

6. WORK ENABLEMENT UPDATE

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 'Work Enablement' projects and seeks this Committee's views on the proposed commissioning intentions for 2016/17.

Summary

2. This report provides an update on the progress of the projects commissioned, with a backward look to the projects outcomes for 2014/15 as this was last reported to Committee in November 2014. It sets out current progress on projects for this financial year 2015/16 and also outlines commissioning intentions for 2016/17.
3. The total amount of funding available in 2014/15 for this area of work was £70k, with £30k coming from the WSCC Think Family Budget and £40K from the Council. In 2015/16 the total amount available for this area of work was £60k, with £40k from WSCC and £20k from the Council.
4. Since the start of the Work Enablement Projects in 2013, unemployment in Mid Sussex has fallen and a range of other services now provide opportunities for those out of work or in significant debt. As a result WSCC have confirmed that they will not be making further funding available for work enablement projects in 2016/17. This means £20k of funds will be available to fund work enablement projects in 2016/17.
5. As a result of this decision it is proposed that the Work Enablement Project and the Training and Learning Project end in March 2016 and the £20k of funding from this Council is used to extend the commissioned Mid Sussex NEETs Mentoring Project for 2016/17.

Recommendations

6. **The Committee is requested to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Health and Community that he ends the Work Enablement project and Training and Learning project at the end of March 2016 and reallocates the £20k to extend the commissioned Mid Sussex NEETs Project for 2016/17.**

Background

7. In 2014/15 £30k from the WSCC Think Family Budget and £40K from the Council was allocated to fund work enablement projects. This Committee last received an update on the performance of these projects in November 2014, halfway through the performance year. In 2015/16 the total amount available for this area of work was £60k, with £40k from WSCC and £20k from the Council. As Members will recall, in addition the Council allocated £7,787 in 2014/15 to the Financial Capability Project using monies from Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). Using these funds the Council externally commissioned the following projects;
- A Work Enablement project giving intensive support to those who are not yet ready to look for work;
 - A Training and Learning project providing tailored learning packages and support to residents looking for work;
 - A Financial Capability project giving support to those affected by welfare reform to better manage their finances.

Worklessness in Mid Sussex

8. In July 2015, 390 people were claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Mid Sussex which accounts for 0.4% of the working age population. This is the lowest rate in West Sussex with the next lowest being Horsham at 0.6% (498 people). The highest is Crawley at 1.3% (936 people). The regional average is 1%. By comparison in February 2013 there were 1019 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance accounting for 1.2% of the working age population and a regional average of 2.6%.
9. Since 2013 a range of agencies are also offering work enablement projects. These include Affinity Sutton Housing Group, Hyde Housing Association, Department for Work and Pensions outreach workers through the Think Family programme and Aspire Sussex adult education service.

Progress on Commissioned Services

Work Enablement

10. 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.
11. 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.

12. In 2014/15 the project was commissioned to provide workshops (for between 8 – 12 participants) plus one to one sessions. During 2014/15 the project supported 108 clients of which 17% (19 people) have found paid work against a target of 7%. In addition 63% (68 people) showed an improvement in work readiness either through improved qualifications or through gaining work experience.
13. To date in this financial year (2015/16) the project, which is subject to quarterly performance monitoring, has been commissioned to support 110 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 2015, 87 clients have accessed the service and 7 workshops have been delivered, attended by 68 people. Those 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.
14. The outcome targets for this project for 2013/14, 2014/15 and for 2015/16 are included in Appendix 1.

Training and Learning

15. 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.
16. 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.
17. To date in this financial year (2015/16) the project, which is subject to quarterly performance monitoring, has been commissioned to support 90 clients with a target of 22 clients (25%) achieving paid work, being self-employed or in a work placement. In the period April to the end of September 2015, 87 people have accessed the service with 58 attending a course.
18. The outcome targets for this project for 2013/14, 2014/15 and for 2015/16 are included in Appendix 2.

Financial Capability

19. The Financial Capability project was funded for two years and came to end in March 2015. The aim of the project was 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 provided this service, in addition to the Work Enablement Project, as they have extensive experience of working on improving financial capability with social tenants.
20. In 2014/15 the project was commissioned to provide support for 60 people through workshops and one to one support. This included a target of 75% of attendees reporting improved financial capability and 15% of attendees showing reduction in debt three months after the workshop. Seven workshops were delivered which were attended by 48 people and a further 10 people were supported on a one to one basis. All participants reported increased confidence in money management and case studies demonstrated self-reported reduction in household debt.

