

**Employment Learning and Skills and Community Policy and  
Performance Board  
Business Planning 2016 – 19**

**Members Briefing Note – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide members of the PPB with an overview of key strategic issues facing the Board over the medium-term.

As you will appreciate this briefing cannot cover all aspects of the delivery of services across all of functional areas that fall within the remit of this Board but will provide details of the primary drivers that will shape the work of services in supporting and delivering the Council's organisational priorities and business needs.

***Strategic Context***

- **Ongoing Financial Constraints**
- **Difficult Choices**
- **Things that we must do**
- **Lots of change and uncertainty**
- **Maintaining Stability**

The Council continues to operate in an extremely difficult financial climate. We will need to ensure that we continue to meet our statutory responsibilities across all areas of our operations and the Economy, Enterprise and Property Department and the Community and Environment Departments will continue to play a key supporting role in this endeavour, for example through effective financial management and the integration of national policy initiatives with

***PPB Areas of Responsibility***

- **Consider each area in turn**
- **Key issues for each**
- **Overview**

efficient arrangements for service delivery.

An overview is provided for each priority for comment and discussion. Members are advised that some priorities will resonate in other PPBs, for example, Environment and Urban Renewal and Resources, as the Council's

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Economic Regeneration function encapsulates both place and people in driving the borough's economic growth and prosperity agenda.

**Overview**

- Public Sector Transformation
- Welfare Reform
- Fixing the Foundations
- Devolution
- Northern Powerhouse
- Education Reforms
- Liverpool City Region Single Inward Investment Framework
- Further Education Area Based Review
- Business Growth Hub
- Redesign of the Work Programme

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS AND COMMUNITY PPB**

For 2016/17 the main issues that will influence and impact on the work of the Employment Learning and Skills and Community PPB are: -

**Public Sector Transformation**

This will have a greater impact on the PPB and the work of the Council's Economy, Enterprise and Property (EEP) department because we need to focus more on customer-led co-design as well as co-commissioning. In our case input from both residents and businesses will be required. This should result in:

- Greater co-working with local and central partners i.e. businesses.
- Greater use of "what works" analysis and using information to provide evidence of success.
- Greater promotion of our service and service innovation through digital and Big Data.

**Welfare Reform (ELS&C PPB)**

Our resident's economic circumstances will be affected by the changes Government has introduced. The PPB will need to be made aware of the work

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that the EEP department will be undertaking to ensure that local people have the skills needed to take advantage of local growth opportunities.

**“Fixing the Foundations: Creating a More Prosperous Nation”**

This details the Government’s plans to raise productivity across the Country and is based around “long-term” investment, and, “promoting a dynamic economy”. As a Council our thinking will need to focus on providing services which increase the borough’s productivity in its broadest sense i.e. improved productivity through improved infrastructure, but also through improvements to Halton’s workforce. The Council’s EEP department has a key role in supporting this.

**Devolution**

Devolution through the Devolution Act presents an opportunity to transfer additional levers of Economic Development to the City Region. From an EEP departmental perspective this could result in the pooling of human and financial resources to deliver macro-economic as well as local outcomes.

**Northern Powerhouse**

In the budget a number of statements were made in relation to the Government’s Northern Powerhouse commitments, including the launch of a new transport devolution package for the North. Building on the Northern Transport Strategy, Government confirmed that it will devolve some powers over transport to the North’s Mayor-led city regions. It will establish Transport for the North (TfN) as a statutory body with statutory duties to develop a long-term transport strategy for the North, with an update to be published by Budget 2016. The aim is to redress the North-South economic imbalance, and to attract investment into northern cities and towns.

**Education Reforms**

A number of Education reforms have been announced but the key points that are important to the department and the ELS and C PPB are that the government will be introducing new, more rigorous GCSE and A-levels in maths and science, and will focus on increasing the take-up of STEM subject A-levels, for girls in particular. Young people without good grades in maths and English at GCSE will continue to study the subjects until the age of 18. The Government will also be moving away from the funding per qualification model for adult learners and, with input from local areas and employers, will develop options to ensure provision is targeted at training with the greatest impact.

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Ofsted has recently introduced a new Common Inspection Framework for Further Education. In fact, Riverside was the first college in the country to be inspected using this framework. Learners' views are a key component of the Inspection regime.

