

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, 16 November 2015 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Edge (Chairman), MacManus (Vice-Chairman), S. Baker, Cassidy, Howard, P. Lloyd Jones, Logan, C. Plumpton Walsh, Joe Roberts and Rowe

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Parker

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: W Rourke, A. Jones, C. Patino and J. Griffiths

Also in attendance: One Member of the public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
ELS19 MINUTES	
The Minutes from the meeting held on 21 September 2015, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
ELS20 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
ELS21 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The Minutes of the Executive Board meetings relevant to the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community PPB and resolved since the last meeting of the Board were submitted for information.	
ELS22 RIVERSIDE COLLEGE PRESENTATION	
The Board received a presentation from the Principal of Riverside College, Mary Murphy, which outlined the College's strategic priorities and the quality of teaching and learning; enrolments; funding, and key developments.	

She informed the Board that the strategic aims of the College were:

- To provide an outstanding learning experience so that all students reached their potential;
- To engage those who traditionally did not participate in education and training;
- To be first choice for school leavers, adults and employees in Halton and the surrounding areas; and
- To be recognised nationally as a centre of academic and vocational excellence.

The presentation included information on achievements at Cronton Sixth Form College and Kingsway. It further provided case studies of A Level students; Vocational students; Adult students and apprentices working with local employers.

It was noted that the College worked with 657 employers and community groups and other agencies across the Borough. It also employed 347 people and educated a total of 6,134 people in 2014-15.

The following was noted further to Members queries:

- In relation to area based reviews and the inclusion of 6th form colleges in this process, it was noted that despite lobbying the Association of Colleges, the Government intention was to restrict area based reviews to Further Education Colleges;
- The Runcorn College Campus was no longer financially viable and had closed. However access to the Widnes Campus was being provided by bus services from Runcorn to Widnes; and
- Vocational courses such as plumbing, electrical, joinery had seen an increase in numbers.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the presentation.

ELS23 LIBRARY SERVICE PRESENTATION

The Chairman introduced the Library Strategy and Development Manager Julie Griffiths, who presented an update on the new library service, following the implementation of the efficiency review findings in April 2015.

It was reported that the efficiency review had seen

savings of £450,000 and resulted in: the reduction in the opening hours of the Libraries; the cancellation of the mobile library; a new staff structure; and the employment of 25 new staff.

She informed the Board of three of the areas the library service was currently working on:

Helping to get people online – included IT clinics in all libraries; one to one support on a drop in basis at all libraries; trained staff to support customers in all libraries; and work clubs partnerships.

Community Library Service – included pilot programmes of service delivery with care and residential homes; expansions of the home delivery service; and a partnership with *Meals on Wheels* from January 2016.

Learning in Libraries – such as Lego clubs; the sign up to the Society of Chief Librarians Learning Offer (all libraries to provide access to the internet, resources, and places for learning); and digital maker spaces.

Members wished to thank the Library Service and its staff for their enthusiasm towards the implementation of the new service and wished them further success in the future.

RESOLVED: That the presentation is noted.

ELS24 EUROPEAN PROGRAMME 2014-2020

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, People and Economy, that provided an update on the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Programme 2014 to 2020.

The report set out the context at a Liverpool City Region (LCR) level and also gave details on the funding bids Halton had been developing.

RESOLVED: That Members note the update on the European Structural and Investment Funds Programme 2014-2020.

ELS25 GROWING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN HALTON UPDATE

Members received a report from the Strategic Director, People and Economy, that updated Members on business support activities that had been undertaken to

support the growth of Halton's economy.

The Board was reminded that a business support model or 'business attractiveness model' for Halton was presented to this PPB in March 2015. It was felt appropriate therefore to provide an update on the activities that the Council had been developing since March.

In summary, the purpose of the model was to shape and inform the level and type of support that was provided to businesses in Halton. It was noted that although the model applied a basic principle that priority should be given to those businesses that would make the greatest contribution to growing and sustaining Halton's economy, the Council aimed to provide a comprehensive business support service known as a 'soft landing and retention service' to all the Borough's existing businesses, as well as new businesses looking to relocate to the area.

Further information on the business support model was contained in the report and Members were referred to Appendix 1, which illustrated the developments with regards to the number of jobs being created in the Borough and the proportion of private sector jobs being created.

In response to Members questions it was noted that the potential for income generation within the Economy, Enterprise and Property Division within the Council was currently being looked at as this was identified as a departmental budget saving in 2016-17.

The Chairman commented on the visit to The Heath Business Park that took place prior to the meeting. The consensus was that it was a very useful exercise and provided a different outlook towards scrutiny for Members. It was hoped that all Members would have the opportunity to participate in future topic visits that may be arranged.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the progress being made on business support activities in Halton.

ELS26 BUSINESS PLANNING 2016-19

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Community and Resources which requested Members to contribute to the development of Directorate Business Plans for the coming financial year.

It was noted that following the reduction of three directorates to two, the Council would be developing a 'one

Council' medium-term business plan, in parallel with the budget, that was subject to annual review and refresh. The process of developing such plans for the period 2016-2019 had now begun.

Members were invited to identify a small number of priorities for development or improvement that they would like to see reflected within those plans. Directors would then develop draft plans which would be available for consideration by Policy and Performance Boards early in the New Year. To assist with this task Members were provided with a briefing note which gave an overview of key strategic issues facing the Board over the medium term.

RESOLVED: That the Board receives the information and indicates any areas of service activity that is considered relevant to plan development.

ELS27 PEOPLE AND ECONOMY POLICY BULLETIN

Members received a report from the Strategic Director, People and Economy, that informed of recent national policy announcements relevant to employment, learning and skills.

It was reported that a number of policy, legislation, consultation and guidance documents were issued by Government departments and agencies that had varying degrees of relevance to issues on the employment, learning and skills agenda and related topics.

A brief summary of key announcements was provided in the report along with observations of local relevance, where appropriate, so the Board could consider whether to initiate more detailed scrutiny and/or report to a future meeting. The report also linked to the item on business planning elsewhere on this agenda as it served to identify policies and announcements that may become important emerging issues for the Policy and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

Meeting ended at 7.40 p.m.