



**ANNUAL REPORT
EMPLOYMENT LEARNING, SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND
PERFORMANCE BOARD
APRIL 2017 – MARCH 2018**

Introduction from Councillor Andrew MacManus

**Chair of the Employment Learning, Skills and Community Policy
Performance Board (PPB)**

This will be my second report to you as Chair of this Board. During the past year we have seen economic uncertainty and reduced funding having a bearing on work priorities and areas of focus. In addition, some of our skills and employment and business support funding is aligned with the Liverpool City Region governance arrangements. However, we continue to ensure that Halton gets its fair share of funding support to ensure that we provide excellent services to our residents, businesses and communities.

We really have done more with less resource over the last couple of years primarily as a result of the thorough scrutiny role provided by this board which challenges how resources are deployed and whether they are being allocated to projects that have the greatest social and economic impact for the borough.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Member colleagues for their valuable contributions and the support they have shown throughout the year and in particular I want to thank members who have given up their time to serve on the Culture Scrutiny Topic Group. This has been a complex piece of work, which cuts across many sectors and organisations. I would also like to thank officers for working with me to develop an interesting and important range of topics and agenda items for consideration.

Although, there continue to be challenges in the year ahead, I am confident that this PPB will continue to explore new and innovative ways of working to ensure that we provide the best possible Employment, Learning, Skills and Community services to the people of Halton.

I hope that the ELS and C PPB will continue to make an important contribution to creating an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, business growth, and improves the education, skills and employment prospects of our people and workforce in what may become a more challenging environment.

Councillor Andrew MacManus

**Chair, Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and
Performance Board**

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work, please contact Wesley Rourke on 0151 511 8645 or e-mail: Wesley.rourke@halton.gov.uk

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2017/18, the Board comprised Councillors A. MacManus (Chair) S. Edge (Vice Chair), S. Baker L. Cassidy, J Gerrard, G. Logan, J Lowe, C. Plumpton Walsh, June Roberts, C. Rowe, and P Wallace.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met four times during the year.

The Council's constitution sets out the board's strategic priority is to develop policy and monitor performance in relation to the Council's objectives for employment, learning and skills in the borough.

Specifically in relation to 4 functions:

- Enterprise and employment
- Adult learning and skills
- Culture and leisure services
- Library Service

Set out below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on:

ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AND GROWTH WORK PRIORITIES

Members received a presentation on the work of the Business Improvement and Growth Team. The Team was taking more of an account manager role for supporting businesses in the Borough and there were further opportunities to promote the service provided.

This will better align the team's activities with the Council's emerging regeneration priorities. The delivery of business support across the Liverpool City Region is in a period of transition and the team will develop its role as required to meet the changes.

WOMEN'S ORGANISATION (WO)

The Chief Executive of the organisation attended the PPB in June last year to outline the work of the Team, specifically regarding how the WO was being funded to deliver an Enterprise Hub aimed at providing business start-up advice.

BUSINESS GROWTH PROGRAMME

Members received regular updates on the performance of The Halton Business Growth Programme which was an initiative designed to help businesses in the Borough grow and create jobs. The scheme funds experts, many of whom are local, to undertake an assessment of businesses and identify areas where they can be supported.

INDUSTRIAL STRATAEGY

The PPB was given a report on the government's Industrial Strategy white paper, 'Building a Britain fit for the future'. Potentially Halton could benefit from the is

change in the government's approach to industrial policy, for example operations at Sci-Tech.

ADULT LEARNING AND SKILLS

APPRENTICESHIPS

Members received a presentation from the Skills Strategic Manager for the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Apprenticeships Hub. Four staff members had been appointed to the project which is hosted by Halton Borough Council, raised awareness of apprenticeship opportunities through a sense of events, workshops and promotional material.

The Council, on behalf of the Liverpool Combined Authority, bid successfully for a Skills Funding Agency ESF grant to deliver a series of Apprenticeship Hub activities. This will facilitate the government's apprenticeship funding reforms.

ADULT LEARNING

During the year, Members were advised on the work of the Adult Learning Team. It provides a wide range of accredited and non-accredited courses aimed at providing a welcoming and supportive environment for residents seeking to acquire new skills and training. The Service received a pleasing Ofsted grading of "Good" and partnering with employers was exemplary.

The service participated in the national pilot/research project to assess the impact of adult learning on the recovery of learners with mild/moderate mental health difficulties.

The Adult Learning Team are working with LCR colleagues in determining the key requirements necessary for receiving the Adult Education Budget that will be devolved from 2018/19.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Council has been running a Work Programme Contract for seven years and the Service Manager provided an annual report on the programme's performance and achievements to date. It was noted that the HPiJ Team managing and delivering the Contract was one of the top performing providers in the Country.

HPiJ have been asked to share best practice with other delivery partners of the work programme.

LOCAL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Members have received periodic updates on the Borough's local Economic Assessment. This year the emphasis is moving towards more of a "Halton Tomorrow" vision which sets out how Halton's economy might look in the future and how the Council might prepare for this in regard to how it provides support and skills development to the Borough's businesses, employees and residents.

PRESENTATION FROM RIVERSIDE COLLEGE

The Principal of Riverside College outlined the strategic priorities of the College and reported on positive achievements during the last academic year.

CULTURE AND LEISURE SERVICES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT

Members were provided with an overview of the team whose primary focus is to support and create cohesive neighbourhoods. The presentation also highlighted the great work to the team does in working alongside community groups to engage and support skills, knowledge and positive community action. This despite the team having reduced funding and personnel.

Each year the Policy Performance Board receives a report on the management and delivery of its five community centres based at Castlefields, Ditton, Grangeway, Murdishaw and Upton. Members expressed praise for the quality of the services provided and that the centres provide a community hub for local residents to enjoy. Overall use has increased and the service was working towards delivering a zero net cost.

Members were advised that the 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.

SPORT AND RECREATION TEAM

An informative presentation was provided on how the team delivered the priorities of the Borough's Sports Strategy and the work they do to improve both the physical and mental well-being of people living and working in Halton.

SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUP (CULTURE)

This year's Topic Group has focussed on "reviewing Halton's cultural offer within a City Region Context".

Much of the work of the Group was predicted on emerging governance arrangements within the Liverpool City Region. However, the Topic Group considered the synergy between culture and the visitor economy, but concluded that it was important to clearly define Halton's cultural offer and better understand the views and needs of the customer. The work resulted in the development of a survey and a clear set of actions to further promote Halton's cultural and leisure assets.

LIBRARY SERVICE

The Library Service annual report was reviewed as was the proposed Library Service strategy.