

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

DATE: 18 February 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: Update Scrutiny Topic Group – Better Jobs

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the work of the 'Better Jobs' Scrutiny Topic Group

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members acknowledge the work undertaken to date and proposed next steps.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Members agreed to the establishment of a Scrutiny Topic Group for the Municipal Year 2018/19 which would consider how local residents could be encouraged to access the better paid jobs being created in the borough.

The Scrutiny Topic Group is using aspects of the Six Sigma methodology to manage the process. The approach being used is known as 'DMAIC' Define; Measure; Analyse; Design; Improve; Control.

To date, three meetings have taken place which have covered the Define and Measure stages of the process. This has enabled Members and Officers to gain a better understanding of the issue and then determine the most appropriate 'Key Lines of Enquiry.

A large amount of data has been gathered. Members have reviewed a number of research documents and a discussion has taken place regarding how any successful improvements to services and or processes relating to the topic brief will be measured.

In considering the data and information provided, Members recognised the value of previous Topic Group studies which provided information on the barriers to employment and learning from both an employer and employee perspective. It was felt that this work provided a useful context, but a further analysis of the data suggests that an in depth

revisit of this work would not add value to the purpose and scope of the topic. It would merely reaffirm 'what we already know'.

Research undertaken to date confirmed the perception that a lower proportion of Halton's residents are employed in higher level occupations and in turn, earnings per person by place of residence are lower.

On a positive note the 'professional, scientific and technical' is the largest employment sector in the borough and there has been a significant increase in the number of people employed in these occupations. Equally, Halton has seen a significant growth in its business base, with above average business starts and above average business survival rates.

The research confirms that jobs are being created and in those areas that will support Halton's economy in the long-term. However, the research also demonstrates that many of these jobs are described as 'difficult to fill vacancies'.

This then presents a dichotomy in terms of the policies the Council might progress in respect of how an improvement in the proportion of local people accessing high paid jobs in the borough can be achieved.

Therefore, Members concluded that more appropriate scrutiny questions to pose might be 'why is it happening?' and 'what are we going to do about it?'

At the last topic group meeting, Members made a number of points regarding behaviour change; and the feasibility of identifying determinants in relation to data held by Public Health professionals and whether 'nurture and nature' played a role in determining a person's future job prospects and how influences early in life will have a bearing on this.

Next Steps.

In response to the above, since the last topic group meeting, further information and research has been obtained in the following areas:

An article illustrating teacher and parent involvement in career decisions 2016

<https://www.allaboutschoollleavers.co.uk/articles/article/251/who-has-the-most-influence-over-young-people-s-career-decisions>

Making the links: poverty, ethnicity and social networks 2013

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/making-links-poverty-ethnicity-and-social-networks>

Time to change report press release and a short summary 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/an-analysis-of-2-decades-of-efforts-to-improve-social-mobility>

full document link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-policies-between-1997-and-2017-time-for-change>

This information will be shared at the next Topic Group meeting on 25th February 2019.

A further key line of enquiry to be explored at a future topic group will focus on whether the borough's residents who hold higher level qualifications and skills are accessing the borough's job opportunities being created. The Council's Customer Intelligence Unit has collated information which identifies where Halton residents attend Higher Education establishments and the range of courses they complete. The Topic Group will consider how resources can best be deployed to promote links between residents and businesses before and during their academic studies rather than after they have completed their courses.

To assist with this key line of enquiry, it is proposed that 'expert witnesses' from industry; educational establishments; and training providers will be invited to future meetings.

Finally, the Topic Group will produce a mapping exercise to identify where existing resources support residents to find and obtain employment, and where there are gaps in this provision. This will ultimately inform future decisions on service design and delivery.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no further policy implications arising from this report

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications arising from this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The work of the topic group will inform future employment, learning and skills services provided by the Council and its partners.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The work of the topic group will inform future employment, learning and skills services provided by the Council and its partners.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

6.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no risks arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

It is envisaged that recommendations emerging from the topic group will relate to promoting equality of access to job opportunities in the borough.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.