

## 6. WORK ENABLEMENT

REPORT OF: Assistant Chief Executive  
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Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community  
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### Purpose of Report

1. This report provides an update on the commissioned 'Work Enablement' projects and seeks this Committee's views on the future of this project.

### Summary

2. Of the four services that were initially commissioned in the second quarter of 2013/14, three were re-commissioned in 2014-15 to help those who wish to return to work and improve their prospects. The 'Into Work Helpline' project has not been re-commissioned due to poor uptake of the service. All of the projects are subject to quarterly performance monitoring and an annual review.
3. In 2014/15 the Council allocated £40k and West Sussex County Council (WSSC) £30K to fund work enablement projects. In 2015/16 the Council has allocated £20k and WSSC £40k. In addition to this, the Council allocated £7,787 in 2014/15 to the Financial Capability Project using monies from Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).
4. The total amount available in 2015/16 for this area of work is £60k. It is proposed that the Work Enablement Project and the Training and Learning Project continue in 2015/16 with the targets amended to reflect the available funding. It is not proposed to continue the Financial Capability Project in 2015/16.

### Recommendations

5. **The Committee is requested to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Health and Community that he agrees to extend the work enablement and training and learning project in 2015/16.**
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### Background

6. Members will recall that in September 2012 officers were asked to commission services to support people back into work. This report provides an update on the progress of the projects commissioned
7. The Council, in partnership with WSSC, developed a scheme to support people back into work. Members will note that in addition to the work enablement support there are two other ways in which we are providing incentives to work through the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme. (CTSS). Firstly through Extended Payments of Council Tax support for those returning to work, and secondly through tapers, which provide a reduction in the percentage taper applied to earnings.

8. In 2013/14 the Council provided £20k funding towards work enablement projects with WSCC providing an additional £80k. In 2013/14 £80k of this funding was used to commission four distinct services:
  - An Into Work Helpline, providing advice and guidance to those affected by welfare reform;
  - A Training and Learning project providing tailored learning packages and support to residents looking for work;
  - A Work Enablement project giving more intensive support to those who are not yet ready to look for work; and
  - A Financial Capability project giving support to those affected by welfare reform to better manage their finances.
9. Whilst the Council made provision within its 2014/15 Corporate Plan and Budget to provide a further £20k of funding for work enablement projects, no firm commitment was given by WSCC at the time regarding future funding. As a result Members of this Committee, at its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013, agreed that the unspent £20k of this Council's contribution be rolled forward in to 2014/15, giving a guaranteed budget for the project of £40k.
10. In addition, the Council received a payment of £7,787 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in August 2013 in respect of transitional funding for Housing Benefit reforms. As this payment was not ring fenced Cabinet at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013 approved the transfer of this sum to the Welfare to Work reserve to fund work enablement projects.
11. Due to the predicted budget shortfall and the lower than expected uptake for the 'Into Work Helpline', officers recommended, at the beginning of 2014/15, that this project should not be re-commissioned.
12. In July 2014 WSCC confirmed work enablement funding of £30k for 2014/15 and £40k for 2015/16 to match this Council's ongoing contribution of £20k pa.

### **Worklessness in Mid Sussex**

13. Since January 2014 the number of people claiming JSA has continued to decline and remains at approximately 700. Overall, the average claimant rate of 0.6% in Mid Sussex is the second lowest (with the same rate as 10 other authorities) in the country and remains well below the national (2.7%) and regional (1.6%) averages.
14. In Mid Sussex, the number of JSA claimants among under 25s has remained higher than those aged 25 - 60. In 2014 the average number of claimants under 25 for the period January – August in Mid Sussex was 0.8% which compares with 2.1% regionally and 3.6% nationally.

