

## 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, 18 September 2023 in the Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), S. Hill, Rowe, Ryan and Stretch

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Ball, Garner, Hutchinson, C. Plumpton Walsh and Wall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, S. Saunders, S. Lowrie, K. Arrowsmith and M. Jones

Also in attendance: Four members of the public

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

		<i>Action</i>
ELS10	MINUTES	
	<p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 19 June 2023, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>Feedback relating to queries raised in ELS4 (The Big Conversation) would be emailed to Members following the Meeting.</p>	
ELS11	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	<p>It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.</p>	
ELS12	HALTON LEISURE CENTRE - VILLAGE CHANGE FACILITIES	
	<p>The Board received details of an online petition received by the Council on 10 August 2023 titled '<i>Single Sex Spaces</i>', in relation to the village changing room plan for the new Halton Leisure Centre.</p>	

The report provided Members with detailed information on Halton Leisure Centre plans and the design process relating to the village changing rooms. It also included information on the main consultation events relating to the building facility mix and the subsequent advertising of the planning application, which was submitted in May 2020, where comments from the public were sought and received.

Officers referred to the risk assessments a pool operator was required to carry out and the requirement for the production of Pool Safety Operating Procedures (PSOPs), which included how changing rooms were to be operated, supervised and cleaned.

The Chair circulated copies of plans of the village changing area to Members (also available on the Council's website) and read out a statement of rationale provided by the Architect, as to why the changing village is the most appropriate option for the wet side change at the new leisure centre:

- *A changing village design is recommended by Sports England as being preferable to the single sex separate male and female open-plan changing rooms alternative. All the new pools we have designed have been based around village changing. All our remodelling and refurbishment projects have taken old-fashioned single-sex open plan changing and converted it to village changing;*
- *The changing village allows a male parent/carer to supervise a female child in changing before and after swimming, and a female parent/carer a male child. In the same way, helpers can accompany people with disabilities of the opposite sex. However, separate sex changing rooms discriminate against single parents and parents in a same sex relationship;*
- *Village changing offers greater flexibility to accommodate varying mixes of male and female users, including the flexibility of allowing family groups to change together;*
- *Village changing gives flexibility to allow staff of either sex to supervise, clean and maintain the area. All changing spaces and lockers are available to all users giving flexibility to accommodate any proportion of male and female users;*
- *There is nothing in the Moor Lane design to prevent*

*Active Halton from running single sex swimming sessions as part of their timetable. Glazed screens between the foyer and the pool hall will be equipped with blinds. The separate adjoining school swimming/team change is available as an area that can be closed off for privacy during adult swimming for sensitive groups and will have separate access to toilets, pre-cleanse showers and the pool water;*

- *The changing village will minimise any perceived sense of insecurity for sensitive users through being equipped with individual cubicles of various sizes giving privacy for changing: single person, two-person and four-person/family. It will also be equipped with separate shower cubicles for post-swim showers, again offering better individual privacy than single sex separate male and female open-plan changing.*

Members discussed the two options described in the report and agreed that option one was preferable, but made the following observations and suggestions to ensure extra safeguards:

- Although construction was underway, could changes be made to the partitions of the cubicles to ensure that the gap at the bottom was at a minimum – officers would send Members the current measurements of the cubicle doors and raise this with the Architect;
- A vertical split sliding door option was suggested which would offer more flexibility of the space – officers would discuss this with the Architect;
- CCTV was discussed – could this be installed in the communal corridor area of the changing village;
- The presence of staff was important to ensure that the rules of the Centre were complied with, this would instill confidence in the public to know they were in a safe environment;
- Signage must be robust enough to deter offending; this should include the penalties for rule breaking, ie prosecution;
- Signage to include no nudity in the changing village – cubicles are provided for changing;
- Signage to include warning against the use of mobile phones in changing areas; and
- It was felt that the changing village design would be more serviceable and practical for families and carers attending the pool.

It was confirmed that the Board would make a site

visit to the Leisure Centre following the meeting. Officers were also tasked with obtaining information from other leisure centres in the Country who operate the same village changing facility, so that these could be shared and offer reassurance to petitioners.

