

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 10 September 2007 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Jones (Chairman), Fraser (Vice-Chairman), P. Blackmore, Findon, Howard, Parker, Rowe, Stockton and Worrall

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Edge and Lewis

Absence declared on Council Business: None

Officers present: H. Cockcroft, G. Collins, L. Derbyshire, N. Goodwin, I. Grady, P. Sinnott and A. Villiers

Also in attendance: Councillor Wright (in accordance with Standing Order No. 33) and Councillor Rowan.

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
ELS13 MINUTES	
The minutes of the meeting held on 13 th June 2007, having been printed and circulated, were signed as a correct record.	
ELS14 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
It was noted that no questions had been received.	
ELS15 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The Board was advised that since the last meeting, there had been no minutes of the Executive Board relating to the work of the Employment, Learning & Skills Policy and Performance Board.	
ELS16 MERSEYSIDE SPORTS PARTNERSHIP	
The Board received a presentation from Jean Stephens, Director of the Merseyside Sports Partnership on its work and achievements and its priority areas of work in	

2006/07.

The presentation:-

- Explained the background to the Merseyside Sports Partnership;
- Outlined the vision and what would be done to achieve the vision;
- Set out a diagram of the delivery system for sport in Merseyside;
- Set out and explained the results of the Active People Survey regarding Merseyside;
- Detailed the progress, impact and achievements to date;
- Outlined Merseyside's Sports Partnership priorities for 2007-08; and
- Detailed a case study in respect of the Halton Cricket Forum.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- In relation to athletes who had reached a certain standard and would need to go to another authority in order to progress, it was noted that there was no continuity or arrangements in place between the various governing bodies for this development. However, some governing bodies in sports such as rugby, tennis and cricket had comprehensive talent development systems;
- In relation to the difficulties regarding the numerous CRB checks that could be required, it was suggested that there should only be one CRB check, that was done centrally, be cross referenced and cover a diverse range of activities. It was also suggested that the Board recommend that the Merseyside Cultural Forum look to address this matter with the relevant Chief Constable;
- It was suggested that it may be more appropriate to name the Board 'Physical Activity Partnership' as the word 'sports' could be a disincentive to some people. It was also noted that Merseyside Sports Partnership was a multi agency Board and there

had been increased participation in physical activities such as walking, keep fit and cycling;

- The financial costs and demands of coaching pathways in relation to qualifications and costs incurred by the numerous CRB requirements was noted. It was also noted that many of the individuals concerned were volunteers and these difficulties were acting as a deterrent. In this respect, it was noted that a Workforce Development Plan was being produced to develop coaching and help volunteers to obtain further qualifications. In addition, £6m had been invested into coaches, volunteers and the workforce to address this problem; and
- The cost implications of the additional qualifications that governing bodies were placing on some sporting activities was noted. It was also noted that there had been a requirement to raise standards and improve quality in such services and a lot of governing bodies had aligned to the UK coaching certificates which had resulted in increased costs to individuals.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the presentation be received;
- (2) the comments on the work of the Partnership be noted;
- (3) Jean Stephens be thanked for her informative presentation; and
- (4) The Board recommend that Merseyside Cultural Forum, in consultation with the appropriate Chief Constable, identify a way of having a central system for CRB checks that would cover a wide range of diverse activities to reduce the requirement of more than one CRB check.

Strategic Director
Health &
Community

(NB: Councillor Rowe declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business as he is employed by Cameron Industrial Services.)

ELS17 SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community which reviewed the progress of the Sports Facilities Strategy.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

- the opportunities that Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding could present to the Borough in respect of sports facilities in schools was noted. It was suggested consideration could be given to providing a swimming facility in Widnes and Runcorn. It was also noted that BSF funding could provide opportunities for library and sports services in the Borough and the Director of Children and Young People was supportive of such opportunities;
- it was noted that income obtained from the seven all weather pitches was mainly used for maintenance and refurbishment of the pitches;
- In relation to the remediation work required at St Michaels Golf Course, it was noted that DEFRA funding had not been confirmed and the work could take up to four years to complete;
- In relation to the floodlit multi use sports facilities/training areas – six sites to be determined by Area Forums, it was noted that some area Panels had already committed the funding, whereas others were considering a variety of funding packages;
- The excellent sports facilities at St Peter and Paul's and Wade Deacon High Schools was noted;
- It was noted that the exploration of joint use of sports facilities in partnership with Halton College included the Linnets;
- It was noted that there would be a formal opening of the new tennis facilities at Wade Deacon school in the near future. It was also suggested that a visit to the new facility at Wade Deacon High school could be arranged for Members;
- It was noted that disability sport was increasing in Halton and overall facilities for the disabled were being reviewed. The importance of this provision was also noted; and

