

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 February 2017 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors MacManus (Chair), Baker, Cassidy, Logan, J. Lowe, C. Plumpton Walsh, June Roberts, Rowe and Wallace

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Edge and J Gerrard

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, A. Jones, T. Booth and A. Bowan

Also in attendance: N. Wilcock and J. Doyle – Merseylink CCJV

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

ELS29 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 21 November 2016 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS26 – Scrutiny Topic Group Culture – the first meeting of the group would take place on 1 March 2017.

ELS27 – Update on the European Social Fund Ways to Work Project – the Ward breakdown information would be included in a further report at the next meeting.

ELS30 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

ELS31 MERSEYLINK EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Board received a presentation on the progress made to date against the Employment and Skills Key Performance Indicators associated with the new Mersey Gateway crossing. The Board received Merseylink's Employment and Skills Co-ordinator, Neil Wilcock; Alison

Bowan, Employment, Learning and Skills Division HBC; and Jill Doyle, Merseylink CCJV.

As Members were aware Merseylink was selected as the consortia to construct the new Mersey Gateway crossing. Merseylink submitted their Employment and Skills Delivery Plan which included a range of proposed key performance indicators (KPI's); these were discussed in detail in the report.

As part of the procurement process, Merseylink consulted at length with Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) on employment and skills issues. It was noted that the intelligence gathered from this consultation was used to inform their Employment Skills and Delivery Plan.

Following this Merseylink established an Employment and Skills Governance Board (ESGB). This was Chaired by Merseylink's Project Director and included representation from the Merseylink Consortia, the Halton Employment Partnership and the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Ltd. At the ESGB meetings updates were received on progress against the Employment and Skills KPI's. Mr Wilcock was appointed as the Employment and Skills Co-ordinator to support the implementation of the Delivery Plan and act as the interface between HEP and the Merseylink Consortia.

The presentation was received by Members and the following points of clarification and comments were made:

- There was a wide range of apprenticeships offered at NVQ2 Level, such as steel fixers; administration; accountancy; quantity surveying; general construction; joinery; scaffolding; earthworks and IT;
- Out of 28 apprentices 10 had been employed through Merseylink to other contractors and 14 were still working at Merseylink;
- The process of recruitment and training was explained to Members in order for the apprentice to gain employment;
- The apprentices were awarded certificates at the end of the courses;
- The Timebank projects were welcomed and praised by Members; and
- It was reported that a £95m boost had been made to

the economy of the North West region since the start of the construction of the bridge, the Chair requested to know how much of this amount applied to Halton – Mr Wilcock would find this out.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ELS32 INWARD INVESTMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW UPDATE

The Board received an update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Inward Investment Scrutiny Review which concluded in September 2015.

The Inward Investment scrutiny review topic group was established in 2015 to look at the approach to inward investment and considering how a collaborative approach, with the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and other local authorities, would make better use of resources.

The Topic Group made a number of recommendations – both locally and with the LCR; these were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the progress being made to implement the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review.

ELS33 PRESENTATION - THE BRINDLEY THEATRE

The Board received a presentation from the Brindley Arts and Events Manager, Tim Booth which outlined the recent successes and future priorities for the Theatre.

The presentation outlined the recent structural improvements to the building both externally and internally, and made reference to operational improvements such as staff restructure, new ticketing software and hardware and new website. Mr Booth advised that the Theatre had undergone a rebranding of the name and logo, brochure format styles and advertising templates.

