

Public Document Pack



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

Monday, 21 September 2020 at 6.30 p.m.
Via remote access (please contact below
for instructions)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Walsh'.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Andrew MacManus (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor John Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Lauren Cassidy	Labour
Councillor Rosie Leck	Labour
Councillor Geoffrey Logan	Labour
Councillor June Roberts	Labour
Councillor Christopher Rowe	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Angela Teeling	Labour
Councillor Pamela Wallace	Labour
Councillor Louise Whitley	Labour

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 or e-mail
ann.jones@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 16 November 2020*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

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1. MINUTES		1 - 2
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)		
	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

**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 Tuesday, 28 July 2020 via remote access

Present: Councillors MacManus (Chair), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), J. Bradshaw, Cassidy, Logan, Rowe, Wallace and Whitley

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Leck and June Roberts

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, A. Jones and C. Patino

Also in attendance: One member of the press

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

		<i>Action</i>
ELS1	MINUTES	
	The Minutes from the meeting held on 10 February 2020, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
ELS2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
ELS3	EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING & SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20	
	The Board received the Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2019-20.	
	The Chair wished to convey his thanks to the Vice Chair and all Members of the Board and Officers for their support throughout the year.	
	RESOLVED: That the Annual Report for 2019-20 be received and recommended to full Council.	

ELS4 COVID-19 - NEW WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out the range of services that had been provided during the COVID-19 pandemic, which were relevant to this Policy and Performance Board.

The report outlined these services and included:

Business Support – services provided by the Business Improvement Team which included: raising awareness of support available to 2,500 local businesses; call handling and delivery of the Discretionary Grants Fund.

Employment, Learning and Skills – services provided by the Employment, Learning and Skills Division which included: information on the Library Services and Leisure Centres; details of community activities undertaken, an update on the Brindley Theatre; the status of planned events; and Community Centres updates.

Further to Members queries, the following was noted:

- Residents who were self-employed were provided with several options of Government grants available to them. Many enquiries had come from *Halton People into Jobs* which were then passed onto Business Support. The Chamber of Commerce was also providing assistance with grants for self-employed people via the Government directly.
- Some activities/classes in the Community Centres had been suspended; however social distancing was now being observed in the swimming pools and gyms and some classes were able to continue this way as well; and
- A bicycle scheme for staff was planned for later in the year but nothing has been confirmed yet.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked all Officers for their hard work in dealing with the demands that COVID-19 had brought upon them and the Borough.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the report and comments made.

Meeting ended at 5.50 p.m.

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 21 September 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
- (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
- (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
- (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
- (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;

- Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chair will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning & Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	21 September 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Economic Development
SUBJECT:	Covid19 – Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund (LADGF)
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** The impact of the Coronavirus is being felt in our communities in many different ways, and Halton's businesses have been severely affected with many losing several months of trade and some are still not fully operational. This report sets out how the LADGF provided by Central Government has gone some way to support local businesses.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) The Board considers the information presented and raise any questions of interest or points of clarification following the presentation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 LADGF

During Lockdown, the Business Improvement and Growth Team collated all current government advice to businesses into a single resource for use by Council colleagues and developed dedicated resource packs for specific target groups, for example the self-employed. The team sends a fortnightly (weekly until August 2020) e-shot to 2,500 local businesses containing up to date information about business support during the current crisis. The team has managed more than a thousand calls from local businesses in distress, with a large proportion of enquiries concerned about eligibility for support through the Business Rates system or other government backed schemes.

- 3.2** In addition the Council, designed, administered and delivered the LADGF. The scheme targeted businesses that were not able to access

previous grant schemes but had property costs and had been significantly impacted by Covid-19. Government's criteria is:

- A business must be a solvent business that was trading on 11th March 2020;
- Should be a small or micro company;
- Have ongoing property costs;
- Has been significantly financially affected by Covid-19;
- Has not received other relevant grant support from Central Government apart from the Furlough Scheme;

Halton's scheme's eligibility is focused on the following themes:

1. Shared Space Grant
2. Charitable Sector Support Grant
3. Bed & Breakfast Support Grant
4. Businesses either working from home and/or other locally owned businesses in other premises

The scheme was open to applications between 1 June and 19 July 2020 and came to a financial close on 24 August 2020. Ahead of the Government's deadline of 28 August, due to the fact we successfully delivered the LADGF.

