

# **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EMPLOYMENT LEARNING, SKILLS & COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD JUNE 2022 – MARCH 2023**

## **Introduction from Councillor Eddie Jones Chair of the Employment Learning, Skills & Community Policy & Performance Board**

The Board scrutinises the work of the *Economy, Enterprise & Property Department* and the *Community & Environment Department*.

My thanks to the officers for working with the Vice-Chair and I to develop the agenda items and thank you for the quality of the reports and presentations they have produced during the year. We have certainly had a varied and informative agenda and I believe that Members of this board continue to proactively shape the services we provide to our residents and I would like to thank Members of the Board for their passion and commitment.

I hope that the Board will continue to make a worthwhile contribution to creating an economically prosperous borough in this challenging environment.

### **THE BOARD'S MEMBERSHIP**

During 2022/23, the Board's membership comprised Councillor Eddie Jones (Chair) Councillor Ellen Cargill (Vice-Chair); Councillor Victoria Begg; Councillor Eddie Dourley; Councillor Garner Councillor Stan Hill; Councillor Geoffrey Logan; Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh; Councillor Chris Rowe; Councillor Tom Stretch; Councillor Aimee Teeling.

The Board had 3 meetings during the year.

### **THE ROLE OF THE BOARD**

The Council's constitution sets out the Board's strategic priority is to develop policy and scrutinise performance in relation to the Council's objectives. Specifically in relation to 4 areas:

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

### **SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUPS**

Members of the Board completed two scrutiny topics.

'Health and Employment' and 'The Provision of Business Support in the Borough'.

The Health and Employment topic group sessions included contributions from officers within the Employment, Learning and Skills (ELS) Division, as well as Public Health. Members were advised that the Employment Learning and Skills Division and Health

services contribute to improving the mental health of adults who live and or work in Halton. Services work collaboratively to raise awareness in the work force and in communities to the support available.

Health issues are an important component of the support local residents receive from the Council's Halton People into Jobs Team with employment programmes signposting to MIND as well as health trainer links. The Adult Learning team within the ELS division has signed up to a mental health pledge, although it is worth noting that no dedicated learner support exists.

When considering the provision of business support in the borough, Members participated in the following sessions:

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).

## **APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT**

The Board received a report and presentation on the '*Apprenticeship Support by Be More*' service. The Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team was managed by Halton Borough Council and funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF). It delivered career inspiration and guidance to Liverpool City Region (LCR) residents and promoted the take up of apprenticeships, vocational training and employment vacancies.

## **SPORTS AND RECREATION**

The Board received a report which provided information on the Council's Sport and Recreation Service, and Leisure Centre and Sports Development Services for the financial year 2021/22. The report outlined what the service had delivered during the last 12 months, following the emergence from the pandemic. The Leisure Centre Service (LCS) reopened in April 2021 after the third national lockdown. It was reported that the service continued to actively work with partner organisations, to facilitate development through a better understanding of local issues and a sharing of resources to achieve success.

At a subsequent meeting the Operational Director for Communities and Greenspace provided an update on recent restructures within his department.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS IN THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION**

The Board regularly received updates on employment and skills developments in the Liverpool City Region (LCR). The LCR Combined Authority led on a number of employment and skills initiatives as follows: Adult Education Budget (AEB) Procurement; LCR Skills Show; Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and Strategic Development Fund (SDF); and Skills Bootcamps for the Workforce.

## **UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND**

The Board was provided with updates on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and set out how this may impact on Halton. Members were advised that the UKSPF was a major regeneration fund. Reports outlined the funding commitments already made which included what the UKSPF would provide to the Combined Authority as a whole and what Halton would receive from this. It also provided information on the impact this funding would have for Halton and its priorities.

## **CHANGES TO LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS (LEPS)**

The Board considered a report which provided an update on transition from a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Growth Platform, to a more integrated organisation as part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority, against a backdrop of a Central Government review.

## **LIVERPOOL CITY REGION GROWTH PLATFORM**

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.

## **SCI-TECH DARESBUY TALENT AND SKILLS ACTION PLAN**

The Board considered a report which provided an update on the delivery of Sci-Tech Daresbury's Talent and Skills Action Plan.

The Business Growth Director for Sci-Tech Daresbury, gave a presentation to Members on the Talent and Skills Action Plan.

## **LIVERPOOL CITY REGION LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS PLAN**

The Board received a report which provided an update on the development of a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for the Liverpool City Region (LCR). Members welcomed Rachel Owen, from the Halton Chamber of Commerce, who delivered an accompanying presentation.

## **DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS RESTART CONTRACT UPDATE**

The Board considered a report which provided an overview of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Restart Programme contract, currently being delivered by Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ).

## **SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME (WORKBASED STUDY PROGRAMME)**

The Board considered a report which provided an overview of the Supported Internship (SI) Programme contract currently being delivered by Halton Borough Council's (HBC) Employment Learning and Skills Division (delivered jointly by Halton People into Jobs and Halton Adult Learning).

## **PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

At each meeting the Board receive this report that informs them of emerging issues and the performance of the divisions in meeting Key Performance Indicators. The latter emerge from the annual business plan which in turn is derived from a longer-term Council level plan.