

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 12 February 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy
SUBJECT: Local Employment Partnership
WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider signing up to the Local Employment Partnership (LEP) initiative with Jobcentre Plus.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) Executive Board support the commitment to the LEP.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs) were introduced in 2007 by the government as a way of tackling the increasing recruitment and skills challenges of the labour market and economy. The partnership is between employers and Jobcentre Plus and is a way of building on existing approaches to recruitment and developing a skilled workforce from within the local community.

3.2 By signing up to a LEP employers are demonstrating a commitment to looking at the untapped potential of working age people claiming benefits by opening up employment and training opportunities to disadvantaged jobseekers and in particular those from economically deprived wards.

The advice received from Jobcentre Plus is that the Council is already meeting the LEP recruitment standards as all job seekers are signposted to any advertised vacancies by Jobcentre staff and there is a well established Apprenticeship scheme in place.

3.3 The skills development aspect of the LEP encourages employers to access Train to Gain funding through signing the Skills Pledge. As the Council has already taken advantage of this scheme and is working jointly with the Trade Unions to promote uptake there would be no further commitment required.

3.4 Following discussion with Jobcentre Plus it would appear that by signing up to a LEP the Council is only reconfirming in a more public

arena the commitment to work it is already undertaking. The signing of the LEP either by the Chief Executive or Leader of the Council would be publicised by Jobcentre Plus to encourage other employers in Borough to take advantage of what it available.

- 3.5 The signing of the LEP provides an opportunity for the Council to further drive its vision and priorities forward. It supports the aims of the Community Strategy and the work of the Halton Strategic Partnership by underpinning some of the priorities identified following the 2005 State of Halton report. It will also form part of the initiative to reduce unemployment and help, through the Apprenticeship scheme, to reduce the number of young people not in employment, education or training.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Not Applicable.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Managers will have to consider carefully their recruitment needs and to ensure that all sections of the Community are reached.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Will support the employment prospects of local people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Will support the employment prospects of local people.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Will support the employment prospects of local people.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Will support the employment prospects of local people.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Will support the employment prospects of local people.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 If LEP is not signed it could undermine the public commitment to tackling worklessness within the Borough.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Signing the LEP will support the Council's drive to support disadvantaged groups in the community.

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

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