

Extract of Executive Board Minutes Relevant to the Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board**EXB 49****APPRENTICESHIP POLICY / APPRENTICESHIP LEVY & PUBLIC SECTOR TARGET**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which contained a draft Apprenticeship Policy and an overview of the proposed Apprenticeship Levy and Public Sector Target.

The Board was advised that the attached draft policy aimed to ensure a uniform and consistent approach across the Authority when employing apprentices. In addition it would bring together various disciplines within the Council, such as Policy, Human Resources, Employment, Learning and Skills, ensuring a co-ordinated approach.

It was reported that apprenticeships could often inject freshness and new ideas into the organisation, which helps to reduce potential skills shortages in growth areas and can contribute to the Council's wider employment and regeneration priorities. The report outlined specific links to national, regional and local drivers and it was noted that the Government was committed to achieving three million apprenticeship starts by Summer 2020. To achieve this, an Apprenticeship Levy would be introduced from April 2017, with employers in the public and private sectors with wage bills over £3m, required to contribute 0.5% of that pay bill into a levy.

It was reported that calculations based on the Government target would equate to about 55 apprentices for Halton annually, although the Apprenticeship target was to be viewed as aspirational rather than as a statutory target. Further, any revenue cost associated with the employment of apprentices had to be borne by the Council, as it was noted that only training costs could be recouped from Government.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Apprenticeships Policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, and its implications, be supported;
- 2) the implications of the Apprenticeships Levy and Public Sector Target be noted;
- 3) a designated fund be established to support the creation of twenty apprentices per year;
- 4) the schools element of the levy be recovered via the Schools Forum; and
- 5) £200,000 be included in the Medium Term Financial Forecast to create an Apprenticeship Fund.