

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

Community Safety & Environmental Services Committee: 2 August 2006

Subject: Workforce Plus: an Employability Framework for Scotland

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform the Committee of the Government's Workforce Plus framework which will develop an effective and coherent employability service across Scotland.

2. Background

- 2.1** Closing the Opportunity Gap is the Scottish Executive's approach to tackling poverty in Scotland. GtOG Target A is to reduce the number of workless people dependent on benefits across 7 areas in Scotland by 30,000 in 2007 and 66,000 in 2010. The seven priority areas include West Dunbartonshire with a target of moving 2,500 people back into work.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Workforce Plus is designed to support action at a national and local level to reduce the numbers dependent on benefit using a partnership approach. £5.6 million has been allocated for each year for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008. The proposed allocation for West Dunbartonshire is £420,000 per annum.
- 3.2** To drive forward the framework local partnerships will be put in place which will be responsible for the collaborative action. The Workforce Plus Partnership will be part of the wider Community Planning Partnership (CPP), likely members will include West Dunbartonshire Council, Job Centre Plus, Communities Scotland, Dunbartonshire Enterprise and the Health Board.
- 3.3** The framework document recognises that there is a myriad of employability services which are complex and confusing for both those seeking work and potential employers. It aims to provide a co-ordinated and proactive approach to employment services. 4 key areas have been identified:-
- to draw more disadvantaged people into the process to help them into work
 - improve agency performance and roll out good practice
 - improve the retention and progression of employees
 - improve the quality of engagement with employers.

- 3.4 An interim Action Plan is required to be prepared by the CPP by the end of October 2006 and will involve an assessment of the workless client group and future employment opportunities in the private and public sectors, an assessment of the effectiveness of the existing employability infrastructure, and the identification of gaps in the structure and proposed actions.
- 3.5 By the end of January 2007, a 3 year action plan will be developed which will set out how the proposed actions will be taken forward, with particular focus on local needs and clients who are at greatest distance from the labour market.
- 3.6 A National Workforce Plus Partnership will be established to coordinate activity which will be jointly chaired by the Scottish Executive and Job Centre Plus. A Workforce plus Team will be based within the Scottish Executive which will evaluate the process and also disseminate good practice.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 On completion of all necessary arrangements and strategies, an allocation of £420,000 will be made by the Scottish Executive to support workforce development with West Dunbartonshire in the financial years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

5. Personnel Issues

- 5.1 There are no Personnel Issues.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Workforce Plus Partnership to be established locally will move forward to build a co-ordinated approach under the CPP to help those most disadvantaged within West Dunbartonshire into employment, with the anticipation that this approach will benefit the individuals moving into work and contribute to the economic growth of the local area.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 **The Committee is invited to welcome the increase of funding to the area and support the establishment of the local Workforce Plus Partnership.**

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Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services
Date: 13 July 2006

Wards Affected: All

Appendix: None

Background Papers: Workforce Plus: an Employability Framework for Scotland
(Scottish Executive)

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