

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 23 March 2015 in the Karalius Suite, Halton Stadium, Widnes

Present: Councillors Edge (Chairman), MacManus (Vice-Chairman), Cassidy, Howard, P. Lloyd Jones, Logan, Parker and Ratcliffe

Apologies for Absence: Councillors S. Baker and C. Plumpton Walsh

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W Rourke, A. Jones, C. Patino, N. Goodwin, S. Saunders, N. Wilcock, M. Patino, J. Boote and J. Doyle

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

ELS37 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 7 January 2015, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS38 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

ELS39 MERSEYLINK EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Board received a presentation from Mr Neil Wilcock, the Employment and Skills Co-ordinator – Merseylink CJV, of the progress made to date against the Employment and Skills Key Performance Indicators associated with the new Mersey Gateway crossing.

The Board was advised that Merseylink was selected in the Summer of 2013 as the consortia to construct the new Mersey Gateway crossing and to maintain the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge.

It was reported that the final submission of Merseylink's Employment and Skills Delivery Plan included a range of proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). The Divisional Manager Employment, Learning and Skills and the Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) Manager were involved in scoring the Employment and Skills Delivery plans submitted by the bidders. Officers advised that as part of the procurement process, Merseylink consulted at length with HEP on employment and skills issues. This included a number of 'bootcamp' events and attendance at HEP meetings. Merseylink then used the intelligence gathered to inform their Employment and Skills Delivery Plan.

When Merseylink were selected as the preferred bidder, they established an Employment and Skills Governance Board (ESGB), which was chaired by Merseylink's Project Director, and included representation from the Merseylink consortia, the HEP and the MGCB Ltd. It was noted that the meetings took place monthly and updates were received on progress against the Employment and Skills KPI's. Additionally Merseylink had employed a full time Employment and Skills Co-ordinator to support the implementation of the Delivery Plan and act as the interface between HEP and the Merseylink Consortia.

A comprehensive range of employment and skills KPI's within their Employment and Skills Delivery Plan were proposed by Merseylink and detailed in the report.

The following highlights were noted from the presentation:

- To date Merseylink along with HEP had successfully run five pre- employability programmes, one for Administration and Traffic Management and three for General Construction. These courses had supported 55 local people, from this figure a total of 15 people had been offered an opportunity on the project (27%), ten as apprentices and five in general roles;
- Currently there were 224 permanent staff employed on the project, 13% from Halton;
- 75 new staff had been employed since January 2015 with 31% (23) being from Halton and 15% referred through HEP or the National Apprentice Scheme;
- To date Merseylink had employed 14 apprentices within a variety of departments and 73% of these were from either Widnes or Runcorn;

- SME Engagement – A cluster programme had been set up and 7 local businesses attended a workshop in August 2014. Out of the 7 attendees, four had formed a cluster to deliver catering on the project;
- By the end of March 2015, Merseylink would have delivered 18 weeks work experience to students/pupils within the Borough. Currently Merseylink had delivered 37.5 days' worth of work based learning to Halton residents with further opportunities going to Riverside College students;
- Volunteer Programme – To date Merseylink and HEP had delivered approximately 2400 hours of volunteering opportunities which equated to 80% of the KPI;
- One of two visitor centres had opened;
- Timebank – Merseylink had allocated 72 of the overall 100 days during phases one and two and had delivered 27 days by supporting a number of projects from both Runcorn and Widnes; and
- Regeneration – a regeneration fund had been created to support local community projects; such as the Art Initiative and the Heritage Trail.

The points below were noted following Members' queries:

- Apprentices were trained where possible at Riverside College; however when a course was not available, the next nearest educational facility was used, for example St Helens College;
- Riverside College had facilitated the pre-employability courses and Timebank workshops;
- Details of the apprentice data would be available later on in the year as some apprentices had just started in January 2015 so it was too early to determine success rates etc;
- Some apprentice posts had received little or no interest from Halton residents so went outside the Borough; and
- Officers would look into the approach used in schools with regards to promoting apprenticeships and

viewing them as a path to employment.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted and Neil Wilcock be thanked for the informative presentation.

ELS40 CHILDREN & ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLAN

The Board was presented with the final draft of the Children and Enterprise Directorate Business Plan for approval.

It was noted 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.

The key priorities for development or improvement for the various functional areas reporting to this Policy and Performance Board were considered by the Board at its meeting in November 2014. The priorities the Directorate proposed for the Business Plan 2015-18 noted by Members and were as follows:

- Integrated Commissioning of services to meet the needs of children, young people and families in Halton;
- Effectively supporting the child through the Halton Levels of Need Framework when additional needs arose;
- Improving achievement and opportunities for all through closing the gap for the most vulnerable children and young people; and
- Driving the economic prosperity of Halton to the benefit of residents and the workforce.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) Notes the contents of the report; and
- 2) Approves the Employment, Learning and Skills elements of the Directorate Business Plan.

