Traineeships;
- Consultation on changes to TUPE Regulations;
- Regional Growth Fund ('RGF');
- Launch of Industrial Cadet Scheme;
- Publication of further 2011 Census Data; and
- Launch of International Business Festival in Liverpool.

Members were further advised of the Skills for Life survey results and that Halton had outperformed in comparison to the City Region and the National statistics.

It was noted that updated information had been received and in relation to the reform of the planning system it was reported that local areas were to put in place bespoke pro-growth planning policies and delivery arrangements as part of the new Local Growth Deals.

It was further noted that a further £3 billion for additional financial support for housing and infrastructure capital projects has been sourced from non-ring fenced budgets of Government spending departments.

The Board was informed of a successful bid for a pinch point application to alleviate problems regarding national highways and Halton had secured 1.6 million to increase capacity of the road network around site access for the Daresbury site.

Arising from discussion of the information Members felt that TUPE was a deterrent to job creation, however it was noted that there was little local evidence for this in Halton.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

ELS46 LIBRARY SERVICES UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which provided information on the library service achievements for the period up to 31 March 2013.

It was reported that the library service undertook a CIPFA evaluation of the service in October 2012, and overall satisfaction was shown that 94% of users rated the service as good / very good. In addition it was noted that there had been 82,000 visits recorded in the last year.

The following highlights had contributed to the positive results and were detailed further in the report:

- Runcorn Library opening in April 2012;
- Supporting Change Lottery Funding at Halton Lea Library;
- Community Pathfinders Project at Halton Lea and Widnes Library;
- Reading activities project;
- Reading families project;
- Library strategy;
- Home delivery service; and
- Koha library management system.

Arising from discussion of the report Members noted the digital support provided in light of universal credit and the need for people to make applications online, and the success of the local history film shows and proposals to run them again at different times of day making them more accessible.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

ELS47 COMMUNITY CENTRES ANNUAL REPORT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which provided an annual report on Community Centres for the operating period 2011/12.

It was reported that the Community Centres service consisted of five buildings, Castlefields, Ditton, Grangeway, Murdishaw and Upton. The Centres provide programmes of community activities, varying models of community café's and service outlets, i.e. children's centre, youth centre and day services. It was noted that the centre provided a

community hub and central point at the heart of communities for residents to enjoy chosen activities and receive services in their neighbourhoods. It was further noted that they were based in the most severely deprived wards and were well utilised. Churchill Hall also received grant funding to support community use.

The report set out performance data for community centres which contributed to a whole area approach to health and wellbeing. It was noted that community centre's service demonstrated continuous improvement through its performance monitoring and contributions to the Council's programme.

Community centres were benchmarked as part of the APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) against other Civic, Cultural and Community venues owned and run by other local authorities.

The report further set out annual usage of community centres, detailed profiles for each community centre and future challenges.

The Board received a presentation from Nicola Goodwin, Community Development Manager, which set out examples of community activity, demographic evaluation and in summary noted that community centres were proving resilient, capacity could be increased, savings had been delivered and the workforce was skilled and committed.

In relation to the reduction in attendance figures for Castlefields Community Centre it was noted that this was due to the physical regeneration as the surrounding sites had been demolished and that the reason for the reduction of figures in other centres was that adult day services and youth services had withdrawn from the centres. However, it was reported that current figures already showed an increase in attendance when compared to other years.

Arising from discussion of the report, Members noted the different operating system for Murdishaw as it had its own governance model and governing body and discussed the possibilities for other centres to follow this route. Due to the way Murdishaw Community Centre was run enabled it to obtain a further £150,000 of external funding over the last 3 years for projects such as garden space, car parking facilities and CCTV.

The Board further noted capacity within the centres and suggested other community users be approached with a

view to using the available space.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the service delivery and future developments and challenges for the community centres service be noted; and
- 2) other community service providers be offered the available space with the centres.

Strategic Director
- Communities

(NB Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item due to being a Board Member of Murdishaw Community Centre)

ELS48 INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF BUSINESS 2014

The Board considered a report which advised on the proposals for the development of an International Festival of Business in the Liverpool City Region and to advise Members of the opportunities that the event could bring to the Borough. The Festival would take place in June and July 2014 and would provide a global forum where industries in key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, low carbon, and life sciences, professional and financial services can come together to trade ideas, products and contacts.

The event had been described as a Mini Shanghai Expo and would bring together world and UK cities for 61 days of themed events, exhibitions and showcases. It was anticipated that the Festival would attract 250,000 visitors from across the globe and bring £100 million worth of investment. The Festival would be themed around three core business sectors: low carbon, global communications and knowledge economy.

It was noted that a draft version of the calendar of events would be available late spring/early September 2013 and first key sponsors and speakers announced in early March 2013. In addition three launch events were planned on 25th February, 18th March and 27th June 2013.

