

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 14 January 2009 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Jones (Chairman), Austin, M. Bradshaw, Edge, Findon, Howard, Parker, Rowe, Stockton and Worrall

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Fraser

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Collins, N. Goodwin, J. Hatton, A. McNamara, M. Simpson, P. Sinnott and A. Villiers

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

ELS31 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2008, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS32 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was reported that no public questions had been received.

ELS33 SSP MINUTES

The Board received the Minutes of the Employment Learning and Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership meeting held on 27 November 2008, which outlined the following:

- local employment issues;
- HBC procurement;
- construction employment integrator project;
- credit crunch / redundancies;
- budget;
- riverside college; and

Action

- sub group and LSP reports

Members noted the economic crisis and considered ways in which the Council could support businesses. It was advised that a joint Officer and Member group had been set up to look at best practice guidance for businesses in terms of what Local Authorities could and couldn't do.

The Board discussed the tender process and the possibility of adding in to the scoring mechanism extra points for contracts awarded to local businesses and the option of using vacant and underused properties to improve job opportunities in the construction trade.

In addition the Board suggested that clarity be provided in relation to Learning and Skills Council's money in terms of how it was dispersed.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The SSP Minutes be noted; and
- 2) The possibility of using vacant and underused buildings to improve job opportunities in the construction trade be investigated.

Chief Executive

ELS34 ELS PPB WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director Environment which outlined the first step in developing a work programme of Topics for the Board to examine in 2009/10.

Members considered topics as detailed below which would be prioritised and finalised at the next Policy and Performance Board (PPB) meeting:

- workforce and skills for science and technology focusing on Daresbury (this would be a joint group with the Urban Renewal PPB);
- financial inclusion including employment and debt support through the economic climate;
- libraries and the possible increase of mobile libraries including examination of options such as libraries in schools and satellite libraries; and
- identification of potential and encouragement of elite

sports performance in the borough.

It was reported that should Members have any further suggestions regarding topic groups they were to email proposals to the lead officer before the 12 February 2009.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The list of suggested topic group options above be noted and taken into account at the March meeting of the PPB; and
- 2) Members forward any further suggestions to the lead officer before the 12 February 2009.

Strategic Director
- Environment

ELS35 FREE SWIMMING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community which set out the Governments Policy initiative to provide free swimming to all those aged 60 and over and to all those aged 16 and under for two years starting on 1 April 2009.

It was advised that the initiative was launched last summer in order to improve participation, health, impact on childhood obesity and to help meet the Governments commitment to get two million people more active by 2012.

It was reported that free swimming would be offered in Halton in Kingsway Leisure Centre, Brookvale Recreation Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool. The allocations of annual grants for each strand of the policy and the implementation of the scheme were outlined in the report for Members consideration.

The Board discussed various issues such as the possibility of over crowding, the need for parental consent for children under the age of 16, the use of a swipe card system and the possibility of implementing a talent identification scheme.

Members also requested that a report outlining the effect the scheme would have on current users as well as additional usage gained from the scheme be brought back to the Board after the first year of implementation.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) a report detailing the effect of the scheme on current users in addition to increased usage gained from the scheme, be brought back to the Board after the first year of implementation; and
- 3) the possibility of a talent identification scheme be investigated.

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

ELS36 CHILD POVERTY IN HALTON

The Board received a report which outlined the need to initiate the development of a child poverty action plan. It was reported that in March 1999 the Prime Minister committed the Government to end child poverty by 2020, and to halve it by 2010. Numerous announcements and initiatives had been made since that time and the Government announced PSA Delivery Agreement 9, ending child poverty.

Statistics from the national child poverty toolkit which demonstrated how child poverty had changed since 1999 was also outlined for the Board. Detailed in the report was the progress Halton had made in reducing child poverty.

It was reported that data showed that whilst much had been achieved and child poverty had reduced in the Borough, there was still a considerable amount of children living in poverty (as defined by households with less than 60% of the median income).

The Board considered whether a topic group be established to consider various issues such as longevity and life chances and the proposals that could be made from that work.

Members were advised that the next step was to support the development of a Merseyside Child Poverty Strategy and when this had advanced Halton would need to develop its local action plan. Once the action plan had been finalised it would be brought to Board for Members consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the progress made on child poverty be noted; and
- 2) the finalised action plan for the Child Poverty Strategy be brought a future meeting for Members consideration

Strategic Director-
Children & Young
People

ELS37 MID YEAR MONITORING REPORT FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR CORE FUNDING 2008-09

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director - Health and Community which provided details of the mid year monitoring report for Voluntary Sector Core Funding.

