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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, 21 November 2022 in the Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), E. Cargill (Vice-Chair), Begg, Garner, Logan, C. Plumpton Walsh, Rowe and Stretch

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Dourley and Aimee Teeling

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, A. Jones and S. Saunders

Also in attendance: M. Basnett – Liverpool City Region Growth Platform and J. Leake – Sci-Tech Daresbury

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
ELS11 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 20 June 2022, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>It was noted that the meeting scheduled to be held on 19 September 2022 was cancelled due to the passing of Her Majesty the Queen.</p>	
ELS12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
<p>It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.</p>	
ELS13 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION GROWTH PLATFORM	
<p>The Board received a presentation from Mark Basnett, the Managing Director of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Growth Platform, informing of the role and work of his organisation.</p> <p>It was reported that the LCR Growth Platform was</p>	

established jointly by the Liverpool City Region's Local Enterprise Partnership and Combined Authority to help strengthen, simplify and coordinate the business landscape for the City Region to make it easier for businesses to start, grow and invest in the area.

The mission of the Growth Platform was described as being able to deliver growth across the City Region through business support, attracting investment and developing talent to create a fairer, greener and more inclusive economy for all who lived and worked here.

Mr Basnett outlined to Members the positive relationships that existed between the Growth Platform and the Council and discussed the following areas using a presentation:

- Sector Insights – were a range of City Region based sector Boards that provided insight on key opportunities and challenges facing businesses in each sector;
- Cluster Developments – these were growing in numbers; Daresbury Sci-Tech had been included in the LCR cluster development;
- LCR Growth Hub – any businesses could access services offered by the Growth Hub;
- The scale up of business support – the LCR overall had a business survival and growth problem so it was recognised that there was a need to nurture and support new businesses; it was commented however that Halton performed well in this area;
- Data on business survival rates and growth comparisons were made with the rest of England;
- LCR Careers Hub – an LCR wide programme of support for students and schools to better understand and experience local careers and future employment opportunities; and
- Inward Investment and Performance Analysis – the Council sits on the Investment Board.

Further to Members questions following the presentation, the following further information was provided:

- The Growth Platform was not as well known as it should be and it was a challenge to attract people in. Funding was cut this year, which had affected the amount of outreach planned. The amount of funding for next year was unknown;
- The success of the two schools in Halton that had reached all eight Gatsby benchmarks was discussed.

Success was usually driven by the passion of the staff at the school who encouraged leadership and entrepreneurialship amongst their students. What could be learnt from these schools – this would be looked into outside the meeting and reported back;

- There was an almost 50/50 split of Halton residents versus out of Borough employees who worked in local businesses in Halton. A summary taken from an economic profile of Halton would be prepared and sent to Members following the meeting;
- The Growth Hub did not include business support for young people at the moment as this was not funded as part of the offer. The Council has provided start up programs in the past for young people but funding was also a challenge now in Halton;
- There was a need to get into secondary schools in Halton to offer careers advice services; and
- Leaving the EU had shown a 10%-15% decline in trade and exports. This has had a particularly negative effect on small businesses who were unable to meet the additional requirements to do business in Europe.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the considerations given to how the Liverpool City Region Growth Platform contributes to supporting businesses in Halton.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

ELS14 SCI-TECH DARESBUY TALENT AND SKILLS ACTION PLAN

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Economy, Enterprise and Property, which provided an update on the delivery of Sci-Tech Daresbury's Talent and Skills Action Plan.

The Chair welcomed Mr John Leake, the Business Growth Director for Sci-Tech Daresbury, who gave a presentation to Members on the Talent and Skills Action Plan, which was appended to the report.

It was noted that the Sci-Tech Daresbury Talent and Skills Strategy was developed in 2021 and was a key component of the Sci-Tech Daresbury Strategy for Science, Innovation and Growth. The Talent and Skills Strategy was being delivered through an Action Plan and sought to create an exciting, inspiring and high performing community at Sci-Tech Daresbury and beyond.

Mr Leake gave an introduction to Sci-Tech Daresbury and spoke about the campus community and the masterplan

for the site, including the adjacent development of homes. He outlined the challenges being faced by companies attracting talented people to come and work on campus, and the ambition to create 10,000 high value jobs by 2036. He went on to introduce the *Sci-Tech Daresbury RADAR – Talent and Skills Strategy*, which aimed to promote and communicate their talent and skills initiatives – to attract, develop and retain talent.

