

Public Document Pack



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

Monday, 30 January 2023 at 6.30 p.m.
Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

S. Young

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Eddie Jones (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Ellen Cargill (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Victoria Begg	Labour
Councillor Eddie Dourley	Labour
Councillor Emma Garner	Labour
Councillor Stan Hill	Labour
Councillor Geoffrey Logan	Labour
Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh	Labour
Councillor Christopher Rowe	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Tom Stretch	Labour
Councillor Aimee Teeling	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 to be confirmed.*

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

Part I

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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.	
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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, 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>
<p>ELS11 MINUTES</p> <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>	
<p>ELS12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.</p>	
<p>ELS13 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION GROWTH PLATFORM</p> <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.

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

DATE: 30 January 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services

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, Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 30th January 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director Economy, Enterprise & Property

PORTFOLIO: Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community

SUBJECT: Update on Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board Business Support Scrutiny Topics

1.0 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF REPORT

1.1 To provide an update on the Business Support Scrutiny Topic Group

2.0 RECOMMENDED:

2.1 It is recommended that the ELS & C PPB:

- i. Notes the update on the Topic;
- ii. Agrees that the Business Support Topic Group is concluded.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Members have progressed two topics i) 'Health and Employment' and ii) 'The Provision of Business Support in the Borough'. The Health and Employment Group has been concluded.

3.2 The Provision of Business Support in the Borough

In assessing the provision of business support in the borough, Members have received the following:

- 1) an introduction to the Topic Group (Background and Context)
- 2) a presentation from the Council's Inward Investment officer, who provided Case Study examples demonstrating where business support has been effective.
- 3) a presentation from The Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce outlining how the Chamber supports business in the borough
- 4) a presentation from the Managing Director of the Liverpool City Region Growth Platform (21st November)
- 5) A study visit to Carpenter Additive, Dennis Road Widnes (19th December).

Emerging issues and key considerations relating to points 1-3 have previously been provided to the PPB. Further information relating to points 4 and 5 are set out below.

3.3) **Liverpool City Region Growth Platform**

The Growth Platform is Liverpool City Region's growth company, designed to support people and businesses to realise their potential and generate growth. Its role is to strengthen and simplify the business landscape, creating a sustainable economy that reflects the needs of our community.

The presentation included information on a number of themes and priorities:

Sector Insight

It was reported that Growth Platform manages a range of City Region based Sector Boards that provide insight on the key opportunities and challenges facing business in each sector. These feed into the Combined Authority in the development of policy, strategy and its delivery through projects relating to business growth, innovation and investment. Halton is well represented on these Boards.

Cluster Development

An explanation of the role of Cluster development was provided to the PPB. Cluster Development enables businesses working in and supporting key sectors to benefit from sector expertise and growth and generate a fertile business environment for future growth.

The Growth Platform has included Sci-tech Daresbury in the LCR cluster development work to encourage closer working and support for emerging clusters to strengthen the offer of the city region across the scientific and tech sectors.

Growth Platform Sector managers have supported Halton businesses into a wide range of LCR schemes and programmes including LCR 4.0 and LCR4 START, Health Matters, plus general sector support.

Halton is actively engaged on Visitor Economy (VE) strategy and widely consulted on the VE short term recovery strategy, shaping the future of the DMO for the City Region.

Halton Digital & Creative businesses have been supported through Gather's suite of programmes around business resilience, leadership and management.

Other initiatives have included participation in Digital Manufacturing Week, support of the Healthcare Sector, Space Cluster; and MedTec cluster.

The Growth Hub

The Growth Platform manages the City Region Growth Hub coordinating business support to help local business access the wide range of support available across the City Region – working with local delivery partners.

Scale Up Business Support

Reference was made to giving priority to Scale Up Business Support. The data show that the Liverpool City Region does not have a business start-up problem, but business survival and growth is a key issue.

High Growth/Scale up business account for about 5% of the UK economy but generate 50% of the growth and jobs – so its vital that we get to know and understand them and support them as the beacons of growth in our economy over the next 10 years

(Scale up definition: 20% growth year on year)

Growth Platform manages a High Growth Business Support Programme (launched April 2022 through to June 2023) for the City Region, including Halton

16 High Growth/Scale up Halton Businesses have been identified and targeted for High Growth Account management.

Talent Support

The Growth Platform manages a City Region wide programme of support for schools and students to better understand and experience local careers and future employment opportunities

It was reported that 13 Halton Schools and Colleges are engaged with and supported by the Liverpool City Region Careers Hub managed by Growth Platform.

The Careers Hub Lead links directly into the Council's Education services and the wider team with Careers Leaders attending regular network meetings and termly action plans are reviewed and agreed.

8 of the 13 schools/colleges in Halton are achieving 5 or more Gatsby Benchmarks with 2 schools fully achieving all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks with good progress across all schools.

Strong links have been made with Halton employers supported by the Careers Hub team of Enterprise Advisers and Give An Hour volunteers working within all schools and colleges.

'Let's Explore' virtual reality programme is accessed by SEND and Alternative Provision schools to explore the world of work and experience work experience to build student confidence and resilience

Inward Investment

The Growth Platform manages the City Region's Inward Investment Agency – Invest Liverpool City Region - working closely with Halton Council who sit on the Investment Board.

3.4) **Study Visit Carpenter Additive**

Carpenter Additive is based at a £20m Metal Powder Production Facility at the Widnes Waterfront. The company is a global leader in speciality alloys for over 130 years. The company's approach to industrial metal additive manufacturing is to help customers solve the most challenging material and process problems. Throughout the development of the additive industry over the past two decades, the company has supplied material and expert advice to those entering the space. Customers around the globe are in the aerospace, medical, transportation, energy, and industrial sectors.

During the visit, Members were provided with the opportunity to see the production facility in full.

The company emphasised the positive relationship they had established with the Council. Members will recall that the Council facilitated the development of the facility and the company is leasing the land and premises from the Council.

The emerging issues from the visit include;

Training and Development

Carpenters have invested in providing exciting employment opportunities for Apprenticeships and graduates and work closely with Riverside College, Halton People into Jobs and Liverpool University to provide long-term careers for aspiring local talent.

