

**REPORT TO:** Employment, Learning & Skills and  
Community PPB

**DATE:** 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community &  
Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Employment, Learning & Skills and  
Community

**SUBJECT:** Liverpool City Region Employment & Skills  
Update

**WARDS:** Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update Members on a number of employment and skills developments in the Liverpool City Region.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Policy and Performance Board receive the information and comment as relevant.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority leads on a number of employment and skills initiatives. This report sets out a number of these, providing most recent information.

### **Adult Education Budget (AEB) Procurement**

3.1.1 AEB is now devolved from Government to the Combined Authority (CA). The CA is now in year 3 of its commissioning cycle and recently went out to re-procurement for its contracted provision. It will be a single stage process this time, therefore making it a simpler process and the contract will be a 5 year one (1+1+1+1+1) to help give the sector more stability. The closing date was 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and the CA is currently scoring the submissions from training providers.

3.1.2 Halton's Adult Learning Service and Riverside College receive AEB via a grant and are therefore not subject to the AEB procurement process.

3.1.3 The council meets regularly with the CA to review progress against the AEB profile. Covid has had and continues to have a significant affect upon progress as a result of a combination of factors including centres being closed, staff and learner absences through Covid related illness and lack of confidence in learners to access online learning.

3.1.4 During the various lockdowns, AEB provision transferred to an online delivery model. Given the procured training providers were no longer able to offer their original curriculum offer as training centres were closed, they took to offer alternative provision. The market was flooded with online employability provision from the procured AEB providers who, in many instances, were able to offer incentives to learners such as free laptops to enrol. As a local authority AEB provider, the Adult Learning Service was not able to offer such incentives and enrolments were adversely affected. This situation has been fed back to the CA and we have asked that, as part of the procurement process currently being worked up, the CA ensures that any procured provision must not duplicate existing provision offered in Halton by the grant funded providers. Delivery of the procured provision will commence 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

### **LCR Skills Show & Apprenticeship Graduation Ceremony**

3.1.5 Halton's Employment, Learning & Skills Division manages the Apprenticeship Support by Be More service on behalf of the Combined Authority. The service offers impartial advice and guidance to residents on apprenticeships and promotes and celebrates all things apprenticeships. The team were leading on a large, interactive Skills Show due to take place on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at the Exhibition Centre Liverpool.

3.1.6 Figures before Christmas showed there were 105 exhibitors confirmed and 46 group bookings from schools (totalling 3763 individuals) and an additional 60 individual bookings for the twilight session on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Halton's school bookings made up 10.26% of the overall school bookings.

3.1.7 Given the recent Omicron variant, which has significantly increased the numbers of positive Covid cases in the UK and the nature of an interactive skills show, a number of exhibitors and schools cancelled their involvement in early January 2022. Further cancellations were expected so a decision was made to postpone the Skills Show to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> March. All existing bookings will be honoured.

3.1.8 Further details of what the Skills Show will bring to the City Region can be found [here](#).

3.1.9 The Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team also delivered an Apprenticeship Graduation Ceremony for LCR apprentice graduates in November 2021. 60 apprentices, their guests, colleges/training providers and invited dignitaries attended a fabulous evening at Grand Central Hall in Liverpool. Guest speakers included Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham and Olympic gymnast Beth Tweddle MBE, who inspired guests with their own apprenticeship stories. A further Graduation Ceremony will take place in September 2022 and discussions are currently underway as to what this will look like, where it will take place etc. We expect numbers to be greater than the November 2021 event as there is a greater lead in time.

- 3.1.10 Funding for the Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team is set to end in September 2022. Discussions are currently underway with the CA regarding options post September.

### **LCR Insights**

- 3.1.11 The Combined Authority is developing an insights tool regarding Job Vacancies in LCR. There are many jobs available in the city region and the CA have already developed a central portal LCR Jobs to bring various job vacancy resources into one place. However, there is a mismatch of job vacancies and suitable applicants to fill these vacancies. Currently there are 19500 vacancies in LCR with an average salary at £23500. LCR Insights is not a vacancies website for jobseekers, rather it is a tool for those supporting people into employment in their local areas to understand what vacancies are out there. Obviously as new vacancies arise, the data will be updated.
- 3.1.12 It is also likely that a targeted marketing campaign to attract applicants from outside the City Region will be developed.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no policy implications associated with this report.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Covid has impacted adversely on the delivery of the adult education budget within the City Region, including Halton's Adult Learning Team. Underperformance may result in funding being clawed back, which then has an impact on budget levels as staff and premises costs still need to be covered.
- 5.2 Funding for the Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team is set to end in September 2022. Discussions are currently underway with the CA regarding options post September. There are 6 members of staff in this team.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The LCR Skills Show's main target audience are young people from year 9 onwards. Nearly 4000 school pupils were set to attend the event in January. Many young people have missed out on comprehensive and interactive careers advice over the last 2 years. Should the March event also have to be postponed to any later, then it will be too late for those in Years 11 and 13 to benefit from such a valuable event.

### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

There are no implications associated with this report.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

There are no implications associated with this report.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

There are no implications associated with this report.

### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

There are no implications associated with this report.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

In line with an orange book assessment there is no likelihood or impact of this work beyond the team performing the task.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

There are no equality or diversity issues.

## **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.