

Cllr. Jones
Chairman



ANNUAL REPORT

EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

APRIL 2007 – MARCH 2008

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

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

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2006/07 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors Eddie Jones, Frank Fraser, Susan Edge, David Findon, Harry Howard, Stan Parker, David Lewis, John Stockton, Peter Blackmore, Christopher Rowe and Philip Worrall.

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

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

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

Community Cohesion

The PPB concluded its topic work on community cohesion. From this, reports were considered by Executive Board and the Local Strategic Partnership, and the Local Area Agreement has taken on board key elements of the topic group work.

Local Area Agreement

The Board considered the development of the draft Local Area Agreement (LAA), particularly in relation to targets for employment, skills and enterprise development. This work commenced with a joint meeting with the Employment learning and Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership which was followed by more in depth discussions at the PPB itself where considerable thought was given to what the local targets should be.

Employment

The Board has kept up to date with the development of the Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy. It undertook a scrutiny topic on how the council could help to generate employment in local businesses through the use of its procurement function (final report due June 2008). It completed its review into the operation of Halton People into Jobs coming up with a number of service improvement.

The Board undertook a joint event with the Employment Learning and Skills SSP where local employment projects funded through the Local Strategic Partnership presented their activities and time was taken to explore their impact and potential for joint working.

Community Development

The Board received an annual report on **Community Development** service delivery scrutinising performance indicators around active community groups, initiatives and external funding levered in through the service. Also received annual monitoring information on the Council's Community Development and Youth Grants.

The Board received an annual report on **Community Centre** service delivery scrutinising capacity usage of the Council's five facilities by members of the public, other Council departments and partner agencies.

The Board received an annual report on impact of **Voluntary Sector Core Grant** funding. Mid-year monitoring information on grants and received presentations from Halton Voluntary Action and Citizens Advice Bureau on performance/service.

Libraries

The Board considered a number of reports on Libraries in Halton. This included an update on the service as a whole and a specific report on how the mobile service was performing in the light of the previous review of its operations. The PPB gave much consideration to library books analysis, developing clear recommendations as to how old books could be distributed to support basic learning throughout the borough. The PPB also considered a report on progress made in relation to securing Big Lottery money under the CORE (Community Opportunities through Reading and Engagement) programme.

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Sport

This was an area of particular focus throughout the year. The Sport Development Topic Group has undertaken considerable work in gathering evidence and assessing levels of participation. There was a presentation on the Merseyside Sports Partnership Strategy and consideration of the Sports Facilities Strategy.

Culture

The Board has played an active role in developing the Halton programme of activity for the Capital of Culture that culminated in a full report being approved by Executive Board on 29th March 2007. During 2007-08, the PPB received a number of reports on the progress being made and particularly on the development of the 2008 youth festival. The Board received a presentation on how public art is a core part of the culture of an area and can be incorporated within all projects big or small.

Skills and Enterprise

The Board received a number of reports on skills and enterprise in Halton. It completed its topic review of the Adult and Skills Development Service and received a detailed presentation on skills issues from the Area Partnership Director from the Learning and Skills Council, Greater Merseyside. It also held detailed discussions about the development of a business perceptions survey (that has subsequently taken place). The Board undertook two organised visits to Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and the Heath Business and Technical Park to investigate skills issues and employment opportunities from the two sites. It reviewed progress on the Enterprise Action plan that was developed from the previous enterprise topic group.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2008/09

The Board has decided that during the current municipal year (2008/09) it will complete the reviews of the following areas:

- Creating local jobs through public procurement
- Skills: Identifying the existing and future needs of businesses; and
- Sports Development

Additionally, the Board will commence reviews of:

- Logistics – Joint with Urban Renewal
- Barriers to Employment
- Facilities in Recreation, Sport and Arts

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Gary Collins 01928 516100 gary.collins@halton.gov.uk

