

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

DATE: 30 May 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise

PORTFOLIOS: Economic Development, and
Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Joint Scrutiny Review of Provision of
Apprenticeships in the Borough

WARDS: ALL

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To approve the draft report on the Joint Scrutiny Review of Apprenticeships and forward it to the Executive Board for consideration.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

The report is approved and forwarded to the Executive Board.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The draft report (attached at Appendix 1) was commissioned jointly by the Children, Young People & Families and the Employment, Learning & Skills and Communities Policy and Performance Boards. A scrutiny review Topic Group was established comprising of six Members (three from each Board), and was chaired by Councillor Edge,

There has been a significant resurgence in the Apprenticeship model in recent years, with the current Coalition Government providing enhanced financial incentives to employers, and especially SME's to encourage them to offer apprenticeships.

The review focused on the following specific aspects;

- The implementation of an Apprenticeship programme for the Council.
- Monitoring and review of the programme.
- Engagement with the private sector.

- The roles and responsibilities of partners to drive the Apprenticeships agenda in Halton.

The review itself was conducted through a number of means:

- Monthly meetings of the scrutiny review topic group;
- Presentations by various key members of staff and external partners;
- Examination of local and comparative data and information.

4.0 FINDINGS

A considerable amount of high quality work has been done by the Council and a range of partners over recent years to promote and increase the quality and availability of suitable apprenticeship opportunities in Halton. However, there are still considerable existing and emerging challenges to be overcome, a key one of which is how to respond to the changes in funding from September 2013 for Apprenticeships from 25+ with the introduction of Level 3 and 4 post-24 loans for Advanced and Higher Level Apprenticeships.

The recommendations for action and further improvement identified from this scrutiny review are listed on Page 12 of the scrutiny report and have been arranged into an Action Plan at Annex 1 for ease of reference and monitoring.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Apprenticeships can help develop employability skills and help people gain confidence. They support the Sustainable Community Strategy and Council Corporate Plan by promoting and increasing the employability of local people and removing any barriers to employment.

Also, the embedding of the use of apprenticeships within the recently adopted People Plan has the potential to put Halton Borough Council at the forefront of the creative and constructive use of apprenticeships as an example to other local employers

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Apprenticeships present an additional opportunity to enable young employees to secure the skills they need to succeed in their working lives. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children & Learning Act (2009) includes the requirement for all young people to be in education or training until the age of 18 by 2015, and an entitlement to an Apprenticeship place for each suitably qualified young person who wants one from 2013.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

A package of qualifications offered through the Apprenticeship Framework, will have positive implications for employment, learning and skills

6.3 A Healthy Halton

In some instances people seeking an apprenticeship will have known health problems perceived as barriers to employment. In such instances employers will be given support in terms of advice and adaptations and individuals may need support through the development of condition management plans.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The proposals are not significant enough to require a full risk assessment at this stage.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Apprenticeships present an opportunity to engage with the wider community and contribute to ensuring equality of access for all in helping people find sustainable employment and transferable skills. An equality Impact Assessment is to be undertaken and any significant outcomes will be reported to your meeting.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.

Halton Borough Council documents:

- Corporate Plan – 2011 – 2016
- Sustainable Community Strategy – 2011 – 2026
- People Plan, 2012-2015.
- Strategic Analysis to support 14-19 Strategic Commissioning for 2012-13

External Documents:

- Skills for Sustainable Growth Strategy Policy Document.
- Building Engagement, Building Futures: Strategy to Maximise the Participation of 16-24 Year Olds in Education, Training and Work
- Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy
- Apprenticeships in Higher Education

Place of Inspection

Municipal Building, Widnes

Contact Officer

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