

This Business Plan extract contains information in relation to the delivery of the Council's following strategic priority area

Employment, Learning, Skills and Community

To encourage investment, enterprise and business growth, and improve the opportunities for learning and development together with the skills and employment prospects of residents and the workforce so that they are able to feel included socially and financially.

Key Developments

Employment Learning and Skills

The Division was successful in being awarded subcontractor status for delivery of the new DWP Work & Health Programme (December 2017), acting as subcontractor to Ingeus.

The Combined Authority and DWP agreed to a jointly funded and innovative Households into Work programme, with recruitment completed in November 2017.

The Combined Authority have continued Devolution discussions with Government of the devolution of the Adult Education Budget. However, with the election and Brexit factors, the devolution of the budget has been delayed and full devolution will take place in academic year 2019/20.

Apprenticeship Reforms came into effect in May 2017. Changes resulted in a 61% reduction in apprenticeship starts nationally in the period 1st May - 31 July 2107 compared with the same period the year before.

Expressions of interest for Institutes of Technology were sought in late 2017. A joint expression of interest between HBC and Sci Tech Daresbury partners was submitted in November 2017. The IoTs will specialise in delivering the higher level technical skills that employers need.

Publication and implementation of a number of key Combined Authority plans, which will need to be aligned to plans locally: Skills Investment Statement 2018/19; Skills Strategy; Apprenticeship Growth Plan.

Implementation of the Department for Education Careers Strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents (December 2017). Linked to this is the new bidding round for delivery of the National Careers Service. HPIJ has submitted expressions of interest in November/December 2017 to act as subcontractor to prime contractors.

The Youth Employment Gateway Programme performed well in 2017/18. The Programme aims to pilot alternative ways of engaging with young people and one approach has been the development of a personalised budget planning tool where young people can use their budget to make their own choices in regard to training courses, travel, equipment and clothing.

Positive Ofsted Inspection Report April 2017 – the Adult Learning service was inspected at the beginning of 2017/18. The inspection framework was more challenging compared with the process during the previous inspection. It was therefore, a huge achievement for the service to continue to be categorised as 'Good' with some outstanding features.

Provided pre-employability and recruitment open days aimed at helping local people to find work at some of the borough's new developments. The training included interview techniques, application form advice as well as support in Mathematics and English.

Alstom Transport, with the help of our Employment Learning and Skills team, have held two recruitment sessions to promote job opportunities at Alstom's new Transport Technology Centre and Academy for Rail in Widnes.

The Mersey Gateway Toll Operator, Emovis recruited to its Contact Centre Operations team based in Runcorn. 33 individuals signed up to the programme, 17 individuals completed the course and booked an interview and out of which 13 received an offer of employment.

Liverpool City Region (LCR) Apprenticeship Hub - The New LCR Apprentice Hub team is hosted by Halton and became operational in May 2017.

Halton Chamber of Commerce 1st Tuesday Skills Event - We worked with the Chamber of Commerce to hold a skills roadshow/show case events as part of the Chamber's monthly '1st Tuesday' networking meetings. They provided local businesses with an opportunity to get some bespoke one to one support in accessing skills funding and advice.

Households into Work Programme (HiW) - We worked with colleagues in the Liverpool City Region to develop an alternative approach to supporting people into work. This will focus on households where more than one adult is unemployed rather than programmes that target individuals. The programme will test a new way of working that will see each eligible household provided with tailored support and assigned an Employment Advocate for up to 12 months.

Community & Environment

Library Service:

Library service activity supports the Society of Chief Librarians Universal Offers. The five Universal Offers (learning, reading, health, digital & information), along with the Children's Promise and Six Steps for Blind and Partially-Sighted People, cover key areas for a 21st Century library service. These Offers are an integral part of our service for customers. There is also a new Culture Offer that has been introduced.