RESOLVED: That the Board recommends Option one as the preferred option, with consideration being given to the above suggestions, and contractors continue to proceed with the current design layout and program of works.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

*One Member of the public asked to put forward a question on the above item. The Chair advised of the Public Question Time procedure, as described in agenda Item 3. She was invited to submit her question following the meeting for a response.*

### ELS13 LEISURE CENTRE WORKFORCE & OPERATIONS

The Board considered a report on the Council's Leisure Centre operations and received an update on the construction of the Council's new Leisure Centre.

The last update was provided to the Board at the January 2023 meeting, where it was reported that at the time recruitment was proving to be difficult, which was a regional problem being experienced in the leisure business; the report outlined the recruitment activities carried out since then. Members were advised that there was a significant improvement in the time taken to recruit to vacant posts, but that the service still experienced a high turnover of staff; the possible reasons for this were discussed, as well as the following:

- Funding for swimming instructors training and the caveat to pay this back if leaving employment of the Council within two years of completion;
- Casual contracts for swimming instructors and minimum hours required;
- The restructure of the service to ensure stabilisation;
- The development of a Leisure Centre app;
- Timings of the swimming lessons for babies/toddlers and confusion of information on the website – this would be checked; and
- The status of the 'Little Dolphins' group would be checked.

Leisure Centre attendance figures for 2022/23 were provided to the Board; these would be used as comparisons from one year to the next, to show any increases /

decreases for the service.

Members were advised that the construction of the new Leisure Centre was progressing well, and Officers gave updates in relation to this. The Active Halton website hosted a section dedicated to the new build, with pictures and regular updates were uploaded.

The Board was also advised that *Wates*, the contractor, had delivered many community activities, these were listed in the report in paragraph 3.7 and included events at Riverside College and Cronton Sixth Form College.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

#### ELS14 HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ADULT LEARNING ANNUAL POSITION STATEMENT 2022/23

The Board received an overview and accompanying presentation of the Halton Adult Learning Service performance for the Academic Year 2022/23.

It was noted that Adult Learning provision for 22/23 was funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB), devolved to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA). In addition to this, funding was also available for Test and Learn initiatives and for the City Region Wide Pathways to Teaching project, coordinated by Halton Adult Learning. The Board was advised that all budgets were managed and monitored through regular scrutiny and accountability meetings between the CA Relationship Manager and Senior service Leaders within Halton Adult Learning.

The report provided information on the Ofsted Inspection carried out on the Adult Learning Service and the 'Good' rating that was maintained. The Inspectors' report was presented via weblink within the report.

Information relating to the current position with funding; Pathways to Teaching, achievements in non-accredited adult learning and learner recruitment was also provided.

Following Members queries the following additional information was provided:

- Adult Learning was for clients aged 19+ so special schools were not routinely contacted as pupils did not

usually fit into this age group;

- It was suggested that the Adult Learning Team make contact with the Halton Young Carers Centre to market courses that young carers could aspire to;
- Recruitment of teachers was sometimes challenging due to the types of employment contracts on offer;
- Promotion of the Adult Learning Centre in colleges did already take place;
- The new marketing strategy would include more robust marketing methods;
- Members noted that most of the courses available were free for Halton residents; and
- The uptake of courses was recorded in a marketing log to show the Ward they came from.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### ELS15 BUSINESS GROWTH PROGRAMME COMPLETION & BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICE LAUNCH

Due to the unavailability of the reporting officer, this item is deferred to the November meeting.

#### ELS16 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 4 OF 2022/23

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 4 of 2022-23 (1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these. It was noted that these reports were emailed to Members on 10 July 2023 after they were finalised.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2022-23 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.

RESOLVED: That the quarter 4 2022-23 performance management reports be received.

ELS17 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR  
QUARTER 1 OF 2023/24

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter one of 2023-24 (1 March 2023 to 30 June 2023) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2022-23 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.

The Board noted the improvements reported within the recruitment and HR processes for the Leisure Service and Adult Learning. A suggestion was made that the currently empty *Frankie and Bennie's* unit could be used by students for training; this would be put forward.

RESOLVED: That the quarter one 2023-24 performance management reports be received.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

*Meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.*