Within Halton, as the concentration of both business and facilities fell broadly within the sector designated the knowledge economy, it was proposed that two/three themed events could be planned. In consultation with the Chamber of Commerce, discussions had commenced with the Heath Business Park and Daresbury Science and Innovation

Campus to hold events.

It was therefore proposed that a sum not exceeding £5,000 be allocated from existing budgets to support the delivery of events in Halton.

Members raised concerns how Halton's profile would be represented and queried whether £5,000 would be sufficient to support the delivery of events in Halton. It was further noted that the profile of Norton Priory could be raised from a tourism point of view.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Halton's participation in The International Festival of Business 2014 be supported; and
- 2) the comments made be noted.

ELS49 HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL UPDATE ON APPRENTICESHIPS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which provided an update on apprenticeships in Halton.

It was reported that apprenticeships took between one and four years to complete and covered 1,400 job roles in a wide range of industries. An apprenticeship was a set of qualifications called a 'framework' developed by Sector Skills Council, most of which followed a standard format, details of which were set out in the report for information.

The report informed Members of the role of the Learning Provider and how training was delivered, opportunities for progression, details of the on-line vacancy service, and development of a programme to deliver sessions to schools across the Liverpool City Region with the aim of supporting teachers' knowledge and understanding of apprenticeships.

The report further set out an overview for Halton with apprenticeship starts and success rates for residents including a breakdown of sector subject area, gender and employer information, in addition to Halton's Apprenticeship Development Plan, Halton Employment Partnership and Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy.

Members were advised of the future policy for

apprenticeships, traineeships and the Richard Review of apprenticeships.

It was reported that as a result of the Richard Review of Apprenticeships 24 questions were to be asked as per the outcomes from the review.

It was further reported that an update would be brought to a future meeting with regards to Apprenticeships within the Waste Management and Open Spaces divisions of the Council.

Arising from discussion of the information the Board noted the involvement of Riverside College with apprenticeships and that they were aware of the problems of oversupplying in certain professions.

The Board requested that information be sought regarding completion of Apprenticeships and figures of how many people had secured employment at the end of them.

RESOLVED: That the information and comments made be noted.

ELS50 SCRUTINY TOPIC WELFARE REFORM ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE EMPLOYMENT LEARNING & SKILLS AGENDA

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which proposed the establishment of a topic group to consider the main impacts of the Welfare Reform changes on Employment, Learning and Skills provision in the Borough.

Members were advised the Welfare Reform Act received Royal Assent in March 2012 and introduced a number of new measures which the ELSC PPB may wish to consider in more detail. It was noted that the Act would begin to take effect in phases from April 2013.

The report set out a number of considerations which would ultimately inform and influence the Council's response to the Welfare Reform Act. The Board was advised that a Topic Group would be a useful forum for developing a coordinated response to how best to deal with the issues arising out of the changes to the Benefits System.

The Board discussed the importance of the topic group due to the fact that 1st April was the date for

implementation of the bedroom tax and October was when the Universal Credit was due to commence. Members also commented that careful consideration needed to be given to the scope and terms of reference for the Topic Group. The following Members volunteered to sit on the Topic Group, Councillor Edge, Cassidy, P. Lloyd Jones, C. Plumpton Walsh and Zygadlo. It was reported that Councillor Edge would Chair the Topic Group.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board agree to the establishment of a topic group on the main impacts of Welfare Reform in respect of the Employment Learning and Skills agenda;
- 2) Councillors Edge (Chair), Cassidy, Peter Lloyd Jones, Carol Plumpton Walsh and Zygadlo be appointed to sit on the topic group;
- 3) an evaluation report be presented to the ELSC PPB no later than September 2013.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

(NB Councillor Cassidy declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item due to having a family member who worked in HBC's Benefits Section)

ELS51 PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which set out the Priority Based Performance Management Report for the third quarter of 2012/13 to December 2012. The report detailed progress against service objectives / milestones and performance targets as 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 3. 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.

In relation to 2.1 it was reported that the ERDF 4.2 Business Support Programme was now 3 months into the project and contact had been made with companies from the database with a view to offering support for their requirements.

With regards to the Business Improvement District it was reported that Astmoor had received a 75% yes vote and Halebank had received an 82% yes vote.

In respect of 2.3.8 "Other Issues" Members queried the percentage of website usage and wondered where web visitors for the remaining 58% were located.

The Board discussed the Local Enterprise Partnership who had secured £10,000,000 and queried what portion of the funding would be spent in Halton. In response it was noted that this information had not been made available yet priority schemes had been submitted and were currently being assessed. Members were advised this information would be circulated when received.

With regards to Key Milestone EEP3 and the targets that had not been met to deliver the work programme, it was reported that the set targets were high and very few organisations had met the target. In addition, staff absence had contributed to targets not being reached.

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

Meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.