

## **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, 21 November 2016 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors MacManus (Chair), Edge (Vice-Chair), Cassidy, Logan, J. Lowe, Rowe and Wallace

Apologies for Absence: Councillor S. Baker, J Gerrard and June Roberts

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, A. Jones, A. Bowen, J. Griffiths and R. Owen

Also in attendance: Alison Hoolihan and Helen Osborne - Libraries

### **ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

	<i>Action</i>
ELS21 MINUTES	
The Minutes from the meeting held on 26 September 2016, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
ELS22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
ELS23 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The Executive Board minutes relevant to the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community PPB were submitted to the Board for information.	
ELS24 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT GATEWAY	
The Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, presented a report to the Board that provided an overview of the Youth Employment Gateway Project currently being delivered by Employment, Learning and Skills Division.	

Members were advised that the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Youth Employment Gateway (YEG) project was an innovative programme for people aged between 18 and 24 years and who had been in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit (UC) for between 8 weeks and 9 months. The Programme provided all participants with a range of services, each aimed at moving them one step closer to their employment aspirations and ambitions.

The overview included achievements to date, income and expenditure and future strategy of the Programme.

Members praised the Programme and its success since its implementation. The following points were made following Members queries and comments:

- It was encouraging that clients were part of the Programme because they wanted to be; unlike a mandatory programme where people were forced to go to maintain benefit payments for example;
- The reasons for clients not achieving 26 continuous weeks of work were various; such as short term contracts; agency work or just that the job was not suitable for the client. In such cases the client would return to the advisor for further advice;
- Programme staff maintained contact with other agencies as sometimes clients needed to be referred to other services;
- It was suggested that one of the YEG clients be invited to share their experience with the Board, at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## ELS25 HALTON GROWTH HUB

The Board received a report and accompanying presentation which informed of the development, delivery and current performance of the Growth Hub initiative in Halton.

The report explained that the creation of Growth Hubs was a Government initiative intended to provide clarity, consistency and simplification across the business support agenda; increase migration business support from the public to the private sector and provide gateway support that was

information, guidance and brokerage to the business community. They were therefore not intended to be suppliers of business support but rather the interface between the business community and increasingly, commercial business support providers.

The report went on to discuss the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Growth Hub and Halton's approach to a local growth hub. The performance of Halton's Growth Hub to date was presented to the Board by Halton's dedicated Growth Hub Broker, Rachael Owen. Included in the presentation were examples of the work undertaken with companies such as *Clovemead*, *G-tec Ltd*, *Genlab* and *Apec Taxis*.

The following additional points were made following Members questions:

- People claiming Job Seekers Allowance who wanted to start their own business were eligible to apply to the Loan Fund, where they could borrow up to £25k at 6%;
- There were some projections made for future business growth in Halton, this data had been shared with Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ);
- A market needs assessment was needed to assess the available properties for businesses looking to move to Halton;
- The criteria for businesses accessing the Growth Hub service was that they must be in Halton or be planning to move to Halton to set up business;
- It was good to have a central source of information, which was convenient for businesses to access; and
- The Halton and Warrington Business Fair had been held and the stand was well visited.

RESOLVED: That Members note the performance of the Growth Hub in Halton to date.

## ELS26 SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUP - CULTURE

The Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, presented a report that put forward for consideration, the establishment of a topic group to evaluate Halton's cultural offer within the context of the Liverpool City

Region's (LCR) Cultural Devolution agenda.

It was noted that the LCR Combined Authority was developing a collaborative City Region approach to culture following the City Region Devolution Deal in November 2015.

The report advised of the 'Creative Conversion Group' that was created in February 2016 and provided details of the joint action plan that had been developed producing nine key areas, which were detailed in the report.

Appended to the report was a draft document containing the scrutiny review's aims, objectives and proposed methodology, for Members' consideration. Members agreed to establish this topic group and Councillors McManus, Wallace, Lowe, Edge, Logan and Rowe agreed to join the group. The initial invitation and papers for the first meeting would be sent to all Members.

REOLVED: That

- 1) Members agree to the establishment of a topic group to focus on Halton's cultural offer and its interface with the wider LCR;
- 2) the Board Members listed above agree to join the group; and
- 3) interim reports be presented to the Board no later than March 2017 and a final report be produced by June 2017.

Operational Director -  
Economy, Enterprise  
& Property

#### ELS27 UPDATE ON THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND WAYS TO WORK PROJECT

The Board received an update on the Combined Authority ESF Ways to Work contract. It was noted that the 'Ways to Work' project was co-funded by the European Union (EU) and was being delivered across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) by all six local authorities.

It was reported that the project had commenced in January 2016 and would end in December 2018. It had a total value of £42m over 3 years and Halton's allocation was worth £3.3m. Officers advised that the Ways to Work project was one of a suite of projects currently being funded through the EU and further information on this was provided in Appendix 1 of the report.

Officers advised of the aims of the project and the activity to date, as presented in Table 1. The setting of targets was also discussed and Members were informed of the marketing plans in place for the project.

Members noted the numbers of ILM (Intermediate Labour Market) placements currently, as shown in Table 2 and the fact that interest in these was growing. The following was also noted after Members' comments:

- The Project was important for people not only to get qualifications but for raising their morale and general wellbeing;
- Although European Funding was secured up to 2019; there was no indication where future funding would come from to continue the Project;
- The potential £3.3m worth of investment into the Borough was dependant on achieving outputs and results. A pro rata approach was taken with regards to payments, which could always be clawed back; and
- Members requested a breakdown of Wards that residents were from who were accessing the Project; this would be sent once available.

RESOLVED: That Members welcome the progress made to date and support the growth and development of the Ways to Work project.

Operational Director -  
Economy, Enterprise  
& Property

## ELS28 LIBRARY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

The Board received a presentation from the Library Strategy and Development Manager, Julie Griffiths, on the Library Service activity over the last 12 months which had focussed on increasing usage of the service across the community.

She advised Members of activities which had supported the delivery of the Library Service Strategy:

- Reading – the e-book challenge, e-platform and comics plus.
- Activities – such as Shakespeare week, Fun Palace, BBC's love to read competition and the new activities introduced: Wellbeing Wednesdays; Saturday Stories; and Homework Club. They also held a Lego

Club and the Summer Reading Challenge which was held every summer.

- Learning and Science – learning through technology such as coding and micro bits, (an example of which was passed around the room).

The Libraries Area Managers were introduced to Members, Alison Hoolihan in Runcorn and Helen Osborne in Widnes.

Following the presentation and Members questions, the following additional points were made:

- The take up of learning through technologies was very good and it was noted that coding was being introduced into the schools curriculum;
- Staff were trained to assist with customers who had dementia and had been accredited for this;
- The take up of reading e-books was good, with 400 people signed up so far; and
- Young people were encouraged to engage with the libraries through contact with the schools and the Library Service employed a Children and Families Officer, who was also responsible for communicating and promoting the Service.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Meeting ended at 8.12 p.m.*