Learning Offer: digital making and informal science learning

Expanding the lending of BBC Micro:bits, expanding science learning through computer programming, lego robotics, and augmented reality. These activities develop digital skills and creativity while embedding learning in people's lives and supporting the use of libraries as places for community learning

Reading Offer: new resources

New technology has been utilised to ensure library customers have access to a diverse range of reading resources. Alongside the traditional book collection, eBooks are now available as well as digital newspapers, magazines and comics. All are free to access for library members. Lending figures continue to increase creating a community of readers across the Borough.

Culture Offer: new opportunities

A programme of activity has been introduced to ensure libraries are vibrant spaces that offer new opportunities for the community to take part in cultural and creative activity. Produced quarterly, the events marketing brochure highlights the role of libraries as cultural hubs.

Health Offer: impact

Expanding the Home Library Service continues to impact on reducing social isolation, offering services to those unable to access the physical libraries. Our award winning Community Library Service is a project working with care homes across the Borough, delivering reminiscence, shared reading and IT skills. A new programme is in development supporting adults with learning disabilities, opening up access to reading and learning

Digital Offer: new technology

Access to local resources is expanding online as Picture Halton, a repository for local images from our collection, is being re-developed and marketed.

Library staff continue to support people to get online as part of the Include IT digital project,

Information Offer: networks

Libraries are developing a reminiscence network across the Borough, engaging care home practitioners to share best practice and develop skills to support residents living with dementia.

Community Involvement

Community Centres Service

The Council provides five Community Centres across the borough at Castlefields, Ditton, Grangeway, Murdishaw and Upton. The Centres have programmes of community activities, varying models of community café provision and service outlets. The Centres provide a community hub, a central point at the heart of Halton's communities for residents to enjoy chosen activities and receive services in their neighbourhoods. Community library IT provision has been extended with the Centres now providing increased digital access for the local community, and contributing to tackling worklessness by helping to deliver skills development opportunities, adult education and job clubs.

A dedicated community centres website is now live and includes;

- An online booking enquiry form
- Contact details and locations for all of the centres
- Information in respect of the activities at each centre

Social media presence has also improved with the promotion of a new inclusive community centres Facebook page for the five centres.

The five centres have been set up to receive online payments, expanding on the traditional payment methods: cash, cheque and sundry debtors system.

Over recent years, through improvements in management and increases in the range of services and activities offered, there have been year on year increases in Centre usage and income. Financial efficiencies have also been delivered over recent years meaning that the Centres now require significantly less subsidy than previously.

A key aim for the coming year, and beyond, will be to continue to increase income and deliver further efficiencies in order to make the service as self-sustaining as possible.

Moving forward, a marketing strategy will be developed to promote the Centres and seek new areas of business that provides an enhanced offer for local residents and work towards seven day demand. Community café provision is planned to be increased to embrace Halton's Health & Wellbeing ambition. Customer satisfaction and insight will be developed to better understand which parts of the service are highly valued, which require further development and to help identify gaps for future areas of focus. The service will also contribute to a partnership asset review and proactively develop the community centres service to strengthen the hub concept of neighbourhood access.

Community Development Service

The Community Development Service supports the creation, development and sustainability of independent local community groups. This generates the capacity for effective and inclusive community engagement with council departments and services thus enabling the delivery of community initiatives to tackle strategic objectives and community needs. The Service has a key role in enabling local community groups to access grant funding leveraging in additional funds to the Borough and will continue support community & voluntary sector organisations to access external funding to bring investment into Halton.

The Service will develop digital information to promote community activity and achieve wider reach to Halton residents and will support strategic activity with key partners to place community engagement and community insight at the heart of service development for Health & Wellbeing in the Borough.

The Service will work in tandem with the Community Centres service to identify gaps in community centre usage and provision and work collaboratively to support a wider offer to community activity, access to services and community events.

Emerging Issues

Employment Learning and Skills

The DWP Households into work programme will be delivered across Liverpool City Region. 2 Employment Advocates will work with 54 Halton households from March 2018. This is an innovative 2 year pilot to support workless households into employment and other positive outcomes.