ELS41 COMMUNITY SHOP

The Board was presented with a report from the Strategic Director, Communities, advising them of the Community Shop concept and proposing the exploration of the potential establishment of a Community Shop in Halton.

It was reported that a Community Shop was a social

enterprise model which provided a supermarket and community hub which provided members with access to shopping at 70% less RRP and wrap around mentoring support to tackle financial exclusion.

Members were advised that Community Shop handled over 30,000 tonnes of surplus food product annually, providing retailers and manufacturers with a zero-to-landfill solution. The parent company, Company Shop Ltd, had a proud heritage and longstanding expertise in the execution and delivery of redistributing surplus goods and was well placed to bring Community Shops to the UK in a sustainable and successful way.

Further details of the concept of the Community Shop were provided in the report together with details of the Community Shop Model and the Community Hub, which was an extended service to the Community Shop offering programmes such as CV writing skills, budgeting and debt advice, cookery classes and employability and skills training.

Officers advised the Board of the experiences of the Community Shop in Barnsley, as an example. Further to Members' queries it was noted that people who were eligible for membership were made aware of its existence, in the hope that they would want to join, it was in no way compulsory. The Board agreed to endorse further exploration for a Community Shop in Halton. Members' comments regarding a suitable location, deprivation areas and transport issues were noted and would be taken into consideration when choosing a location for the Community Shop.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The report be received;
- 2) Members endorse that further exploration be undertaken into the potential for a Community Shop to be established in Halton; and
- 3) A further report is presented to update Members of the Board on progress in this matter.

ELS42 PROPOSED BUSINESS SUPPORT MODEL

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which proposed a model/mechanism that accurately determined which businesses, when supported, had the most potential to spur

Halton's economic growth.

Members were advised that the report had been produced in relation to objective number 6 of the 'Growing Economic Prosperity in Halton' PPB report of September 2014. The report explained the basis for the model and stated that it was based on extensive secondary data research and a set of business indicators which had been developed to measure which businesses, when supported, would promote local growth most significantly. The model was a two phase process and consisted of a primary quantitative system, followed by a more qualitative evaluation of Halton's most 'attractive' businesses.

Phase one of the proposed business model would consider business indicators, as listed in the report, in order to provide an initial list of the businesses in the area that would promote growth most significantly if supported by the Council. Each business would have an 'attractiveness for support' rating and then the most promising businesses would then have further qualitative evaluation of 30/50/100 of the top scoring businesses. This would be the proposed second phase of the business support model, further details of the more evaluative approach was provided in the report.

Members discussed the proposed model and noted that it would be prudent to support the businesses that would have the most impact on economic growth in Halton.

RESOLVED: That the proposed business support model is noted and used as part of the wider evidence to inform HBC economic policy and activity.

Councillor P Lloyd Jones declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item (under paragraph 4.4) as he was a Board Member of Murdishaw Community Centre.

ELS43 COMMUNITY CENTRES ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Board received the annual report on Community Centres for the operating period 2013-14.

It was reported that Halton's Community Centres Service consisted of five buildings, Castlefields, Ditton, Grangeway, Murdishaw and Upton. The Centres delivered programmes of community activity, varying models of community cafes and service outlets, i.e. children's centres, youth centres and day services. These centres provided a community hub, a central point at the heart of these communities for residents to enjoy activities and receive

services in their neighbourhoods, and were based in the most deprived wards in the Borough.

Members were advised that Community Centres were benchmarked through APSE (the Association of Public Service Excellence) against other Civic, Cultural and Community Venues owned and run by other local authorities. This provided performance data but also trend information over a number of years.

It was noted that the timescales for data submissions, verifications and analysis dictated that benchmarking data was not available from APSE until quarter three of the following operating year, hence the timing of presenting the annual performance information to Members. This however did not affect the reporting through the quarterly performance monitoring reports and any financial, operational or other matters relating to Community Centres that needed to be brought to Members' attention in the relevant operating year, would be done so.

The report continued to discuss how Halton's Community Centres had progressed in recent years and provided profiles on each of them with comparison data from 2008/09. It also discussed the future challenges of the Centres such as increasing capacity, usage and income.

Members raised points relating to increasing the marketing of the Centres to increase income and suggested that this be done collectively. A marketing strategy for the service was being developed to include the five centres incorporating future use of social media. In developing the strategy, packages for social occasions such as private parties would be considered as a potential market segment for the Community Centres.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ELS44 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS – QUARTER 3

The Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, presented the performance management reports for Quarter 3 of 2014-15 and requested the Board to consider them and raise any questions or points of clarification.

It was noted that the key priorities for development or improvement in 2014-17 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:

- Enterprise, Employment and Skills; and
- Community and Environment

The report detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

RESOLVED: That the Board receive the Quarter 3 performance management reports.

Meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.