

Public Document Pack



Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 28 July 2020 at 5.00 p.m.

Via remote access (please contact below
for instructions)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Walsh'.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Andrew MacManus (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor John Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Lauren Cassidy	Labour
Councillor Rosie Leck	Labour
Councillor Geoffrey Logan	Labour
Councillor June Roberts	Labour
Councillor Christopher Rowe	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Angela Teeling	Labour
Councillor Pamela Wallace	Labour
Councillor Louise Whitley	Labour

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 or e-mail
ann.jones@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 21 September 2020*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

Item No.	Page No.
1. MINUTES	1 - 5
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	6 - 8
4. EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING & SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20	9 - 22
DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ISSUES	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

**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, 10 February 2020 in the Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors MacManus (Chair), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), J. Bradshaw, Leck, Logan, June Roberts, Rowe, Teeling, Wallace and Whitley

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W. Rourke, A. Jones, C. Patino, S. Saunders, S. Lowrie and F. Edwards

Also in attendance: One member of the press

**ITEMS DEALT WITH
UNDER DUTIES
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

	<i>Action</i>
<p>ELS29 MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 18 November 2019, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>ELS30 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
<p>ELS31 POLICY UPDATE - EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS</p> <p>The Board received a report informing them of recent national policy announcements made between 1 November 2019 and 31 January 2020, relevant to the Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board.</p> <p>It was noted that the information provided was not intended to be in-depth but provided a brief summary of key announcements along with observations of local relevance, where appropriate.</p>	

The announcements headlines were as follows:

1. Nursing students to received £5,000 payment;
2. 'T' Levels;
3. Town of the Year Competition;
4. Funding for innovative business ideas for new products;
5. Update on Liverpool City Region Activities;
6. National Apprenticeship Week 2020 – 3-7 February 2020;
7. Employer Brokerage by Be-More;
8. Strategic Investment Fund – Skills Capital Update; and
9. Visitor Economy Week 2020 Launch – 3 February 2020.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

ELS32 FAMILY LEARNING PROVISION IN HALTON

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an overview of the provision of family learning within Children's Centres and Primary Schools across Halton. They welcomed the Divisional Manager – Employment, Learning and Skills who delivered an accompanying presentation to Members.

Members were advised that Halton's Employment, Learning and Skills Division delivered a range of adult learning programmes within Primary Schools and Children's Centres across the Borough linked to supporting the aims and objectives of the TALK Halton project and the Halton Reading Strategy.

In response to Member's queries/comments, the following additional information was provided:

- There were children from the troubled families programme accessing the family learning services mainly from the children's centres;
- Some parents were unaware of the service and some perhaps felt intimidated to ask for help. Marketing of the Family Learning Programme was carried out via leaflets and emails in children's centres and schools, staff also identified need where possible and often spoke to parents in the playground;
- Staff would carry out a data capture exercise in relation to numbers of troubled families taking part in Family Learning;

- Adult learning provision was free to anyone where the household income was below £17,400;
- The number of schools offering the service had increased over the last couple of years with nearly all primary schools now accessing the service; and
- The staff who delivered the service were qualified primary school teachers.

It was noted that the funding for the Family Learning provision in schools and notice of further funding would be available soon. Family Learning in children’s centres was grant funded by the Department for Education and was due to end in June 2020 with no alternative funding yet made available.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received.

ELS33 BUSINESS PLANNING 2020-2023

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out the proposed Business Plan for the Economy, Enterprise and Property Department (EEP) for the period April 2020 to March 2023.

It was reported that the Council developed a medium term business plan in parallel with the budget that was subject to annual review and refresh. The input of each Policy and Performance Board into the business planning process and the setting of priorities for the Directorate was an important part of this process.

Members were presented with the key priorities for development or improvement for the EEP Department which related to this Committee. A draft Corporate Business Plan would be developed and the information provided in the EEP Department’s business plan would feed into this process.

It was noted that plans could only be finalised once budget decisions had been confirmed in March and that some target information may need to be reviewed as a result of final outturn data becoming available post March 2020.

Officers provided information in response to Members queries on upskilling of staff and creating good jobs for Halton’s residents, examples were given of successes with jobs for locals within Daresbury Sci-Tech and where staff have upskilled and secured promotions within the Community and Environment Directorate of the Council. Members were advised that questions relating to the

regeneration of the Borough, buying and selling of land and Widnes market came within the remit of the Environment and Urban Renewal PPB.

The presentation and Business Plan would be sent to Members following the meeting for their attention. It was noted that the new plan would be effective 1 April 2020.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received.

ELS34 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION LOCAL INDUSTRIAL UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an update in respect of the emerging Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) for the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and highlighted its emerging importance in being used to determine how future resources from Government might be allocated.

It was reported that following on from the Government’s Industrial Strategy White Paper, *Building a Britain fit for the future*, published on 27 November 2017, devolved areas such as the LCR were invited to develop their own LIS.

The Board was advised that a working draft of the LCR LIS was produced before Christmas 2019 and was currently being updated. Further comments and input from partners, including local authorities, was being sought. The vision for the LCR as outlined in the LIS was provided in the report together with its aims by 2040.