3.3 The Halton Borough Council delivered grants worth £831,250 on behalf of Central Government. In the Borough, we have approximately 1,500 business who have not received any Covid Government Funding whatsoever; therefore, the Council took the decision to support as many businesses as possible by providing smaller grants. The demand for funds outweighed the actual amount of money provided to the Council and many businesses did not receive any grant at all. The Council received 269 Applications, of which 163 businesses were awarded grants. The grants ranged from £2,500 up to £10,000 subject to the new of employees.

<u>TOTAL BY CATEGORY</u>		<u>£</u>	<u>APPLICANTS</u>
Charitable Sector Support Grant	1	45,000.00	7
Bed & Breakfast Support Grant	2	7,500.00	3
Shared Space Grant	3	255,000.00	52
WFH / Locally-owned other premises	4	523,750.00	101
		831,250.00	163

3.4 The Council has received some very positive feedback from businesses who were successful: ***“I would like to thank you with all my heart - as a business owner this means so much to us”*** and ***“Thank you so much, I really am delighted. I was just about to try***

and sleep, worrying out of my mind about my business finances. You really don't know what this means for me and my staff".

3.5 However, given the Government criteria set out in paragraph 3.2 and the limited amount of funding, only 5% of the original business rates grant total, a large number of business were hugely disappointed to find they had been unsuccessful. In addition, we have received feedback from businesses who received a grant: ***"Could you please let me know why did you grant our business only £5k, as far as I know grants should be between £10k to £25k? Could you please clarify this for me as we were expecting the minimum of grants that is £10k as we are really struggling recently with paying our expenses as an outcome of this Covid-19 situation and drop of business"***.

3.6 The grants have provided vital support to Businesses in need. However, there continue to be gaps in the Governments provision of Covid-19 support and still some business have missed out.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The LADGF was designed to be accessible and inclusive for all businesses. The grant process worked well and whilst colleagues were inundated with applications and collecting further information, it was a success.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Government funding provided the grant. The Council provided the administrative resources.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The aim of the grants was to support businesses and to enable them to retain employees.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Prepared by the Team and checked Audit.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning & Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	21 st September 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Economic Development
SUBJECT:	Employment, Learning & Skills Update
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on the work of the Employment, Learning & Skills Division.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) **the report be noted; and**
- 2) **The Board considers the information presented and raise any questions of interest or points of clarification following the presentation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Since March 20th 2020, the staff within the Employment, Learning & Skills Division have been operating a remote system for customers and learners, with all centres currently closed. The staff are in the process of preparing for centres to reopen again and in planning for how delivery to customers and learners will roll out given social distancing measures. As well as the guidance surrounding Covid-19, being core to our delivery going forward, the work of the Division will very much focus on supporting those individuals that have been adversely affected economically by the pandemic and have lost their jobs and/or confidence. Existing programmes are set to continue and, in some cases, shift in priority to support those most in need. For example, Halton People into Jobs will deliver a new DWP funded Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) programme to help people who have been unemployed and in receipt of benefits for at least 13 weeks, to find sustained work.

This report provides an update to the September 2019 ELS PPB update report.

3.1 ESF Ways to Work

3.1.1 The Ways to Work programme has continued to support residents into work, training and self-employment during lockdown. We liaised with local employers to provide paid ILM opportunities. Partnership working has been key in raising awareness of the support available across Halton and a dedicated marketing campaign took place via social media to generate new referrals.

3.1.2 The Ways to Work programme is funded through two separate funding streams:

1.3 funding supports residents aged 16-29yrs old. An extension was agreed to continue the service to December 2020. A further bid has been submitted which is due to go to the ESIF committee this week for approval (if approved 1.3 delivery will finish September 2023).

1.1 funding supports residents aged 30+. Funding is in place to June 2021. A proposal is due to be submitted for National Reserve Funding to extend 1.1 beyond 2021 (if approved 1.1 our delivery will finish September 2022).

As part of the CA's 'ask' of the Government to support the road to recovery, an extension to the Ways to Work programme (£53m) has been requested as part of Build Back Better. The pioneering Ways to Work programme has been running in the City Region since 2016, working with 25,000 people and supporting over 15,000 into work. It provides individual targeted support to unemployed people to help them identify, prepare for, and secure employment opportunities. The programme works closely with local employers and skills providers, aligning support to vacancies and skills shortages. Demand for the programme will increase because of the pandemic, and there is an opportunity to fund its extension so that it can provide immediate support to those who most need it.

