

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 30 May 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children & Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: Barriers to Employment (from an employers perspective) topic group

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider the scrutiny topic group report on barriers to employment from an employer perspective

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) **Members of the ELS and Community support the recommendations contained in pages 13-18 of the attached report, namely;**
- *To continue the Recruitment and Training 'offer' to inward investors provided through the Halton Employment Partnership and seek funding for a dedicated resource to provide this coordinated support on a medium term basis.*
 - *To seek Government support to help Halton support people from disadvantaged groups and areas within Halton to access jobs and training opportunities arising in the construction industry.*
 - *To support the development of a wider system of vocational qualifications focused on the STAM agenda.*
 - *To support the development of the Fab Lab concept.*
 - *To ask Government to revisit the Apprenticeship Eligibility rules*

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A summary of the key messages contained in the report, is provided below:

- 3.1 This topic report builds on the previous topic regarding barriers to employment from an **employee** perspective. This time, a report has been prepared which presents an **employer** perspective on barriers to employment.
- 3.2 The report concludes that the perceived barriers to employment from the perspective of the individual job seeker in Halton are well documented.
- 3.3 There are a number of barriers or key considerations cited by employers when they are considering recruiting staff. Whilst there are common themes, the requirements vary according to the job and sector. Interestingly, whilst some employers insist on experience and or qualifications, others prefer to focus on attitude to work.
- 3.4 The Halton Business Perception Survey is considered to be a key document in obtaining and presenting the views of employers on employment and employability. All businesses who took part in the Business Perception Study 2010 were asked to rate by importance the required skills of potential employees using a five point scale from 'very important' through to 'very unimportant'.
- 3.5 Three skills or attributes were found to be of greatest importance to local employers; **communication, numeracy and literacy**.
- 3.6 Members commended the borough's joined up approach to engaging with employers through the Halton Employment Partnership, which allows for limited resources to be deployed in a more focused and effective way.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 It is felt that this is a helpful piece of work because it provides an examination of some of the issues which prevent employers from employing (local) people. This research can be used to inform future priorities in respect of engaging with employers.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None at this stage.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People in Halton

By highlighting the recruitment needs of employers, it is suggested that the considerations presented in the report can be used to better prepare our young people for the world of work

7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The report highlights the fact that there are a number of factors which influence employer decisions when recruiting and appointing people. It is acknowledged from this report that a whole system approach is required which does not focus purely on learning and skills in isolation, but is founded upon a more bespoke relationship with employers and businesses.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

None

7.4 A Safer Halton

None

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 By capturing the views of employers we can ensure that we provide better support to people finding work in a more targeted and inclusive way.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None under the meaning of the Act

APPENDIX 1 – Topic Brief

Topic title: HCT Scrutiny Working Group

PPB(s) responsible: Urban Renewal / Employment Learning & Skills

Officer Lead: Mick Noone Tel: 0151 471 7370

Support Officer: Jeff Briggs 0151 471 7381

Planned start/end date: Short series of meetings (3 to 4), mid February to late March 2012

Topic description and scope:

A review of the operations of, and services provided by, Halton Community Transport (HCT) including identification of funding streams which contribute towards HCT's operations and service delivery. To consider the potential social and inclusion benefits that the services operated by HCT provide to its users and the impacts on these users should service discontinue.

Terms of Reference

1. To consider the Council's duties and policies for securing the provision of public transport services, including community transport.
2. To consider the role community transport can play in helping the Council fulfil its duties and meet its priorities.
3. To consider the aims and objectives of HCT, the details of its current fleet, the number and type of passengers it carries, and the services it provides to the communities of Halton.
4. To consider the legislation governing the operation of CT services (permit systems, licences, etc.).
5. To consider the service level agreement that exists between Halton Borough Council and Halton Community Transport in terms of levels of service provision, standards of quality required and funding levels.
6. To consider whether HCT, or indeed other community transport operations that may be supported by the Council, can be deemed to be benefitting from an unfair financial and competitive advantage in relation to other transport providers.
7. To consider the potential impacts on users of the specialised transport services that HCT provide should any such service be withdrawn, wholly or in part i.e. less vehicles provided, reduced days/times of operation.

