

**REPORT TO:** Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 20 February 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Enterprise, Communities and Resources

**PORTFOLIOS:** Economic Development

**SUBJECT:** Merseylink Employment and Skills Performance Update

**WARDS:** Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Board through a PowerPoint presentation of the progress made to date against the Employment and Skills Key Performance Indicators associated with the new Mersey Gateway crossing. Merseylink's Employment and Skills Co-ordinator will attend PPB to make the presentation.

The last presentation to this Board was in March 2015

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the report is noted.

## **3.0 REPORT**

- 3.1 As reported in March 2015 Merseylink was selected in the summer of 2013 as the consortia to construct the new Mersey Gateway crossing and to maintain the existing Jubilee Bridge
- 3.2 The final submission of Merseylink's Employment and Skills Delivery Plan included a range of proposed key performance indicators.
- 3.3 As part of the procurement process, Merseylink consulted at length with HEP on employment and skills issues. This included through a number of 'bootcamp' events and attendance at HEP meetings. Merseylink then used the intelligence gathered to inform their Employment Skills and Delivery Plan.
- 3.4 Merseylink established an Employment and Skills Governance Board (ESGB). The Board is chaired by Merseylink's Project Director and includes Representation from the Merseylink consortia, the Halton Employment Partnership and the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Ltd. Meetings take place and updates are received on progress against the Employment and Skills KPIs. In addition, Merseylink recruited a full time Employment and Skills Co-

Ordinator to support the implementation of the Delivery Plan and act as the interface between HEP and the Merseylink Consortia.

#### 4.0 KEY EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

4.1 Merseylink proposed a comprehensive range of employment and skills key performance indicators within their Employment and Skills Delivery Plan. These are as follows:

- 'A minimum of 3,000 hours per year **volunteer opportunities** delivered linked to the activities of the Visitor Centres and Community Relations Programme'.
- '100% of Halton's primary school community engaged in a **creative public arts programme**, during the construction works. Art work to be displayed / performed throughout the construction period with the best selected for permanent display in a variety of venues throughout the borough'.
- 'The development of a set of **curriculum materials**, during the construction period, to support the delivery of project based work with a specific year group within an agreed number of school. Outcomes to be cascaded to a wider group of schools upon completion'.
- 'A minimum of **10% of all new construction employees** to be sourced from job Centre Plus, Work Programme and current local employment and career development'.
- 'The delivery of **four pre-employability programmes per year** in partnership with HEP providers, during the construction period involving a minimum of 10 people per programme'.
- 'A minimum of **40 days per year (during works) work based learning opportunities** for young people and adults living within Halton'.
- 'To deliver **15 weeks work experience** placements per annum, during the construction works to support both adults and young people'.
- '**10 % of all labour on the construction works being delivered by New Apprenticeships**, including higher apprentices'.
- 'The target of **80% of all new apprenticeships** recruited through the Mersey Gateway Project to **complete their framework**'.
- 'Delivery of at least **two "Meet the Buyer" events** within year one of the construction period – mapped against the capacity profile of prospective small and medium enterprise supply chain providers from the local area and wider region'.
- 'Delivery of an **annual programme of procurement support** in partnership with the HEP during the construction works, to include delivery of knowledge transfer in respect of Health and Safety best practice and requirements'.
- 'In partnership with HEP develop and deliver, within year one of the construction programme, a **cluster programme to assist SME's** to come together to bid in partnership for larger contracts'.
- **100 days Timebank support per annum** during the construction period for the delivery of targeted and meaningful support for Halton Borough Council, Local third sector community organisation and educational establishments'.
- A small number of amendments to KPIs and wording within associated SLAs have been agreed at ESGB level to reflect current practices.

- 4.2 Merseylink's Employment and Skills Co-ordinator maintains a master spreadsheet, detailing progress against each of the KPIs and this is shared with the ESGB on a monthly basis. The co-ordinator meets regularly with task group leads and is actively involved in HEP meetings and events. In addition, the portfolio holder for Economic Development, is engaged regularly in Merseylink events and contributes to relevant press releases.
- 4.3 Integral to the successful delivery of the activities detailed in the Employment and Skills Governance Board is an ongoing marketing and PR strategy. Good practice case studies and regular updates are included in both web based sites and local press. A number of individuals that have accessed the range of initiatives offered through Merseylink have since gone on to gain employment with them.

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

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

A number of schools in Halton have benefited from the activities associated with the Employment and Skills Delivery Plan and KPIs as well as the marketing and PR strategy.

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

The Employment and Skills Delivery Plan and associated KPIs were developed in partnership with HEP colleagues with the objective of creating employment, learning and skills opportunities for the residents of Halton. Progress to date is very positive and the KPIs are being delivered on.

### **5.3 A Healthy Halton**

The creation of the new Mersey crossing will also result in the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge being improved for pedestrian access. A Heritage Trail joining the original sites for the Visitor Centres (Wigg Island and West Bank) is still expected to be developed to encourage visitors to walk across the silver Jubilee Bridge as they visit both sites.

### **5.4 A Safer Halton**

The new Mersey Gateway crossing will not be pedestrianised, with local residents being encouraged to use the Silver Jubilee Bridge for local access. It is expected that road accidents will be much reduced once the congestion associated with the current road network is reduced.

### **5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

This major project will support economic growth as well as creating a landmark civil engineering structure. Improved road infrastructure will be a real positive for both existing and potential new businesses in the borough.

## **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 6.1 There are financial risks associated with non-delivery of the KPIs set out in the Employment and Skills Delivery Plan.

## **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 There are no equality and diversity points arising from this report.

## **8.0 FURTHER INFORMATION**

8.1 Neil Wilcock, Employment and Skills Co-ordinator, MERSEYLINK CJV, mobile:  
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## **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.