Members discussed the income generation aspect of the Theatre and welcomed the improvement in the finances so far for 2016-17. The future priorities of the Brindley were also outlined in the presentation and the following was noted / clarified following Members' queries:

- Approximately 50% of the Brindley Theatre's customers were from out of the Borough;
- Demands for acts varied from one year to the next

and it was difficult to predict whether or not a show would be a sell out or not;

- A priority was to increase the seating capacity of the café as this was extremely popular; it was hoped to double this from 40 to 80 covers;
- Free parking was unique in Halton so this was attractive to customers and the car park would be increased by 118 spaces once the old Crosville site was developed;
- Members discussed the revisiting of acts, the viability of some acts, the use of the studio for 'niche' acts and why some acts did not return;
- Music education was not offered at the Brindley as it was not in demand;
- Income generation from private hire customers was explained; the Theatre would not make a loss if private events were poorly attended;
- Casual catering staff were employed in the Terrace Café and they did work with Riverside College in encouraging applications from students.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the presentation and welcomes the positive progress being made to promote the Brindley as an important visitor destination.

ELS34 AN OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION STRATEGIES

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided Members with a review and summary of the economic and regeneration strategies and interventions that were published by central government and regional agencies. It also provided commentary on a range of local strategies from Halton based organisations, including the Council.

The report considered how these strategic documents and policies might influence aspects of the Council's future service delivery in respect of economic development and regeneration.

Members discussed the report and the Government's proposed new industrial strategy Green Paper 'Building Our Industrial Strategy' that was unveiled by the Prime Minister at Sci-Tech Daresbury on 23 January 2017, was highlighted. This consultation document would close on 17 April 2017.

It was reported that supporting the economy of Halton – the work undertaken by the Council's Economy, Enterprise

and Property Department, was primarily driven by perceived local needs and priorities determined by the Council. However it was noted that other public sector agencies and organisations operating both locally and at regional levels increasingly intervened in numerous ways in the local economy. These organisations normally had published strategies and policies in place that outlined their goals and how they intended to achieve them.

Appended to the report was a document that identified some key documents that would, at varying levels, influence Halton's thinking and would help shape the economic development activities and interventions that this Department undertakes.

In response to a Members comment regarding the future impacts of Brexit, it was not known at this point in time, however it could be said that there would be some winners and some losers. The Chair commented that this subject could be a future scrutiny topic group.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ELS35 UPDATE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH ACTIVITY

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, that provided an update on work being undertaken by the Council's Business Improvement and Growth Team to support economic growth and prosperity in Halton.

Members were provided with background information in respect of the recruitment of a Masters student from the University of Chester, employed to undertake a Halton Business Survey. The scope of the survey was explained in the report and although the results from the survey were mixed, it was noted that the survey was extremely useful in presenting some pointers for how Halton's support to businesses could be further enhanced.

Members were advised that those recommendations and areas for improvement had been taken forward. More recent developments were outlined in the interventions and activities relating to the following, which were discussed in the report:

- This is Halton Living Brochure;
- Liverpool City Region Inward Investment Team Tour;
- Business Growth Hub;

- Evolutive Data Management System; and
- Local Economic Assessment.

It was noted that a report of the Local Economic Assessment would be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That Members note progress being made on activities aimed at supporting economic growth in the Borough.

ELS36 BUSINESS PLANNING

Members received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, inviting them to contribute to the development of Directorate Business Plans for the coming financial year.

It was reported that the Council developed a ‘one council’ medium term business plan, in parallel with the budget, that was subject to annual review and refresh. The process of developing such plans for the period 2017-2020 had now begun and Members were asked to consider a small number of priorities for development or improvement for inclusion. Appended to the report were the suggested key priority areas that related to the Employment, Learning and Skills and Community PPB.

Members wished to comment that although some of the culture and community business plans were considered non statutory, these services were crucial to the wellbeing of the residents of Halton and made a difference to their lives. Members had received positive feedback on the improvements to the community centres since they were now run by the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Board receives the information provided.

ELS37 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS

The Board was presented with the performance management reports for quarter 2 of 2016-17 and was requested to consider and raise any questions or point of clarification in respect of these.

It was noted that the key priorities for development or improvement in 2016-17 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

- Enterprise, Employment and Property Services;
and
- Community and Environment

It was noted that 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 Quarter 2 2017-18 performance management reports be received.

Meeting ended at 8.37 p.m.