Roll out of the new DWP Work & Health Programme will see the Division supporting residents with disabilities and health conditions into employment. This is potentially a 7 year programme.

The delivery of the DWP Work Programme will cease in March 2019 when this national programme comes to an end after over 7 years. Referrals to the programme have been gradually declining over the last year. During 2018/19 the Division will need to wind down this programme.

Academic year 2018/19 will be a transition year before the full devolution of the Education & Skills Funding Agency Adult Education Budget in 2019/20. Each provider will need to complete an Outcome Agreement and Delivery Plan, which will need Combined Authority approval. These papers will determine how much provision the CA will commission from each provider. It is still not known how much Adult Education Budget will be devolved to LCR. Currently in Halton, both HBC and Riverside College are in receipt of this funding.

The outcomes of a Skills Capital full application for development of a Skills Factory at Sci Tech Daresbury will be announced in 2018. Aligned to this are the outcomes from the Expressions of Interest for new Institutes of Technology. The Skills Group for Sci Tech Daresbury will be key to taking any such initiatives forward.

The Combined Authority will sign off the Apprenticeship Growth Plan in February 2018. The plan sets out how the CA will work within the parameters of the Apprenticeship Reforms in maximising apprenticeship opportunities for the Liverpool City Region. The plan will also identify appropriate investment committed to ensure priorities are delivered on, including the continuation of the Apprenticeship Hub, which is currently managed within the ELS Division at HBC.

The final round of ESF calls will be announced early 2018. The Division currently delivers on 3 ESF projects (DWP Ways to Work; Big Lottery Include IT; ESFA Employees Support in Skills). It is hoped that there will be an opportunity for some of these projects to be extended, although match funding would be a requirement for some strands of ESF.

In the Autumn Budget Statement, a formal skills partnership with the Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industry was announced aimed at agreeing priorities for a National Retraining Scheme and the establishment of new Skills Advisory Panels to ensure that local economies' skills needs are reflected.

The Government also committed to work with employers to determine how the apprenticeship levy can be spent and to ensure that it works effectively. In Halton we host the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Hub. The Hub runs until July 2018, so it is important to lobby for the service to be continued, to ensure that Government is pressed to enable local areas to pool levy contributions so that provision can be planned and targeted more effectively.

Arising from recommendations from the Area Based Review of Further Education, Several evidence base studies, to guide how the City Region tackles skills shortages, were completed in 2017/18. Studies included the Liverpool City Region Skills Investment Statement and Skills strategy. Work in 2018/19 will focus on the development of a Skills Investment Strategy; and Apprenticeships Growth Strategy which will complement this earlier work.

There are also a number of emerging issues which will have an impact on the range of interrelated activities intended to support employment and economic regeneration and social prosperity at a national regional and local level as detailed below:

Industrial Strategy – The Government has published its Industrial Strategy White Paper, ‘Building a Britain fit for the future’. The White Paper sets out five foundations of productivity which are ‘the essential attributes of every successful economy’. These are:

Ideas (Research and Development, Innovation)

People (Skills and Education)

Infrastructure (Broadband, Energy, Transport)

Business Environment (support for specific sectors and SMEs)

Places (tackling regional disparities)

Improving the Five Foundations will enable the UK to tackle a series of Grand Challenges that the Government has identified which will help the UK “take advantage of global changes, improve people’s lives and the country’s productivity”. The Grand Challenges are:

1. Artificial Intelligence and the data revolution (embedding and maximising the advantages)
2. Clean Growth (low carbon technologies across the economy)
3. Mobility (low carbon transport, automation, infrastructure)
4. Aging Society (healthcare and labour market challenges)

The White Paper will be supported by a number of sector deals and an independent Industrial Strategy Council.

