

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

DATE: 23rd March 2015

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise.

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: Merseylink Employment & Skills Performance Update

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the Board through a PowerPoint presentation of progress made to date against the Employment & Skills Key Performance Indicators associated with the new Mersey Gateway crossing. Merseylink's Employment & Skills Co-ordinator will attend PPB to make the presentation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 That the report is noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Merseylink was selected in the summer of 2013 as the consortia to construct the new Mersey Gateway crossing and to maintain the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge. Financial close was reached in April 2014.

3.2 The final submission of Merseylink's Employment and Skills Delivery Plan included a range of proposed key performance indicators. The Divisional Manager Employment, Learning & Skills and the Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) Manager were involved in scoring the Employment & Skills Delivery plans submitted by the bidders.

3.3 As part of the procurement process, Merseylink consulted at length with HEP on employment and skills issues. This included through a number of 'bootcamp' events and attendance at HEP meetings. Merseylink then used the intelligence gathered to inform their Employment & Skills Delivery Plan.

3.4 As soon as Merseylink were selected as the 'preferred bidder' they established an Employment & Skills Governance Board (ESGB). The Board is chaired by Merseylink's Project Director and includes representation from the Merseylink consortia, the Halton Employment Partnership and the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Ltd. Meetings take place monthly and updates are received on progress against the Employment & Skills KPIs. In addition, Merseylink recruited a full time Employment & Skills Co-ordinator to support the

implementation of the Delivery Plan and act as the interface between HEP and the Merseylink Consortia.

- 3.5 Sub-groups were established to oversee progress against each of the various strands of activity and associated KPIs. Each sub group is chaired/led by a member of the Halton Employment Partnership and each of the leads sits on the ESGB and reports back at meetings.

4.0 KEY EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 4.1 Merseylink proposed a comprehensive range of employment and skills key performance indicators within their Employment & Skills Delivery Plan. These are as follows:

- *'A minimum of 3,000 hours per year **volunteer opportunities** delivered linked to the activities of the Visitor Centres and Community Relations Programme.'*
- *'100% of Halton's primary school community engaged in a **creative public arts programme**, during the construction works. Art work to be displayed/performed throughout the construction period with the best selected for permanent display in a variety of venues throughout the borough.'*
- *'The development of a set of **curriculum materials**, during the construction period, to support the delivery of project based work with a specific year group within an agreed number of schools. Outcomes to be cascaded to a wider group of schools upon completion.'*
- *'A minimum of **10% of all new construction employees** to be sourced from Job Centre Plus, Work Programme and current local employment and career development.'*
- *'The delivery of **four pre-employability programmes per year** in partnership with HEP providers, during the construction period involving a minimum of 10 people per programme.'*
- *'A minimum of **40 days per year (during Works) work based learning opportunities** for young people and adults living within Halton.'*
- *'To deliver **15 weeks work experience** placements per annum, during the construction works to support both adults and young people.'*
- *'**10% of all labour on the construction works being delivered by New Apprenticeships**, including higher apprenticeses.'*
- *'The target of **80% of all new apprenticeships** recruited through the Mersey Gateway Project to **complete their framework**'.*
- *'Delivery of at least **two "Meet the Buyer" events** within year one of the construction period – mapped against the capacity profile of prospective small and medium enterprise supply chain providers from the local area and wider region'.*
- *'Delivery of an **annual programme of procurement support** in partnership with the HEP during the construction works, to include delivery of knowledge transfer in respect of Health and Safety best practice and requirements'.*
- *'In partnership with HEP develop and deliver, within year one of the construction programme, a **cluster programme to assist SME's** to come together to bid in partnership for larger contracts.'*
- ***100 days Timebank support per annum** during the construction period for the delivery of targeted and meaningful support for Halton Borough Council, local third sector community organisation and educational establishments.'*

- 4.2 Merseylink's Employment & Skills Co-ordinator maintains a master spreadsheet, detailing progress against each of the KPIs and this is shared with the ESGB on a monthly basis. The Co-ordinator meets regularly with task group leads and is actively involved in HEP meetings and events. In addition, the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, is engaged regularly in Merseylink events and contributes to relevant press releases.
- 4.3 Integral to the successful delivery of the activities detailed in the Employment & Skills Governance Board is an ongoing marketing and PR strategy. Good practice case studies and regular updates are included in both web based sites and local press. For example, one of the trained Merseylink 'volunteers' has since gained full time employment with Merseylink. Similarly, from the last pre-employment programme during which 9 individuals completed a general construction course, all 9 were taken on by Merseylink in either apprenticeship or trained roles.
- 4.4 12 months into the construction programme, it felt timely to bring an update on the progress of the Employment & Skills Delivery Plan to this PPB.

50 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

It is expected that a great many of the schools in Halton will benefit from the activities associated with the Employment & Skills Delivery Plan and KPIs as well as the marketing and PR strategy. Merseylink and HEP are clear that engagement with the borough's young people throughout the project is of real significance and gives the opportunity to contribute towards creating a legacy.

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The Employment & Skills Delivery Plan and associated KPIs were developed in partnership with HEP colleagues with the objective of creating employment, learning and skills opportunities for the residents of Halton. Progress to date is very positive and the KPIs are being delivered on.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

The creation of the new Mersey crossing will also result in the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge being improved for pedestrian access. A Heritage Trail joining the original sites for the Visitor Centres (Wigg Island and West Bank) is still expected to be developed to encourage visitors to walk across the Silver Jubilee Bridge as they visit both sites.

5.4 A Safer Halton

The new Mersey Gateway crossing will not be pedestrianised, with local residents being encouraged to use the Silver Jubilee Bridge for local access. It is expected that road accidents will be much reduced once the congestion associated with the current road network is improved.

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

This major project will support economic growth as well as creating a landmark civil engineering structure. Improved road infrastructure will be a real positive for both existing and potential new businesses in the borough.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 There are financial risks associated with non-delivery of the KPIs set out in the Employment & Skills Delivery Plan

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 There are no equality and diversity points arising from this report.

8.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

8.1 Neil Wilcock, Employment & Skills Co-ordinator, MERSEYLINK CJV, Mobile: +44 (0) 7773 806 270, neil.wilcock@merseylink.com

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

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