Market Issues

The company's strategy is to operate inside and outside the EU hence mitigating problems of exporting and importing feed stock and finished product.

Carbon Management

The company are introducing measures to ensure that they continue to have a neutral carbon footprint which is particularly important given the nature of the businesses they supply.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no further policy implications

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications identified in this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

No implications

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The topic groups were established to support service development in this key priority area.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

No implications

6.4 A Safer Halton

No implications

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

No implications

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no risks associated with this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no equality and diversity issues.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community, Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	30 th January 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director Community and Greenspace
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community
SUBJECT:	Sport and Recreation Team
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with a report on the Council's Sport and Recreation Service. Reporting on the Sports Development and Leisure Centre Service from June 2022 to December 2022. Update on the new Leisure Centre building programme; recruitment of lifeguards and swimming instructors.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) **The report be noted**
- ii) **Consider the progress and raise any questions or points for clarification**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The report provides information on how and what the service has delivered during the last 6 months. Service delivery has been extremely difficult as recruitment delays affected staff, regular customers and engagement with residents. The cost of living crisis is now affecting the service; some people are cutting back on how much they spend on Leisure.

4.0 SPORT AND RECREATION TEAM

- 4.1 The team has two distinct areas:

4.1.1 Sports Development Team

The Sports Development Team continues to be based at Frank Myler, supporting the operations of the building. There are 2 full time Officers, one part time (maternity leave until July 2023) a part time Community Sports Coach and 2 part time assistants that support Frank Myler Pavilion and grass pitch use.

4.1.2 **Leisure Centre Team**

Management of the Councils Leisure Centres. Kingsway Leisure Centre, Brookvale Recreation Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool – closed June 16 2022.

The Leisure Services Team has 58 contracted seats occupied. A vacant Leisure Attendant (LA) and Operations Manager at Kingsway and nine vacant Swimming Instructors (SI) across the sites. 66 casual seats occupied, supporting service delivery (including 32 LA, 12 SI). Significant number of Lifeguards recruited in November 2022. NPLQ course offered free to those aged 16+ not in work (funding from Onward Homes and Cheshire Police. Halton Education Partnership (HEP) supported communication of the opportunity across partner organisations. 50 applications received, 20 selected, 14 gained qualification, majority 16 and 17 year olds. Pre-employment checks are difficult for 16 and 17 year olds (producing the required identification). Two ILM Aquatics Apprentice posts established October 2022 remain vacant.

5.0 **SPORTS AND RECREATION SERVICE DELIVERY 2022**

5.1 **Active Halton overview**

5.1.1 Following the pandemic community classes increased steadily to 100+ weekly sessions, there has not been the return to pre covid levels and the demand for group exercise session has seen a decline locally, mirroring a national trend. Private operators have struggled to recruit instructors, also reducing number of classes offered. Latest JD Gym (St Helens – opened December 2022 as a Gym only). Industry trends will be monitored moving forward.

5.1.2 Fitness memberships at Leisure Centres are above Pre covid levels.

5.1.3 Lots of voluntary sectors sports opportunities across the borough, regular communications and increased social media

5.1.4 Football Foundation, Active Through Football Project: consortium, across 5 boroughs in the Liverpool City Region, £500,000 grant awarded, to target areas of deprivation and low participation. Football projects delivered locally, included sessions at Frank Myler and Brookvale Recreation Centre. Taster sessions to existing community groups delivered, such as, working with existing dementia group in Murdishaw community centre.

5.2 **Frank Myler Pavilion and Sports Ground**

5.2.1 Post pandemic, there are 18 indoor community bookings and 4 bookings for the MUGA (including 1 Sport Development sessions). Sessions include dance, football and rugby sessions, mature movers and dance/exercise classes for older adults. 29 teams are using the pitches on site.

5.2.2 The way classes are delivered and paid for has changed. Financial support provided to external community classes, who struggled to restart activity, however, still insufficient numbers returning and with cost of living crisis, many have become unsustainable.

5.3 Halton Sports Coach Scheme

- 5.3.1 Walk fit, Run fit sessions delivered regularly at Frank Myler following positive comments from participants. Sessions will start again, when the weather improves in the new year.
- 5.3.2 Community Football sessions, continue to be popular, especially with girls. New sessions introduced, children attending enjoy the recreational side, rather than competitive games and club environment.

6.0 LEISURE CENTRE SERVICE (LCS) ACTIVITY 2022

6.1 Brookvale

- 6.1.1 Refurbishment of Brookvale 3G Pitch and ancillary facilities work completed in May. In July, a community football tournament was held, as an official opening event for partners to view. The Council granted £303,284 from the Football Foundation, for the installation and improvement of ancillary facilities. Footfall at site has increased significantly. (circa 5,000 visits a month)

6.1.2 Kops N Kids

Monday evening football funded places, 31 free sessions offered.

- 6.1.3 Q1 & Q2 total visits 91,381 (15,150 fitness; 26,192 swim; 51,351 dry side – includes the new pitch users).

6.2 Kingsway

- 6.2.1 Hosted a number of large events, including annual schools sports hall athletics, roller derby competition, dance festival and gymnastics competition.

- 6.2.2 Q1 & Q2 total visits 103,030 (20,976 fitness, 54,470 swim, 27,584 dry side)

6.3 Swimming

6.3.1 Learn to Swim (LTS)

Active Halton 'Learn to Swim' Programme rebranded/ marketed as a single 'product'; a progressive programme/pathway, with defined stages and clear aims/objectives. The shaping of the programme/pathway is ongoing, with the development of existing services/sessions, alongside the introduction of new sessions.

6.3.2 School Swimming

Head teacher presentation in October, at Annual Health and Safety Briefing, outlining the new Active Halton 'School Swimming' Programme – details on what has changed, the aims/objectives of the project, benefits to schools and pupils and further information/guidance on what is required from schools. Highlighted the

importance of water safety education within schools and collaborative working with Active Halton.