3.2 Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Hub

3.2.1 The Employment, Learning & Skills Division has managed the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Hub on behalf of the City Region for 6 years. However, given the developments at the CA and as part of the Metro Mayor's ambitions, a proposal was made of £4m of Single Investment Fund (SIF) and £5.5m of ESF to fund a new service going forward. The full business case for SIF was approved in October 2019, enabling Halton to continue to deliver the LCR Apprenticeship Hub element of the new contract under an SLA agreement with the CA. The service was then renamed Apprenticeship Support by Be-More. Both the SIF and ESF programme will support over 700 events/outreach activities and generate 1,500 apprenticeship vacancies. To-date 297 events and targeted outreach activities promoting apprenticeships have been

delivered to 12,136 residents, of which 919 were from Halton. So far, over 200 vacancies have been created.

- 3.2.2 From October 2020 to March 2022, 250 Apprenticeship Awareness theatre productions will be delivered in schools across Liverpool City Region, in addition to two annual Apprenticeship Graduation events and a Skills Show in the summer of 2021.

During the last 4 months, the team have delivered virtual events to JCP claimants and 121-telephone support service to parents and students across the city region to ensure a continuation of the service, which has received significantly positive feedback from both DWP and schools.

3.3 LCR Apprenticeship Growth Plan

- 3.3.1 The Combined Authority commissioned the Apprenticeship Growth Plan, which ran 2017-2020. During some of this time, the LCR Apprenticeship Hub Board regularly reviewed the action plan within the Growth Plan and reported on progress to the Combined Authority (CA) Employment & Skills Board.

- 3.3.2 The CA undertook a review of the services it was funding/leading on and the Apprenticeship Hub Board no longer met. An overarching Skills & Apprenticeship Hub, managed by the CA, was created and all policy relating to skills and apprenticeships now sits with the Hub Manager based at the CA. An updated Apprenticeship Growth Plan has not been commissioned. The Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team (as detailed in 3.2) is managed through the Division and continues to report into the CA on a monthly basis.

3.4 DWP Work & Health Programme

- 3.4.1 The DWP Work and Health Programme went live in November 2017. Halton People into Jobs delivers the programme on a sub-contractor basis to Ingeus.

555 participants have started on the programme that have accessed up to 15 months of support to help remove barriers to work. Since the start of the programme, 168 individuals have been supported into paid employment/self-employment.

- 3.4.2 In 2019/2020 an internal audit of the programme was conducted which reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the programme. A substantial assurance opinion was issued with no action required.

- 3.4.3 The new DWP funded Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) programme (part of Work and Health Programme) will go live in October 2020 to help people who have been unemployed and in receipt of benefits for at least

13 weeks, to find sustained work. The programme will support 1453 participants between October 2020 and March 2022.

3.5 Merseylink Employment & Skills Performance

Merseylink's Employment and Skills Board has continued to meet remotely during Covid lockdown and progress towards KPIs by Tarmac and Emovis monitored. Discussions have taken place with regard to the KPI for the number of volunteering hours, as post construction the 3000 hours is not realistic. At the last meeting, it was reported that the Catalyst Museum was undergoing refurbishment and it was proposed to use the space previously occupied by the Mersey Gateway Visitor Centre for Catalyst activities. It was agreed that Tarmac would continue discussions with the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board in order to agree a more relevant KPI for this area of work.

3.6 Adult Learning and Devolution

3.6.1 Devolution of the Adult Education Budget has not had a negative impact on the delivery of Adult Learning in Halton. The curriculum offer was reviewed and remained in line with local and Liverpool City Region priorities.

3.6.2 The additional funding for Test and Learn pilot programmes was embraced by the Adult Learning Team and innovative programmes have been delivered.

3.6.3 Funding data returns have been submitted to LCRCA for the devolved AEB allocation and to ESFA for the small funding allocation for continuing and out of borough learners. The Data and Information Manager has participated in LCRCA MIS meetings.

3.6.4 Family Learning

- During Covid-19 lockdown, Family Learning Tutors communicated with parents and delivered activities using the on-line parent platform used by Halton Primary Schools.
- Curriculum tailored to borough need around, grammar, reading and mathematical calculations - linking with the TALK Halton project and the development of the Halton Reading Strategy.
- Mental health provision requested from schools through our 'Youth Connect 5' programme and mental health workshops as schools are seeing a rising need for this within families.

