

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## CABINET

23 JUNE 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>LIVERPOOL CITY REGION (LCR) APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>INTERIM DIRECTOR CHILDREN SERVICES</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ANN MCLACHLAN</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend the adoption of The Liverpool City Region (LCR) Apprenticeship Strategy by Wirral Council and to seek permission for Council officers to work with Liverpool City Region colleagues to develop the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy Implementation Plan. The Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy will support the council's objective 'to create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral'. The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Bill (ASCL) 2009 provide a statutory framework for apprenticeships and create a right to an apprenticeship for suitably qualified 16-18 year olds. Under The Bill the Council has responsibility for planning and commissioning education and training for all 16-19 year olds.

The Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy and Action Plan are detailed in Appendix 1.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 That the Council adopts The Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy.

That the council authorises officers on behalf of the Council to continue to work with Liverpool City Region colleagues to develop the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy Implementation plan.

### 3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 To support the council's statutory duties under the ASCL Bill 2009 to secure appropriate provision for 16-19 year olds including apprenticeship provision.

To support the delivery of the Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Strategy.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Strategy identified the development of an Apprenticeship Strategy for the City Region as a priority.

In the autumn of 2010 The Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Board tasked the Liverpool City Region Sub Regional Group (SRG) with developing the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy.

A task and finish group, comprising LA 14-19 representatives from the six Liverpool City Region Merseyside Authorities was set up to develop the draft apprenticeship strategy.

The draft strategy was presented to the six Liverpool City Region Children and Young People's Directors of Children's Services and the Employment and Skills Board (ESB) in December 2010. The ESB members agreed for the strategy to be signed off by Alan Walker (Chair) and Damien Allen (Director of Children's Services for Knowsley Council) following a short consultation. Wirral informed the ESB members that prior consultation was required and that Wirral would require time for elected member sign-off, prior to launch.

- 4.2 In January 2011, Wirral submitted a comprehensive response to the draft Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy and Action Plan. Wirral response was considered by the working group developing the strategy, led by 14-19 teams from each local authority.

Wirral had particular concern regarding the following areas:

- Identification of resource and joint investment across city region without member approval;
- Synergy and coherence in the financial subsidies paid to employers to recruit apprentices. I.e. Wirral Apprentice Programme. Wirral argued strongly that we would not support an approach to impose a maximum ceiling on the level of financial support to employers across the Liverpool City Region and that an alternative approach should be to develop and agree minimum criteria;
- Launch of an Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Academy – lack of clarity regarding model;
- Lack of clarity regarding the timescale of the strategy, age cohort (is this a young person or adult strategy).

A final version of the strategy has now been received and has been amended as follows:

- Action Plan has been removed and will be developed at a later stage;
- Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Academy confirmed as a "virtual" Academy;
- Reference to resource and joint investment removed, and many actions have been identified as "pilots". However Wirral may not be in a position to deliver against some of the actions. i.e. embedding the Apprenticeship

“offer” into the broader business support offer – i.e. dedicated apprenticeship specialists co-located in Invest Wirral.

- The strategy still refers to local authorities working together for synergy and coherence regarding financial subsidies to employers.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 5.1 Important to note that the development of the implementation plan will determine actual delivery of the strategy and The Employment and Skills Board should build in the appropriate time for officers to consult and seek member approval where required. If this does not occur then delivery of the strategy by all Liverpool City Region Boroughs may be at risk.

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 None.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The draft Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy was tabled at the Wirral Economic Development Steering group (WEDs) meeting in January 2010. WEDS partners tasked the WEDS operation group to prepare a response to the consultation on their behalf. This response was fed into the Apprenticeship Task and Finish group at the end of January 2011.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 8.1 None.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 9.1 There has been no financial commitment to the strategy by Wirral to date other than the time of relevant officers given to the initiative.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 None at this stage.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 None apply at this stage.
- 11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)  
Not at this stage

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 None apply at this stage.

## **13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 None apply at this stage.

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**APPENDICES**

1. Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy and Action Plan.

**REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Nil

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>