- It was suggested that the Board be updated regularly on the strategy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the comments raised on the progress of the Sports Facilities Strategy be noted;
- (2) an annual report on progress made against the strategy be presented to the Board; and
- (3) a visit for Members of the Board, to the new tennis facility at Wade Deacon High school be organised.

Strategic Director
Health &
Community

ELS18 CAPITAL CULTURE YOUTH FESTIVAL

The Chairman reported that this item had been deferred to the next meeting, as it had not, as yet, been presented to the Executive Board for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the item be deferred to a future meeting of the Board.

ELS19 LIBRARY SERVICE UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community which gave Members an update on the developments of the Library Service and highlighted the range of activities that had been organised to promote the service.

The Board was advised that a Big Lottery application had been submitted to the Community Libraries Fund at the end of March 2007. In this respect an email had been received indicating that the final decision had been delayed and would not be available until the middle of October 2007. However, unlike some other Authorities, Halton were still being considered for the funding.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that if there were any further changes to the mobile library stops that there would be further consultation;
- The range of activities for 2008 which had been designated as the Year of Reading and how they linked into primary schools was noted. The extensive work undertaken with young people and

the numerous young people's projects across primary and secondary ages was also noted;

- It was noted that the Railway Room in the library would re-open on 22nd September 2007. The comprehensive facility and extensive literature was also noted and Members were encouraged to visit the facility;
- The reasons for the fluctuations in the percentage of active borrowers as a population was noted. It was also noted that there was an increase in the number of people accessing services such as the internet; and
- It was noted that the NRF funding ceased in 2008 and the Authority, at this time, did not know if there would be any more of this funding after that date. However, it was also noted that the £1.5m lottery funding, if successful, was capital funding and could only be used for refurbishment and development of the libraries.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

ELS20 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community which informed the Members of the Board of the contribution that the Community Development Service had made in the delivery of the Culture and Leisure Service Plan and the five key Corporate Priorities over the last municipal year, 2006/07.

The Board was advised that the full annual report would be available in the Members rooms and Members could receive an individual copy on request, via email.

Councillor Wright, Portfolio Holder, Community took the opportunity to thank the Community Development Team for the excellent work they have done to date in relation to the funding and support they have given to people in the community. These views were endorsed by all the Members of the Board.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and

- (2) the Board, place on record, a vote of thanks and appreciation to the Community Development Team for the work they have undertaken to date.

(NB: Councillor Wright declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business as a Member of the 3MG Board.)

ELS21 URBAN RENEWAL STRATEGIC REVIEW AND ACTION PLAN

At the request of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board, the Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which presented the Urban Renewal Strategic Review and Draft Action Plan for 2007-10 for consideration.

In this respect, an update of the Urban Renewal Strategic Review & Action Plan 2007 – 2010 was circulated at the meeting.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

- In relation to a general trailing off of funding streams (e.g. SRB, NRF and ERDF) and the earlier over programming funding problems of the North West Development Agency. It was noted that economic initiatives contained within much of the Urban Renewal agenda would have difficulty in accessing external funding. A number of projects were cited, including Castlefields Regeneration, town centres development and waterside developments. In addition to the Widnes Waterfront EDZ and St Michael's Golf Course;
- It was suggested that a report be presented to the Board outlining the audit trail of the funding of the major projects;
- The European calculation and difficulties in relation to Objective One funding was noted;
- The importance of renewing the natural environment was noted;
- It was noted that affordable housing was crucial to urban renewal; and
- It was suggested that the Authority could be more pro active with the requirements of the main

transport provider that was directly owned by the Council in relation to the bus services.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the Urban Renewal Strategy and Draft Action Plan 2007-10 be noted for the purpose of ensuring cross cutting issues awareness; and
- (2) a regular update report on future funding availability for Urban Renewal major projects with ELS links be presented to the Board.

Strategic Director
Environment

ELS22 COMMUNITY COHESION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which presented the final report of the Community Cohesion Working Party. The report sought the approval of a series of recommendations which would be considered by the Executive Board.