## **Progress on Commissioned Services**

### *Work Enablement*

15. The aim of the Work Enablement Project is to provide small, tailored group and one to one support to people who are far from being ready to work, for example people who have never worked, or who have been out of work for a period of six months or longer. The aim of the service is to improve mental wellbeing, confidence and basic 'workability' skills in order to help clients be more psychologically and practically able to look for work.
16. The service provider for this project is Working Futures Partnership, a Social Enterprise with extensive experience of helping 'hard to reach' client groups into work. The provider has built a good relationship with local Children and Family Centres, who have provided space and free crèche facilities for the courses and are keen to refer their clients to them. The project is aligned with the Think Family Neighbourhoods and receives referrals from partners including Job Centre Plus, Think Family Workers and Mid Sussex Wellbeing.
17. In 2013/14 the project was commissioned to provide workshops (for between 8 – 12 clients) plus one to one sessions. As noted above this project targets people who have been unemployed for a period of time. During 2013/14 the project supported 62 clients, of which 16% (10 people) have found paid work significantly exceeding the performance target of 5%.
18. In 2014/15 the project, which is subject to quarterly performance monitoring, has been commissioned to support a minimum of 150 clients with 40% of attendees showing an improvement in work readiness either through improved qualifications or through gaining work experience or volunteering. In the period April to the end of September 2014, 52 clients have accessed the service and four workshops have been delivered, attended by 27 people. People who have attended the workshop will be contacted one month after the workshop to establish work status and after a further six month period to monitor the longer term outcomes of this project.
19. The outcome targets for this project for 2013/14 and for 2014/15 are included in Appendix 1.

### *Training and Learning*

20. The aim of the Training and Learning project is to provide bespoke training courses to those who have not been out of work for long or those who are in low paid work and need to improve their qualifications in order to improve their prospects.
21. The provider for this project is Sussex Learning Solutions (SLS), a professional training provider delivering adult education courses in the Sussex area, with particular expertise around helping unemployed learners to improve their employability.
22. In 2013/14 the project was commissioned to provide courses and one to one support for a minimum of 50 clients. The project supported 60 people with 14 people (23%) finding work or improving their work status (more hours or more pay).

23. In 2014/15 the project, which is subject to quarterly performance monitoring, has been commissioned to support a minimum of 120 clients with a target of 30 clients (25%) achieving paid work, being self-employed or in a work placement. In the period April to the end of September 2014, 41 people have accessed the service with 36 attending a course. Seven courses ran in July and August and a further 12 courses are planned to the end of November.
24. The outcome targets for this project for 2013/14 and for 2014/15 are included in Appendix 2.

### *Financial Capability*

25. The aim of the Financial Capability project is to help and support residents to manage their incomes without falling into unsustainable debt and to manage the transition from being in receipt of benefits to paid employment. Working Futures Partnership provide this service, in addition to the Work Enablement Project, as they have extensive experience of working on improving financial capability with social tenants.
26. In 2013/14 the project was commissioned to provide workshops, and one to one support for those who feel unable to attend group sessions. A total of 47 people attended workshops with three people receiving one to one support. All of the participants received advice and guidance relevant to their personal situation and 90% of the participants stated that their confidence in managing their money and budgeting had improved.
27. In 2014/15 the project, which is subject to quarterly performance monitoring, has been commissioned to provide support for 60 people through workshops and one to one support with a target of 75% of attendees reporting improved financial capability and 15% of attendees showing reduction in debt three months after the workshop. Four workshops will be delivered in the period September to December 2014 with a further four in early 2015. Data regarding enrolment and participation will not be available until early 2015.
28. The outcome targets for this project for 2013/14 and for 2014/15 are included in Appendix 3.

### **Next Steps**

29. In 2015/16 there is a commitment from WSCC to provide £40k and there is provision of £20k within the Council's budget for work enablement. This represents a slight reduction in funding from the combined current level of £70k
30. It is proposed that the Work Enablement and Training and Learning projects, which are jointly funded by the Council and WSCC, continue, with the performance targets adjusted to reflect the reduced funding. Due to the funding situation it is not intended to continue to provide the Financial Capability project.

### **Financial Implications**

31. The Council has allocated £20k in its base budget to fund the Work Enablement programme. There is a commitment from WSCC to jointly fund this project and they have allocated £30k in 2014/15 and £40k in 2015/16. The Council has provided an additional £7,787 for the Financial Capability Project in 2014/15 using funding from the DWP.