3.6.5 Children Centre Provision

- Part of the Talk Halton project to support in the raising of GLD scores for children at the 2-year assessment point and at the end of Reception. Speech, Language and Communication is a key focus across the borough, lower development and scores at the early stage

is impacted on outcomes at the end of KS2 and at the end of Secondary.

- Successful delivery of tailored provision to support these foci over the last academic year which will be continued through funding for a new Test and Learning Pilot in 2020/21 to support blended English and maths for parents.

3.6.6 Functional Skills – English, maths and ICT

- Successful delivery of English, maths and ICT courses took place in learning centres until March 2020. Learning for individuals with access to equipment and connectivity continued digitally and other learners had the opportunity to continue their learning using textbooks and resources.
- Centre Assessed grades were submitted to the Awarding Body based on assessment outcomes and internal standardisation resulting in confirmation of Calculated Results for each learner submitted. Learners who were not able to achieve the qualification will be given the opportunity to continue their learning in the 2020/21 academic year.

3.6.7 Employability Skills

- Delivery of HEP Award programmes continued to be successful up to March 2020.
- Bespoke courses have been developed and delivered to meet the needs of participants registered on the Work and Health programme.
- Many Independent Learning Providers were awarded contracts by LCRCA to deliver Employability programmes across the Liverpool City Region and has resulted in some duplication of provision.

3.6.8 Test and Learn Pilot programmes

- Successful delivery of the Digital Marketing & Media Test and Learn project linked to developing Coding skills and creating Web pages for small business enterprises, which continued during COVID as an online provision. Due to its success and the Skills strategy needed across the borough and Region we have embedded 'Coding' & 'Web Design' into our curriculum delivery for 2020/21.
- The Engage with Reading Pilot programme was successfully delivered pre-Covid lockdown with 12 volunteer Reading Mentors trained to deliver 1:1 sessions. Due to restrictions during lockdown and to maintain social distancing, the programme was suspended from March 2020. It is proposed to recommence the programme from November 2020 onwards.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- ### 4.1
- The Adult Education Budget is now devolved to the LCR Combined Authority. We are now in year 2 of devolution (1st August 2020) and

funding for Halton has been guaranteed by way of a grant for this 2nd year.

- 4.2 The Combined Authority submitted their 'Build Back Better' ask to Government in July 2020. The report sets out how, with the help of Government, the City Region can recover from the impacts of Covid-19 through a range of interventions and projects. The asks in relation to People Recovery will certainly impact on the work of the Division and it is expected that, should funding be awarded, much of our activity will need to be scaled up very quickly. The full report can be accessed [here](#), with the People Recovery section starting at page 35.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Additional funding has been confirmed for the new JETS programme, which will go live in October 2020. The Division is still waiting on ESF appraisals to be completed to better understand future funding levels for the Division. It is expected that, should the Build Back Better proposal be accepted by Government, the Division would benefit financially from this. Funding would enable a scaled up offer for the Division's services.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Some of the projects within the Build Back Better ask to Government will be to support young people from aged 16 to upskill and gain employment/ apprenticeships. The Apprenticeship Support Team and Ways to Work project already support young people in the borough.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

All of the services offered by the Division, including the Apprenticeship Support Team, exist to deliver on this priority for Halton Borough Council.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Many learners and customers have struggled during Covid as they have not been able to attend centres and benefit from face to face reassurance from staff. Many have reported they have developed mental health issues and it has been even more challenging for our staff to give them the support they need remotely. Working from home has also presented real challenges for some staff and it is very important that we protect the mental health of both staff and customers/learners.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	21 st September 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Community and Sport
SUBJECT:	Library Service
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Library Service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

In the COVID-19 society, public libraries continue to be well used but must be responsive and adaptable to reconnect communities to vital resources that support wellbeing, learning, information & reading.

Heightened during this time is the need for people to be part of something, feel valued, involved, and not have to pay money. The trusted reputation of library services, working with key partners and making novel alliances, provides a valued platform for engaging and supporting communities in this new normal. Effectively communicating new initiatives to dispersed communities and teams across the Borough will play a pivotal role in successful delivery.

3.1 2019-20 summary

2019-20 was a successful year for the library service with a number of high profile innovative projects including the Get it Loud in Libraries gig in February, now nominated for a National award, and Halton's inaugural Readathon which saw 197,000 reading minutes logged by people during the week. The service also achieved positive baseline data, increasing overall visitor numbers to libraries and the number of active library members.

