

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, 15 September 2014 in The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Edge (Chairman), MacManus (Vice-Chairman), S. Baker, Cassidy, Howard, P. Lloyd Jones, Logan, Parker, C. Plumpton Walsh and Joe Roberts

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W Rourke, A. Jones, C. Patino, S. Saunders and L. Carr

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

ELS11 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 23 June 2014 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

One Member requested feedback on the Welfare Reform Scrutiny Topic Group (Minute ELS8 referred). In response it was noted that the recommendation to include GP referrals in the Topic Group had been included in the report submitted to Executive Board.

Further to a query regarding the monitoring of grants to Voluntary Sector Organisations, it was noted that this matter was covered in the Annual Report to Executive Board on 13 March 2014 (Minute EXB166 referred).

ELS12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

ELS13 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered the Minutes of the meeting of

the Executive Board relevant to the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Portfolio, since the last meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

ELS14 PRESENTATION ON HALTON'S WORK PROGRAMME CONTRACTS

The Board received a presentation on progress relating to Halton's Work Programme contracts.

Members were reminded that on 16 June 2011 this Board supported the decision to enter into contracts with *Ingeus* and *A4E* to deliver the Single Work Programme in Halton. Although Members of the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community PPB received regular updates relating to performance on both contracts through the Quarterly Monitoring Reports, it was felt that Members would appreciate a more in depth presentation explaining how the contracts operated.

It was explained that the Single Work Programme operated on a payment by results basis, which meant that if a person was helped into work, a fee would be provided. To summarise, only 10% of the total fee would be paid by Government when an individual started the work programme. A job outcome fee was paid only after an individual had been in work for 6 months, then a sustainment payment was spread over 1 to 2 years once the person had been in work longer than 6 months.

It was noted that Halton Borough Council had invested staff in managing the process and a return on this investment could only take place once a person had entered into the workplace. The Council had however, started to see an initial return on its investment, whilst at the same time providing a service which helped some of the Borough's most disadvantaged residents back into work.

A question and answer session followed the presentation and the following points of clarification were made:

- An apprenticeship was considered to be a job so these were included in the Work Programme figures;
- Those customers who had not yet been successful in obtaining a job remained on the Programme, which was ongoing for two years. They remained on the

Programme whether they got a job or not within those two years;

- Customers with health needs or disabilities remained on the programme but could not be mandated to take up employment. They were kept in regular contact with the staff via regular telephone calls.
- With regards to the performance of A4E, this was not known as they reported results as a package with other providers.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the progress made to date on Halton's Work Programme contracts.

ELS15 INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR BUSINESS

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which described the scale and impact of The International Festival of Business (IFoB) 2014 across the Liverpool City Region and focused upon the specific activities that took place in the Borough of Halton during the Festival.

Members were advised that the IFoB took place across the Liverpool City Region in June and July 2014 and was marketed as a gathering of the world's most inspiring businesses. The Festival brought together cities from throughout the UK for 61 days of events, exhibitions and showcases and was billed as the largest event of its kind in the UK since the Millennium Fair of 2000 and the Festival of Britain in 1951.

It was reported that IFoB featured more than 400 events in venues across the Liverpool City Region and a further 139 events at venues further afield, covering seven different business sectors. Further, more than 75,000 business delegates took part in IFoB with more than 15,000 registering for the IFoB Business Club and 10,000 delegates passing through the festival's nerve centre, the *IFB Hub*.

The report provided information to Members on the IFoB events and activities in Halton that had taken place, which included the *'International Festival of Business 2014 'Big Data Day'* and *'Addressing the Skills Needs of the Science, Technology and Advance Manufacturing (STAM) Sector'* held on 24 and 26 June respectively.

RESOLVED: That Halton's contribution to the success of International Festival of Business 2014 be noted.

ELS16 GROWING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN HALTON -
KNOWING WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, informing them of research being undertaken to identify and prioritise future resources and actions aimed at growing economic prosperity in Halton.

The report outlined that HBC and its partners should firstly undertake an evaluation of previous regeneration activity and secondly, should undertake a detailed business survey to better understand Halton's business base. This would enable better measurement of the economic impact of the interventions and ensure that future resources were deployed to maximum benefit. The report also provided information on how the evaluation would be conducted and gave details on the undertaking of the business survey which included the areas where responses would be sought.

Following Members' discussion it was noted that HBC's partners were the *Halton Employment Partnership* and *Halton Chamber of Commerce*. Members asked how the Council could ensure a high return on the surveys. Members were advised that Officers would liaise with businesses on a one to one basis, to encourage them to respond to the survey.

