

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, 20 September 2021 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), E. Cargill (Vice-Chair), Begg, M. Bradshaw, S. Hill, Logan, Stretch, Teeling and Whitley

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Dourley and C. Plumpton Walsh

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, A. Jones, C. Hart and P. Corner

Also in attendance: M. Murphy – Riverside College and one member of the press

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

The Board observed a minute's silence in honour of Councillor Howard, who sadly passed away last week.

ELS11 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 28 June 2021, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

ELS13 PRESENTATION - RIVERSIDE COLLEGE

The Board welcomed the Principal from Riverside College, Mary Murphy, who presented an update on the College's strategic priorities; this included the quality of teaching and learning; enrolments; funding; and key developments.

The presentation outlined the type of students and areas where they were being educated – 16-18 year olds, those with special educational needs, adults, higher education, apprenticeships and fee paying courses. In total

there were 6,686 students currently on roll over the 3 campuses – Riverside College, Cronton Sixth Forum College and CRMZ.

The college was proud to say it worked with 700 employers locally and 45 high schools in Halton, the Liverpool City Region and Warrington. It was noted that 90% of students of all ages who enrolled stayed at College and achieved their qualifications. In March 2020, the College was inspected by Ofsted and was awarded an outstanding rating; extracts from the inspection report were provided for Members. The report also gave details of investments made in teaching and learning facilities totalling £28m over the past 8 years.

To conclude Members were presented with some case studies of students achievements at the College and how they had progressed on to further education or secured careers.

The Board welcomed the information presented and some Members commented that they had in fact attended the College themselves, at some point in their life.

In response to Members' questions, it was commented that there would always be challenges ahead – aside from the impacts of Covid, there was a new Secretary of State for Education and an impending spending review, which could affect funding and apprenticeships.

Mary invited all Board Members to tour the Colleges at a future date; this would be arranged as part of a future study visit.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received and action points noted.

ELS14 ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND ASSESSMENT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an update on developments in the economy in recent years. Members also received a presentation in support of this.

It was reported that an in depth assessment was made based on information specific to Halton and analyses of local economic information, in order to understand progress with *Halton 2030* and the economic issues raised. Members were updated on the progress over the last two years, which used the following categories as a measure:

Operational Director -
Economy, Enterprise & Property

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- The Economic Overview;
- Enterprise and Jobs;
- The Resident Population;
- Skills; and
- Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

The report outlined the key findings of progress in the economy within the following areas:

- Economic Value (GVA) and Growth;
- Employment and Economic Activity;
- Skills;
- Economic Inactivity and Unemployment;
- Housing; and
- Land and Property Markets.

It was noted that Halton was in a good position generally with just a couple of areas that needed attention. The following was discussed in response to Members' questions:

- The HGV driver situation – there were some issues with the shortage of HGV drivers in Halton that were affecting businesses who were part of a supply chain for example and receiving late deliveries. It was a difficult profession to recruit to for the reasons discussed, so it was important to work towards future training and recruitment and support business to do this.
- Those economically inactive – this was higher than the national average but information regarding the actual demographics of these residents was not available. It was suggested that the topic group on *Health and Employment* (see minute below) could investigate this with help from colleagues in Public Health, who have more detailed data in this area.
- The definition of having no formal qualifications meant those with no qualifications from the standard examination boards. People may have qualifications from jobs they have held previously but are not recognised by other employers as there is no certificate.
- Apprenticeships were important as they offered young people the qualification and experience which are easily transferrable.

- Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ) ran a number of schemes for the Council which were bid for on a competitive basis against commercial organisations. They had continually strived to bid for these contracts to retain the ability to help local residents and had been successful in doing so. As well as helping residents they worked with a number of employers who contact them asking for advice and suitable staff.

RESOLVED: That the presentation and comments made be noted.

ELS15 TOPIC GROUP ITEMS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

The Board received the proposed scrutiny topic group titles for the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community PPB, for the municipal year 2021/22.

Further to the PPB meeting in June, Members confirmed that they would like to progress two topics – *Health and Employment* and *The Provision of Business Support in the Borough*. Taking into consideration resource constraints, it was agreed that the priority would be the *Health and Employment* topic and the second item would be progressed later in the year and would link to future study visits.

Members received the two templates appended to the report which outlined the purpose and objectives of each topic and set out the format for the meetings and identified possible expert witnesses and areas for discussion.

It was agreed that all Members would be invited to join one or both Topic Groups and the dates of the first meetings would be sent out as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That Members note the report and consider the scope of the topic groups as set out.

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ELS16 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2021/22

The Board received the Performance Management reports for Quarter 1 of 2021-22 (1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021) 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 2021-22 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 first quarter Performance Management reports be received.

Meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.