

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 February 2019 in the Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors MacManus (Chair), Cassidy, Leck, Logan, June Roberts, Rowe, Teeling, Wallace and Whitley

Apologies for Absence: Councillors C. Plumpton Walsh and Gerrard

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, J. Griffiths, C. Patino, S. Saunders and S. Bartlett

Also in attendance: One member of the press

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
ELS26	MINUTES	
	The Minutes from the meeting held on 19 November 2018, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
ELS27	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
ELS28	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 3 OF 2018-19	
	The Board received the performance management reports for Quarter 3 of 2018-19 (1 October 2018 to 31 December 2018) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.	
	It was noted that the key priorities for development of improvement in 2017-18 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.

Further to Members queries, the following was noted:

- Ref EEP LI 11 and 12 – the actual figures for quarter 3 were low but this was due to the DWP Work Programmes coming to an end in March this year. The newly introduced DWP Work and Health Programme had seen increased referrals;
- Community and Environment Budgets – reasons for the budget overspend were outlined in the report and the challenges faced were discussed;
- The Stadium would welcome and encourage any organisations or businesses who wish to hire the pitch;
- The men's gymnasium was closing in May 2019 but the ladies would remain open;
- The Siemens-Alstom proposed merger negotiations were still ongoing.

RESOLVED: That the performance management reports for Quarter 3 be received.

ELS29 UPDATE SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUP - BETTER JOBS

The Board received an update on the work of the 'Better Jobs' Scrutiny Topic Group. This was established as the Scrutiny Topic for the Municipal Year 2018-19 and considered how local residents could be encouraged to access the better paid jobs being created in the Borough.

It was reported that the Topic Group used aspects of the Six Sigma methodology to manage the process. This approach was known as DMAIC; Define, Measure; Analyse; Design; Improve; Control.

Members were updated with the progress the Group had made to date as described in the report. The dichotomy presented was explained with regards to those jobs in the Borough described by employers as 'difficult to fill' and the purpose of the topic group; leading to the conclusion that other questions should be looked at.

It was reported that at the last topic group meeting, Members made a number of points regarding behaviour change; and the feasibility of identifying determinants in relation to data held by Public Health professionals and whether 'nurture or nature' played a role in determining a person's future job prospects and how influences in early life would have a bearing on this.

The next steps of the Topic Group were outlined and Members were referred to further research carried out in different areas, as shown via the website links provided. Members also noted the suggestion for a future topic group to focus on whether the Borough's residents who held higher level qualifications and skills were accessing the Borough's job opportunities being created.

The Board discussed:

- the demise of the careers advise service *Connexions* and the expectation that schools should provide this service (which some did). The importance of parents' advice at this stage of a child's life was noted;
- the suggestion that the Board invites students from local schools and colleges to a future meeting, so that they could present their experiences of careers guidance;
- the suggestion that the careers advice is provided from the age of 13 instead of 14; this would be referred to the relevant officer for a response; and
- the Gatsby Career Benchmarks.

Officers referred to the upcoming Halton Skills Show which would take place on 20 March 2019 in the Heath Business Park; further details would be sent to the Board, together with information on the LCR Schools Hub Pilot.

The Chair reminded the Board that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Topic Group would be on Monday 25 February 2019.

RESOLVED: That Members acknowledge the work undertaken to date and proposed next steps.

ELS30 LIBRARY SERVICE

The Board received a presentation from the Library Strategy and Development Manager which provided an

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overview of the activities undertaken by the library service over the past 12 months.

Members were presented with the Halton Libraries Events booklet, January to April 2019 and information on the Public Library Universal Health Offer (a partnership offer delivered by the SCL and The Reading Agency).

Members welcomed the news from the Libraries and congratulated the staff involved. It was commented that the service had strived to continue to provide numerous activities for the public despite cuts to funding. The importance of the Libraries was discussed within the community and they were considered to be a warm, safe, friendly environments.

It was reported that a consultation was taking place to find out what more the Libraries could offer.

In response to members queries regarding the Libraries working with primary schools to improve their English Language standards; it was noted that some work was already done with schools but the Child Development Officer at the Council would be contacted with regards to this in particular and a response provided later. Also with regards to the delivery of the activities offered in the Libraries, it was stated that the library staff were facilitators of the events, not teachers. There were some activities however that were required to be run by qualified people.

RESOLVED: That the presentation and comments made be noted.

ELS31 COMMUNITY LEARNING MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

The Board received a presentation from the Head of Curriculum and Learner Services (Halton Adult Learning Services), which provided an overview of the Halton element of the Greater Merseyside Community Learning Mental Health Research project.

It was reported that the project aimed to assess the potential for adult and community learning courses to help people develop strategies and a tool kit to manage and aid recovery from mild to moderate mental health problems. In total 51 learning providers took part covering 57 local authorities over a two year period.

The presentation outlined the purpose of the project; its aims and focus; the statistics and figures; the partners

being worked with; outcomes and learner feedback.

In response to Members queries, the following was noted:

- The data being collected was compiled through tracking the learner;
- The Programmes were delivered in Kingsway Learning Centre in Widnes and the Acorn Learning Centre in Runcorn; and
- The project was able and prepared to engage with third parties and was already working in some schools, where for example parental engagement challenges existed.

So Members could access the video links at their leisure, the presentation would be forwarded to them.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

Councillor Whitley declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item as she was a Member of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

ELS32 UPDATE ON LIVERPOOL CITY REGION ACTIVITIES

Members received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, on employment, learning and skills activities in the Liverpool City Region (LCR).

It was reported that the Council contributed to a number of initiatives and actions that were taking place in the LCR as follows:

- Local Industrial Strategy for the LCR;
- Apprenticeships Hub;
- LCR Apprentice Graduation Ceremony;
- School Careers Hub;
- Devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB);
- Skills for Growth Action Plans and Careers Materials; and
- National Apprenticeship Week

Further to Members queries the following comments were made:

- The Adult Education Budget (AEB) would receive an additional £150k funding for Test and Learn pilots;
- The Halton Tomorrow Strategy would link in with the

LCR Local Industrial Strategy;

- The apprenticeship levy was discussed and the potential for its misuse by employers; Officers advised that they promoted quality and progression for those on apprenticeships;
- The LCR Apprentice and Employer Ambassador Network had been launched and to date four of Halton's employers had signed up to be Ambassadors; it was hoped that the list would increase in numbers; and
- The Open Your Door Theatre Company had delivered a short play to local secondary schools around apprenticeships.

RESOLVED: That Members note the progress being made to deliver employment, learning and skills activities across the Liverpool City Region and recognises the role Halton Council and its partners play in supporting these activities.

Meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.