The Board agreed that the Local Industrial Strategy be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the emerging document and consider its implications for Halton; and
- 2) agrees that in light of the potential role of the LIS in developing investment priorities; that the report be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

ELS35 SPORT AND RECREATION TEAM

The Board received the Council’s Sport and Recreation Service’s Annual Report for the period 2018-19 and accompanying presentation from the Leisure Centres

Manager, Community and Environment.

It was reported that the team had two distinct areas:

- The Sports Development Team; and
- Management of the Council's 3 leisure centres – Kingsway Leisure Centre, Brookvale Recreation Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool.

The report outlined the responsibilities for the Team and their day to day duties and presented information on local projects being delivered under six Themes: Increasing Participation and Widening Access; Club Development; Coach Education and Volunteering; Sporting Excellence; Finance and Funding for Sport and Sports Facilities.

Members welcomed the presentation and the following comments were made in response to questions:

- The Sports Development Team went into schools to promote the service and facilities available to students in the Borough;
- The 'teen-gym' (11-15 year olds) was explained;
- Despite ongoing maintenance issues, Runcorn Swimming Pool would remain open;
- The plans for a new leisure centre in Widnes were welcomed but the need for a new one in Runcorn was also recognised;
- Brookvale Leisure Centre would be upgraded in the future;
- The need to retain and develop staff was a priority and retention plans were being looked at;
- Feedback was requested from customers who did not renew or cancelled their Memberships; and
- The leisure market was becoming more competitive year after year and ongoing challenges that were faced with the recruitment of skilled staff and attracting custom because of this were recognised.

RESOLVED: That the Board welcomes the progress being made in encouraging and supporting residents to be active.

Meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

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

DATE: 28 July 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-
- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
 - (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
 - (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
 - (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
 - (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;

- Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chair will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

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

DATE: 28 July 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Resources and
Community

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: Employment, Learning, skills and Community
Policy and Performance Board Annual Report for
2019/20

1.0 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF REPORT

1.1 To receive the Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2019/20.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the 2019/20 Annual Report be recommended to Full Council.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Article 6 of the Constitution requires each Policy and Performance Board to submit an Annual Report to Council outlining their work, making recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods as appropriate.

3.2 The Annual Report (see attached) has been submitted to the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board for consideration.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None.

6.3 Healthy Halton

None.

6.4 Safer Halton

None.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

N/A

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

N/A

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

**EMPLOYMENT LEARNING, SKILLS AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND
PERFORMANCE BOARD**

APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

**Introduction from Councillor Andrew MacManus
Chair of the Employment Learning, Skills and Community Policy Performance
Board**

During the past year as in previous years, we have seen economic uncertainty and reduced funding having a bearing on work priorities and areas of focus. In addition, some of our skills, employment and business support funding are aligned with the Liverpool City Region. However, we continue to ensure that Halton gets its fair share of funding support to ensure that we provide excellent services to our residents, businesses and communities. The topic group work referred to later in the report found the services were of a high standard.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank members for their valuable contributions and the support they have shown throughout the year. In addition, I thank members who have given up their time to serve on the scrutiny topic group.

I thank the officers for working with me and the Vice-Chair to develop an interesting and important range of agenda items for consideration.

At the time of writing the future is less certain than at any time in the living memory of many residents. The country left the European Union on the 31st January and we are in the trade negotiation phase with them and others. The outcome will have a material impact on our businesses and community.

Coronavirus has severely disrupted employment and businesses. The full impact of both of these is unknown.

I hope that the Board will continue to make an important contribution to creating an economically prosperous borough and improves the education, skills and employment prospects of our people in this challenging environment.

**Councillor Andrew MacManus
Chair, Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and Performance
Board**

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2019/20, the Board comprised Councillors A. MacManus (Chair) C. Plumpton- Walsh (Vice Chair), J Bradshaw, L. Cassidy, R Leck, G. Logan, June Roberts, C. Rowe, A Telling, P Wallace and L Whitley.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Board met four times during the year.

The Council's constitution sets out the Board's strategic priority is to develop policy and monitor performance in relation to the Council's objectives for employment, learning and skills in the borough.

Specifically in relation to 4 functions:

- Enterprise and employment
- Adult learning and skills
- Culture and leisure services
- Library Service

Set out below are the scrutiny activities we carried this year.

Enterprise and Employment

Liverpool City Region Growth Company

The Board received an update on the development of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Growth Company.

It was reported that in the spring of 2019, the LCR Combined Authority announced its intention to establish a special purpose delivery vehicle for economic growth, the Growth Company.

Members were advised that the primary focus of the Growth Company was to develop a step change to how the LCR maximised its growth potential in future years. In order to achieve this there was a need to develop a clearer and simpler model to support inward investment and business support in the City Region. It was also acknowledged that the success of the Company would require greater partnership working with a number of key institutions, notably local authorities; universities; colleges and the third sector. The proposals sought to strength further the links between the Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership.

The report described the areas that could be delivered through this vehicle. This topic will be revisited at a future board.