3.2 Lockdown activity

In line with government advice, all library buildings closed to the public and library teams on 23rd March. Library teams worked quickly to shift activity to digital platforms. Budgets were reallocated to increase

resources and support new demand. An intensive social media campaign was developed to engage audiences and highlight resources to new and existing customers.

Use of the digital newspapers and magazines platform increased by over 100%, and ebook and eaudio loans increased by 70%. There has been a 350% increase in new members during lockdown.

3.3 Recovery to Date

Following the easing of lockdown restrictions the service has renewed focus on three key values:

Connection

Halton Libraries connect communities to valued resources, offering stability and familiarity in uncertain times. Library teams, key partners & artists underpin the successful delivery of our innovative programme of work.

Creative learning

Halton Libraries offer opportunities for creative learning through imaginative application of digital platforms.

Spaces

Halton Libraries offer access to unique virtual and physical space for communities and staff

Highlights of a sample of current projects are below.

3.3.1 Connection

Home Library Service:

During lockdown library staff continued to deliver books to over 100 vulnerable and isolated residents, as well as increasing provision to include new customers shielding. The library outreach team contacted all our Home Library Service customers by phone a number of times to provide updates on the service and offer support. The Home Library Service continues to be a valuable and increasingly popular service.

Choose & Collect:

In June we introduced a contact-less pick up service for customers. The majority of library staff were now redeployed but a core team rolled out this new initiative to support the value of reading for mental health and wellbeing that has understandably been heightened during this time. Customers can request books via telephone, email or social platforms, library staff choose an appropriate selection of titles and these bundles are then collected from outside the building.

3.3.2 Creative learning

The national Summer Reading Challenge and Halton's successful programme of summer activities all moved online this year. Highlights included Mama g digital story sessions for under 4's and our partner led computer game coding workshops which had 7000 participants.

3.3.3 Spaces

Reopening library buildings started with Halton Lea Library on the 7th July. All libraries are now open with safety measures in place. There are restrictions on customer numbers, but PC access is available and staff are safely supporting customers as they adapt to the current temporary offer in the buildings.

3.4 Next phase

Engaging creatively with communities during this phase when we do not have the option to use the library buildings as the conduit is a new challenge. A current piece of work focused on overcoming this challenge is The Joy Project:

3.4.1 The Joy Project

The Joy Project is a planned season of visual arts activity in public spaces taking place across the Borough this autumn. In a COVID society, we often travel between destinations without taking a moment to look around, this project imagines what might happen if we paused just for a second and saw something that sparked joy. Small installations will be created by artists in a number of locations currently being explored.

When it is safe to do so we will be reopening library spaces as places to spend time, and for events and group activities to take place.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Library service activity supports the delivery of the Library Service Strategy.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications contained in this report. The activities undertaken have been delivered within existing business provision.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Library service strategy supports children and young people through a variety of reading activities, a class visit programme, story sessions, learning activities and a volunteer programme.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Library service strategy supports employment, learning and skills through the provision of public access computers and free Wi-Fi in all libraries, support for people getting online, support for job seekers, and access to resources for those learning new skills.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Library service strategy supports health through the provision of venues from which to deliver health and wellbeing events, Books on Prescription & Mood Boosting collections in all libraries, reminiscence work in the community using Memory Boxes, partnerships with local groups, development of the Community Library Service, and all library staff are trained as Dementia Friends.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Not Applicable

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Not Applicable

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no risks associated with the report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The report gives examples of best practice in ensuring that our Library Services are accessible to all.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 21st September 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community & Resources

SUBJECT: Community Development Service Annual Report for 2019/20

PORTFOLIO: Community & Sport

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the operational delivery for the Community Development Service for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That Members consider and comment upon the report.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Community Development service helps support local community groups or organisations with their formation and facilitates the delivery of community led initiatives and activity. The team also have a combined role in managing Area Forum projects delivery; enabling Elected Members to respond to community concerns and aspirations. The combined role generates effective community engagement with Council departments, services and partner organisations and contributes to building resilience in Halton's communities.

4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The Team's Officers are neighbourhood based. They work alongside community groups to support them to develop their skills and knowledge to promote community action. This often involves providing advice and guidance around committee structures, financial arrangement, policies and regulations which need to be developed and observed and assisting in delivery of community action. This is the only role that has these functions as a core purpose. Community Development activity strengthens local belonging, addresses inequalities and provides a conduit between communities and the public sector which fosters a relationship that:-

- Promotes a strong sense of place, local services really matter to how residents feel about where they live and their overall satisfaction.