8. To consider other possible transport service alternatives available for users whom rely on existing specialised transport.
9. To consider other potential ways in which alternative specialised transport services could be provided by different transport providers more effectively and/or at reduced cost.
10. To consider the detrimental impact on the Council's duty under Section 63 (8) of the Transport Act 1985 'it shall be the duty of any council, in exercising or performing any of their functions to have regard to the transport needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled' should specialised transport services be withdrawn in their entirety.
11. To consider the impact of cuts to the supported bus service budget and the impact this is having or could have on the provision of local bus services in certain areas. Demand responsive transport services such as the Council funded Dial-a-Ride provided by HCT, are a fall-back for residents (in meeting the duties as set out above) from areas where there is no alternative public transport provision.
12. To consider the Community Impact Review and Assessment (CIRA) for reduction of funding for specialised transport services and consequential impact on duties as part of the Equalities Act.
13. To consider the potential impact on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid application, which includes elements of provision by HCT and could be worth £4.3million over the next three years, should funding levels provided be discontinued.
14. To consider the existing passenger fares and other charge levels made by HCT for services provided for individuals and for affiliated groups.

Why this topic was chosen:

In the current financial climate where major savings are required and every budget line is being closely scrutinised, the HCT scrutiny working group aims to identify the overall effectiveness of the services provided by HCT and to review the current operations of HCT as well as funding levels provided by the Council.

Key outputs and outcomes sought

Outputs:

A clear understanding of –

1. HCT's operations, the services it provides and its sources of funding.
2. The role Community Transport can play in helping the Council meet its statutory duties and its priorities.
3. The service level agreement that exists between Halton Borough Council and Halton Community Transport and it's overall content.

4. The potential impacts on users of the specialised transport services provided by HCT should these services be withdrawn or significantly reduced.
5. Any other possible transport service alternatives available for users and/or potential alternative specialised transport service provision.
6. The Council's duty under Section 63 (8) of the Transport Act 1985 when determining the need to consider the transport needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled.
7. The requirement to produce a Community Impact Review and Assessment (CIRA) for any reduction of funding for specialised transport services.
8. The Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid application, HCT's role and how this and other forms of public transport fit with the overall aim of the LSTF bid.

Outcomes:

1. The identification of any significant risks and issues from the review of HCT's activities and operations.
2. The identification of any significant benefits and opportunities from the review of HCT's activities and operations.
3. To reach a conclusion on whether the subsidy provided by the Council to HCT is providing value for money and whether future support should be maintained (subject to availability of funding).
4. A clearer scope and direction for future provision of specialised transport services with knowledge of all of the relevant surrounding information.

Which of Halton's 5 strategic priorities does this topic address and what are the key objectives and improvement targets it will help achieve?

A Healthy Halton, Key Objectives including:

- Responding to the needs of an ageing population, improving their quality of life and thus enabling longer, active and more fulfilled lives;
- Removing barriers that disable people and contribute to poor health by addressing the wider determinants of health;
- Improving access to health services, including primary care

Employment Learning and Skills, Key Objectives including:

- Developing a culture where learning is valued and skill levels throughout the adult population and across the local workforce can be raised;
- Promoting and increasing the employability of local people and removing barriers to employment to get more people into work

Environment and Regeneration, Key Objectives including:

- Providing a well connected, sustainable and accessible borough and ensuring a variety of safe efficient travel and infrastructure options for people

Nature of expected/desired PPB input

Involvement by a small number of Members and officers in a series of working groups, involving approximately 3 or 4 meetings. Working group reports to be considered by PPB as appropriate.

Preferred mode of operation

As above.

Media/Communication implications/opportunities arising from examining this topic.

None at this stage.

Agreed and signed by:

PPB Chair Officer

Date Date

Name of Board: Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board

Date of Meeting: 14th March 2012

Report Title: Policy & Performance Board Work Programme 2011/12

Author: Jeff Briggs

STANDARD SECTIONS – CHECKLIST		
All reports must be submitted together with the following checklist fully completed		
	Yes	No
Resource Implications The financial, manpower and land (buying or selling) considerations should be clearly detailed including any corporate implications of following the recommended course of action.	√	
Social Inclusion Implications Any implications relating to social inclusion/anti poverty should be highlighted	√	
Sustainability Checklist Any implications that affect the sustainability themes of economy society and the community and the environment should be included,	√	
Best Value Any Best Value implications should be included.	√	
Legal Implications Any Legal implications should be included.	√	
Crime and Disorder Issues Any crime and disorder implications should be included.		√
Community Impact Review & Assessment (CIRA) Is a CIRA relevant to this report? Has a CIRA proforma been completed?	√	
<i>Please review these potential effects, within the context set out overleaf, to compose your summary assessment</i>		
Summary assessment of Implications: The subsidy paid to the operator has been identified for withdrawal following the maximum period of payment being reached and also as a contribution towards the total saving requirement for the next financial year. <i>This wording will appear in the Board report.</i>		