Employment Learning and Skills Update

It was reported that the Employment, Learning and Skills Division sat within the wider Economy, Enterprise and Property Department and consisted of the following services:

- Adult community learning
- Family Learning
- Halton Employment Partnership and Employability Programmes
- Halton People into Jobs, delivering on the following contracts:
 - DWP Work and Health Programme
 - DWP Households into Work
 - DWP/ESF Ways to Work; and
 - ESF/Big Lotto Digital Inclusion Project
- Liverpool City Region (LCR) Apprenticeship Hub (managed on behalf of the Combined Authority).

It was noted that the services that the division delivered were 100% externally funded for the past 5+ years by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Additionally, the division had been successful in being awarded European Social Funds (ESF) to deliver a number of projects.

The report provided Members with updates relating to:

- Devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB);
- Skills Capital;
- ESF Calls; and
- The Skills and Apprenticeship Hub.

Members noted the introduction of new courses teaching website design, marketing/digital advertising and marketing with film, which would fill a gap that existed in these areas. They also welcomed the bid that was being made by Halton on behalf on the LCR for the National Youth Employment Initiative funding.

Economic Progress and Economic Profile

A report on Halton's current economic profile and an update on developments in the economy in recent years was presented.

In summary, the update included: The Economic Overview; Enterprise and Jobs; The Resident Population; Skills; and Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

The current economic profile was described and officers presented an assessment based upon the information provided as an evidence base for '*Halton 2030*' which is a vision for how Halton's economy would look in the future, set out the future challenges and how the Borough might respond to these challenges.

Business Growth Programme Update

The Board was advised on the changes from Phase 1 of the LCR Integrated Business Support Programme through to Phase 2, now named as the Business Growth Programme (BGP), and the nature of support across the Liverpool City Region.

It was reported that it was proposed to extend the Programme and if this was successful Phase 3 would commence January 2022. The programme met a distinct gap in the current business support delivery positioned between pre start / start up / post start up delivered by others within the LCR. Further, supporting Phase 3 of the BGP would align with the Council's priorities in improving the economic growth by aiding SME's within Halton to grow, develop, become more sustainable and increase jobs.

Further to Members' queries, the following information was added:

- A risk analysis was done once a year using the Local Economic Assessment
- Some SME's failed in their first 3 years of trading; accurate statistics relating to Halton would be available later and reported to the Board
- SME survival rates in the Borough were comparable and slightly exceeded the LCR average
- Information on job numbers and types of business were provided in the monthly economic report produced by the council's Customer Intelligence Unit.

LCR Local Industrial Update

This provided an update in respect of the emerging Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) for the LCR and highlighted its emerging importance in being used to determine how future resources from Government might be allocated.

Following on from the Government's Industrial Strategy White Paper, *Building a Britain fit for the future*, published on 27 November 2017, devolved areas such as the LCR were invited to develop their own LIS.

The Board was advised that a working draft of the LIS was produced before Christmas 2019 and was currently being updated. Further comments and input from partners, including local authorities, was being sought. The vision for the LCR as outlined in the LIS was provided in the report together with its aims by 2040.

Delivering the Hydrogen Economy NW Event Report

A report was presented on the *Delivering the Hydrogen Economy North West* Event, held at The Heath Business and Technical Park on Wednesday 5 June 2019.

A presentation was made to members to accompany this and described the various schemes and funding applications currently being advanced across the LCR and the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership area, and the likely impact upon the economy of Halton of the development of a hydrogen economy locally.

Members noted the significance of the development of a hydrogen economy locally and the contribution likely to be made to the decarbonisation of industry, the creation and sustainability of local employment and a range of significant positive public health outcomes.

One Front Door – Liverpool City Region’s Inward Investment Service

The Board received a report which updated them on the *One Front Door* for the LCR, a new delivery model for engaging with new prospective investors.

Members were advised that the Inward Investment Service was the approach taken within the LCR to attracting investment into the area and with intense demand for investment among city regions, it was crucial that the approach taken was as effective and efficient as possible.

The report discussed the LCR approach, its success and recent activities such as the review which started at the end of 2017.

Adult Learning & Skills Development

LCR Apprenticeship Hub: Apprenticeship growth Plan 2018-2020 and ESF Employees Support in Skills Contract

The Board received a presentation on behalf of the LCR Apprenticeship Hub Skills Strategy Manager. This gave an overview on progress to date against the LCR’s Apprenticeship Growth Plan 2018 – 2020 and a review of the ESF Employees Support in Skills contract, awarded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

It was noted that the LCR’s Apprenticeship Hub had operated since 2011 and was a good example of close collaborative and partnership work that existed within the region. Halton Borough Council operate the scheme across the region on behalf of the LCR.

The presentation provided information on what the Apprenticeship Hub was, as well as information on:

- The ESF Employees Support in Skills Contract and deliverables
- Key successes of the Hub
- Events and activities happening locally in Halton
- The LCR Apprenticeship Ambassador Network;
- The LCR Skills show 201
- The priorities of the Apprenticeship Growth Plan 2018-2020;
- Progress on the Apprenticeship Growth Plan 2018-2020 so far
- The next steps for the Apprenticeship Hub.

Members commented it was useful to have an outside and impartial body visiting the schools to explain apprenticeships. It was also noted that Halton had hosted the Apprenticeship Hub for a number of years despite being the smallest local authority; Members praised the work and skills of officers in respect to this.