The White Paper has a number of implications for Halton. This is because the Government has acknowledged that the UK’s productivity lags behind other countries and to address this requires state intervention. The White Paper focuses on sectors that are already competitive and productive. Whilst Sectors such as science and innovation are well represented in Halton and stand to benefit from the funding identified in the White Paper nevertheless it extends to other areas and considers, for example, how health and social care, education and skills can contribute to driving productivity.

Brexit

Brexit is already having an impact on Halton’s Economy. It is not yet possible to evaluate whether the impact is negative or positive. In certain instances, there is uncertainty in the market regarding inward investment decisions. On the other hand, some companies are looking to consolidate their UK location with an interest

Library and Culture and Leisure Services

Digital Infrastructure

The Government Digital Service (GDS) with the support of The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is seeking suppliers who can provide digital training and digital support services to reduce the number of digitally excluded people in the UK, by removing the barriers presented by lack of access, digital skills, vulnerability or motivation.

The Society of Chief Librarians is applying to this framework on behalf of public libraries and Halton is part of this. The role that public libraries can play in reducing the digital divide is expanding and the infrastructure we rely on needs to be fit for this purpose.

Appendix 1

Key Objectives, Milestones and Measures

Service Objective: EEP 01	To promote access for learning for those who need it most		
Key Milestone(s) (18 / 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure National Careers Service Contract (sub contract arrangement) August 2018 ▪ Secure contract extension and or growth for the European Social Fund Employees Support in Skills contract – August 2018 ▪ Completion of Ways to Work under 29's cohort – July 2018 ▪ Completion of ESF Ways to Work cohort by December 2018 		
Responsible Officer:	Siobhan Saunders	Linked Indicators:	EEPLI 13

Service Objective: EEP 01	To develop and Economic Growth Plan for the Borough		
Key Milestone(s) (18 / 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce Annual Economic Assessment September 2018 ▪ Develop Business Growth Programme Successor Programme April 2018 ▪ Produce Halton Tomorrow document June 2018 ▪ Prepare Halton Offer for Business Festival June 2018 		
Responsible Officer:	Tim Leather	Linked Indicators:	EEPLI 20

Service Objective: CE 02	Increase the use of libraries – in alignment with the Society of Chief Librarians Universal Offers and local needs deliver a modern, vibrant public library service; promoting and supporting reading, health, learning, information, digital and culture. Improving life chances through skills development and access to new opportunities.		
Key Milestone(s) (17 / 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver a programme of extended informal learning opportunities meeting identified local targets - March 2019 ▪ Develop a programme of cultural activity meeting identified local targets – March 2019 		
Responsible Officer:	Library Strategy & Development Manager	Linked Indicators:	Indicator CE LI 07 and 08

Halton Borough Council Business Plan Extract (2018 – 19) for Employment, Learning, Skills and Community

Ref	Description	16/17 Actual	17/18 Target	17/18 Actual	18/19 Target
EEP LI 07	Number of Enrolments (Adult Learning)	3183	3600		
EEP LI 08	Number of People supported into work	543	400		
EEP LI 09	Percentage of learners achieving accreditation	16%	37%		
EEP LI 10	Total number of job starts on DWP programme (People Plus)	123	36		
EEP LI 11	Total number of job starts on DWP programme (Ingeus)	197	58		
EEP LI 12	Number of new starts into permitted/paid work for local people with disabilities (over 12 month period)	33	30		
CE LI 07	Number of active users (physical & digital resources) of the library service during the last 12 months.	255,095	320,000		
CE LI 08	Number of physical and virtual visits to libraries (annual total)	323,779	440,000		
CE LI 09	Increase in percentage of the population taking part in sport and physical activity at least twice in the last month (KPI 1 from Active Lives survey)	N / A	Target to be agreed and established from baseline data in next financial year		
CE LI 10	Percentage of people physically inactive (KPI 2 from Active Lives survey)	N / A			
CE LI 11	Percentage of adults utilising outdoor space for exercise/ health reasons (MENE survey)	N / A			