

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 21 September 2009 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Jones (Chairman), Edge (Vice-Chairman), Austin, M. Bradshaw, Findon, Loftus, Parker and Stockton

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Howard, Rowe and Worrall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: H. Cockcroft, G. Collins, N. Goodwin, M. Simpson and A. Villiers

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

ELS13 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was reported that no public questions had been received.

ELS14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2009 having been printed and circulated were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS15 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board and the Executive Board Sub-Committee relevant to the Employment Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board.

ELS16 SSP MINUTES

The Board received the minutes of the Employment Learning and Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership Meeting held on 16th July 2009. In receiving the minutes the following points were noted:

- There were still discussions being held between “Customer No. 1” and Stobart in relation to the creation of jobs in the warehousing and distribution centre. It was thought that jobs would be available after Christmas due to an 11 week training programme and a three day Employability Course;
- 120 jobs every six months would be available in Halton and once these had been agreed in a central point in Liverpool they would be filtered through to Widnes and Runcorn Job Centres; and
- The “Support to Newly Employed” Service Level Agreement (SLA), had been held back as the Specialist Strategic Partnership had to ‘recession – proof’ the financial plan for this. It was proposed that any underspend identified as part of the review process would be added to this line to create a larger recession fund.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

ELS17 MERSEY GATEWAY AND THE CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT INTEGRATOR MODEL

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which outlined the progress made on identifying how employment and training opportunities resulting from the Mersey Gateway could be secured for local people.

It was reported that the Inspector formally closed the public inquiry on 28th July 2009 and a decision was expected in early 2010. Following the public inquiry, the priorities would be focused on the land acquisition programme and procurement/tendering arrangements, in order that the project could be progressed quickly, when the government announced its decision, assuming that the decision was favourable.

The Board was advised that work was underway to ensure that the process to appoint a Concessionaire to build and operate the Mersey Gateway once the Secretaries of

State announced their decision.

A procurement workshop chaired by the Chief Executive was held on 13th July 2009 to discuss the Council's position on a number of key aspects of the project, which included agreeing a project plan and identifying further work that would be required.

Outlined in the report for information was a diagram which provided an overview of how the model worked including employment planning, capturing demand, monitoring and evaluation, continued workforce development and providing routeways. It was reported that the Mersey Gateway Project Team were currently working with colleagues in the Economic Regeneration Department, to identify ways in which the Mersey Gateway procurement arrangements could assist in securing employment and training opportunities in construction for local people, using the Construction Employment Integrator model initiative (CEI).

It was further advised that the overall aim of the CEI was to provide a mechanism that would ensure people from disadvantaged groups and areas were able to access jobs and training opportunities arising in the construction industry. Outlined in the report were the details of how the CEI would achieve the national aims and objectives in using this mechanism.

The Board discussed various issues such as a breakdown of requirements and targeted audience, training needs for Job Centre staff to source the correct candidates for the jobs and a breakdown of percentage of categories of jobs required for example skilled, semi-skilled and low skilled. It was further noted that a Suppliers Workshop would be held in the near future. Members felt that facilitating a Jobs Fair would benefit all parties involved in the scheme.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made on identifying how employment and training opportunities resulting from the Mersey Gateway could be secured for local people be noted; and
- (2) arrangements be made for Halton Borough Council to hold a Jobs Fair in the near future.

Strategic Director
- Environment

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community which outlined the delivery of Community Development in 2008/09.

It was reported that the purpose of Community Development was to build relationships with our communities, to help groups and networks of people take joint action on matters that concerned them. It was also about enabling individuals to influence the decisions that affected their lives.

The Board were informed that to do this the Community Development combined a number of aspects which were outlined in the report for information. The Board was advised of the service performance and service development which detailed the following:

- Starter Grants;
- Community Development Grants;
- Voluntary Youth Organisation Grants; and
- Bursaries.

A detailed breakdown of all the grants during 2008/09 was provided within the report for Members' consideration.

The Board discussed the lack of Capital Funding for Community Development and suggested that the Culture and Leisure provisions required could be sought through Building Schools for the Future (BSF).

The Board raised concerns in relation to schools being paid for community use and not providing this use. The Board was advised that this would be investigated further and information would be brought back to Members. Members wished to congratulate the Community Development Team on the excellent work being carried out through 2008/9.

RESOLVED: That the Community Development Service performance for 2008/09 be noted.

ELS19 SKILLED AND TALENTED SPORTS

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community which detailed how young skilled and talented sports participants were managed in Halton.

It was reported that the Board had identified Skilled and Talented sports for a work programme and this report was to enable an introductory discussion on how the Board would like to proceed and how to look at that area in terms of topic work.

The Board received a presentation from Gill McGough – Advisory Teacher for Sports and Physical Education and Sue Lowrie – Sports and Recreation Manager, which outlined processes for the gifted and talented young people in physical education and sport. It was advised that gifted and talented in PE and sport was one of the ten strands of the Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP) which had the overall aim of creating a world class system for physical education and sport.

