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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 September 2024 in The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), Abbott, Connolly, Garner, Hutchinson, McDonough, Rowe, Ryan and Stretch

Apologies for Absence: Councillor S. Hill

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, S. Saunders, D. Cooke and L. Carr

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
ELS8	MINUTES	
	<p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 17 June 2024, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
ELS9	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	<p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
ELS10	HALTON CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE	
	<p>The Board welcomed Nicola Donoghue, Operations Manager for Halton Cancer Support Centre, who gave an overview about the Centre and the services offered in the Borough.</p> <p>The Centre provided therapeutic support for people who were affected by cancer. They offered a professional, quality service with warmth and compassion, responding to the needs of local people.</p> <p>A total of 851 clients were currently registered at the Centre; 400 of those had a cancer diagnosis and the rest</p>	

were a mix of carers and the bereaved. The Centre offered a range of services to these clients such as: counselling, peer support (eg. men's group); online support; therapies, respite breaks; a children and young people's service; and workshops (eg. sleep, wellness).

It was noted that last year the Centre was core funded by the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership and Halton Borough Council. The remainder of the Centre's costs were covered by one off grants and from fundraising events, such as the Park Run.

It was announced that the Charity has supported the local community for 29 years and next May 2025 would be its 30th Anniversary.

Additional information was given following Members questions:

- The Centre did not have any joint projects with Halton Haven at the moment but they did refer clients to each other's services at times;
- The Centre's running costs amounted to £133k last year;
- Bereavement counselling helped reduce a persons need for other services, which takes pressure off them;
- The Centre employed an outreach worker who visits hospitals and GP practices to raise awareness of the Centre;
- Runcorn clients amounted to about 20% as they had the Delamere Centre at the Hospital;
- Core funding for local charities was being cut and it was felt that they should be supported more than they were, for the benefit of local people;
- The Centre was restricted to the size it currently is due to the accommodation; if they wanted to expand they would need another building;
- The Centre owned a caravan in North Wales and this was available for hire by clients for respite care; and
- The young people's service was used by schools who referred children who had parents with a cancer diagnosis (with parents' consent).

Referring to the accommodation issue, it was suggested by one Member that the Council's voided properties could be looked at, to see if any were suitable for the use of the Cancer Support Centre in the future. This would be looked into.

Executive Director

RESOLVED: That the presentation and comments made be noted.

Environment &
Regeneration

ELS11 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) Employment and Skills matters.

The report outlined a range of topics being worked through by the LCR and Officers as follows:

- Proposition for Employment and Skills – as part of the preparations for the new Government a proposition was being developed setting out what could be delivered by the area and which reflected the Metro Mayor’s manifesto;
- A Long Term Skills Plan – the 10 year plan would set out the long term skills for the LCR and would be used as a basis to commission future work around skills and employment;
- Early Years Sector Workforce and Provision – to support the Early Years and Childcare sectors to sustain, develop and scale up;
- Construction Sector Priorities – to support the delivery of 80,000 new homes through a local workforce in the sector;
- Department for Work and Pensions Updates – a new national jobs and careers service would be created; and
- Economies for Healthy Lives – one of only four programmes in the UK to be approved for funding from the Health Foundation.

The following was discussed after the presentation:

- Young people training to work in the construction industry and the fact that the numbers moving to work in the sector were declining. Some who started a construction training programme often did not finish or chose not to go into employment in this sector afterwards;
- Some schemes had been successful in terms of creating apprenticeship opportunities in the construction sector and this included The Mersey Gateway construction project;
- The ‘social value’ of projects and large contracts, in relation to jobs for local people and businesses and

was this element incorporated in the Council's procurement stage as a condition of bidding;

- The Employment, Learning and Skills team did work with contractors during construction of the Mersey Gateway. Sometimes however, they were not aware of other large contracts going to tender, so it was felt that the team needed to be included in the notice of these;
- From a planning perspective, were conditions being implemented to ensure that S106 agreements included social value elements in an application;
- It was felt that it was important that developers understood they must contribute to the communities of Halton if they want to build houses here for example; and
- Server farms – one Member gave an example of these being installed by a Council in the South of England; could this be looked into by Halton.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ELS12 SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME WORK BASED STUDY

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, that provided an update on the Supported Internship (SI) Programme.

In April 2021 Halton Borough Council was commissioned to deliver the SI Programme which was a structured, work-based study programme for young people aged 16-24 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who had an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

The SI Programme is delivered by HBC's Employment, Learning and Skills division and is jointly delivered by Halton People into Jobs and Halton Adult Learning. The Programme was contracted to deliver 11 supported internships each academic year.

The report outlined the four key principles of the voluntary Programme and how this supported young people with an EHCP to gain paid employment. Performance data was provided, as well as information on key successes and challenges faced. The Board was presented with case studies of three young people who had successfully completed the Programme and were now working in part time paid employment.

The Board welcomed the news contained within the report and confirmed their continued support to the Programme.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

ELS13 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS Q1 2024/25

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 1 of 2024-25 (1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2024-25 were agreed by Members and 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. Members were invited to highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be provided to a future meeting of the Board.

The following matters were raised:

- The new Leisure Centre would be opened in January 2025 but it was believed there was uncertainty over contracts for casual workers;
- The variety of acts at The Brindley and that there seemed to be more tribute type acts than those of a cultural nature;
- There was no signage in The Brindley car park to show the way to the Theatre, which was difficult for people visiting for the first time;
- What was the difference between milestones EEP 9 and EEP 10 as they looked the same with the same commentary;
- It was thought that a public consultation that took place recently in the Old Police Station regarding Runcorn's Town Centre regeneration should be shared with all Members;
- More details were requested on the overspend on agency costs for the next performance management report;
- NI contributions / IR35 for agency workers, were

these included in the fees.

Feedback would be sought to those questions and the Chair requested an update on The Brindley for the next meeting's agenda.

RESOLVED: That the performance management reports for quarter one be received.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

Meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.