

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, 8 January 2014 in The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Cassidy and Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: C. Dinsdale, N. Goodwin, D. Houghton, C. Patino, 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

ELS30 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 11 November 2013, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS31 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was reported that no public questions had been received.

ELS32 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

The Board received a presentation from Mark Basnett, Liverpool City Region Enterprise Board, which provided information of further work being carried out to develop an Enterprise Strategy for the Liverpool City Region.

The presentation set out the following:

- reasons for an Enterprise Strategy;
- various statistics for businesses compared to the UK average;
- total enterprises per 10,000 working age

- population;
- demographics;
- births and deaths of new enterprises in the Borough;
- 5 year survival rates;
- enterprise growth & barriers to growth;
- percentages of businesses that significantly traded outside the Region;
- business support landscape;
- what the strategy should deliver;
- long term ambitions;
- strategy & programme; and
- key principles, themes and strands.

Arising from discussion of the presentation, Members raised concerns that the work experience provision delivered by schools had ceased. In addition Members discussed the use of the internet to develop small businesses and suggested that this be identified as a priority for Halton to be included in the strategy.

It was noted that a report was submitted in September 2013, which advised that partners in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) were developing an Enterprise Strategy to capture and evaluate existing evidence on economic development in LCR and the wider economy to inform the design and development of a future enterprise programme.

Members were advised that the strategy was being developed so that the LCR was able to develop and deliver a coherent plan of action to tackle the chronic shortage of businesses that impeded on economic performance and addressed the gap of 17,000 businesses. This would help create an environment where businesses were created and could grow at a rate above targeted levels.

The report further set out what development of the strategy would include and the key questions to be considered.

The Chairman advised the Board that it was important that Halton played an active role in shaping and informing the development of the strategy.

The Chairman thanked Mark Basnett for an informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That

Strategic Director

- 1) the presentation and report be noted;
- 2) the use of internet to develop small businesses be identified as a priority area for Halton which may be included in the strategy;
- 3) Members forward any other priority area suggestions for Halton to be included in the Strategy to the Lead Officer or Clerk.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

ELS33 EUROPEAN PROGRAMME 2014-2020

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which advised Members on the development of a European Action Plan for Halton as part of the next European Programme 2014-2020.

The report was set out in two sections as follows:-

- accessing European Funds; and
- identifying and Developing Halton's Priorities.

It was reported that budgets had now been allocated with Liverpool City Region (LCR) receiving approximately £185m. From this it was noted that Halton would possibly receive an indicative allocation of £16.9m by the Local Economic Partnership (LEP).

It was further noted that EU Regulations for the new programme required all EU funding to be spent on 11 thematic objectives and the LCR had agreed that these themes would be taken forward through 5 portfolios, which were set out in the report for information.

Members were advised that a European Funding Investment Plan / Action Plan for Halton had to be developed and Halton had mirrored the 5 portfolios in developing its own set of projects under the same themes. An internal officer group chaired by the Strategic Director for Children and Enterprise had been meeting since April 2013 to develop Halton's priorities in relation to the new programme.

The report set out the approach Halton was taking to develop the priorities and set out the portfolio leads. In addition Members considered the thematic priorities which had been identified which were appended to the report, for example tackling youth unemployment, social growth and connectivity, transport infrastructure and helping adults back to work.

Arising from discussion of the report, Members queried who was funding the Judicial Review outlined in 3.2 of the report and when was it scheduled to take place. In response it was noted that the other Merseyside authorities were responsible for the funding and it was scheduled for the 28 and 29 January 2014. Members requested an update be brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the implementation of a Halton Action Plan for the European Programme 2014-20 be noted;
- 2) consideration be given to the thematic priorities identified; and
- 3) a progress report be presented at a future meeting.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

ELS34 RLWC USA TOMAHAWKS - VERBAL PRESENTATION UPDATE

The Board received a report from Chris Patino, Operational Director, Community and Environment, which provided information on when Halton hosted the USA Rugby League Team during the Rugby League World Cup (RLWC) 2013.