The Board was advised that the aim of the gifted and talented strand was to improve the recognition of and the support and provision for gifted and talented pupils in physical education and sport. Three key areas of work were outlined as follows:

- High quality – raising the quality of PE for gifted and talented young people;
- Support – ensuring appropriate personal development support for young talented performers in sport; and
- Raising the quality of coaching and competition for talented performers in sport.

It was noted that pupils were recognised as talented when they demonstrated high level ability within the range of PE context or had the potential to do so. Specifically it was suggested that talented pupils excel in one or more of the following abilities that reflected the full range of PE, physical, social, personal, cognitive and creative. Descriptions of these elements were tabled at the meeting for Members' consideration.

The Board was informed that teachers were given the skills to identify gifted and talented pupils and advised of how to develop their skills further. Work was also carried out in terms of leadership skills, coaching and competitions and there was also a disability sport focus where appropriate.

The Board raised queries as to how much the work into gifted and talented sports actually costs, where the funds for this came from and discussed whether it required mainstream funding. In response it was noted that the Skills Support Partnership received currently £300,000 from DCSF funding and there were also other small budgets. Members were advised that this information could be circulated to the Board.

The Board discussed various issues such as mechanisms for talent identification, the dangers of young talent slipping through the net, provision for development to maximise potential, opportunities available to participate at a high level and multi-disciplinary approaches to nurturing talent. After a lengthy discussion the Board felt that more information would be required to explore the skilled and talented sports system in more detail.

RESOLVED: That a more detailed report be brought back to a future meeting on the approach to skilled and talented young sportspeople in Halton.

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

ELS20 BARRIERS TO WORK TOPIC GROUP

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which provided a progress report on Barriers to Work Topic Group. The report outlined the terms of reference for the Topic Group and detailed the emerging issues raised by the Topic Group which were outlined in the report for information.

Members discussed the postcode lottery system as it was felt that some companies use this when recruiting applicants for jobs. In response, it was noted that this would be investigated. The Board discussed a qualification level chart which had been produced to simplify the qualifications gained, explain what an employer could expect from the level of qualifications and also state which qualifications were accredited to that level. It was reported that this would be distributed to Members of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the progress made by the Barriers to Work Topic Groups in considering the findings of the employment focussed research undertaken in the Neighbourhood Management areas.

ELS21 TOPIC GROUP - WORKFORCE AND SKILLS FOR THE

LOGISTICS INDUSTRY - FINAL REPORT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which outlined the recommendations of the Topic Group on Workforce and Skills for the Logistics Industry.

The Board was advised that the topic commenced with a skills audit of the logistics sector in Halton and the audit covered aspects of work which were outlined in the report for information. It was noted that the Halton Employment Partnership was established in late 2008, to bring together expertise from various employment, learning and skills agencies which were detailed in the report for Members' consideration.

In relation to the Topic Group recommendations it was noted that whilst recent work had established a knowledge base of the recruitment and training needs for the 3MG development, more detailed work would be required once the 3MG recruitment commence to meet individual business needs. Members considered all the Topic Group's recommendations and were satisfied with those and agreed that the Topic Group could be signed off.

RESOLVED: That the Board noted and endorsed the final recommendations of the Topic on Workforce and Skills for the Logistics Industry.

ELS22 SERVICE PLANS 2010/11

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which outlined the key issues for consideration in the development of service plans for 2010/11 as follows:-

- Impact of difficult financial settlement in the re-structuring of the Council;
- Impact of economic downturn;
- Community cohesion, community engagement, equality and diversity;
- The Health agenda i.e. sport and participation and Libraries and Arts;
- Integrational issues;
- Libraries;
- Building Schools for the Future;
- 2012 and the programme to support and increase

- participation in 2012;
- St. Michael's Golf Course; and
- Norton Priority Museum.

Members were advised to inform the Chair should they suggest any further areas that the service plans could explore.

RESOLVED: That the 10 key issues for consideration in the development of service plans for 2010/11 be noted.

ELS23 STANDING ORDER 51

The Board was reminded that Standing Order 51 of the Council's Constitution stated that meetings should not continue beyond 9.00 pm.

RESOLVED: That Standing Order 51 be waived.

ELS24 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons and factors affecting services for economic regeneration and culture and leisure for the first quarter.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Congratulations were noted in relation to the 12 Green Flags awarded the quality mark of excellence for parks as this was an increase of two on the previous year;
- Halton was currently 2% below the North West average for people claiming Job Seekers' Allowance; and
- Clarity was sought around the figure of the latest position in relation to care leavers and apprenticeships being employed within Halton Borough Council. It was noted that this figure would be distributed to Members of the Board;

Tabled at the meeting was an informal note of the Employment Learning and Skills PPB's Performance Group

Meeting held on 4th August 2009. It was advised that this Group was set up in part so that it could time its meetings flexibly to consider quarterly performance information when it was newly available. The minutes outlined a discussion held regarding ways to obtain more value from the processes of performance reporting and monitoring. The points considered were outlined in the minutes for Members' consideration. The Board was advised that this Group would continue to meet regularly and report progress back to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

Meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.