**Emerging Issues**

There are several issues which the Employment Learning and Skills and Community directorate will need to consider when developing its list of key actions for 2016/17. These are:

***Liverpool City Region Single Inward Investment Framework***

Work continues on the establishment of a Single Investment Framework for the City Region. The Employment Learning and Skills and Community PPB has completed a 'Scrutiny Topic Review' to consider how Halton could and may interface with the City Region, but clearly the Council will need to deploy resources through its EEP department to respond to or adapt to any proposals.

***Further Education Area Based Review***

Government recently announced a review of FE provision. In summary, Government wishes to see FE providers offering courses which are relevant to the area in which they operate. The EEP department will contribute to this work through the Liverpool City Region's Employment and Skills Board and Combined Authority.

However, the Council's ELS and C PPB will need to ensure that it is cognisant of the need to provide complementary adult Education services in the borough which accord with the principles of the Area Based Review.

***Business Growth Hub***

The creation of Growth Hubs is a government initiative intended to:-

- Provide clarity, consistency and simplification across the business support agenda
- Increasingly 'migrate' business support from the public to the private sector.
- Provide gateway support, that is information, guidance and brokerage to the business community

Growth Hubs are, therefore, not intended to be suppliers of business support rather the interface between the business community and, increasingly, commercial business support providers

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Halton Borough Council and Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise have submitted a joint response to the Growth Hub tender. The ELS and C PPB will need to ensure that the new arrangements meet the needs of local businesses

***Redesign of the Work Programme (ELS&C PPB)***

Since 2011, the Council's EEP department has successfully managed and delivered the work programme, importantly helping many of our residents into work, but it has also generated income, which has been reinvested in employment, learning and skills provision. The evolution of a successor programme will need to be reported to the ELS and C PPB as the detail emerges.

**PRIORITY WORKSTREAMS for the Economy, Enterprise and Property Department 2016/2017.**

Members of the ELS and C PPB are advised that the EEP department proposes the following priority work streams to respond to the key factors and emerging issues described above:

Implementation of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (Master planning)

Coordinate and deliver the borough's Major Regeneration Projects

Development of Halton Place Marketing proposal

Development of a Halton Growth Plan

Development of Local Strategic Partnership Asset Management Plan

Contribute to Liverpool City Region's Devolution asks, particularly in regard to Business Support, Employment, Regeneration and Skills

Support Area Based Review

Contribute to Halton's Vision for 2035.

Preparing for Ofsted Inspection – (the department's Adult Learning service will be due for an inspection).

Contribute to Green Belt Review and Delivery Allocations Plan

Contribute to the borough's retail study.

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**PRIORITY DELIVERY ACTIONS 2016/17**

Members of the ELS and C PPB are advised that the EEP department proposes the following priority delivery actions in 2016/17. Clearly a number of these actions accord with the remit of other PPBs including for example the Urban Renewal and Resources PPBs.

**Development and Investment Services Division**

1. Implement Markets Business Plan and accompanying Delivery Plan
2. Continuing development of the following regeneration projects:

St. Paul's Quarter, Widnes  
Sci-Tech Daresbury  
3MG  
St. Michael's Golf Course  
Venturefields, Widnes Waterfront  
Bayer, Widnes Waterfront  
Astmoor  
Castlefields  
Runcorn Town Centre  
Halton Lea including Runcorn Shopping Centre  
Sandymoor  
Murdishaw Local Centre

3. Implement Business Growth Hub concept.
4. Support Town Centres through Town Team and Business Improvement District (retail)
5. Charging Policy for Business/Funding support
6. Establish SLA with 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector regarding external funding provision
7. Ensure that third party occupations and tenancies are properly managed, documented and optimise revenue receipts.
8. Ensure accurate record keeping and up to date plans, and valuations are consistent to support the management of the borough's assets.
9. Undertake analysis of business needs in relation to premises and relocation opportunities
10. Roll out Business Attractiveness Model principles

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11. Support the identification of external funding opportunities
12. Ensure the timely disposals of surplus assets.
13. Facilitate accurate and appropriate Asset Valuation reporting.
14. Progress and complete the sale of the Council's industrial estates.