- Understanding and targets local priorities - community concerns drive community initiatives and improvements in their neighbourhoods.
- Communicates what the Council is doing and proactively seeks engagement.
- Generates connected communities to create a sense of belonging and facilitating community resilience.
- Generates community respect and civic pride through activity brings residents together. Intergenerational work in particular has had a significant impact in breaking down perceptions between young and old in communities resulting in people feeling safer.

4.2 Seeking out funding opportunities and securing successful bids has become increasingly core to the Community Development and Project Officer role; which is particularly important in the current economic climate. A performance measurement framework is in place for Community Development activity. The Table below shows the Service's performance against each indicator for 2019/20 compared to the previous year.

	2019/20	2018/19
4.3 Total number of volunteers	330	303
Number of groups worked with	101	71
Number of people benefiting from activity	6,987	2,563
Number of events/initiatives supported	12	13
Funding secured from CD intervention		
From external sources	£281,650	£527,696
From internal sources	£40,603	£68,547
TOTAL FUNDING	£322,253	£596,243

In 2019/20, for every pound it cost to provide the Community Development service, £2.20 was levered in to support community groups and initiatives.

5. GRASS ROOTS DELIVERY

5.1 The following section provides some examples of groups that the Community Development (CD) Team are working in partnership with of across the borough and also examples of some of the projects that they have helped to deliver

5.1.1 Broadheath, Ditton, Hough Green & Hale

9th Rainbows – Support with funding bids to provide a residential experience for the group members.

Friday Friends – Help for a group setting up to support elderly people and those with dementia and their carer's at Ditton Community Centre

St Michael's with St Thomas Church - Provided funding advice and support for the church to renovate their community room. Just over £39k was secured from Virridor.

5.1.2 **Appleton, Kingsway & Riverside**

Widnes Bowling Club – supported the club to source funding to enable them to provide a Christmas panto and party for children in the local area.

Fortuna Female Society – Range of support provided from supporting a number of successful funding applications to advice on planning events and consultation.

Catalyst - Support via participation in their Funding Group – bids submitted, support with consultations and paperwork reviewed.

5.1.3 **Birchfield, Farnworth & Halton View**

St Luke's Church: Worked alongside External Funding Team to support the Church with a variety of funding bids; including advice on required consultation to improve community facilities at the Church.

Halton View Action Group – Work with this existing group included looking at their current governance arrangements and providing advice to ensure it was fit for purpose. Also helped identify and address areas where their policies and procedures were missing.

5.1.4 **Grange, Heath, Halton Brook & Mersey**

Years Ahead – Support was provided to source £4k for the arts program that this group provides. A number of changes within the group also led to support being provided to new committee members.

Buddhist Temple - Worked alongside External Funding Team and with Runcorn Historic Society to source almost £8k for the reinstallation of historic sewer gas lamp and information board. Further support provided for the development of a peace garden and new temple.

Unlock Runcorn – Support provided to help develop communal garden space within their compound with funding of £1800 secured. Supported the Regeneration Team to provide further support with the development of the 'Unlock' project as a whole.

5.1.5 **Halton Castle, Norton North & South, Windmill Hill**

Murdishaw Matters - provided advice and guidance to this newly established group on governance and relevant policies and procedures. Once established, the group secured a Community Development Starter Grant.

Creative Health Initiatives (CHI) – Worked closely with this organisation as they took on the café in Phoenix Park. As well as providing regular,

general day to day advice, support was also provided on a number of funding applications totalling over £100k.

Persona Insight CIC – Supported this newly established group with the paperwork required for setting up a CIC. Also advised on possible sources of funding.

5.1.6 Beechwood & Halton Lea

Beechwood Community Centre – Ongoing support to this organisation with a particular focus on supporting with area forum application.

Runcorn Sea Cadets – Supported group with purchasing of new equipment and helped boost their membership numbers.

5.1.7 Daresbury

Sandymoor Community Centre – support with funding applications to enable the purchase of additional equipment and resources for the centre.

6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

6.1 The Community Development Service also administers Starter and Development Grants for community groups. In 2019/20, three new groups were supported with a Starter Grant and ten existing groups were supported with a Development Grant to assist with their project/group costs. A breakdown of expenditure is set out in the Table below.

