

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 June 2022 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), E. Cargill (Vice-Chair), Begg, Garner, S. Hill, Logan, Rowe, Stretch and Aimee Teeling

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Dourley and C. Plumpton Walsh

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, A. Jones, S. Saunders, P. Corner, F. Edwards and S. Lowrie

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
ELS1	MINUTES	
	The Minutes from the meeting held on 31 January 2022, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
ELS2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that no public question had been received.	
ELS3	THE EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING & SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD'S ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22	
	The Board received the Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2021/22.	
	The Chair conveyed his thanks to all Members of the Board and Officers for their support throughout the year.	
	RESOLVED: That the Annual Report for 2021-22 be received.	

ELS4 APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT BY BE MORE UPDATE

The Board received a report and presentation on the '*Apprenticeship Support by Be More*' service, which provided an update from the paper submitted at the last meeting in January 2022.

The Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team was managed by Halton Borough Council and funded by the European Social Fund (ES) and the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF). It delivered career inspiration and guidance to Liverpool City Region (LCR) residents and promoted the take up of apprenticeships, vocational training and employment vacancies. Since the last report on the service in January 2022 the Team had delivered the LCR Skills Show (1 and 2 March 2022) to 2568 individuals, held career events, an educational theatre play and made 212 interventions.

Following Members' questions, the following was noted:

- The LCR now managed the Apprenticeship Support by Be More website; it was commented that the website lacked signposting for those with SEND, this would be fed back to them. The Team had recently targeted Young people with SEND in a separate campaign (Learn Live);
- An apprenticeship is a job and generally apprentices were offered permanent employment upon completion of an apprenticeship;
- There was a drop in 16-18 year olds applying for apprenticeships during Covid-19 pandemic, these were now increasing;
- Schools from Runcorn and Widnes did take part in the LCR Skills Show in March; more detailed information was available and would be sent to Members following the meeting; and
- Officers had held meetings with the LCR regarding the cessation of the service and had lobbied for a replacement service.

Members welcomed and praised the work carried out by the Be More Team but were disappointed that the service would cease in December of this year. No information was being provided from the LCR on what would replace this service and what opportunities would be made available to those six staff who delivered the service and currently faced losing their jobs. The Board objected to the cessation of the service and it was agreed that officers would contact the

LCR for more information on a substitute service going forward.

Operational
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Economy,
Enterprise
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RESOLVED: That the Board received the information and presentation.

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ELS5 SPORT AND RECREATION TEAM

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Community and Environment, which provided information on the Council's Sport and Recreation Service, and Leisure Centre and Sports Development Services for the financial year 2021/22.

The report outlined what the service had delivered during the last 12 months, following the emergence from the pandemic. The Leisure Centre Service (LCS) reopened in April 2021 after the third national lockdown. It was reported that the service continued to actively work with partner organisations, to facilitate development through a better understanding of local issues and a sharing of resources to achieve success; without which much of the work highlighted in the report would not have been possible.

The Sport and Recreation Team has two distinct areas, Sports Development Team and Management of the Council's 3 Leisure Centres – Kingsway Leisure Centre, Brookvale Leisure Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool. The report outlined the projects delivered in both of these areas in detail, which included participation data and partnership and collaboration work.

Following the presentation, the following information was provided or clarified:

- The figure of 248,000 related to number of activity visits made to leisure centres, not the number of people;
- The use of grass pitches was back to capacity, specifically Widnes;
- Following the Covid-19 pandemic, older clients were slowly returning to classes;
- Brookvale pool was not open to the general public during the day, except early mornings and two lunchtimes, but the gym was;
- Some lifeguards were swimming instructors as well, so did both jobs;
- There was a waiting list for swimming classes; unfortunately, due to resources the waiting list is currently suspended. If there is a space a customer

can be enrolled, if not they would be asked to call back. Once resources permit, the waiting lists will recommence; and

- There was a review of the Aquatics service currently underway which was looking at stabilising the model.