Presentation: Sci-Tech Daresbury Talent and Skills

The Board received a report from Mr Phil Atkinson of the Science Technology Facilities Council, who presented an update on the development of the Talent and Skills Strategy at Sci-Tech Daresbury.

The Talent and Skills Strategy responded to the objective of growing the campus to 10,000 – 15,000 people by 2037. The Strategy helped understand what the skills challenges were, how interventions would benefit the campus and what evidence was available to support these interventions. Further, the aim of the strategy was to attract, develop and retain the wide range of sector talent and skills essential to Sci-Tech Daresbury, Halton, the LCR and beyond.

It was noted that the focus would be to enable science and technology companies on the campus to readily access the talent and skills necessary, to enable their growth and to scale up. The report provided details of the focus of the strategy, its actions and the intended outcomes.

Following Members' questions, the following additional information was noted:

- A jobs portal was being developed as part of the strategy and a link to jobs/careers would be on the Daresbury Sci-Tech website as well. The Divisional Manager for Employment, Learning and Skills also received job vacancy alerts from Daresbury Sci-Tech which were circulated locally;
- One aspect of the strategy was to give advice to SME's that were struggling to expand due to lack of locally skilled staff;
- Outreach work within the community was being focussed to highlight the opportunities available to young people by involving local schools, teachers and parents etc. Open days at the site had taken place previously and more were planned in the future.

Apprenticeship Update

This provided an update on the new Skills and Apprenticeship Hub and the Apprenticeship Ambassador Programme launched in January 2019.

It was reported that following a recent successful funding application, the LCR Combined Authority was bringing together under the umbrella of a new 'Skills and Apprenticeship Hub' the expertise of the existing Apprenticeship Hub, the City Region's Skills for Growth Service, and the work of the Combined Authority around specific sectors and careers.

The Service is in place from 1 November 2019 and has 5 main functions. These were outlined in the report with the management and delivery arrangements.

The following comments were made following presentation of the report:

- It was good to see older people (25+) doing apprenticeships as some were not ready to take an apprenticeship straight from school, so it was an option for them later on in life.
- It was also encouraging to see that some people were continuing up to higher levels within their apprenticeships.
- The importance of Riverside College in ensuring that students were 'job ready' was discussed.
- The number of older people retraining to follow different career paths.
- The workforce requirements of companies within the Borough were shared with the Council and the College, so that skills and qualifications shortages could be identified and could be focussed upon.
- Members requested to know how many apprenticeships were completed and how many apprentices actually secured employment from them.
- Members requested a breakdown of apprenticeships for Halton and how many of those were school leavers.

Family Learning Provision in Halton

A report and accompanying presentation provided an overview of the provision of family learning within children's centres and primary schools across Halton. Members were advised that Halton's Employment, Learning and Skills Division delivered a range of adult learning programmes within primary schools and children's centres linked to supporting the aims and objectives of the TALK Halton project and the Halton Reading Strategy.

In response to Member's queries/comments, the following additional information was provided:

- There were children from the Troubled Families Programme accessing the family learning services mainly from the children's centres;
- Staff would carry out a data capture exercise in relation to numbers of troubled families taking part in Family Learning;
- Some parents were unaware of the service and some perhaps felt intimidated to ask for help. Marketing of the Family Learning Programme was carried out via emails and leaflets in children's centres and schools. Staff also identified need where possible and often spoke to parents in the playground;
- Adult learning provision was free to anyone where the household income was below £17,400;
- The number of schools offering the service had increased over the last couple of years with nearly all primary schools are now accessing the service;
- The staff who delivered the service were qualified primary school teachers.
- It was noted that the funding for the Family Learning provision in schools and notice of further funding would be available soon. Family Learning in children's centres was grant funded by the Department for Education and was due to end in June 2020 with no alternative funding made available yet.

Presentation Riverside College

The Board welcomed the Principal from Riverside College, Mary Murphy, who presented an overview of the College's strategic priorities, quality of teaching, enrolments, funding and key developments.

Members welcomed the information provided and were pleased to note the College's successes and examples of case studies where students had gained entry to Universities throughout the country or were successful in securing permanent employment.

The following items represent the 'community' areas of the PPB's work

Culture and Leisure Services

Sport and Recreation Team Annual Report for 2018/19

The Board received the report and accompanying presentation.
The team has two distinct areas:

- The Sports Development Team
- Management of the council's 3 leisure centres – Kingsway Leisure Centre, Brookvale Recreation Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool.

The report outlined the responsibilities for the team and their day to day duties and presented information on local projects being delivered under six Themes: Increasing Participation and Widening Access; Club Development; Coach Education and Volunteering and Sporting Excellence.

Members welcomed the presentation and the following comments were made in response to questions:

- The Sports Development Team went into schools to promote the service and facilities available to students in the Borough
- The 'teen-gym' (11-15 year olds) was explained
- Despite ongoing maintenance issues Runcorn Swimming Pool would remain open
- The plans for a new leisure centre in Widnes were welcomed but the need for a new one in Runcorn was also recognised
- Brookvale Leisure Centre would be upgraded in the future
- The need to retain and develop staff was a priority and retention plans were being looked at
- Feedback was requested from customers who did not renew or cancelled their memberships
- The leisure market was becoming more competitive year after year and ongoing challenges that were faced with the recruitment of skilled staff and attracting custom because of this were recognised.