Starter Grants & Community Development Grants

GROUP NAME	PROJECT	GRANT AWARDED
Starter Grant		
Blue Sky Community Youth Group	Start Up Costs	£150.00
Murdishaw Matters	Start Up Costs	£150.00
Friday Friends	Start Up Costs	£150.00
TOTAL Starter Grant		£450.00
Development Grant		
Church Together in Runcorn	Churches Against Poverty Programme	£400.00
Eclipse Cheerleading	Kit & Equipment	£400.00
CHI	Promotional Material	£400.00
St Michael's with St Thomas	Promotional Material & Resources	£367.62
West Bank Boat Club	Kitchen Equipment	£300.00
Hillview Women's Club	Printing Material	£360.91
Murdishaw Arts Co-operative	Training Programme	£300.00

Comfort Dolls	Material & Resources	£350.00
Runcorn Community Choir	Musical Resources	£400.00
Ragheed Action Group	Equipment	£139.93
TOTAL Development Grant		£4,218.46
TOTAL GRANTS		
		£4,668.46

7. AREA FORUM PROJECTS

7.1 As referred to in paragraph 3.1, Community Development & Project Officers also manage Area Forum funding applications and project delivery. As well as helping to deliver activities and initiatives within local neighbourhoods, Area Forum money can often help to lever in other funding into the borough as match funding; for example, third party contribution for Wren applications. An annual report on Area Forums, which provides full details of expenditure, match funding, evaluation and case studies, is presented to the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board.

8. STRATEGIC APPROACHES

8.1 The Community Development Service;

- Works in close collaboration with the Community Centres service to support community led activity in Council venues and provide vibrant hubs with a wide offer for local residents;
- Has provided lead support to the Community Shop initiative to secure a social supermarket in Halton. The Halton Community Shop opened in December 2019 and it was the first one in the Liverpool City Region;
- Provides support to the Council's approach for the re-settlement programme of Syrian Refugees. The service is a member of the multi-agency forum and provides local briefs for each new arrival in the Borough to assist families with orientating themselves in their new surroundings;
- Provides a strategic approach to community engagement in Halton. It enables Council departments and partner agencies to engage with local communities and supports the third sector infrastructure that provides the platform for community involvement in Halton.
- Provides support to partner organisations with assessing grant applications. This is an expanding area and examples include Riverside Housing and the WEA.

9. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Financial and Resource implications are detailed within the report.

10. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no Policy implications arising from this report

11. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

11.1 A Healthy Halton

Community development supports a whole area approach to health and wellbeing linking appropriate partners and stakeholders to work jointly with all sections of Halton's community responding to health issues, i.e zipper club, alzheimers group, lunch bunch, and Halton happy hearts. This approach raises awareness of health issues and empowers communities to be proactive and build resilience. Examples of this are support to community gardening & allotment projects, patient support groups and liaison with the Health Improvement Team.

11.2 Halton's Urban Renewal

Community development contributes to wider community initiatives and regeneration in the areas they are sited. There are numerous community gardening and local environmental projects across the service working jointly with key stakeholders. Delivering community development within the neighbourhoods linking into the Area Forums provides a mechanism for local people to influence improvements for their area and translate aspirations into objectives.

11.3 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The service works with volunteers; facilitating skills development in committee processes, capacity building, fundraising and consultation. Close working with the Community Centres service also provides volunteer opportunities. Support is also provided for adult and lifelong learning for community groups.

11.4 Children and Young People in Halton

Community Development activity benefits all ages of residents with many initiatives directly supporting children and young people or having intergenerational approaches.

11.5 A Safer Halton

A sense of community and community connectedness reduces residents' fears of crime where they live, they are likely to feel a stronger sense of belonging and safety in an environment where the communities know each other, are active and there are established links to other stakeholders like police, housing, community wardens, etc

12. RISK ANALYSIS

12.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report.

13. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 13.1 There are no equality and diversity issues as a result of this report as the Local Area Forums and grant support opportunities are open and accessible to all members of Halton's community.

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	21 September 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Economy, Enterprise and Property
SUBJECT:	Covid-19 Recovery and Halton's Economy
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to expand on the borough's Economic Reset Plan by providing further data and analysis on the potential impact of Covid-19 on the Halton economy.
- 1.2** A further presentation of the data will be provided at the meeting
- 1.3** This information will be used to inform where resources could be best targeted in order to support the borough's future economic growth.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The report be noted; and**
- 2) The Board considers the information presented and raise any questions of interest or points of clarification following the presentation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Position

As the World starts to emerge from the first phase of the Covid-19 crisis, local authorities are consolidating existing statutory and operational requirements. They are also reallocating and securing resources in order to redefine their economies. They are working hard to improve the economic and social prospects for local residents and businesses over the years ahead.