6.3.3

Bookings – schools have been provided with a new booking form, which includes set session days/times. Bookings are split into 2 x 6 month blocks and each school within Halton is guaranteed at least one session per week over at least one 6 month block. This is to ensure that all pupils within Halton have the opportunity to learn to swim. Booking deadlines introduced.

6.3.4

Drowning Prevention Week

Royal Lifesaving Society UK Campaign (19th June – 26th June) – educate children/young people & parent/carers on how to enjoy the water safely. Water Safety information/educational messages displayed at the leisure centres, with free water safety resources available to all.

6.3.5

Sports Works

Swimming Lessons for children with special educational needs/disabilities. The Sports Works swimming lessons have been full to capacity since they returned in October 2021.

£1 Swims in place for School holidays to provide an affordable safe environment to swim, thus improving the physical and mental wellbeing.

7.0 **New Leisure Centre**

7.1 The new build Leisure Centre located on Moor Lane in Widnes, contract start date January 9th 2023. The contract period is 108 weeks thus completion is 5th February 2025. The build cost being circa £29m. The building will be a high quality, accessible and sustainable facility including 2 pools, a sports hall, gym, squash court, exercise studios, soft play, café, health consultation rooms and associated facilities. It will support the Council's vision of helping the inactive to become active and more residents to fulfil their potential by participating in sport and physical activity, thus improving their long-term health and wellbeing. The benefit of this project is that it will deliver a high quality facility that benefits the residents of the borough. Participation in sport will benefit all residents who participate thus helping them improve their long-term health and wellbeing.

7.2 Wates understand the importance of developing the potential of young people. To that end they have a strong and comprehensive programme of activities that will make a real difference across Halton Borough:

- Wates team to undertake 20 visits to school/colleges
- Site team to host 10 school visits
- Create and support 55 weeks of meaningful work experience for students
- Wates team to commit to 80 hours Volunteering in the local community
- Creating new and supporting existing Apprentices in achieving the training and qualification they need to progress their careers within the construction industry

7.3 Wates will also ensure training requirements are written into subcontractor orders.

The project team have created a Frequently Asked Question document, attached to this report.

8.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The benefit gained from being Active or involved in sport contributes towards achieving wider council priorities. Benefits that sport can bring to people and to society: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development. The Sport and Recreation service and the voluntary sector sporting community make a significant contribution to the Public Health agenda.
- 8.2 Liverpool City Region have a shared strategic ambition to collaborate and develop the role Physical Activity can play in the region to support our common priorities and goals. Issues discussed have included, transport, economic, climate, health, community cohesion and inclusion.
- 8.3 Continue to work with colleagues to improve the Active Travel offer, to improve cycling and walking infrastructure to make environments more suitable for the active travel. People want to do more walking, running or cycling for everyday journeys, which is likely to link to the cost of living crisis and rising fuel prices potentially making driving less accessible.

9.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Council have been working closely with the contractors Wates on the new Leisure Centre scheme, commissioned via the SCAPE framework. They have been through a tender exercise with their supply chain, this being closely monitored by our costs consultants, who have confirmed that the scheme will deliver value for money given the current difficult economic position
- 9.2 The service has recovered from the impact of the pandemic, but there remains issues with recruitment, this is not unique to Leisure sector, the way people work has changed. Staff continue to work hard and look at different ways of running the service. Further customer engagement is required as the way residents access services has and will continue to change. The short-term position looks very challenging with our facilities continuing to age.
- 9.3 The Leisure Centres require specialist staff to open the buildings to the public, specifically the swimming pool. The service has experienced service delays, due to vacant posts, sickness and mechanical issues; the expectation is that this will continue.
- 9.4 The service does experience a high turnover of staff. Young people historically fill casual worker roles, such as Leisure Attendants, whilst they are in higher education and university. Swim England and the RLSS are working with local authorities to develop Workforce plans, to attract and retain people.
- 9.5 Merseyside Sports Partnership are currently responsible for taking forward Sport England funding in Merseyside, such as, Together Fund, Opening School Facilities.

10.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

10.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The service engages with thousands of young people through a variety of coached activities, learn to swim programme, signposting to community sports clubs and activity to support and increase participation.

10.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

The service provides volunteer opportunities and skill development in coaching, administration, fundraising and access to resources for those learning new skills. Support adult and lifelong learning, through fitness referral programmes. Lifeguard training will continue, however, the service will engage more with external contractors. Recruitment continues to be problematic. The Aquatics team are looking at a new workforce development model.

10.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Sport and Physical Activity links directly with priorities in Halton's Health and Wellbeing strategy, prevention being the key. Physical activity links with prevention of certain cancers, mental health problems and falls. We need to put the customer first, focus on those least active and transform how activity is provided, this has never been so important. Keeping active has been a focus throughout the pandemic it will continue to be a priority as the Nation moves forward.

10.4 **A Safer Halton**

The connection between sport and reducing anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime supported by key research. Sports activities and competitions, sports volunteering, sports leadership, sports training help develop individuals and communities, encourage healthier and more productive lifestyles and create inclusive communities and neighbourhoods that provide a shared identity and sense of place.

10.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The service supports groups looking to improve the areas where they live/work.

11.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

11.1 Delivery and income affected by staff shortages.

11.2 Council Leisure Centre stock is old and of poor quality, mechanical failures leads to service delays.

12.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

12.1 The Sport and Recreation service is open and accessible. The service supports groups and individuals to be and stay active.

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

13.1 None



How long will construction take/when are you planning to start?

Construction scheduled to take 108 weeks from start on site. The start on site date is 9th January 2023 with completion 5th February 2025.

When will the existing Leisure Centre close?

It is our intention to ensure the current Leisure Centre remains operational until the new one opens.

Why is the council not refurbishing the existing Leisure Centre?

Parts of the existing Leisure Centre built in the 1970s, it was later extended in the late 1980s. It is now nearing the end of its useful life. Condition surveys have indicated that a considerable amount of investment (£15million +) would be needed to extend its life much beyond 2025, which is just not cost effective and would cause major disruption to current users.