Community Development Service Annual Report for 2018/19

It was noted that the Community Development Service helped support local community groups and organisations with their formation and facilitated the delivery of community led initiatives and activities.

The team also had a combined role in managing Area Forum projects delivery, enabling elected members to respond to community concerns and aspirations. This combined role generated effective community engagement with council departments, services and partner organisations and contributed to building resilience in Halton's communities.

The report set out how the Community Development Team officers worked within their respective neighbourhoods and described the relationships fostered over the years.

The amount of funding from external sources in the year 2018/19 had increased considerably from the year before, this was welcomed by members. Examples were also provided of projects and groups that the service were working in partnership with across the Borough.

Detailed information was provided on projects funded through the Area Forums, which included the costs and areas of the council's priorities and where the spend had been made for each.

The consensus of the Board was that the work, knowledge and guidance provided by the Community Development Team was invaluable to members and assisted in the harnessing of community spirit within their respective wards.

Community Centres Annual Report for 2019/20

The report covered the period April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

The Community Centres Service provided for the management and delivery of services from five buildings: Castlefields, Ditton, Grangeway, Murdishaw and Upton. The centres delivered programmes of community activities with varying models of community cafes and service outlets. It was noted that these centres provided a community hub, a central point at the heart of the communities where they were located, for residents to enjoy chosen activities and receive services in their neighbourhoods.

Members were provided with a summary of service performance that included centre usage and operating costs. The report went on to include the profile for each community centre that included key performance indicators to illustrate the performance of each over a three year period.

The Brindley Theatre

The Board received a presentation from the Brindley Arts and Events Manager that included an update on the theatre's successes and future priorities.

Information was provided on external and internal improvements since 2017, the new website, how income was generated, how customers bought their tickets, and future regeneration opportunities. It was noted that 50% of the Brindley's customers were from outside the Borough.

Members discussed the possibility of using the green space outside The Brindley for outdoor events in the future; an area that benefits from being in the town centre and with free parking. This site was being surveyed in order to progress this. The possibility of encouraging inward investors to the Town Centre was discussed and the Operational Directors, Environment and Community, and Economy, Enterprise and Economy were working collaboratively on this.

Members welcomed the positive progress being made to promote The Brindley Theatre as an important visitor destination.

Borough of Culture Consultation

The Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, invited Members to attend a consultation that will explore the themes identified for Halton's Borough of Culture Year in 2021.

The Board was advised that the award of LCR Borough of Culture was inspired by the UK City of Culture Programme that followed Liverpool's European Capital of Culture in 2008.

It was noted that the Borough of Culture initiative was a non-competitive process that would rotate round the LCR with the aim of encouraging each borough to develop collaboratively its local talent and potential, whilst reflecting the ambitions and aims of the Regional Culture and Creativity Strategy which looked to build sustainable capacity across the City Region.

Further, Members were advised the aim of Halton's Borough of Culture Year was to increase participation in quality cultural activity across Halton. This would help more people to experience the arts and to benefit from the role that culture could play in transforming lives, improving health and wellbeing, reduce social isolation, increase community cohesion, inspire creativity, support learning and making Halton a great place to live and work. This would be delivered under the banner of 'Celebrate Halton' and would look to celebrate the borough's past, present and future, through a programme of activity ranging from small community led activities to large scale events which would bring in national and international artists.

Following Member's discussion the following information was noted:

- Funding of £200k was available for Halton's Borough of Culture Year
- Halton has had its own talented artists and these would be identified and invited to join in the celebrations
- Many community groups had expressed an interest in taking part in the consultation, which could be arranged

- A previous year's topic group was focussed on culture; the findings of which would be revisited and hopefully used
- It was important that local people were aware of the historical heritage and culture of where they lived but many did not. It was hoped that this event would inspire and appeal to all people and communities
- It was agreed that this opportunity needed to be maximised for the legacy of the borough and for the younger generation, so input from everyone was welcomed.

It was confirmed that due to the Election on 12 December, the original date of the consultation event had been cancelled. Once the new date was known, Members would be advised.

Library Service

The annual report was delayed this year and is due to be presented at the first meeting in 2020/21 year.

Topic Group

The topic this year was *Better Jobs for Better Lives*. The report and recommendations were presented to the Executive Board.

Significant numbers of jobs are being created in the borough and, proportionately, Halton residents access the lower paid rather than the higher paid jobs. Employees from outside the borough take up higher paid job opportunities provided by Halton businesses.

The Topic Group worked to identify why and how this could be changed.

The Topic Group considered to what extent jobs being created in the borough are accessible to local people.

Members evaluated the employment, learning and skills services provided by the council, identifying the opportunities and challenges the council faces in delivering these services. The report acknowledged the positive work that the council undertakes to support residents into training and employment.

The report considered actions already taken and further actions that could be implemented which would increase the number of residents accessing better jobs in the future.

There is more promotional and marketing work that could be done to raise awareness of the employment, learning and skills services provided by the council. However, the ability to do this is determined by available resources. Furthermore, any increase in demand needs to be managed in line with existing resources and also in line with how the council's Employment Learning and Skills division can procure and access support services alongside other competing Council priorities.