Halton Council has already produced an Economic Reset Plan, which has previously been circulated to all Council Members. The Plan will be used to ensure that the Council can support local businesses in partnership with local organisations and businesses and partners operating in the Liverpool City Region.

Further economic data is now available. This has been incorporated into the borough's Economic Reset Plan.

A summary of key findings and merging issues is set out below.

3.2 Sectors and Furlough

Clearly, the impact of COVID-19 on the direct service sectors in Halton was significant. The hospitality, leisure, entertainment, non-essential retail sector and personal services represents 9,500 jobs (of 60,000 jobs) and 825 business units in the borough. However, it is worth noting that manufacturing activity and construction work was affected by the period of lockdown.

Despite the above, the level of furloughed employees in Halton was below the UK average at 27% or 16,300 employees as opposed to 32%.

3.3 Unemployment

By the end of July, the unemployment rate in Halton had jumped by 67%. This was before the end of the Furlough Scheme, so it is likely that this figure will worsen.

3.3 Resilient Sectors

Chemicals, pharmaceuticals, warehousing and logistics, technical, administrative and digital sectors are all strongly represented in the Borough and have generally proved to be much more resilient than many other sectors.

3.4 Improving Sectors

Halton has some businesses that are likely to have seen an increase in activity from the chemical sector contributing to sanitization products (Zep, for example manufactures professional strength cleaning and maintenance chemicals in Halton) to transport and logistics demand from grocery multiples (Eddie Stobart has increased employment to support the Tesco distribution centre.

Halton has a strong presence in the retail distribution sector, both food and mixed.

3.5 Industrial Summary

The economic position across the UK has been very badly affected by Covid-19 but in Halton pharmaceuticals, healthcare, digital and hydrogen present some clear future opportunities. The Borough is also well positioned to benefit from increased industrial digitisation (Industry

4.0) and chemicals has somewhat resilient. As a result, there are some areas for optimism.

Whilst these industries present opportunities and the area has limited exposure to the gravely affected automotive and aerospace sectors.

Brexit represents another future area of challenge.

3.6 Sector Focus

As part of all the recovery work there is a recommendation that business engagement is at the heart of a longer-term plan.

The focus on supporting those businesses that offer the most opportunity for the area and as such are proposed for chemicals, energy, logistics, life sciences, digital & creative and advanced manufacturing.

3.7 Public Sector Response

The difference that a public sector response can make, is to help businesses recognise new supplier and customer relationships; assemble the data that makes a difference in policy, funding and parent company decision making; identifies interventions that support modernisation –such as the response to Industry 4.0 challenges; and determines the future skills needs as businesses change. The public sector have a clear role in supporting people into employment where possible with training, raising the awareness of opportunities and tutoring job seekers with the skills required to secure employment.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The paper attached to this reports is an attempt to remedy employment and business support in these unprecedented times and will flex and adapt to meet the needs of businesses.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no immediate financial resources and delivery is from existing resources and team members.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Report produced in conjunction with officers delivering employment, learning and skills and policy frameworks.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Risk of losing elements business base in the short and medium time but out of the control of the Halton Council.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 Halton Borough Council Economic Reset Plan 2020.
Contact W Rourke, 0151 5118645

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning Skills and Community Policy Performance Board
DATE:	21 st September 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Enterprise Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Economic Development
SUBJECT:	Scrutiny Topic Group 2019/20
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

At the September 2019 meeting the Board agreed that *Traded Areas in the Borough* would be the scrutiny topic for 2019/20. The objective was to see how they contribute to the Council's finances. With the changes in the operation of the Council's functions caused by Coronavirus a review of the topic group is proposed.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the topic group should cease further activity
- 2) there should be no topic group in 2021.
- 3) at a future meeting during 2021 the members should consider a topic for 2022.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The group met once on 13th February 2020. Due to Coronavirus, no further meetings have taken place. The operation of the traded areas has changed significantly since the topic was selected. As they start to reopen their operations they will not resemble that previously experienced as they will be in recovery mode.

The Chair consulted with Cllr. Anthony McDermott, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, about the topic group. He accepted the board's Chair's suggestion that there was little point in continuing with the current topic group and that 2021 be a fallow year for a topic group.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no further policy implications at this stage.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

N/A

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

N/A

6.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

6.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no risks identified.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.