**Employment Learning and Skills Division**

1. Work Programme focuses now on difficult/harder to reach clients and developing the necessary staffing structure changes to reflect this.
2. Prepare for changes to work programme post June 2017 and forward plan to help advisers to prepare for this.
3. Apprenticeships Hub – broadening remit and, managing co-ordinators and monitoring progress.
4. Supporting Skills Group at Sci-Tech.
5. Developing and Implementing European Projects and Programmes.
6. Adult Learning changes to the curriculum for next year given reductions in funding.
7. Preparing for Inspection.
8. Deliver Youth Employment Gateway
9. Further developing our Employment and Business Partnership

**Property Services (Operations)**

1. Contribute to One Public Estate concept to better understand how assets are managed in a broader City Region context.
2. Develop a prioritisation process for managing 'non-maintenance' property enquiries
3. Develop a Property Customer Charter giving details on how often property services could respond to enquiries/ lead in times for responses.

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**DESIRED DEPARTMENTAL OUTCOMES**

**The outcomes and key performance indicators highlighted below will for part of the quarterly monitoring reports that will be presented to respective Council PPBs i.e. our success will be measured by:**

More businesses coming to the borough

More businesses staying in the borough

A Workforce with better skills and qualifications

Stronger relationship with businesses

More people in work

More people studying and achieving better results

Increased revenue streams for the Council

External Funding resources secured and used effectively

**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

We will measure our performance and the effectiveness of these actions through the following Key Performance Indicators:

Jobs Created

Businesses Supported

Land Disposal

Land Remediation

Qualifications

Skills Levels

Business Satisfaction levels

Increased Funding/Investment

Occupancy Rates on properties

Unit Costs – office accommodation

Attracting Inward Investment i.e. an increase in new businesses relocating to Halton.

In conclusion, this document identifies the main factors and emerging issues affecting the Employment Learning and Skills and Community PPB.

The document also outlines the proposed key priority workstreams and priority actions to be undertaken by the Council's Economy, Enterprise and Property Department during the financial year 2016/17.

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COMMUNITIES PRIORITIES

***Community Involvement***

Community Involvement consists of the Community Development service, Community Centres at Castlefields, Ditton, Grangeway, Murdishaw and Upton and Area Forum projects.

Community Development

- Develop
- Facilitate community engagement to shape services and support policy development
- Leverage external funding for community activity into Halton
- Effective networking and cross sector working with voluntary sector & faith organisations

Overview:

Community Development supports the creation, development and sustainability of independent local community groups. This generates the capacity for effective and inclusive community engagement with council departments and services thus enabling the delivery of community initiatives to tackle strategic objectives and community needs. The Community Development team have both a strategic and neighbourhood role in co-ordinating partnership support to respond to community concerns and aspirations and create cohesive neighbourhoods which are participative and vibrant with a strong sense of community connectedness. The team provides capacity building support to empower Halton's residents to develop social capital, facilitate effective community engagement with Halton's stakeholders and build community resilience. The team have a key role in enabling local community groups to access grant funding leveraging in additional funds to the Borough.

The service will continue to support existing community organisations, their volunteers and facilitate new community activity to increase participation and community resilience.

The service will develop digital information to promote community activity and achieve wider reach to Halton residents.

The service will work in tandem with the Community Centres service to identify gaps in community centre usage and provision and work collaboratively to support a wider offer to community activity, access to services and community events.

The service will support community & voluntary sector organisations to access external funding to bring investment into the Borough.

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The service will support strategic activity with key partners to place community engagement and community insight at the heart of service development for Health & Wellbeing in the Borough.

The service will lead a review of partnership forums for front line services in community engagement, information and advice services and streamline the mechanisms as endorsed by Halton Strategic Partnership Board.

#### **Community Centres**

- **Facilitate community led activity**
- **Enable neighbourhood delivery & grass roots access to services**
- **Increase usage, Service Level Agreement's & income**
- **Provide digital access**

The Community Centres service consists of five buildings, Castlefields, Ditton, Grangeway, Murdishaw and Upton. The centres have programmes of community activities, varying models of community café's and service outlets, i.e. children's centre, youth provision, adult day services. These centres provide a community hub, a central point at the heart of these communities for residents to enjoy chosen activities and receive services in their neighbourhoods. They are based in the most severely deprived wards in the Borough and are well utilised.

The service will strive to increase partnership delivery at neighbourhood level and increase service level agreements to improve accessibility to services and support sustainability.