A refurbished centre would have a more limited lifespan (approx. 15-20 years), be less energy efficient and not offer the same range of facilities as a purpose built new-build centre, which can deliver the required facilities mix. We therefore need to progress plans to build a new future proofed flexible facility that is fit for purpose and meets user expectations for the next 30-40 years. In order to meet modern day standards in terms of energy efficiency and minimising the site's carbon footprint, it is

Halton Leisure Centre Project, Moor Lane, Widnes Frequently Asked Questions

necessary to have a good building's fabric. This helps in improving the thermal efficiency (air tightness, heat loss and cooling) of the building and reduces the need for higher levels of energy consumption. This could not be achieved through refurbishing the existing premises. In fact it is both time consuming and often more expensive to adapt existing buildings particularly when significant mechanical, electrical and technological changes need to be made. The pool replacement is a major example. Also, if the existing centre were to be refurbished, it would need to be closed down for at least 18 months and this would lead to a major loss of amenity to Halton residents; there are over 250,000 visits to the centre each year. Ultimately, we want to build a facility that minimises energy consumption, provides flexible facilities, which can be expanded to meet the needs of today's and future generations.

How much is the new Leisure Centre going to cost?

The appointed contractor Wates Construction Limited has conducted a full competitive tender process. The total build cost including fit out, circa £29 million. That being said, it is our intention to ensure value for money is obtained.

Where are construction workers going to park during construction and how will the construction affect access to existing businesses?

Workers will park within the construction site or at off site car parks, such as, the one extended on Caldwell Road. Work phased to ensure that some public car parking, surrounding the site compound retained. However, some of the current car parking affected, during construction of the new centre. Therefore, there is a possibility of some disruption and a reduction in capacity for a few months. Any development will be subject to a construction and environmental management plan (CEMP) which will set out good construction practice which the development will need to be carried out under.

How will the construction affect the area?

There will be increased traffic movements with workers and deliveries during the construction process. However, deliveries in particular will be coordinated through a construction management plan to minimise impacts at peak times. The busiest periods for users of adjacent businesses are typically outside normal working hours so the prospects of clashes with construction traffic will be minimised.

Will a new Leisure Centre cause an increase in traffic?

The facilities offered may generate more visits and result in a little more traffic. However, because of its central location it is close to good public transport links, so the impact should be minimal. The Green Travel Plan will include details on reducing the carbon footprint of visitors by encouraging more sustainable forms of transport, plus walking and cycling and ensuring that there is adequate and safe cycle storage. It can also include encouraging car sharing by visitors. The Highways Authority consulted as part of the planning application and a traffic assessment undertaken. A Transport Statement provided as part of the planning application.

Are there enough car parking spaces?

The current centre car park struggled to meet demand, used regularly by visitors to surrounding buildings, such as, college. Expected that use by those not visiting the centre will be minimal. The number of car park space at the Caldwell Road car park increased and the flexible working arrangements, in response to the pandemic, has seen a drop in parking around the area. Coach and cycle spaces to accommodate users.

Halton Leisure Centre Project, Moor Lane, Widnes Frequently Asked Questions

Will the Council be making a profit by selling the current Leisure Centre site?

No. The construction costs for the proposed new Leisure Centre are significantly greater than the value of the current Leisure Centre site. No planned use for the existing site. Work will commence on the future use of this land, once construction of the new build starts. This will link to Town Centre Regeneration work/studies.

Will there be new homes built on the existing Leisure Centre site?

Work has not commenced on determining the future use of the existing site.

How is the Council going to pay for the new Leisure Centre?

The Council borrowing will fund the cost of the Leisure Centre. Whilst a modern Leisure Centre with a wide range of facilities will generate more income per annum than the current Leisure Centre, the additional income will not be sufficient to fully cover the annual financing costs of the loan. There will therefore be a net pressure on the Council's Revenue Budget because of the new Leisure Centre. The Council will look to offset any deficit by seeking to generate additional income streams from elsewhere in the Borough.

Will the nearby NHS Centre be affected?

The NHS health centre is an important stakeholder. Our proposals do not affect these facilities in any way.

Do we actually have a say in this or has the Leisure Centre been decided on?

Consultation has taken place. Independent review of facilities commissioned during 2017/2018, this involved public consultation. The Council adopted Indoor and Built Sports Facility Strategy, including an action plan in 2019. Replace Kingsway Leisure Centre identified as the key priority. Building plans prepared and public consultation took place in January 2020 and again during the planning application process in May 2020. Planning approval granted in November 2020. The project has been through the Councils decision-making process. Amendments made to the energy source, removing gas supplies, approval to proceed granted in October 2022. The building design is now fixed.

It was necessary to identify a location:

- already owned by the Council
- large enough to accommodate all the facilities required in the new centre
- not within the Green Belt
- centrally located, easily accessible by many of the borough's residents (on foot, by public transport and by car)

It was also necessary to consider a number of other factors, which could affect the location of the site, including:

- other planning issues and environmental site constraints
- any potential need to relocate existing site uses/occupiers
- visibility of the site, synergies with surrounding land uses and Council regeneration plans
- the sensitivity of the site to any proposed development

Will the new studios be soundproofed and have air-conditioning?

Yes, all the new studios will have this.

Halton Leisure Centre Project, Moor Lane, Widnes Frequently Asked Questions

How will the proposed design and facilities meet the need for disabled residents in the Borough?

The centre will be fully accessible and dementia friendly. It has a Changing Place facility accessible to support residents and visitors get active and enjoy day-to-day activities. In addition, it is planning policy that the centre is DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant.

Will the new Leisure Centre pose a flood risk?

The site is situated in a location with risks of flooding; the building base has been raised. It is not uncommon to develop in such areas. Any new buildings constructed are designed to fully mitigate any additional risks of flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment was submitted as part of any planning application and this would demonstrate how the building would mitigate any impacts it may create.

Who will be the operator for the new Leisure Centre? Will my membership costs go up?

The Councils in house team will operate the Centre. In terms of membership, it is our intention to offer competitive prices to ensure the Leisure Centre remains accessible to as many people as possible within the Borough.

