

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Enterprise and Growth Committee

approval noting

Ref LMcM/EW

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Employability Programmes Update

From Lizanne McMurrich, Head of Communities

Email mcmurrichl@northlan.gov.uk **Telephone** 01236 812338

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on a number of the current employability programmes in North Lanarkshire, together with national, regional and local policy developments which have the potential to support and help shape future provision in North Lanarkshire.

Information is included on; the Council's EU funded programme as it enters its second phase, two Scottish Government funded pilot employability projects ongoing in North Lanarkshire, and national policy changes which have the potential to lead to greater alignment and integration of employability activities within the area.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Enterprise and Growth Committee consider and note the content of this report.

Supporting Documents

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

The employability programmes referred to within this report support the Council to deliver on the following strategic priorities and ambitions:-

1. Improve economic opportunities and outcomes.

Ambition 5: Grow and improve the sustainability and diversity of North Lanarkshire's economy.

4. Enhance participation, capacity and empowerment across our communities

Ambition 19: Improvement engagement with communities and develop their capacity to help themselves.

5. Improve North Lanarkshire's resource base.

Ambition 21: Continue to identify and access opportunities to lever additional resources to support our ambitions.

1. Background

1.1 **Support to Unemployed and Underemployed Residents**

A key feature of North Lanarkshire Council's past and current commitment to the regeneration and future prosperity of the area is a significant investment in the provision of support to unemployed and underemployed residents. Whilst this support has been consistent, the strategy behind the Council's delivery of activities has responded and adapted to the needs of local employers and residents.

1.2 **North Lanarkshire's Labour Market**

Over recent years, there has been a clear drive to increase participation in fair and sustainable work to ensure that prosperity is shared across North Lanarkshire. The current local labour market shows high levels of employment and correspondingly low levels of unemployment. Historically this would have been viewed as success. However, there remain real challenges within the local labour market. Notably these are the higher than average levels of economic inactivity with unemployed residents who have little or no employment skills and face a real challenge in getting into available jobs.

Therefore, the current strategy is geared towards supporting those further from entering employment with investment in building the confidence, skills, training and work experience necessary to secure and sustain a job and to do this in a way which treats our residents and communities with respect and dignity. This approach underpins the Council's programmes and those it supports.

The Council's approach aligns well with that taken nationally in Scotland. The Scottish Government's own review of employability services 'No One Left Behind', published in November 2018, also focuses on supporting people who face multiple barriers into the right job.

2. **Report**

2.1 **EU Funded Programme - Prospects 2019-2022**

As reported to Committee on 7 February 2019, Phase One of this programme ran from 2016-2018. Final job outcomes totalled 3,103 against a target of 2,877, with just over 25% of the support in this programme focused on 16 -19 year olds. Negotiations with the Scottish Government in 2018 resulted in a second phase to the EU funded programme being agreed with funding secured to operate from 2019 -2022.

The outcomes to be achieved through phase two funding support are for there to be 9,130 residents supported and 4,100 job outcomes. Support is aimed at those residents who can evidence at least two barriers to entering the labour market.

2.1.1 Delivering Outcomes in Partnership

In addition, this phase will support young people who are within six months of leaving school and identified as possibly leaving to a negative destination as part of the new Pathways Programme developed by Education and Families and approved at Policy and Strategy Committee on 21 March 2019.

Other activities include; closer working with Criminal Justice with the implementation of specific programmes to support their clients into work, a repeat of the third sector engagement programme which led to referrals from residents who would not normally access employability support and continuing work with health, housing and supported enterprise services to ensure their clients have access to training and those jobs which are secured from local employers.

The delivery partners are the Council's own Employability team, the Community Learning & Development Employability and Learning Hubs, Routes to Work Limited and local Third Sector organisations. The programme is currently averaging around 205 referrals per month and is working at full capacity.

2.2 Innovation Projects

In June 2017 the Scottish Government announced a new Innovation and Alignment Fund that was seeking proposals that integrate employability and skills services with either health, criminal justice and/ or housing, with proposals sought by the end of July 2017. Two North Lanarkshire Council proposals were approved for funding by the Scottish Government to test new approaches to working with specific groups. Funding of £241,319 from the Scottish Government was matched with £21,000 from the Council. The projects are:

- (i) *Employment Academy Supported Training (EAST)* is a partnership between Enable Scotland and the Council's Employability Service to work with people who have a learning disability and a criminal conviction and require specialised support and training to enter the labour market; and
- (ii) *Access to Opportunities* draws together support for homeless residents of North Lanarkshire and aligns these with employability & skills services. The project utilises the experience and expertise of Barnado's and Simon Community Scotland with the support of North Lanarkshire Council's Housing Support team to work with service users. The target group includes young care leavers and vulnerable adults of all ages who are homeless and have recognised health, social care and housing support needs and the project is designed with a clear focus on developing skills, gaining accredited qualifications and moving participants toward training or employment outcomes within the North Lanarkshire labour market using existing employability services.