It was advised that 12 organisations had received funding from the Council, details of which were outlined in the report for consideration. Organisations awarded over £5,000 were subject to a Service Level Agreement and provided quarterly monitoring. Organisations who received under £5,000 provided 6 monthly figures. It was reported that a case study would be provided for each quarter and would be included in future monitoring reports.

Members were informed of a luncheon planned for the Voluntary Sector Agencies, it was reported that the invitation could be extended to Members of the Employment Learning Skills Board so they could liaise with the agencies and maybe arrange a visit in the future.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

ELS38 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2007-08

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community which updated the Members of the deliver of Community Development in 2007/08.

It was reported that the Community Development team provided direct support to 90 community organisations in 2007/08. It was noted that this support enabled capacity building for groups to plan a key role in delivery of 72 community led initiatives. Members were advised that 2,084 active volunteers had participated in supporting community groups, delivering initiatives and providing community events, an increase in 945 from the previous year.

It was noted that a half yearly service user evaluation for the period 1 April to 30 September 2008 had been undertaken and 78 groups who had used the service were invited to comment with 54 returning completed evaluation forms, a response rate of 69%. Key points from the evaluation were outlined in the report for Members consideration.

Members felt that it would be useful if in the future to have figures of how many people were in each community group that benefited from allocated funds.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The service performance and future developments of service delivery be noted; and
- 2) Statistics of how many people in each voluntary group who received awards be distributed to Members of the Board.

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

ELS39 JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT - HEALTH

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community which provided a summary of the findings of the first Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Health.

It was noted that Directors of Adult Social Services, Public Health and Children and Young People's (CYP) Services in every Local Authority and Primary Care Trust (PCT) had a statutory duty from April 2008 to work together to develop a JSNA for their area.

For the production of the first JSNA Halton focused on refining, improving and bringing together the information we already had available that highlights overall population needs. This information was from national and local sources and included a wealth of information we had collected directly from services across Halton. This information was used to take a longer-term view of population trends and the likely impact on demand over the next years and decades.

Members were advised that the JSNA was intended to identify 'the big picture' in terms of the health and wellbeing needs and inequalities within the local population. It was not intended to describe how we would address the needs, demonstrate outcomes or showcase our services. The aim was that the information contained in the JSNA would encourage partner agencies to use the findings to

inform a number of local authority and PCT strategies, Client Group Commissioning Plans, Local Area Agreements etc. It had already been used within Halton, to feed into Ambition for Health and the Joint Commissioning Plan.

The development of the JSNA was not a single, one off exercise but was an ongoing piece of work, which would add to our commissioning 'intelligence'. As we continue to develop our JSNA we would: -

- Build upon service user and care views
- Include information about service usage
- Ensure we have information at a locality level as well as overall trends.

It was further noted that the approval process for the JSNA within the PCT was currently being reviewed. It was anticipated that it would go to the PCTs Management Team and then the Trust Board, once the St Helens JSNA was ready.

Members were advised of the consultation process undertaken and it was noted that a key element of the consultation process was the production of an accessible public document on the local priorities detailing how the JSNA would feed into commissioning plans for the future and the evidence based investment decisions taken. This had been achieved through the development of the summary of findings document, which was available as an appendix to the report.

It was proposed that the consultation process be in 4 stages, as follows:

- 1) Professionals
- 2) Members via all Policy & Performance Boards (January 2009)
- 3) Key stakeholders
- 4) General public

At each stage, the document would be revised and updated accordingly.

Members noted that deprived wards still needed improvement and support, social housing was in good condition and some private housing was in poor condition which was reflected in the more affluent wards and there was a high proportion of adults that had low educational attainment that reflected on other needs in the Borough.

The Board suggested that each area could be looked at individually in terms of the health impact on the Borough, as each Policy and Performance Board would have an impact on specific areas it was proposed that issues could be looked at to discover what progress could be made as a Council.

Members queried where the statistics had originated from and requested that the main organisations used could be added to the document.

Members commended the work undertaken in producing the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) each Policy and Performance Board look at specific areas individually within their remit, in order to address health issues in the Borough; and
- 3) the main organisations used to obtain data be provided to Board Members and added to the document.

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

STANDING ORDER 51

The Board was reminded that Standing Order 51 of the Council's Constitution stated that meetings should not continue beyond 9.00 pm.

RESOLVED: That Standing Order 51 be waived.

ELS40 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director Corporate and Policy which provided progress towards meeting Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets at the first six months of the Agreement.

Members were advised that the latest data had been received and there was an amendment to the base line data which had gone down. There was a change in the way it was calculated and a mechanism was being developed to reflect all business start ups.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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Meeting ended at 9.13 p.m.