Performance Report

At each meeting the Board receive this report that informs them of emerging issues and the performance of the Council in meeting the Key Performance Indicators. The later feed out of the annual business plan.

The Board received a report on the progress being made on the 2020/2023 Business Plan.

Policy Update Report

Again at each meeting the board receive a briefing on national and regional policies that might affect the areas covered by the Board.

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning & Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	28 July 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Economic Development; Community and Sport
SUBJECT:	Covid19 – New Working Arrangements
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The impact of the Coronavirus is being felt in our communities in many different ways, and will be personal to each individual, couple or family or indeed, Halton business. This report sets out the range of services that have been provided during the COVID 19 Pandemic which are relevant to the Employment Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) **the report be noted; and**
- 2) **The Board considers the information presented and raise any questions of interest or points of clarification following the presentation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Business Support Update

During Lockdown, The Business Improvement and Growth Team continued to collate all current government advice to businesses into a single resource for use by Council colleagues and develop dedicated resource packs for specific target groups, for example the self-employed.

The Business Improvement and Growth Team has a dedicated phone number 0151 511 7825 and email business@halton.gov.uk These were used as the primary points of contact for local businesses seeking support and information. The Team sign posts businesses to the government's advice website at www.businesssupport.gov.uk and the

Growth Platform web site <https://growthplatform.org/business-covid-19-advice/>

Referrals can be made to a City Region helpline staffed by private sector business professionals who are providing their services free of charge to businesses in distress.

Awareness Raising

The Business Improvement & Growth Team sends a weekly e-shot to 2,500 local businesses containing up to date information about business support during the current crisis. Topics have ranged from how to apply for a business ratepayer's grant, Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund, highlighting professional support to SMEs (defined as businesses with between £1m and 45m turnover). The newsletters also raises awareness of business opportunities so, for example, the LCR had an opportunity for business to provide of PPE and warn of current scams targeting businesses.

Call Handling

The Team has managed more than a thousand calls from local businesses in distress, with a large proportion of enquiries concerned about eligibility for support through the Business Rates system or other government backed schemes.

Calls handled also included more specific and technical enquiries dictated by the type, category or class of business and/or the individual circumstances of the owner or manager. These are very complex in nature.

This service was particularly important when the business rates grant scheme was announced when we were able to support colleagues in finance with the call volume coming into the Council from businesses specifically about that scheme.

The team has provided very detailed support and guidance to individual companies. This has only been possible through the prompt and invaluable support of Business Rates colleagues.

Some calls have been technical in nature however, it should be noted that colleagues have provided a quasi-counselling service to individuals in distress, ensuring they are pointed in the right direction. For example, when it is clear that a business is not eligible for business support they have been signposted to appropriate and eligible benefits. This is an intangible output from the work but cannot be overstated.

Grants

In addition to the call handling service mentioned above the team has designed, administered and is delivering the Local Authority

Discretionary Grants Fund. The scheme is targeted at businesses that were not able to access previous grant schemes but had property costs and had been significantly impacted by Covid-19. Government's criteria is:

- A business must be a solvent business that was trading on 11th March 2020;
- Should be a small or micro company;
- Have ongoing property costs;
- Has been significantly financially affected by Covid-19;
- Has not received other relevant grant support from Central Government apart from the Furlough Scheme;

Halton's scheme's eligibility is focused on the following themes:

1. Shared Space Grant
2. Charitable Sector Support Grant
3. Bed & Breakfast Support Grant
4. Businesses either working from home and/or other locally owned businesses in other premises

The scheme is initially being delivered between 1st June and 19th July 2020.

3.2 Employment Learning and Skills Update

The services delivered within the Employment, Learning & Skills Division are funded externally via a combination of grant and competitively tendered for submissions. The majority of the funding received is obtained through a 'payment by results' approach.

Therefore, the more outcomes achieved, the greater the income: levels (outcomes are e.g. adult learning enrolments; customers on HPIJ programmes; skills shows delivered by the Apprenticeship Support Team).

The onset of lockdown because of COVID 19 health and safety measures required the operations of the Division to be quickly re-evaluated and re-modelled to enable continued support for our learners and customers.

Some staff members were already equipped to work from home. However, many of the team did not have the facilities in place and managers worked closely with ICT Services in putting relevant software and hardware in place to enable home working. Within a few days of lockdown, ICT Services successfully got all staff online and able to work remotely, which was very much appreciated.

The COVID 19 situation has resulted in the following within the Employment, Learning & Skills Division:

- Cessation of face-to-face delivery of teaching, learning and assessment following the closure of centres and lockdown measures.
- Cessation of face to face employment support via Halton People into Jobs
- Awarding Body requirements for some qualifications, in particular for Childcare qualifications, will result in learners having to continue learning in 2020/21 in order to achieve the minimum placement hours and assessment of the qualification criteria.
- Adult learning exams are unable to go ahead in centres
- Learner portfolios are only partially completed
- The majority of the summer term adult learning classes unable to run
- Customers and learners unable to attend centres to access IT to job search, and self-study.

