

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT

To: EDUCATION COMMITTEE		Subject: WORK ABLE SCOTLAND 2017/18 OUTCOME
From: HEAD OF EDUCATION (SKILLS, LIFELONG LEARNING & YOUTH EMPLOYMENT)		
Date: 11 JANUARY 2017	Ref: LMCM/PK/EW	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of the successful outcome of the tender process for the new Scottish Employability Service, Work Able Scotland, and to provide information on the bidding process for the Scottish Government's three year employability programme, the Scottish Employability Support Service, which will run from 2018-2020.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 New Employability Programmes

As reported to Committee in November 2016, the Scottish Government has announced details of its successor programme to the UK wide Work Programme, which ends in March 2017. The new programme will begin with an interim programme for 2017/18 and be succeeded by a three year programme from 2018-2020. Information regarding the delivery model and bidding process for the interim programme, known as Work Able Scotland, was released in September 2016 with similar information on the three year programme now beginning to emerge.

In line with previous approaches to the delivery of employability services within the area, Committee endorsed the approach that the Council should be involved in this process, via its ALEO Routes to Work. Therefore, during the tender process the Council's Employability Services and Routes to Work representatives engaged with a number of lead bidders with a view to Routes to Work delivering the Work Able service in North Lanarkshire.

With a national budget of just under £5 million, this new programme is of a small scale in relation to the previous national programme and aims to support 1,500 people across Scotland who are in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (a health related benefit) but who are considered as able to take part in work related activities. Based on current figures for this client group, it is estimated that North Lanarkshire may have a share of around 120-130 referrals. Significantly however, it will be the transition programme to the next three year programme which is expected to have a budget in the region of £32 million per annum and will aim to support up to 10,000 people per annum nationally.

2.2 Work Able 2017/18 Tender Process

Skills Development Scotland is the contractor for the programme and had indicated that they expected bids from consortia of partners for Contract Package Areas which they had specified. North Lanarkshire is in the same contract package area as Glasgow, South Lanarkshire & East Dunbartonshire.

2.3 Scottish Employability Support Service 2018-2020

The tender process for this large scale programme is expected to begin in March 2017 with a submission date of May 2017 and a contract start date of April 2018. With wider levels of support than Work Able Scotland and increased referral numbers the Scottish Government are managing the bid process for this programme directly. Contract package areas for bids have yet to be agreed but similarly to the Work Able bid process, the timescale for submissions is tight and negotiations with potential lead bidders will have to be undertaken adeptly to ensure a lead role for the Council and its ALEO Routes to Work, in the delivery of this programme in North Lanarkshire.

3.0 CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Work Able Tender Process Outcome

On 30 December 2016 it was announced that The Wise Group, a major social enterprise based in Glasgow and with a long track record of successful delivery of various community based employability programmes, was the successful lead bidder for the contract package area for Glasgow, Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire. As part of that bid, Routes to Work, with the support of the Council, will deliver the Work Able programme within North Lanarkshire.

3.2 Financial Considerations

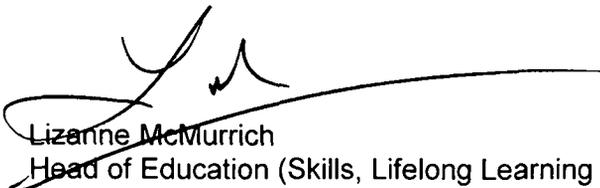
On the basis of 120 participants being referred in 2017/18, performance to the minimum prescribed level would generate payments of around £190,000 for Routes to Work. Based on experience and work with this group, a service to deliver this minimum level could be funded from this level of performance payment and it is not anticipated that additional funding would be required by Routes to Work. In addition, as with the previous Work Programme, a key benefit of subcontracting these national programmes is that any surplus funds generated could be re-invested locally.

3.3 Next Steps

In order to ensure the new Work Able service is implemented effectively from the start date on 3 April 2017 it is critical to begin working with the lead bidder and referral partners immediately to establish procedures and protocols for its delivery.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the successful outcome of the tender process for Work Able Scotland and note the information on the bidding process for the Scottish Employability Support Service which will run from 2018-2020.



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Local Government Access to Information Act: For further information please contact Lizanne McMurrich, Head of Education (Skills, Lifelong Learning & Youth Employment) on 01236 812338