### **Risk Management Implications**

32. There is a risk that the commissioned providers do not meet the performance targets set. Robust monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure the projects are delivering intended outcomes.
33. A down-turn in the economy could result in insufficient jobs available locally for people participating in the scheme to move into. An up-turn in the economy and ongoing unemployment could negate the need for this project, however, these projects would continue to provide a valuable service for those further from the job market. This risk is outside of the council's control to manage but the situation will be closely monitored.

### **Equality and Customer Service Implications**

34. An Equality Impact Assessment of the commissioned projects has been carried out. The assessment identified a possible need for courses to be provided in specific languages to address the needs of people from black and minority ethnic groups (BME). The providers have been asked to monitor the need for this during the term of the contracts but have not identified any need since April 2014. The uptake of the projects by people from BME groups is monitored, and from April 2014 to September 2014, 8.4% of participants were from BME groups. The BME population in Mid Sussex according to the last census is 9.7%.

### **Background Papers**

None.

## Appendix 1

### Work Enablement Project Performance Measures 2013/14 and details to date for 2014/15

Performance Measures for 2013/14		Performance Measures for 2014/15	Progress as of 30/9/14
Minimum of 100 users to attend sessions.	62	Minimum of 200 users to make contact with the service of which 150 attend sessions	52
40% of attendees to show demonstrable improvement in work readiness, either through improved qualification or through gaining work experience	71%	40% of attendees to show demonstrable improvement in work readiness, either through improved qualification or through gaining work experience	*
5% of attendees to show improved paid work outcomes	16%	7% of attendees to show improved paid work outcomes including those becoming self employed	*
100% of course attendees to fill out evaluation with satisfaction ratings of 75%+	90%	100% of course attendees to fill out evaluation with 75% rating the overall course as 4 or 5 out of 5 (good or excellent)	*
Minimum of 10% of attendees to be followed up 1-2 months post initial contact to assess what the outcome of the intervention was.	100%	All attendees to be followed up 1-2 months post course/intervention to assess what the outcome of the intervention was	*

\* The information for these performance indicators is collected from the participants four to eight weeks after the end of the course. Information relating to the courses provided to the end of September 2014 will be available in mid-January 2015.

## Appendix 2

### Training and Learning Project Performance Indicators for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Performance Measures for 2013/14		Performance Measures for 2014/15	Progress as of 30/9/14
Minimum of 50 participants to access the service	(60 people) 120%	Minimum of 120 people to access the service with 80% attending one or more courses	41
75% of attendees to show demonstrable improvement in work readiness, either through improved qualification or through gaining work experience	85%	40% of attendees to show demonstrable improvement in work readiness, either through improved qualification or through gaining work experience	*
25% of attendees to show improved paid work outcomes	23%	25% of attendees to show improved paid work outcomes including those becoming self employed	*
100% of course attendees to fill out evaluation with a satisfaction rating of 75%+	80%	100% of course attendees to fill out evaluation with 75% rating the overall course as 4 or 5 out of 5 (good or excellent)	*
Minimum of 10% of attendees to be followed up 1-2 months post initial contact to assess what the outcome of the intervention was.	46%	All attendees to be followed up 1-2 months post initial contact to assess the outcome of the intervention	*

\* The information for these performance indicators is collected from the participants four to eight weeks after the end of the course. Information relating to the courses provided up to the end of September 2014 will be available in mid-January 2015.

### Appendix 3

#### Financial Capability Project Performance Indicators for 2013/14 and 2014/15

Performance Measures for 2013/14		Performance Measures for 2014/15	
Minimum of 80 participants to access the service	47	Minimum of 60 participants to access the service	*
75% or attendees' evaluations to show improvement in financial capability	90%	75% or attendees' evaluations to show improvement in financial capability	*
15% of attendees to demonstrate taking action to reduce managed debt.	14%	15% reduction in managed debt among target group followed up 1-2 months post contact	*
Minimum of 10% of attendees to be followed up 1-2 months post initial contact to assess what the outcome of the intervention was.	47%	Minimum of 10% of attendees to be followed up 1-2 months post initial contact to assess what the outcome of the intervention was.	*
Level of take up of sustainable financial services (e.g. credit unions)	16 people	Level of take up of sustainable financial services (e.g. credit unions)	*

\*The courses commissioned in 2014/15 started in September. Information relating to the courses will be available from Mid-January 2015.