The Division has quickly had to remodel its operations to ensure continued support for its customers and learners. Tutors, advisors and apprenticeship support staff have continued contact with residents through telephone, Skype and other virtual platforms such as Zoom and Teams . For adult learners who were nearing completion of qualifications, guidance from awarding bodies, which has been received, will allow for tutor and course work assessment; including taking into account the results of mock exams. This has involved learner portfolios being 'dropped-off' at centres and then picked up by tutors. We have adhered to the Government and Public Health guidance for this to happen.

Halton Borough Council is progressing the roll out of Microsoft Teams, which will provide staff with an online video platform to communicate with others and share documents, etc. Adult learning tutors have used some of the time during lockdown to develop an online offer of courses, which will be rolled out. This will enable adult learning courses to be delivered remotely, where necessary. Teams software will also be a useful tool for the Apprenticeship Team to offer information to groups of school students without the need to attend the venue.

Remote marketing and promotion of the Division's services will continue. However, this may be less effective and result in a reduction in participation. In addition, an unknown factor may be a lack of learner/customer confidence to commit to programmes whilst social distancing/phased lockdown remains in place.

Social Distancing and virtual join – learners and customers who are vulnerable and have no access to IT will be invited to attend sessions in the learning centres, maintaining social distancing, with other learners/customers accessing through digital methods. Access to digital equipment and internet is a barrier for many learners/customers and this will present the Division with a challenge as we try to support the most vulnerable in our community.

It is not clear at this time how schools in Halton will operate resulting in uncertainty about availability of childcare learner placements in 2020/21. We will continue to monitor this element of the course and will adjust the delivery model as required. Delivery of learning programmes in Children's Centres will be dependent on centres opening and the availability of crèche provision. A blended approach of face-to-face, digital and remote learning will be used to maximise access to learning for parents.

Close partnership working with a range of organisations in Halton will ensure employability programmes meet the needs of local employers, e.g. Job Centres, Halton People into Jobs, Housing Associations, Children's Centres, and National Careers Service.

In summary, at a local level our immediate actions are to safely re-open our centres and prioritise access for those residents that need our support the most, particularly those who do not have a social network and access to personal IT. Supporting the many newly unemployed residents as well as the existing cohort of unemployed residents will be a real priority at a local level.

Library Services

- Digital services (eBooks, eaudio, press reader) continue to be popular
- Contactless services (Home Library Service, Choose & Collect, Book Drop) working well
- Draft sector toolkit is being prepared and Halton's emerging plan is consistent and is aligned with this through, for example, attendance at webinars & peer meetings.
- As well as learning from European colleagues who are ahead of the UK's timeline we are now looking closer to home as library buildings in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man are now open, and to Westminster Libraries which remained open throughout lockdown period.
- Number of staff in libraries working on contactless offers, redeployed staff requested back for the proposed July opening date.

Covid effect on service:

- Library buildings closed
- Majority of staff redeployed
- Services moved online – additional investment had to be found for eBooks
- Events cancelled
- Move to digital only activities – disenfranchising digitally excluded communities
- Loss of income – room hire, tickets, café
- Library staff delivering books to Home Library Service customers / shielded residents
- Key book supplier has gone out of business

Sports and Recreation

Leisure Centres: Kingsway Leisure Centre, Brookvale Recreation Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool closed to the public 19th March. The majority of staff have not worked since 23rd March. The service is generating no income. The service anticipates a significant increase in cleaning and training costs to re-open. The centres will have to introduce a full activity booking system (no turn-ups) and capacity will be reduced. Industry surveys suggests 70 – 80% of gym members will return within a couple of week of reopening if confidence in the delivery model. Participation numbers not expected to return to pre COVID levels for a significant period. This will have a major impact on income, thus the subsidy required will increase significantly.

The service has reviewed the Ukactive, Swim England, Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) and Swimming Teacher Association (STA) reopening guidance. Draft risk assessment and building control documents produced. The extent to what activities the sites will propose opening and the opening hours will be determined following further staff discussions (occupation and environmental risk assessments, extensive training and availability). Government guidance and discussions with other colleagues, regarding reception screens, hand sanitisers, cleaning, barriers, PPE, will also contribute towards opening and operational plans. A phased opening is proposed, starting with Brookvale, followed by Kingsway. However, no dates have been confirmed.

Community Activity:

- Double page in Halton magazine to support people stay active at home, 35,800 delivered
- Staying Active webpage set-up end of March, 600 views first day, updated with information for older adults
<https://activehalton.co.uk/staying-active-at-home-during-covid-19/>
- Access to 100's of online classes and advise provided on the active Halton webpage
- Promoting Stay Active at home webpage: 3000 Facebook views first day (sport dev and walking for health Facebook)
- Facebook reach 28 day period (ending 6 April) over 5000 reached & 600 engagements (sport dev and walking for health Facebook)
- 20K twitter impressions (sport dev twitter 7.1K & Active Me twitter 13.1K)
- 30 Freelance exercise coaches supported (governing body advice and promotions)
- 12 Volunteer health Walk leaders supported, including wellbeing calls