Why do the new plans not include, like for like facilities or additional facilities like climbing wall?

The current facilities require more capital and revenue. The Council needed to reduce the expenditure on areas that had low daytime occupancy and increase the commercial offer to provide a balanced flexible facility mix.



REPORT TO:	Employment Learning & Skills and Community Policy Performance Board
DATE:	30 th January 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director Economy, Enterprise & Property
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community
SUBJECT:	Liverpool City Region Local Improvement Skills Plan
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the development of a Local Skills Improvement Plan for the Liverpool City Region.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- i) **Members note the process and progress being made to develop a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for the Liverpool City Region;**
- ii) **The Council works with Halton Chamber of Commerce to raise awareness of the Research Questionnaire contained in appendix 1 of the report.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth White Paper introduces a plan to put employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system to help ensure businesses and people have the skills they need to thrive and progress. LSIPs are a key part of achieving this aim.

3.2 Led by designated Employer Representative Bodies ERBs, LSIPs will set out employers' skills needs, and the priority changes required in a local area to help ensure post-16 technical education and skills provision is more responsive and flexible in meeting local labour market skills needs.

3.3 An ERB is an eligible body that has been designated by the Secretary of State to lead the development and any subsequent review of a local skills improvement plan for a specified area. St

Helens Chamber is the ERB for the Liverpool City Region and is working with all other Liverpool City Region Chambers of Commerce.

- 3.4 The ERB is leading on the development of a report which not only sets out those key priorities, but importantly should outline the process to develop the report, i.e., bringing together employers and providers to understand skills needs and provision.

The guidance states that LSIPs will set out the key priorities needed to make technical education and skills provision more responsive to the changing needs of employers and the local economy by:

- ensuring a better match between the supply of and demand for the skills employers most need to thrive and boost productivity, as well as helping to drive greater collaboration between providers to realise the benefits of economies of scale and specialisation.
- making provision more accessible and addressing barriers to progression, especially for the adult workforce, such as driving greater join-up between skills offers, including work programmes; and
- recognising that improving the supply of skills must be accompanied by demand-side measures that drive greater employer engagement and investment in skills and support potential learners through industry-relevant post-16 technical education that meets employers' needs and effective careers guidance.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The guidance states that

LSIPs need to go beyond simple statements about the need for more engineers or digital skills.

- This means understanding the actual skills employers need in the workplace but are struggling to find.
- It is this insight that is often missing but can be invaluable for providers in driving up labour market relevance and delivering better learner outcomes.
- Key findings and supporting evidence should be organised around the technical education occupational routes, pathways and levels developed by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) in consultation with employers.
- Having a common framework that uses the same terms will make it easier for employers and providers to come together and identify where provision is well aligned and where it is not.
- It will also enable the key findings to be sufficiently clear, specific and actionable to inform future provision planning and investment decisions by FE Colleges and other relevant providers.

4.2 The deadline for the submission of the plan is 31st May 2023.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 It is understood that a Local Skills Improvement Fund is being developed to support the implementation of LSIPs.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

6.21 LSIPs are focused on matching skills development with the needs of employers and enabling employers to shape and inform these plans.

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**

7.1 No risks have been identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 No Equality and Diversity implications arising from the report have been identified.

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

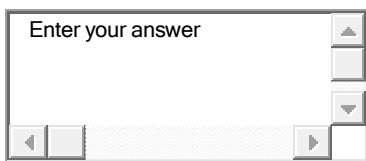
Liverpool City Region
Local Skills Improvement Plan
Business Research

The survey will take approximately 6 minutes to complete.

Immersive Reader in Microsoft Forms allows you to hear the text of a form title and questions read out loud while following along. You can find the Immersive Reader button next to form title or questions after activating this control. You can also change the spacing of line and words to make them easier to read, highlight parts of speech and syllables, select single words or lines of words read aloud, and select language preferences.

Required

1. Local Authority Area Required to answer. Multi Line Text.



2. Company Name Required to answer. Single line text.

3. Full Name Required to answer. Single line text.

4. Job Title Required to answer. Single line text.

5. Email Address Required to answer. Single line text.

6. Which Chamber of Commerce are you a Member of? Required to answer. Single choice.

- St Helens
- Knowsley
- Halton
- Liverpool & Sefton
- Wirral
- Not a Member

7. How many people are currently employed by your organisation or branch (including full and part-time staff) in your local area? Required to answer. Single choice.

- 1-10
- 11-24
- 25-50
- 51-250
- 250+

8. Which of the following best describes your organisation's principal business activity? Required to answer. Single choice.

- Utilities, waste, or energy supply
- Manufacturing
- Construction, engineering, or trades
- Retail or wholesale
- Transport, logistics, or storage
- Hospitality, catering, or tourism
- IT, data analysis, web or data services
- Finance, accounting, or insurance
- Real estate, property, or development
- Legal services
- Marketing, advertising, or communications
- Pharmaceutical or scientific services
- Admin, support, or consulting (e.g. recruitment, cleaning, leasing, training, call centres)
- Public administration or defence
- Education
- Health, social work, or third sector
- Arts, entertainment, or recreation

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing, or mining
- Other services not listed above

9. Looking at people you currently employ, do you agree your current staff have the skills your business needs now? Required to answer. Likert.

Strongly agree

Slightly Agree

Slightly Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Unsure

Neither agree nor disagree

-
-
-
-
-
-

10. Again thinking about people you currently employ, do you agree your current staff have the skills your business needs into the future? Required to answer. Likert.

Strongly agree

Slightly Agree

Slightly Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Unsure

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

-
-
-
-

-
-
-

11. Does your company intend to train and develop existing employees to fill skills gaps, over the next 1-2 years? Required to answer. Single choice.

- Yes
- No

12. Does your company have a training and development plan for your staff, linked to your business goals/strategy? Required to answer. Likert.