He presented some success stories from their partnership working with the University of Liverpool and Cronton College as well as the delivery of management expertise through the campus Gold Partners and explained the work to date with Halton schools. Data was also presented upto 2021 which showed that the Strategy was working and the skills shortages constraining growth had come down.

Following Members questions, the following additional information was provided:

- Not all jobs at Sci-Tech were science jobs – there were vacancies for staff in finance, administration and marketing roles for example;
- Expertise from *Michael Page* targeted people of all ages. Although they had the knowledge of companies' skills shortages, it was up to a particular company as to whether they used their services;
- Halton People into Jobs – they had worked with them and encourage them to get clients to send their CV's to companies on the site;
- A total of 12 local entrepreneurs had been recruited and were ready to offer live speeches or activities in schools for young people. It was noted that there was a challenge currently in engaging with the secondary schools;
- It was also planned to give additional talks at community centres in the Borough to raise awareness of Sci-Tech Daresbury and instil confidence in people to apply for jobs and/or plan a career with a company on the site;
- Staff worked with both SEND and mainstream schools in the Borough to raise awareness of Sci-Tech Daresbury. In addition, a piece of work was planned around diversity and inclusivity, which would also include educating the companies on site on the opportunities they could make available for people with special needs. It was noted that there were already connections in place to identify people with special needs through DWP;

- Work had been carried out with local primary schools to raise awareness of the site. Windmill Hill Primary was highlighted by one Member concerning the barriers that existed for some of the residents in moving around the Borough and the aspirations of the children at the Primary School, which left them at a disadvantage. It was noted that Windmill Hill Primary had already engaged with Sci-Tech Daresbury and they were aware of these barriers; and
- Employment enquiries did come into Sci-Tech Daresbury from students and young people from different places such as Warrington, St Helens, Liverpool and other parts of Cheshire.

RESOLVED: That the work of the Sci-Tech Daresbury Talent and Skills sub-group be noted.

ELS15 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Economy, Enterprise and Property, which updated them on the next stages in the implementation of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Investment Plan.

It was announced that the Investment Plan would be approved by Government in October 2022 and that £44m had been allocated to the LCR over three years. The vast majority of funding would be directed through to local authorities with a small minority of funding deployed for City Region Level activities via open calls. The funding will be allocated to three themes – Communities and Place; Supporting Local Business; and People and Skills. Further details on each theme and the proposed allocation of funding for each was contained in Appendix one of the report.

The report also provided Members with information on proposals for how the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Programme might be managed in Halton and outlined the *Multiply Programme*, which was aimed at improving numeracy skills amongst adults.

RESOLVED: That Members note the progress being made to prepare for the delivery of the UK Shared prosperity Fund in Halton.

ELS16 UPDATE ON EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD SCRUTINY TOPICS

The Board received an update on the Scrutiny Topic Group themes agreed by Members for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

Members had progressed two topics '*Health and Employment*' and '*The Provision of Business Support in the Borough*'. The report presented an update on each topic. It was agreed that the *Health and Employment* topic be concluded, subject to a caveat that the Policy and Performance Board (PPB) would welcome a presentation from health partners as the delivery plan emerged. Further, Members would also like to receive regular updates via the quarterly monitoring reports on progress being made against targets outlined in the delivery and action plan that related to employment and skills priorities.

Councillor Garner emphasised the importance of ensuring that local employers supported local employees through initiatives such as the *Time to Change Employer Pledge*.

The second topic, *The Provision of Business Support in the Borough*, had two actions outstanding. The first was covered today in the presentation from the Managing Director of the Liverpool City Region's Growth Planform; the other was to undertake a study visit to a local business to understand how business support has had a positive impact in the Borough – this had now been arranged on 12 December at 5pm. Members would receive further information on the visit nearer the time.

It was noted that a final report would be presented to the PPB in January, which would capture the key points arising from the Growth Platform presentation made today and upcoming the study visit.

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Topic Group updates be received.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

ELS17 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2022/23

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter two of 2022-23 (1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

It was noted that the key priorities for development or improvement in 2022-23 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as follows:

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

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.

In response to Members queries, it was reported that since the closure of Runcorn Swimming Pool all those members who applied for a refund had received one; 14 had retained their memberships to use with another leisure facility. In addition, 20 lifeguards had recently been recruited and completed their lifeguard training; they were now in pre-employment checks with HR. Members made suggestions with regards to the retention of lifeguards and lifeguard instructors.

RESOLVED: That the quarter two 2022-23 performance management reports be received.

Meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.