- Mental Health awareness training offered to all volunteers
- National Walking Month May – social media campaign delivered
- National Mental Health week – social media campaign delivered
- National Volunteer week – social media campaign delivered
- A4 sheet of Falls Prevention exercises reached over 3300 on twitter end April
- 120 working partners and 500 public emails receive regular updates, sharing of information to support public stay well and stay active at home
- Continuous National Social media campaign engagement including Sport England #StayInWorkOut #WeAreUndefeatable
- Over 40 Community classes now available on zoom (community freelance coaches)
- Public Health England booklet to support older adults stay active at home and avoid falls, disseminated, reaching over 600 emails, 1869 impressions on Active Me twitter
- Support health improvement team disseminate 5000 printed copies of Public Health Booklet
- 20 applications submitted from Halton to Sport England Emergency Fund: 20 assessed and 12 approved. Grants total £41,473 average of £3,456 per application. Further grant info <https://www.merseysidesport.com/covid-19-sector-support/> will
- 2 virtual Couch to 2k programmes delivered
- 2 family activity sheets produced and sent to a variety of settings to the community
- May half term activity leaflet put on social media for children to complete
- Family Games posted
- Updates given to clubs in Halton Sports Partnership network, funding opportunities, advice on virtual sessions and how to come back from lockdown
- Different intensity activity levels so something for the whole community, (yoga, gentle circuits, HIIT, LBT, abs& stretch, box fit, activities to keep children active)
- Regular posts promoting healthy eating tips, motivational and inspiring quotes

- Playing Pitch Strategy Winter Assessment has been completed, Summer Assessment has been delayed due to COVID-19 anticipated end June, earliest draft now Aug 20. This will delay production of the strategy.
- New Leisure Centre, Moor Lane, planning application submitted
- Refurbishment of Brookvale All Weather Pitch project progressing with the Football Foundation

Brindley Update

- The Brindley Theatre has remained staffed throughout lockdown with staff working on site with full social distancing measures in place. Essential programmed maintenance contractors also had full access to the building as required.
- Brindley Theatre staff are working on reorganising and negotiating contracts thus maintaining a full programme once reopening takes place.
- The Box Office are administering refunds (£57,000 to date), maintaining the 24/7 online service (as some transactions are still taking place via online and telephone), and updating and maintaining the data protection information on the customer database.
- Online Gift Voucher sales are also being explored and set up with our contracted sales ticketing system to increase future income generation. This is a comprehensive process using external software.
- During lockdown up to August, over 180 shows have been cancelled or rearranged (primarily rearranged) with no contractual cancellation costs to the council due to individual negotiations with promoters.
- From lockdown up to August, the Brindley Theatre has lost an estimated £460,000 in income (based on income taken in 2019/20).
- The bookings diary has over 90% occupancy through until early 2022 with enquires being received daily.
- A member of the technical team is carrying out thorough checks of all the comprehensive sound and lighting equipment. This is to ensure lack of use does not result in failure/costly repairs, as many of these items have never been left unused for more than 3 days in 16 years.
- One staff member remains on deployment to the Open Spaces Team at Picow Farm Road with other staff only working up to their contracted hours at the Brindley Theatre.
- Staff are also maintaining weekly fire, water testing and health and safety equipment checks.

- The one-year Theatre Seat Concession trial was due to finish on 31 July this year. Due to the building being locked down this will be extended for the period closed in order to complete the trial. This revised finish date will be confirmed when the building is due to reopen.

Events Update

- The Runcorn Hill Summer Fair was cancelled (operated at nil cost).
- All Funfair and Circus bookings were cancelled resulting in lost income.
- The 2020 North West Vintage Rally has been cancelled (operated at nil cost).
- The Borough of Culture Firework Display 2021 contract will need to be negotiated and possibly revised with Legal and Procurement.
- Community Events Volunteering within Parks has ceased.
- The Councils Events calendar including community and private applications have been cancelled for 2020.

Community Centres Update

In terms of the Community Centres, we closed all of our centres to the public from 5pm on Friday 20th March, with staff continuing to attend to carry out deep cleans of the buildings until Monday 30th March, when the buildings were closed indefinitely.

From 30th March all supervisors and administrative staff, were set up to work from home and continued to carry out administrative functions relating to the service.

Since the beginning of April a number of staff from the service have taken up redeployment opportunities, as follows:

7 members of staff making calls to the 'shielded individuals'
5 members of staff volunteering to support Adult Social Care
2 members of staff supporting Open Space Services

The supervisors for each of the buildings have been visiting the buildings at least twice each week to carry out building checks, testing of the fire alarm and panic alarm systems, in addition to providing access for any planned maintenance arranged by property services.

In more recent weeks, since the UK government released plans to lift the lock down, much focus has been on how we might be able to reopen the buildings safely.

By the end of week commencing 29th June – Property Services colleagues will have been out to all of the centres with each of the centre supervisors and community centres manager to support with the completion of the necessary risk assessments and the return to work management checklist. Any remedial actions will be passed to the appropriate contractors, signage will be ordered and all risk assessments can be reviewed and/or completed.

Options for reopening consist of either a phased opening of x number of community centres or the reopening of all community centres. It is not yet known when Community Centres will reopen to the public.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The policy implications of the review relate primarily to the Employment Learning and Skills, etc. etc. priority however, this is a cross cutting work area, which has wider implications on other areas of council business.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The report refers to a number of services that have continued during lock down.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

None

7.4 A Safer Halton

None

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None

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

10.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.