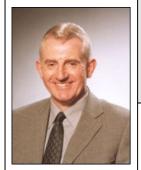
Cllr. Jones Chairman



ANNUAL REPORT EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD APRIL 2008 – MARCH 2009

"This has been a very busy and productive year for the Employment Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board and I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Board members for all the work they have undertaken. The Board undertook a very challenging programme of monitoring, scrutiny, visits and policy development. I believe it is making a substantial contribution to improving the way the council and its partners work together and particularly note the increasingly close relationship with the Employment Learning and Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership, whose meetings I attend on behalf of this Board".

Councillor Eddie Jones, Chairman Employment Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2006/07 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors Eddie Jones, Frank Fraser, Dave Austin, Marjorie Bradshaw, Susan Edge, David Findon, Harry Howard, Stan Parker, John Stockton, Christopher Rowe and Philip Worral.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the Culture and Leisure Services and the Economic Regeneration Departments. The primary functions are to focus on the work of the Council (and its partners) in seeking to improve economic prosperity, to further develop culture and community cohesion, to improve the skills and employment prospects of its residents, and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Employment, Learning and Skills priority

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met 5 times during the year, and set out below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on during the year.

Community Cohesion

The Board received an update on community cohesion matters and considered a range of performance indicators that could be used to measure progress.

Local Area Agreement The Board considered the progress made on the Local Area Agreement (LAA), particularly in relation to targets for employment, skills and enterprise development. Employment Learning and Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership (SSP) The Chairman of this Board is a member of both the Employment Learning and Skills SSP and its Performance Sub Group. It was agreed to further develop the relationship between the two Boards that the SSP minutes would be regularly considered at PPB meetings. Community Development The Board received an annual report on Community Development service (2007-08) that directly supported 90 community organisations involving 2,084 active volunteers (increase of 945 from the previous year). The Board received an annual report on Community Centres scrutinising capacity usage of the Council's five facilities by members of the public, other Council departments and partner agencies. The Board received an annual report on impact of Voluntary Sector Core Grant funding for 2007-08 and considered the mid-year performance for 2008-09. It also considered a report on the criteria and assessment process for accessing community grants. Libraries The Board considered a number of reports on Libraries in Halton. This included a presentation on the investment in Halton Lea Library, an update on the Big Lottery CORE (Community Opportunities through Reading and Engagement) programme, and the progress being made on delivery of the mobile library services. Arts Policy and Public Art The Board also considered the development work and the Council's wider coroprotes strategy. The Board also considere	
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Employment
The Board considered the findings of research that sought to identify why bertain parts of the Borough has persistently high levels of worklessness. This letailed report summarised a number of group sessions with workless and ecently employed people and identified a number of key issues. The report was referred onto the Barriers to Work Scrutiny Panel for detailed consideration. It also reviewed the progress made on the Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy.
Procurement
The Board received a report of the Strategic Director Environment which letailed the recommendations of the Policy Board's Scrutiny Panel regarding the Council's Procurement Policy and its role in developing local employment opportunities.
Service Plans
The Board considered issues that should be fed into the service planning process and examined the draft service plans for Culture and Leisure Services and Economic Regeneration Departments.
Sport
The Board gave consideration to a report regarding how Halton is esponding to the opportunities offered by the Olympic Games including; ports development grant scheme, elite performers and free pitch hire for unior sports clubs.
Enterprise
The Board reviewed progress on the Enterprise Action plan and considered ne opportunities open to Halton through the new North West Development Agency enterprise programme.
Free Swimming
The Board considered a report regarding the government initiative to provide free wimming to all those aged over 60 and those under 16 for two years from 1 st April 2009. This is part of the government initiative to get two million people more active by 2012.
Child Poverty
The Board considered a report on Child Poverty in Halton. The report explained that whilst good progress had been made in reducing the overall numbers of children living in poverty, the government focus to date has been on those parents/carers that are out of work. However, there are still many children living in poverty who live in working households. Child poverty is a key focus for the Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy and the partnership is developing a common methodology framework for the levelopment of child poverty action plans.

Joint Needs Assessment
The Board considered a report on the first Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Health. It discussed this at length and considered ways in which the activity within Employment learning and Skills can contribute to improving Health in the Borough.
Fairfield High School – All weather pitch
The Board considered a letter from the school regarding the all weather pitch provision at the site and how the existing pitch could be improved.
Mersey Gateway
The Board requested and received a report on the employment opportunities arsing from the Mersey Gateway. The Board was keen to identify the range of opportunities (not just construction) that will arise and how apprenticeship, training places and jobs could be secured through the contracting arrangements.
Performance Issues
The Board considered the departmental quarterly monitoring reports through the year. It particularly noted the impact that the recession had on targets relating to inward investment and jobs created/safeguarded. Of real note was the positive impact the changes to the mobile library services which had seen visits increased by 130% and issues by 45%.
Work Programme 2009/10
 The Board has decided that during the current municipal year (2009/10) it will complete the reviews of the following areas: Logistics – Joint with Urban Renewal Barriers to Employment Additionally, the Board will commence reviews of: Workforce & Skills for Science and Technology joint with Urban Renewal Financial Inclusion Libraries
Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Gary Collins 01928 516100 gary.collins@halton.gov.uk