Yes

Partially/For some roles or colleagues

No

Unsure

Agree

-
-
-
-
-

13. Does your company intend to recruit to fill skills gaps, over the next 1-2 years? Required to answer. Single choice.

- Yes
- No

14. How will you attract or recruit talent over the coming 12 months? Required to answer. Multiple choice.

- Job Centre / Recruitment events like Jobs Fairs
- Offering Apprenticeships
- Taking on Graduates
- More senior staff advertisements

15.If you currently train staff, how does this happen? Tick all that apply Required to answer. Multiple choice.

- Through a college
- Through a training provider
- Through our own company training programme
- Compliance/required training only
- We do not currently train staff
-

16.What are your views of the training available to your company at present? Required to answer. Likert.

Is Suitable

Partially Suitable

Unsuitable for our business

None of the above

Training offered overall

-
-
-
-

Quality of candidates

-
-
-
-

Qualifications offered

-
-
-
-

17. Please use this box to expand on your views on Q15. Required to answer. Multi Line Text.

Enter your answer

18. Do you experience any barriers to training? Required to answer. Multiple choice.

- The admin requirements for training are too high
- The cost of training is too high
- We cannot spare staff from their work to enable training
- We don't know who offers the training we might need
- We are not sure what training we need
- We have no requirement for training
-

19. Are any of the following current and/or impending business critical skills gaps that your business needs to address and fill over the coming months/years: Required to answer. Likert.

Yes - Urgently (within 6 months)

Yes - soon (within 18 months)

Yes - eventually

No

Yes

Leadership & Management

-
-
-

Technical

Customer Service

Digital, IT, data analysis

Sales & Marketing

Any Specialist Functions (please specify in Q19)

-
-
-
-
-

No business critical skills gaps exist

-
-
-
-
-
-

20. Are there any other business critical skills gaps that your business needs to address and fill over the coming months/years not specified above? Required to answer. Multi Line Text.

21. What kind of training do you anticipate being required for your company over the next 1-5 years? Both

Required to answer. Single choice.

- Longer accredited courses e.g. Apprenticeship Standards?
- Shorter bespoke courses?

22. Please state any training needs here: Required to answer. Multi Line Text.

23. What services from training providers would be useful for your business? Required to answer. Multiple choice.

- Business Skills development (CPD, bespoke training courses, upskilling) - please provide details
- Access to curriculum development to tailor courses to your business need

Access to facilities, machinery or expertise within the training provider

Help to recruit new Apprentices

Sign up existing staff to Apprenticeships

24. Would you be willing to speak further about this subject with your Chamber of Commerce? Required to answer. Single choice.

Yes

No

25. Please state below which organisation told you about this survey Required to answer. Multi Line Text.

26. On behalf of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Chambers of Commerce, St Helens Chamber ("the Chamber") is the lead contracting organisation with the Department for Education. Under the contract, the rights of all Members, employees and customers, including website visitors' right to privacy and data protection will be honoured, ie. The LCR Chambers are fully committed to complying with the provisions of all applicable Data Protection legislation and regulations such as Data Protection Act and EU GDPR.

The full statement can be viewed on our website
here: <https://www.sthelenschamber.com/about/privacy-policy/>

Please tick below to confirm you agree with how we will use your data. Required to answer. Single choice.

Yes

No

Submit

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REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	30 th January 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director Economy, Enterprise & Property
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community
SUBJECT:	Department of Work and Pensions Restart Contract Update
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Restart Programme contract currently being delivered by Halton People into Jobs, including achievements to date, income and expenditure.
- 1.2 To provide opportunities to members to raise any questions with regards to the DWP Restart Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) **the report be noted**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background information

- 3.1.1 In June 2021 Halton Borough Council entered into a subcontracting arrangement with Prime Contractor (G4S) who had been tasked with delivering the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) new Restart Programme. Indicative start profiles estimate that 1992 Halton residents will be supported through this programme. Referrals and starts will be received up to June 2024.
- 3.1.2 The programme is a mandatory programme for individuals that have been unemployed and in receipt of benefits for 9mths or more. Referrals to the programme are made via Jobcentre Plus (JCP) for individuals that are on Universal Credit within the All-work-related activity group (individuals in this group have to do all they can to find a job or earn more. This includes looking for jobs, applying for jobs and going to interviews).

- 3.1.3 The programme offers 'Payment by Results', which are received on achievement of sustained job outcomes.
- 3.1.4 An employed job outcome payment is paid when a participant starts employed work and accumulates earnings that are equal to or exceed the equivalent of someone working for 16 hours per week for 26 weeks, earning the National Living Wage (NLW) (earnings threshold). DWP use real time earnings information (RTI) data supplied by HMRC to identify achievement of employed job outcomes. Payment decisions are based solely on the RTI data supplied, no additional evidence or requests to review will be accepted.
- 3.1.5 Those referred to the Restart Programme have been unemployed for a minimum of 9mths and would benefit from a tailored package of support to help address multiple/complex barrier and progress them closer towards employment.
- 3.1.6 Participants can access the programme for up to 52wks. They are supported by their Advisor throughout the duration of the programme. Participants are also offered a full service offer when they move into employment to help them retain their new job. In addition to regular one to one appointments with their Advisor we provide a wraparound service including job matching support, training and access to appointments with a Health Trainer.
- 3.1.7 Signposting to specialist organisations to address specific barriers forms part of the action planning process throughout their time on programme i.e., welfare rights (debt/money worries), MIND/talking therapies (mental health), Housing Solutions (housing/homelessness).

3.2 Performance/achievement

- 3.2.1 Contract delivery commenced in June 2021.

Performance is comprehensively managed and monitored through a range of internal and external measures.

- 3.2.2 Performance to date – June 2021 to December 2022:

- 747 customers have started on the Restart Programme
- 192 authorised first job starts have been achieved to date
- 79 sustained job outcomes have been achieved to date

- 3.2.3 In addition to the contractual targets we are required to achieve including number of starts on programme, job starts and sustained job outcomes the contract is also measured against the following customer service standards (CSS's):

CSS 1. Providers must ensure that a Face-to-Face Initial Meeting is conducted with a Participant and a start is recorded as a minimum:

- (a) 90% of cases within 28 working days of referral and
- (b) 70% of cases within 15 working days of referral.