The service aims to increase usage, in particular weekend usage. A marketing strategy will be developed to promote the centres and seek new areas of business that provides an enhanced offer for local residents and works towards seven day demand.

Increase digital access in community centres by expanding community library IT provision and deliver skills development, adult education and job clubs to contribute in tackling worklessness.

The service will aim to expand community café provision enabling access to one at each community centre and further develop the café service to embrace Halton's Health & Wellbeing ambition.

The service will develop customer satisfaction and insight to better understand which parts of the service are highly valued, which require further development and identify gaps for future areas of focus.

The service will contribute to a partnership asset review and proactively develop the community centres service to strengthen the hub concept of neighbourhood access.

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***Library Service***

- Deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service with new operational structure and changes to resources.
- Continue to deliver the library service strategy.
- Continue to support the Society of Chief Librarians Universal Offers for public

Overview:

Following a review of the service changes have been made to the library staff structure and building opening hours. The changes have been effective since April 2015. A number of new staff have been recruited into the new structure and they are being trained and supported to ensure quality support can be delivered to customers.

A number of pilot activities are currently taking place to deliver the library service strategy including development of a Community Library Service to include expansion of the home delivery service.

The library service continues to support people to get online and are expanding this provision, improving staff training to support Universal Credit customers, and improving access to technology in the buildings.

The latest Universal Offer from the Society of Chief Librarians will launch 4/11. The Learning Offer highlights how libraries can support learning through a baseline sign up to provide internet access, space and resources for learning.

The project also includes the development of a digital making kit helping libraries develop their work with children and young people around science and technology; including building computers, coding and robotics, which will support Halton Libraries development of learning activities.

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***Sport and Recreation 2015 – 2018***

- Assisting the inactive to become active
- Leisure Centre operations
- Supporting voluntary Sports Clubs
- Build on and create new income streams
- Sports Strategy review 2015/16
- Playing Pitch Strategy Consultation 2015/16

#### Overview

The council has an extensive programme of physical activity initiatives designed to improve health and develop healthy life styles. The Sport and Recreation service covers a wide range of important priority work areas that contribute towards delivering the Councils adopted Sports Strategy 2012 to 2015.

**Sports Development Team** concentrates on development of programmes and activities to support the local sporting infrastructure. The Team directly supports local residents and voluntary sector sports clubs, by facilitating activities, such as:

- Sports development grant scheme (groups and individuals)
- Grass Sports Hire; 50% subsidy for competitive junior matches
- Halton Leisure Card
- Coach, Club and Volunteer Development Programme
- Community Sports Coaching, in schools, clubs and community settings
- Halton Sports Partnership Executive Committee
- Funding clinics, assisting clubs with grant applications

In addition the team seeks additional resources, so it can deliver activities that can support people to start and stay active, current projects include:

- Sportivate (lottery funded project, for 11 – 25 years); Door Step Club (Street Games funded project, for 14 – 25 years); Girls Football (Football Foundation funded project, for 10 – 14 years); Get Active Project (lottery funded project, to support inactive residents 25 – 55 years get active); School Sport Coaching SLA

The service has a challenging income generation target, the team need to continue to identify areas to increase income in order to support current delivery, failure to generate sufficient income could lead to a reduction in staffing levels and thus delivery.

The majority of the service is non-statutory, however, it does include elements of a statutory nature, including, provision of school swimming lessons and providing services to support residents achieve good Health and wellbeing.

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**Leisure Centre Management:**

Kingsway Leisure Centre; Brookvale Recreation Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool are Council owned Leisure Centres. They provide a range of affordable activities that contribute to resident achieving a healthy lifestyle. In addition the facilities provide the main water space and training to support people, specifically young people, to be safe and confident in water.

The 3 centres have a combined annual visitor figure of circa. 680,000. Reducing or withdrawing services could have a detrimental effect on the Health of people in Halton.

The service is contracted out to Places for People Leisure until March 2016. The Council will be bringing the Leisure Centre operations back in house from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. The facilities are old and further capital investment will be required.

**Frank Myler Sports and Recreation Ground**

Operation of the new facility has been added to the Sport and Recreation Teams duties.

The Council is preparing a Playing Pitch Strategy; evidence of consultation needs to be robust, in order to produce a technical document compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework. The action plan identifies priorities for which resources should be sought.