The Board was advised that 37 towns and cities expressed an interest in being hosts to Rugby League Teams for the World Cup and 14 had been chosen, Halton being one of them. The USA Team arrived in England on 19 October 2013, set up their team base in the Park Royal and used the Halton Stadium as their training base.

A draft delivery plan, which set out activities taken to assist in the facilitation and promotion of the RLWC, was circulated at the meeting. It was reported that the USA team engaged with hundreds of pupils, various community groups and attended civic functions with the Mayor. Members were further advised that the USA Team presented Halton with an award for being a fantastic host and displaying excellent team spirit.

The Chair wished to place on record the Board's thanks to the Sports Development Team for organising the programme during the USA Team's visit.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ELS35 WIDNES RECREATION GROUND DEVELOPMENT - VERBAL PRESENTATION UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which set out information regarding development of Widnes Recreation Ground.

Chris Patino, Operational Director, Community and Environment addressed the Board and provide a verbal update which outlined the following:

- a brief history of the site and background information;
- details of what the new sports facilities would include eg; showcase pitches for rugby, football and cricket, plus changing facilities etc;
- consultation procedure; and
- financial information.

Members were advised that the Council was working in partnership with a local school in order to obtain input regarding design of the facility and work was planned to commence in March 2014 and be finalised in October / November 2014.

It was reported that the estimated £2.680m required to fund the scheme would be raised by the proposed sale of 3 acres of land from the site for housing development.

Tabled at the meeting were various picture boards providing images of the new plans, facilities and playing field areas. The Board welcomed the new development and felt it would be an asset to the Borough.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ELS36 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which provided an annual report on the Community Development service delivery for the period 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013.

Nicola Goodwin, Community Development Manager, reported that Community Development support 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 supports to respond to community concerns and created cohesive neighbourhoods which were participative and vibrant with a strong sense of community connectedness.

The report set out the structure of the team, roles involved and noted that officers worked alongside community groups to help them develop their skills and knowledge to support community action.

It was further noted that a performance framework was in place for community development activities and the performance indicators were set out in the report for information.

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.

Members were also informed of service evaluation, community development grants, strategic approaches and future challenges.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ELS37 EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS QUARTERLY POLICY UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which informed Members of recent national policy announcements relevant to employment, learning and skills.

It was reported that a number of policy, legislation, consultation and guidance documents were issued by Government departments and agencies that had 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 to the Board for information along with observations of local relevance, where appropriate, so the Board could consider whether to initiate more detailed scrutiny and/or report to future meetings.

The report set out the following:

- new policy, strategy and statutory guidance;
 - the Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan; and
 - Care Leaver Strategy;
- research, consultations and general information;
 - proposal to establish a combined authority for Greater Merseyside;
 - OECD skills outlook 2013: key findings;
 - regional policy for smart growth and SME support; and
 - investment and campaign to help small firms grow.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

ELS38 WELFARE REFORM SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUP – TAKING FORWARD THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which proposed ways in which to take forward the recommendations from the ELSC Welfare Reform Scrutiny Topic Group.

It was reported that the scrutiny review was conducted through a number of means between June and September 2013. Progress to date was set out in the report for information including the group's conclusion, findings and recommendations identified. It was noted that the group recognised that all the recommendations may not be achievable due to the Council's current financial position and the budget restraints.

Members were advised that the Halton Strategic Partnership Board was also carrying out work around welfare reforms and it was suggested that the two work streams be brought together. Further investigations would be carried out with regards to how the recommendations could be implemented.

It was further noted that four key themes had been identified as follows:

- adult education and skills, working with job centres and up-skilling the adult population;

- data research to gather information about partner experiences including case studies;
- information and support given to vulnerable groups; and
- policy development and partnership working.

The Board agreed to continue the work of the topic group and endorsed the key themes in moving forward.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

ELS39 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which detailed the second quarter performance management report for 2013/14. The report set out progress against objectives / milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

It was reported that key priorities for development or improvement were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various functional areas as follows:

- Economy, Enterprise and Property extracts for Employment Learning and Skills; and
- Community Services extracts for Library Services and other Culture and Leisure services.

RESOLVED: That the second quarter performance management reports be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.