CSS 2. For all Participants who 'Start' on the programme an initial Diagnostic Assessment must be completed and recorded within 28 days of the referral.

CSS 3. For all Participants who 'Start' on the programme an Initial SMART Action Plan must be completed and signed by the Provider and the Participant within 28 days of the referral

CSS 4. For all Participants, the Provider must deliver 1-2-1 support at least fortnightly.

CSS 5. For all Participants, the Provider must conduct a 1-2-1 Face to Face review meeting no less frequently than every 4 weeks.

CSS 6. For all Participants the Provider must formally reassess the Diagnostic Assessment no less frequently than every 3 months. This must include evaluation of the Participant's circumstances/barriers, with agreed next steps reviewed and recorded.

CSS 7. For all Participants the Provider must review and update the SMART Action Plan no less frequently than every 4 weeks. Action Plans must be signed by both parties and include agreed next steps and activities reflective of Participant and Provider activity and the Participants Diagnostic Assessment.

CSS 8. Providers are required to achieve a high overall Customer Satisfaction rate based on a Customer Satisfaction Survey. Success will be measured relative to other CPAs.

3.3 Income and expenditure

- 3.3.1. Income is generated from a monthly service delivery fee and from job outcome payments. An employed job outcome payment is only paid when a participant starts employed work and accumulates earnings that are equal to or exceed the equivalent of someone working for 16 hours per week for 26 weeks, earning the National Living Wage (NLW) (earnings threshold). DWP use real time earnings information (RTI) data supplied by HMRC to identify achievement of employed job outcomes. Payment decisions are based solely on the RTI data supplied, no additional evidence or requests to review will be accepted.
- 3.3.2 Income and expenditure is closely monitored through a combination of internal and external mechanisms, to ensure that contracts are delivered efficiently.
- 3.3.3 Where possible, access to other available services and/or funding streams are maximised to support the delivery of the Restart Programme contract and their challenging targets. The Restart Programme is delivered by HPIJ, and the services delivered by the rest of the Employment, Learning & Skills Division within which HPIJ sits

provide valuable opportunities for Restart Programme clients at nil cost.

- 3.3.4 Income from the Restart Programme has enabled us to work collaboratively with other council departments i.e., Health Improvement Team to enable the participants to benefit from a fuller offer.

3.4 Key Successes

- 3.4.1 Mobilisation and implementation of the contract was achieved within a short timescale ensuring that the contract 'go live' date was met on 27th June 2021.
- 3.4.2 Performance against the 8 customer service standards has improved over the last quarter (Oct-Dec 22) and the required number of customers into work (initial first earnings) has improved towards the end of the last quarter. Now that staffing levels have increased in December, we expect that we will continue to see further improvements in these areas.

3.5 Key issues

- 3.5.1 Ongoing recruitment of sufficiently qualified and experienced front-line staff to deliver the programme by the required timescales. The contract has been significantly impacted by two annual recruitment freezes since we went live in June 2021. We have been reliant on recruiting temporary agency staff where possible which has not always been sustainable. This resulted in us being placed on a formal Enhanced Performance Regime (EPR) in October 2022 to improve performance against specific contractual targets and customer service standards.
- 3.5.2 The number of referrals to the programme has been lower than the anticipated profiles. Referrals and programme start need to increase to meet the contracted (indicative) profiles. This is a national issue (not just local to Halton/Merseyside district). However, we are working closely with both of our local Jobcentre Plus offices in Runcorn and Widnes to maximise where possible the quantity and quality of suitable referrals to the programme.

3.6 Concluding comments

- 3.6.1 The Restart team have worked very hard with limited staffing resources to implement, deliver and sustain the contract during very challenging times. Performance is improving which has been recognised by the Prime Contractor. Quality and compliance standards have also improved month on month during the previous quarter. Now that staffing levels have increased significant focus needs to continue on supporting our job ready and able customers into suitable and sustainable employment to increase performance against our DWP

contractual targets. Progressing customers furthest away from the labour market will also be key to ensuring their job readiness improves whilst on programme.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None identified at this stage.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

DWP contracts are closely monitored to ensure sufficient income is being generated to cover the full delivery costs of provision.

HBC internal audit conduct annual audits on externally funded provision across the Employment, Learning and Skills Division.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Some Restart Programme customers engage with other projects across Halton that complement each other in supporting local residents and their families with a range of issues.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The fantastic achievements that have come out of the various Work Programmes delivered by Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning and Skills Division getting so many people into work are a very positive outcome for the local economy. Many of the individuals that have accessed the programme have also gained vital maths, English, IT and employability skills along the way, in addition to sector specific qualifications such as SIA licences, FLT, CSCS etc. Signposting to partner organisations to support individuals furthest away from the labour market has been a key part of the programme. Delivery of the Restart Programme will continue to build on the success we have had previously.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Restart Programme customers will be signposted to various health and wellbeing initiatives that are delivered by Halton Borough Council and other external agencies including the Health Improvement Team to support individuals with a range of complex health barriers.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The management of the Restart Programme contract has been meticulous and close monitoring both internally and externally ensure any risks identified are carefully mitigated, with clear action plans in place to address any underperformance, quality and compliance factors.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	6 th January 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director Economy, Enterprise & Property
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community
SUBJECT:	Supported Internship Programme (work-based study programme)
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the Supported Internship (SI) Programme contract currently being delivered by HBC's Employment, Learning and Skills division (jointly delivered by Halton People into Jobs and Halton Adult Learning), including achievements to date, income and expenditure.
- 1.2 To provide opportunities to members to raise any questions with regards to the Supported Internship Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) **the report be noted**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background information

- 3.1.1 In April 2021 Halton Borough Council were commissioned to deliver the Supported Internship Programme which is a structured, work-based study programme for young people aged 16-24 with special educational needs (SEND) who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).
- 3.1.2 The programme was initially contracted to deliver 10 Supported Internships in year 1 (September 21 – July 22).
- 3.1.3 The programme is a voluntary programme which is aimed at supporting young people with an EHCP to gain paid employment by:
 - Supporting them to develop the skills valued by employers
 - Enabling them to demonstrate their value in the workplace

- Developing their confidence in their own abilities to perform successfully at work

3.1.3 The four key principles of the programme are that:

- Supported Interns will spend the majority of their time at the employers premises completing a work placement
- Supported Interns will follow a personalised study curriculum alongside their time at the employer
- Job Coaches are central to the study programme and provide support to the young person and the employer
- The primary goal for the young person is paid employment

The work placements that are undertaken are designed to support the young persons goal of finding paid employment. For the young person, the job must fit with their vocational profile, contributing to their long-term career goal and be flexible enough to address barriers where necessary. For the employer, placements should meet a real business need. The employer should be committed to supporting the young person towards paid employment.

