

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, 19 November 2018 in the Halton Suite - Halton Stadium, Widnes

Present: Councillors MacManus (Chair), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), Gerrard, Leck, Logan, June Roberts, Teeling, Wallace and Whitley

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Cassidy and Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, A. Jones, D. Follett, S. Lowrie, C. Patino and D. Unsworth

Also in attendance: Councillor Jones in accordance with Standing Order number 30

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
ELS19 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 24 September 2018, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>ELS9 – with reference to ELS8, the Household into Work Programme briefing would be sent following the meeting.</p>	Operational Director - Economy, Enterprise & Property
ELS20 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
<p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
ELS21 POLICY UPDATE - EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS	
<p>The Board received a report informing them of recent national policy announcements relevant to the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board (PPB), for the period from the last PPB in September to 31 October 2018.</p>	

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 and learning and skills agenda. The following announcements within the report were highlighted for Members: *New funding for cutting edge quantum technologies; Up to £50 million to develop world leading Artificial Intelligence (AI) talent in the UK; and Call for new green innovations to tackle climate change.* The Board was advised that there was a concentration of businesses of this nature situated within the Daresbury Sci-Tech and Manor Park sites; some examples of these were provided. Officers would circulate more information to the Board on these types of businesses in Halton. It was hoped that companies in Halton would benefit from some of the announcements mentioned. Further to one Member's query regarding planned cuts to business rates, it was suggested that some businesses situated in the Town Centre could benefit, if they met the criteria.

It was noted that the information provided was not intended to be in-depth but provided a brief summary of key announcements along with observations of local relevance, where appropriate. The Board was invited to consider whether to initiate more detailed scrutiny and/or report to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ELS22 ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET DEVOLUTION

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, updating them on the plans for the devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB), which currently funded the majority of the Adult Learning Team Service in Halton Borough Council.

The report explained that the AEB was funding provided for Liverpool City Region (LCR) residents outside of Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Advance Learner Loans and Higher Education. The report outlined the four statutory legal entitlements the funding supported and gave details of the other categories the funding was used to support.

Members were advised that the Liverpool City Region Devolution Deal in 2015 set out how the AEB would be fully devolved to local areas, which would commence from 2019-20. A Memorandum of Understanding had been agreed with the Department for Education to ensure that the devolved budget of approximately £52m per annum would follow. It

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was noted that once the Combined Authority took on this role, it would be responsible for commissioning AEB funded provision in the LCR, and therefore, would have the freedom to set local priorities and funding rates, whilst still being subject to the statutory duties of the Secretary of State. This would allow it to focus on meeting local area need, deliver local economic objectives and develop a sustainable local provider base.

The Board was advised of the devolution progress made so far and the challenges faced. It was noted by them that the Combined Authority was keen to involve SMEs, third sector and small providers when issuing tenders. Members discussed the latest full year information based on 2016-17 ILR data and requested the data for 2017-18. Officers would contact Riverside College and the LCR who provide the data, so Members would be sent this when it was available.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the progress to ensure that Halton received a fair and proportionate share of the funding.

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ELS23 BUSINESS GROWTH PROGRAMME IN HALTON: UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, informing them of the current performance of the Halton Business Growth Programme.

It was noted that the Business Growth Programme within Halton was part of City Region initiative designed to assist Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to grow and create employment. The Programme started in January 2016 and was due to finish in December 2018. The Programme provided assistance by commissioning external suppliers to undertake a two stage intervention with eligible Halton businesses, as described in the report.

Information was provided to Members on performance against company assists and performance against jobs created, both since the start of the Programme up to November 2018.

It was reported that following discussions with City Region partners, it was anticipated that the Programme would be extended to cover the period 2019 – 2021. If secured it would have a target of assisting a further 95 businesses and creating an additional 95 jobs.

In response to Members queries, the following additional information was provided:

- The process of how a company was helped from the initial enquiry to a 6 month follow up was outlined;
- There was a variety of ways in which the service was promoted: via Halton Chamber of Commerce; word of mouth; newsletters; mailing lists; referrals from Elected Members and exhibitions;
- the diagram on page 26 referred to Q4 data; it was noted that this would change as it would include data up to 31 December 2018; and
- One Member advised the Board of a Runcorn Company winning a competition on an American TV Programme called *Shark Tank*. The name of the company would be investigated by Officers.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the activities and performance of the Business Growth Programme and the support available to Small to Medium Enterprises within Halton; and
- 2) notes the proposed extension of the Business Growth Programme from 2019 – 2021, and supports the provision of additional business assistance within Halton.

ELS24 SPORT AND RECREATION TEAM

The Board received the annual report for the Council's Sport and Recreation Service for the period 2017-18, and accompanying presentation given by Sue Lowrie, Sport and Recreation Manager.

It was noted that there were two distinct areas within the Team:

- Sports Development Team – who developed programmes and activities to support the local infrastructure and encourage residents to start and stay active; and
- Management of the Council's three Leisure Centres: Kingsway Leisure Centre; Brookvale Recreation Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool.

Members were advised that overall the report demonstrated a year where the Sport and Recreation Team had worked in partnership with a range of stakeholders and had made considerable progress, impact and achievements

across the Borough. The Team was structured to direct resources on tackling inactivity, as this was where the gains for the individual were greatest. The activities were used as an essential component in supporting and developing the infrastructure of the community and to improve the quality of life for residents, both physically and mentally.

The Board was advised that the Service worked closely with partner organisations to share resources which, in turn, helped achieve success. Officers highlighted the importance of the contributions from partners which had a positive impact to the success of the service.

The report provided detailed commentary on the delivery of the Sports Strategy 2017-18 under 6 themes as follows:

- Increase Participation and Widen Access;
- Club Development;
- Coach Education and Volunteering;
- Sporting Excellence;
- Finance and Funding for Sport; and
- Sports facilities.

Members welcomed the presentation and were pleased to hear about the activities being carried out across the Borough. They noted that there were now less people in Halton who were considered to be inactive as they had taken advantage of the opportunities available such as: Couch to 5k; Couch to 2k; Health Walks; Junior Parkruns; and GP Practices Health Walks. The presentation also outlined the work being carried out around summer holiday activities; mental health matters; and workshops and grants.

Officers provided responses to Members' concerns regarding staff shortages in the leisure centres' swimming pools, i.e. lifeguards and swimming coaches and the fact that services were being cancelled due to this. Members were reassured that recruitment was ongoing for both roles and some staff would be in place for January 2019. It was also commented that there was a national shortage of swimming instructors which together with the pay rates had had an impact on recruitment.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the report and comments made; and
- 2) welcomes the progress being made in encouraging and supporting residents to be active.

ELS25 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS - QUARTER
2 OF 2018/19

The Board received the performance management reports for Quarter 2 (1 July 2018 to 30 September 2018) of 2018-19 and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

It was noted that the key priorities for development of improvement in 2017-18 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

- 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.

Members queried the income levels for Murdishaw and Upton Community Centres as the income to date was low. The reason for this was not known, but as stated in the report, it was noted that these amounts may rise slightly as some outstanding income was yet to be credited to the accounts.

RESOLVED: That the performance management reports for Quarter 2 be received.

Meeting ended at 7.55 p.m.