

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Strategic Lead – Strategic Resources****Tendering Committee: 26 June 2019**

Subject: Delegate Authority to Award a Contract During the Summer Recess - Foundation Apprenticeships

1. Purpose

- 1.1.** The purpose of this report is to ask the Tendering Committee to delegate authority to the Strategic Lead – Housing and Employability, in consultation with the Vice Convener of the Tendering Committee, to award the contract for Foundation Apprenticeships over the summer recess period.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Tendering Committee grants delegated authority to the Strategic Lead – Housing and Employability, in consultation with the Vice Convener of the Tendering Committee, to award the contract for Foundation Apprenticeships over the summer recess period. The anticipated value of the contract for Foundation Apprenticeships is £204,000 ex vat over two years, beginning in July 2019.

3. Background

- 3.1** West Dunbartonshire Council (the Council) has created a £1m fund to support apprenticeships over the next four years. The fund will see £250,000 spent in each of the coming four years to recruit apprentices across a range of Council services and positions within the private sector, with a focus on opportunities within the construction sector and on school leavers. The investment is part of the Council's commitment to build towards a strong local economy and improved job opportunities. Working4U, the fund facilitators, main goal is improving the quality of life and resilience of West Dunbartonshire residents through services for the provision of:

- credible benefit/debt and income maximisation information, careers guidance, education and support to help residents to make informed choices and enjoy improved life chances;
- good quality advice and learning assisting all to make positive and sustained contributions to their family and community; and
- support to improve residents' employability and resilience, making a positive contribution towards increasing employment rates within our community and closing the gap with Scotland.

- 3.2** The new Apprenticeship Investment Fund (2018- 2022) will run parallel to and enhance the Council's successful Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme which presently provides young people with opportunities in a range of fields, including childcare, procurement, digital marketing, ICT, administration, care, and construction crafts based on the anticipated need for labour in areas of sectoral growth, identified by the Regional Skills Assessments (RSA). The RSA provides a coherent evidence base on which to base future investment in skills, built up from existing datasets. They highlight economic and labour market data, offering trends and forecasts at both regional and local authority level.
- 3.3** The Councils' Working4U team have been awarded a Skills Development Scotland (SDS) grant to deliver Foundation Apprenticeships (FA). FA are work-based learning programmes available to senior phase pupils across all schools in Scotland. They are designed to sit alongside National 5, Higher and other qualifications within a pupil's curriculum. They combine sector-specific skills and knowledge, allowing pupils to begin to develop job competence. FAs provide an opportunity for all of Scotland's young people to develop skills and knowledge in a workplace setting whilst also studying subject-based qualifications at school.
- 3.4** The programmes to be delivered as part of this procurement exercise are:
- National Progression Award (NPA) in Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF Level 6 (SQA Ref. No. GL3W 46)
 - National Progression Award (NPA) in Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 6 (SQA Ref. No. GL79 46)
 - National Certificate in Civil Engineering at SCQF level 6 (SQA Ref. No. GJ4G 46)

Pupils who complete and pass the course will receive an SQA award at NPA / General Certificate level.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** Working4U have pupils registered to complete the above qualifications with some commencing their work experience over the summer break. To this end, Working4U require the provider to be appointed and available over the summer to mentor these pupils and to ensure everything is in place for the commencement of the new school year. If Working4U were required to wait until the August 2019 Tendering Committee to appoint the provider of this service there is the possibility of losing the funding.
- 4.2** The procurement exercise for FA; will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations including a contract strategy and *The Public Contracts (Scotland) Act 2016*. The procurement exercise for FA will also be evaluated on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender received which includes an assessment of both price and quality. Social benefit proposals will be requested.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications associated with this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** If the Council was required to wait until the August 2019 Tendering Committee to appoint the provider of this service, there is the possibility of losing the funding.
- 6.2** This procurement exercise will be conducted in accordance with the contract strategy that will be developed by the Corporate Procurement Unit in close consultation with the Working4U team and the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and *The Public Contracts (Scotland) Act 2016*.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** The Corporate Procurement Unit shall ensure that the successful provider has no known links to Serious and Organised Crime which would have significant political and reputational ramifications for the Council.
- 7.2** Should the Tendering Committee decide not to proceed as recommended then may have financial implications.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** The Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has identified that there will be a positive impact on the protected characteristics of age, disability, social and economic development, gender, health, human rights, race, religion and beliefs and sexual orientation. Taken into consideration were West Dunbartonshire Council Performance Indicator's for equality outcomes assigned to Working4U to promote Modern Apprenticeships applications in areas where males and females are under-represented. The Working4U bid for Foundation Apprenticeship also required equality actions to promote the up-take of Foundation Apprenticeships to pupils in areas that are under-represented.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Working4U team and Legal Services have been consulted on this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** This procurement exercise contributes to the Council's strategic priorities for 2017 – 2022:
- A Strong local economy and improved employment opportunities.

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Date: 26 June 2019

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All Council Wards.