Members discussed their concerns over the poor retention of lifeguards and swimming instructors in the Council, which was adversely affecting the services provided in leisure centres, due to not having enough qualified staff to operate fully. Arising from the discussion and responses were the following points:

- Three lifeguards were needed to open a swimming pool to enable the operation of a “two on – one off” rotation; the “off” rotation staff member did other jobs during this period of time;
- Examples of other jobs carried out by the lifeguards were given;
- Swimming instructors were considered to be low paid, in comparison with these jobs in the private sector;
- Lifeguards and swimming instructors were employed on HBC contracts; in addition a large number of casual workers were employed that the service relied on for holiday cover/vacancies;
- Out of 36 lifeguards trained during 2021, 17 had found work at other sites;
- Four lifeguard positions were currently in the recruitment line with HR waiting to be advertised;
- Low pay was the main reason for recruitment difficulties for swimming instructors due to competition with the private sector;
- Despite the closure of Runcorn swimming pool and staff shortages, there were no capacity issues for customers using the pools during general swim sessions;
- A review of the swimming timetable would take place to see if a new Aqua class could be put on to accommodate the participants who attended Runcorn Pool;
- A subsidy for lifeguard training courses was to be considered; and
- Consideration to increase the pay for lifeguards and swimming instructors was suggested.

It was noted that with regards to the consideration of increasing pay to attract staff, a paper was being submitted to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board this year, on this matter. The Board would be kept updated.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the report and comments made; and
- 2) welcomes the progress being made in encouraging and supporting residents to be active.

Operational
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Community
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ELS6 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Economy, Enterprise and Property, which provided a number of employment and skills developments in the Liverpool City Region (LCR).

The LCR Combined Authority led on a number of employment and skills initiatives as follows:

- Adult Education Budget (AEB) Procurement;
- LCR Skills Show;
- Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPS) and Strategic Development Fund (SDF); and
- Skills Bootcamps for the Workforce.

The report outlined the most recent information in relation to the above initiatives. With regards to the LCR Skills Show, Members requested a list of participants/providers and details of the schools that were in attendance from Halton – these would be sent following the meeting and emailed to Members.

It was also noted that the LCR Combined Authority (CA) did have trade union representatives on relevant Boards. The situation with the funding for the Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team was highlighted, as referred to in minute number ELS4.

RESOLVED: That the information be received and comments made be noted.

ELS7 SHARED PROSPERITY FUND UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Economy, Enterprise and Property, which provided an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and set out how this may impact on Halton.

It was reported that the UKSPF was a major regeneration fund which aimed to contribute to the Government's *Levelling Up* agenda by providing financial

assistance to capital and revenue projects which boosted productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in deprived areas, as well as growing a sense of community, local pride and belonging. It was noted that this was designed to be less bureaucratic than the European funding scheme it had been designed to replace – details of this were set out in the report.

The report outlined the funding commitments already made which included what the UKSPF would provide to the Combined Authority as a whole and what Halton would receive from this. It also provided information on the impact this funding would have for Halton and its priorities.

It was noted that since the report had been written further details were emerging in regard to how the fund would be delivered and the priorities for funding. A briefing note was being prepared which would provide more details. It was recognised that going forward there were less resources available than with previous programmes and that working with partners to maximise resources would be required.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the report.

ELS8 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) TRANSITION REPORT

The Board considered a report which provided an update on transition from a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Growth Platform, to a more integrated organisation as part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority, against a backdrop of a Central Government review.

The report listed the activities to be carried out locally as part of the Government review and gave the timeframe for the drafting of the Transition Plan before it is submitted to Government on 29 July 2022.

It was noted that the review is open to the public and private companies and will provide the opportunity to ensure local views were heard. Further, the LEP Board and sub-boards and other private sector stakeholders would be thoroughly consulted for individual and collective input during this process over the coming weeks, as would this Board.

Officers' would submit a further update to the Board in 6 months.

Operational Director Economy, Enterprise & Property -

Operational Director Economy, Enterprise & Property -

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the update.

Property

ELS9 UPDATE ON EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING, SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD SCRUTINY TOPICS

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Economy, Enterprise and Property, which provided an update on the Scrutiny Topic Group themes agreed by Members for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

Two Topics were agreed last June – ‘*Health and Employment*’ and ‘*The Provision of Business Support in the Borough*’. Both Topic Groups had now met and a summary of the key points were set out in the report, which included any emerging issues and future actions to be taken.

A visit to Riverside College was proposed between 11 – 22 September; suggested dates would be sent to the Board for agreement. Furthermore, a visit to a local business was being arranged. Consideration was also being given to providing employers with advice on the work of the Public Health Team, via the Chamber of Commerce’s First Tuesday Breakfast Meetings.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the report.

ELS10 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Q4 2021-22

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 4 of 2021-22 (1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022) 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 or 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.

Further to queries, it was noted that the restructure of the Employment, Learning and Skills Division was completed. Also, that some KPI information on employment,

learning and skills was not recorded due to information not being available.

RESOLVED: That the quarter 4 2021-22 performance management reports be received.

Meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.