

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability

Housing & Communities Committee: 14 August 2019

Subject: Procuring Employability

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The renewal of national employability priorities (No One Left Behind) and introduction of the Local Employability Service Delivery model being promoted jointly by Local Authorities and the Scottish Government requires action to manage the process.
- 1.2 This includes the development of a framework for procuring specialist employability services and a modification of the current client information management system.
- 1.3 The purpose of this paper is to seek approval to proceed with this procurement.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the committee approve the planned approach for managing significant change in the employability service provision environment.

3. Background

- 3.1 The publication of the national review of employability services, 'No one Left Behind' (NOLB), commits the Scottish Government and local government to work in partnership to develop and deliver a locally based approach to employability services.
- 3.2 As a result of this new partnership approach six employability support funds currently managed by SDS will be rolled into one 'No One Left Behind' Fund. The management of these funds will be transferred to local authority employability services.
- 3.3 The funds will be transferred in a planned migration over the next two to three years. The funds that will be subject to this change in 2019- 2020 are:
 - **Activity Agreements** – currently delivered by West Dunbartonshire Council Education Services; and
 - **Scottish Employer Recruitment incentive** – Currently managed and delivered by Working 4U;
- 3.4 Subsequent to this the remaining funds will be transferred from 2020 onwards. This will include the transfer of:

- **The Employability Fund** – currently delivered by a range of organisations in West Dunbartonshire;
- **Community Jobs Scotland** – currently delivered by third sector organisations in West Dunbartonshire.
- **14-19 Fund** – delivered by community based organisations.
- **Discovering Your Potential** delivered by local authority, development agencies and third sector.

3.5 The funds will be managed collaboratively between Scottish and Local Government and will involve other key stakeholders, including the third sector and private training providers, in the planning and delivery of local services. The aim is to develop shared aims and principles, and deliver mutually agreed outcomes.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Although the Scottish Government has agreed to adopt a light touch approach to compliance for the management and distribution of the funds, it is important that West Dunbartonshire Council has appropriate processes and controls in place.

4.2 To ensure we secure these services in an effective manner the Employability Team will work with central procurement to establish a lotted call-off framework for acquiring the services. The Lots will centre on services that will support local residents to overcome barriers to opportunity, improve vocational and non vocational skills and specialist services to overcome health related barriers to employment.

4.3 The framework value will be determined by the value of the 'No One Left Behind' funding provided by the Scottish Government for the delivery of these services. It is anticipated that the value will grow as the 'No One Left Behind' partnership and programme grows.

4.4 Working 4U currently manages working relationships with service users through the use of the Westlink client information database. This is used to confirm eligibility, record interventions and establish the progress from unemployment to sustained employment made by service users.

4.5 In order to meet the reporting requirements placed on us by the Scottish Government for the No One Left Behind approach we will require the system to be adaptable for use by service providers supporting service delivery objectives.

5. People Implications

5.1 The changes may require a re-alignment of activities within organisations currently delivering employability services in West Dunbartonshire. These issues will be resolved through discussion and managed within the context of the proposed procurement process.

6. Financial & Procurement Implications

- 6.1** Future Procurement Exercise: All procurement activity carried out by the Council in excess of £50K is subject to a contract strategy. The contract strategy for the employability framework and the client information system will be produced by the Corporate Procurement Unit in close consultation with Working 4U officers.
- 6.2** The contract strategy shall include but may not be limited to; contract scope, service forward plan, the market, procurement model and routes – including existing delivery vehicles, roles and responsibilities, risks, issues and opportunities and ongoing contract management.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** Without a framework of specialist employability service providers from the third and private sector, West Dunbartonshire Council may not gain access to the funding from the Scottish Government and vital employability services for local residents will be lost.
- 7.2** Without an accompanying review and, if necessary, upgrade of the client information management system, West Dunbartonshire Council (as lead accountable body) will require extensive paper based compliance paperwork and will face challenges meeting the data and information requirements required to manage the programme effectively.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.1** Equalities issues are built into service provision including the need to ensure that we clearly demonstrate support provided for people who have a minimum of two barriers to opportunity. The service is also required to demonstrate actions that will improve the quality of life for families facing poverty. This includes specific information and action to support families where a member of the family is affected by equalities issues.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The development and delivery of employability services is based on a clear understanding of the barriers that prevent people in West Dunbartonshire from capitalising on employment and training opportunities. This includes information gathered through action planning with individuals, ad hoc evaluations and participation surveys.
- 9.2** We have also carried reviews of available services for inclusion on the West Dunbartonshire Employability Pipeline. This will be reinforced through consultation (focus groups and development sessions) with service providers to gain a clear understanding of what services are and, importantly, are not available.

9.3 Through these processes we will establish a framework that is responsive to the needs of local people when seeking support to capitalise on opportunities.

10 Strategic Assessment

10.1 The procurement of specialist employability services and associated client information management system will contribute to the development of a strong local economy with improved access to employment opportunities.

10.2 The framework of specialist providers, complementing the work carried out by Working 4U will contribute to the delivery of efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents.

10.3 This will include services that contribute to community learning and development aims; the delivery of actions within our child poverty report and the provision of access to overcome barriers to economic opportunities.

10.4 Further opportunities to maximise the positive social, economical and environmental impact for West Dunbartonshire through the contract will also be explored, e.g. through the use of Community Benefit Clauses

Peter Barry
Service Lead – Housing & Employability
August 2019

Person to Contact: Stephen Brooks
Working 4 U Manager
Tel: 01389
E-mail: stephen.brooks@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendix:

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All