Both of these projects end in June 2019 and are in the process of being externally evaluated to support future service development to these client groups and results will be reported to Committee in due course.

2.3 Glasgow City Region

The Council has delivered the Working Matters Programme through its Arm's Length External Organisation (ALEO), Routes to Work Limited. This programme, which had been scheduled to end in March 2019, was a pilot project jointly funded by the Department of Work and Pensions and City Region member authorities to secure job outcomes for residents on health benefits. Job outcome targets and outcomes are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Working Matters Targets and Outcomes

Programme Name	Secured Employment Target	Secured employment	Percentage Achieved
East Dunbartonshire	12	13	108%
East Renfrewshire	9	12	133%
Glasgow	232	177	76%
Inverclyde	26	33	127%
North Lanarkshire	56	95	170%
Renfrewshire	54	65	120%
South Lanarkshire	65	46	71%
West Dunbartonshire	29	15	52%
Total	483	456	94%

Due to a wider programme underspend it was agreed to extend the programme for a further year to utilize available grant funding (circa £370,000) across the City Region. North Lanarkshire has committed to participating in this programme which is currently being developed by the City Region Member Authorities and DWP.

Through the City Region Skills and Employment Working Group, the Council also supported the development of the Glasgow City Region Skills Investment Plan 2019-2024 which aims to ensure that the benefits of the £1.13 billion investment across the region supports the development of skills, qualifications and jobs for the resident population.

2.4 National Policy Developments

2.4.1 Scottish Government/COSLA Partnership Working Agreement

In December 2018, a Partnership Working Agreement was drawn up between the Scottish Government, CoSLA, SLAED and SOLACE. This Agreement outlines a collective approach to employability whereby the Scottish Government and CoSLA will work in partnership to shape employability provision nationally and deliver it locally, committing to work with key partners, including; the third sector, other employability providers, and service users, to redesign employability services.

As well as setting out the terms of engagement and working relationship between Scottish Government and Local Government on employability, the Partnership Agreement establishes a number of core principles, including; building on local and regional employability partnerships to share and align activities, and providing the framework for distribution and delivery of employability programmes.

2.4.2 Test of Change – Activity Agreements and Scottish Employer Recruitment Incentive

Through a test of change linked to the shared ambition to refresh the employability system, Scottish Government are proposing that Activity Agreements Funding (£4.43m) and Scottish Employer Recruitment Incentive (£2.65m) are invested in a new local employability delivery model from April 2019. North Lanarkshire's allocation across both these funds in 2018/19 was £442,000. The Council has been formally advised that a grant letter notifying the Council of its level of funding for 2019/20 will be forthcoming along with the grant conditions.

A significant element of this funding will continue to be focused on those young people attending the Council's three employability and learning hubs to ensure that they are supported into a sustainable positive destination, whether training, education or employment.

2.4.3 Skills Development Scotland – Employability Fund

Further discussion is anticipated regarding the 9000 place Employability Fund managed by Skills Development Scotland with an estimated value of £27m. There is an expectation that this could be allocated to local government in 2020/21.

2.4.4 Review of Activity

Finally, there are a number of potential changes to local employability provision which will be integrated into future delivery in due course. These include the outcome of the current review of employability within the Council which is expected to report in August 2019. There is also an ongoing Best Value review of the Council ALEO, Routes to Work Ltd, which will report in September 2019.

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 Fairer Scotland

Assessment not required.

3.2 Equality Impact Assessment

Assessment not required.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Impact

No additional financial impact for the Council in terms of the match funding required to support the National Employability Programme developments outlined in section 2.4 of the report.

4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact

Policy impact is set out in section 2.4.

4.3 Environmental Impact

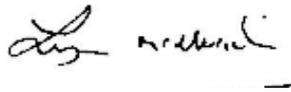
No environmental impacts.

4.4 Risk Impact

No risk impacts.

5. Measures of success

- 5.1 Council support to unemployed and underemployed residents reflects the needs of the local labour market and its employers.
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Lizanne McMurrich
Head of Communities