The Chairman of the Board, Councillor Jones suggested that the Members of the Topic Group re-convene at the end of October 2007 to review the action plan and the migration statistics in relation to new work and the impact on services in the Borough. He also highlighted the importance of Board regularly monitoring cohesion in the Borough.

The Board thanked Members and Officers who had taken part in the topic group and indicated that it was an excellent and comprehensive report on a complex issue.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Board approve the findings and recommendations of the Community Cohesion Topic Group; and
- (2) the following be recommended to the Executive Board for approval;-
 - (i) the 'Vision Story' developed during the scrutiny process be adopted as the community cohesion statement for Halton, and form part of the overall corporate equalities statement used in service planning;
 - (ii) the Equality Impact Assessments be

Strategic Director
Corporate &
Policy

extended in scope, in line with LGA Guidance, to cover the potential community cohesion impacts of all Council policies and programmes. This should be carried out as part of the established service planning process;

- (iii) an Officer Working Group be established, as a sub group of the Corporate Equalities Group, to specifically look at the needs of new migrants in the Borough and to monitor the joint delivery of services to them;
- (iv) the cohesion implications of council activities are monitored and reported to the various Policy and Performance Boards as part of the normal service planning monitoring process. In addition, a data set of cohesion indicators should be set up and populated. These should form an annual progress report on cohesion, which would be monitored by the Employment, Learning and Skills PPB;
- (v) the Corporate Services PPB be alerted to emerging concerns about perceived barriers to accessing services. These include opening hours, disabled access, transport, difficult locations, information and communication, bureaucracy, quality of response and perceived attitudes to certain client group. Corporate Services PPB may wish to consider whether it is worthy of further investigation or scrutiny;
- (vi) the Council and its Partners be informed of the results of this scrutiny topic and recognise that anti-social behaviour has profound implications for cohesion in Halton. It is one of its defining issues. The anti-social behaviour scrutiny topic team and Halton's Community Safety Team should take note of the impact of their work on community cohesion and be aware that this will form part of the cohesion monitoring system in Halton;
- (vii) inter-generational myths and conflicts

were identified as a key defining feature of cohesion in Halton. It is recommended that the appropriate teams within the Children's Services and Health and Communities Directorates collaborate on joining up activity to specifically address inter-generational issues within Halton; and

- (viii) the Board place on record a vote of thanks and appreciation to the Councillors and Officers who had taken part in the review for their excellent work on such a complex issue.

ELS23 STANDING ORDER 51

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

RESOLVED: That Standing Order 51 be waived.

(NB: Councillor Rowe declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business as his employer is Cameron Industrial Services.)

ELS24 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive, which gave Members the opportunity to examine progress towards achieving the service objectives, milestones and performance targets contained in Quarter 1 of the 2006/07 service plans within the Boards remit.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

Economic Regeneration

- The funding difficulties in relation to the Lewis Carroll Visitor Centre was noted. It was suggested that publishers be explored as a possible funding resource. It was also suggested that the number of books sold per annum in relation to the centre be identified. It was also noted that the centre was the responsibility of the Daresbury Church Council and Daresbury Parish Council. The various funding streams that had been explored were discussed and noted;
- The update on the pilot release programme in

relation to HMP Altcourse, Liverpool was discussed and noted;

- The recently confirmed allocation of the deprived areas fund for Halton of £639,000 over two years was noted. The re-organisation of the Job Centre Plus districts which would result in Halton being placed in the Cheshire district and not in Merseyside district was discussed and noted. The actions being taken to date to address this issue was also noted. It was suggested that the Board recommend that Halton remain as one district within Merseyside; and
- In relation to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) releasing that there would be no increase in the budget figures for Adult Learning Skills for the next academic year, the Board requested that the Area Director of the LSC be invited to a future meeting to discuss this issue.

Culture and Leisure

It was noted that the results of the nomination of the Brindley for the National Lottery Award for the Best Arts Project would be on television on Saturday evening.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted;
- (2) publishers be explored as a possible funding resource for the Lewis Carroll Visitor Centre and that the number of books sold in relation to the Centre per annum be identified; and
- (3) the Area Director of the Learning and Skills Council be invited to the next meeting of the Board to discuss the funding allocation for Adult Learning Services in Halton.

Strategic Director
Environment

Meeting ended at 9.20 p.m.