RESOLVED: That the PPB notes work the Council and its partners were undertaking to:

- 1) evaluate existing economic regeneration initiatives;
- 2) undertake a research project and in-depth business survey aimed at better understanding Halton's business base;
- 3) undertake research to determine views from property developers, investors and commercial property agents about their perceptions of the attractiveness and obstacles to inward investment in Halton;
- 4) complete a desk top exercise which mapped existing business support activity provided to local businesses and evaluated the economic impact of these interventions;
- 5) produce a policy report identifying key national policies focussed on helping UK businesses to grow and how this related to Halton activities; and
- 6) produce an action plan identifying key future interventions.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

ELS17 IMPROVING HALTON ECONOMY DASHBOARD

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which advised Members of the recent analysis of economic data on Improving Halton Economy Dashboard.

It was reported that as part of the ongoing standard economic analysis it became apparent that there had been a positive change in a number of indicators. These indicators had been pulled into a 'dashboard' to show the improvement over the past 12 months (of available data, data period covering 2012 to 2014). These improvements had taken place at a quicker pace when compared to the national trend.

The following key points were noted from the dashboard:

- In line with regional and national trends Halton had:
 - Rising levels of average pay;
 - Rising levels of GCSE pass rates;
 - Rising levels of new business start-ups;
 - Falling levels of unemployment/job seekers allowance claimants; and
 - Falling levels of adults with no qualifications.
- The average weekly pay for full time workers living in Halton had risen above the North West average for the first time;
- The GCSE pass rate (achieving 5+ A* - C including English and Maths) in Halton had risen above the England figure for the first time;
- The job seekers allowance claimant rate in Halton had seen a greater decrease over the last 12 months, when compared to the decrease nationally;
- For job seekers allowance claims in Halton, every breakdown of 'age of claimant' and 'length of claim' had fallen by at least a quarter over the last 12 months; and
- Compared to overall England figures, Halton had seen a greater increase in new business start-ups and overall business premises.

Members queried whether the data related to people

who lived and worked in the Borough – this would be confirmed and sent to Members. Also Members queried whether or not the data was broken down into Wards which would highlight the more deprived areas. Officers confirmed that this information was available and that the more deprived areas had specific work and support schemes offered.

RESOLVED: That the results of the analysis be noted and used as part of the wider evidence to inform HBC economic policy.

ELS18 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

The Board was presented with a report on the strategic plans currently being developed across the Liverpool City Region to increase business density.

In November 2013 the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) produced a discussion document entitled '*Liverpool City Region Enterprise Strategy and Programme*' which outlined the disparity between business density, and as a consequence employment and Gross Value Added (GVA), between the LCR and the rest of the UK. This information was presented in the report in Figures 1 and 2 respectively. It was noted that the LCR had 32% fewer business than the UK average and the GVA per capita for the LCR was 25% below the UK average.

The report went on to discuss the LCR Enterprise Strategy's objectives with regards to increasing the number of businesses operating in the region to UK average levels within a generation, and presented the proposed seven interventions and recommendations from the LEP.

RESOLVED: That progress towards the development of a coherent, Liverpool City Region wide strategy to increase the number of viable business, and thereby close the employment and GVA gap between the City Region and the rest of the UK, be noted.

ELS19 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS - QUARTER 1 2014-15

The Board was presented with the Performance Management Reports for quarter 1 of 2014-15 and was requested to raise any questions or points of clarification.

The reports detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets, and

provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during this period in the following functional areas that reported to the Board:

- Enterprise, Employment and Skills; and
- Community and Environment

The following points of clarification were made:

3.1 National Careers Service contract – would not be renewed beyond the end of September 2014.

4.2 3MG – it was confirmed that a claw back of £4.5m would apply if the Council did not meet the employment target outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That the performance management reports for the first quarter 2014/15 and comments made be noted.

Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item as he was a Member of CAB Management Board.

ELS20 MONITORING REPORT FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING 2013/14

The Strategic Director – Communities, presented the retrospective performance information report for Voluntary Sector Core Funding in 2013/14.

It was noted that the Council had awarded eleven Core Grants in 2013/14, as detailed in the report. Appendix 1 provided the performance breakdown for the individual organisations for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. It was further noted that those organisations who received under £5,000 provided 6 monthly performance monitoring information, whilst those who received £5,000 or above provided it quarterly.

Officers advised Members of the proposed action in relation to the performance of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre (CHAWREC), which was to improve its activity during 2014/15.

Members requested to know how organisations actually applied for funding. Members also commented that the demand for Halton's Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) had been overwhelming in recent times, especially for debt advice.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) notes the contents of the report; and
- 2) notes the proposed actions for Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre (CHAWREC) in relation to their reduction in activity during 2013/14, in Appendix 1.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

Meeting ended at 8.06 p.m.