3.1.4 Supported Internships are funded as a study programme, and as such the main source of funding is from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Supported Interns can also apply directly to Access to Work for funding to cover the practical costs of the support in the workplace.

3.1.5 The Supported Internship Programme must be identified as a suitable progression route for the young person in collaboration with the young person, their family member, their current education provider and the Supported Internship Programme Team Leader. Those referred to the Supported Internship programme must have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). A copy of this should be shared with the programme team for them to be able to best support the Intern.

3.1.5 The Supported Internship Programme lasts for up to 52wks. Interns start the programme in September and work placements are identified for them to start by the following February at the latest to enable them to complete a minimum of 6 months in a placement with an employer before they complete the programme the following July.

3.1.6 The programme of study delivered by Halton Adult Learning includes employability, English, maths and IT skills with the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification where appropriate for the individual learner. Additionally, the group setting supports with the development of communication and team work skills, whilst supporting the individuals in understanding how to keep themselves safe in learning, online and in the workplace. Job Coaches support the Interns within the classroom environment.

- 3.1.7 Job Coaches are responsible for working with the Interns to identify suitable placements for them to complete. They continue to support them during the placement until the Intern and the employer are satisfied that they can undertake the role safely independently.
- 3.1.8 Job Coaches also provide travel training to help the Intern get to their education setting and the employers premises when they start on placement. This involves travelling with the Intern via public transport until the Intern, their parent/family member and the Job Coach are satisfied that they can undertake their travel safely independently.
- 3.1.9 Some Interns have multiple/complex barriers in addition to their special educational needs. This requires collaborative working with other internal colleagues including Safeguarding, Social Workers, and the Transition Team. Signposting to specialist organisations to address specific barriers also forms part of the support process and wrap around service provided throughout their time on programme.

3.2 Performance/achievement

- 3.2.1 Contract delivery commenced in September 2021.

Performance is comprehensively managed and monitored through a range of internal and external measures.

- 3.2.2 Performance to date

Year 1 – September 2021 – July 2022

- 11 Supported Internships started on programme
- 10 Supported Internships started an unpaid work placement
- 4 Supported Internships moved into paid work after completion
- 4 Supported Internships moved into further training after completion

Year 2 – September 2022 – present date

- 9 Supported Internships started on programme
- 4 Supported Internships have started an unpaid work placement
- Placements being sourced or finalised for the remaining Interns on programme
- Bespoke training also being sourced for some Intern on programme to enhance their employability prospects i.e. food hygiene, make up and beauty workshops/qualification

3.3 Income and expenditure

- 3.3.1 Supported Internships are funded as a study programme, and as such the main source of funding is from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Supported Interns can also apply directly to the

DWP's Access to Work programme for funding to cover the practical costs of the support in the workplace.

3.3.2 High Needs funding is also used to support the delivery of the Supported Internship Programme

3.3.3 Income and expenditure is closely monitored through a combination of internal and external mechanisms, to ensure that contracts are delivered efficiently.

3.4 Key Successes

3.4.1 Mobilisation and implementation of the contract was achieved within a short timescale ensuring that the contract 'go live' date was met

3.4.2 This is the first year the Halton Employment, Learning Skills division has delivered a Supported Internship Programme. The knowledge and skills of the delivery team has enhanced the experience that the Supported Interns received

3.4.3 Feedback from the Interns and their families/parents has been positive.

3.5 Key issues

3.5.1 Ongoing recruitment of sufficiently qualified and experienced front line staff to deliver the programme by the required timescales. The contract has been significantly impacted by annual recruitment freezes since we went live in September 2021. We have been reliant on recruiting temporary agency staff where possible which has not always been sustainable. This has impacted on Supported Interns being able to receive the full programme offer this year which has been out of our control.

3.6 Concluding comments

3.6.1 The team involved in delivering the Supported Internship Programme have worked very hard with limited staffing resources to implement, deliver and sustain the programme during year one and year two. They continue to support the 9 Interns currently on programme are working hard to find suitable placements for those currently on programme.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Key policy implications have related to Safeguarding Children & Young People. Policies have been reviewed and updated in line with guidance as a service prior to the delivery of this programme Halton Adult Learning had only delivered to 19+ and upwards only.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Externally funded contracts are closely monitored to ensure sufficient income is being generated to cover the full delivery costs of provision.

HBC internal audit conduct annual audits on externally funded provision across the Employment, Learning and Skills Division.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Supported Interns engage with other departments across Halton that complement each other in supporting them and their families with a range of issues.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The fantastic achievements that have come out of the various programmes delivered by Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning and Skills Division increasing qualification levels and getting so many people into work are a very positive outcome for the local economy. Many of the individuals that have accessed the programme have also gained vital maths, English, IT and employability skills along the way, in addition to sector specific qualifications such as food hygiene, hair and beauty etc. Signposting to partner organisations to support has been a key part of the programme. Delivery of the Supported Internship Programme will continue to build on the success we have had previously.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Supported Interns will be signposted to various health and wellbeing initiatives that are delivered by Halton Borough Council and other external agencies including the Health Improvement Team to support individuals with a range of complex health barriers. Health and wellbeing modules are also covered as part of their learning programme.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The management of the Supported Internship Programme has been meticulous and close monitoring both internally and externally to ensure any risks identified are carefully mitigated, with clear action plans in place to address any underperformance, quality and compliance factors.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.