21. The outcome targets for this project in 2013/14 and 2014/15 are included in Appendix 3.
22. As no further funds were available to support this project this financial year (2015/16) the Financial Capability project came to an end in March 2015. Since then a number of Housing Providers and WSCC through the Think Family Programme have commissioned debt advisors to support people across the County on a one to one basis. In addition the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) now provide debt outreach services.

NEETs in Mid Sussex

23. While support for adults out of work, described in paragraph 9, has developed in the Mid Sussex area, support for young people is still a concern and was highlighted in the recent West Sussex Families Plan as a key area of focus. Those Not in Education or Employment (NEET) under the age of 25, account for 25% of those currently claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Mid Sussex.
24. There are currently 114 known NEET young people within Mid Sussex, however there are an additional 520 young people whom their status is not currently known as a result of the way the data is recorded by WSCC. It is therefore likely that this figure is much higher than 114. Data provided by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) indicates that over the last 3 years there has been an increase in the number of young people aged under 25 years claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Mid Sussex.
25. The Mid Sussex Partnership (MSP) commissioned a NEETs project in July 2014 to provide a mentor programme to support at least 30 young people, who are NEET, into the workplace, further education or training. The project that started in February 2015 and provided by the YMCA is funded until March 2016. Currently there is no MSP funding available to support the project for 2016/17.
26. The Mid Sussex NEETs project works to support young people into training, education or employment by providing a mentor from within the Mid Sussex community. Those mentors currently working with the project come from a range of backgrounds including Head Teachers, Careers Advisors, Business Owners and Social Workers. Current performance of this project is outlined in Appendix 4.
27. Since the start of the project in February 2015 a total of 24 NEETs have been referred to the project and of these 16 are currently actively working with mentors. Of the 16 young people engaged with mentors, 4 have gained full time employment. The project has received very positive feedback from young people for example: "My mentor has helped me to get where I want to be and I've now found a job in the employment area I was looking for. She helped improve my CV, helped with job applications and gave me interview tips. Before I was working full-time I was bored a lot of the time and couldn't do much because I didn't have any money. I'm much happier now I'm working. The job is going well and I have opportunities to gain more qualifications.' Another young person said, "It's absolutely great having her (the mentor) You know you've got someone next to you, supporting you and it's not just you by yourself. It's nice to have someone who wants to help because I don't have much support. I know what I want but I can't get it without someone guiding me. She guides me and I follow the path on my own".

Next Steps

28. WSCC have recently confirmed there will be no funds available for 2016/17 to support these projects in Mid Sussex. However, there is provision of £20k within the Council's budget for work enablement for 2016/17.
29. It is proposed that due to the reduction in available funds and the low level of worklessness in Mid Sussex that the Work Enablement and Training and Learning projects do not continue in 2016/17 and the £20k be allocated to extend the Mid Sussex NEETs project where there is greater need.

Financial Implications

30. The Council has allocated £20k in its base budget to fund the Work Enablement programme in 2016/17.

Risk Management Implications

31. 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. Going forward this will include monitoring the NEETs project.
32. A down-turn in the economy could result in insufficient jobs available locally for people participating in the existing schemes and the proposed NEETs project to move into. Similarly an up-turn in the economy and ongoing unemployment could negate the need for the NEETs project. This risk is outside of the council's control to manage but the situation will be closely monitored.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

33. 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%.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Work Enablement Project Performance Measures 2014/15 and details to date for 2015/16.
- Appendix 2 - Training and Learning Project Performance Indicators for 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- Appendix 3 - Financial Capability Project Performance Indicators for 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- Appendix 4 - Mid Sussex NEETs Mentoring Project Performance Indicators for 2015/16.

Background Papers

[Work Enablement – report to Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community, 26 November 2014.](#)

[Equality Impact Assessment for Work Enablement – October 2013.](#)

APPENDIX 1

Work Enablement Project Performance Measures 2014/15 and details to date for 2015/16

Performance Measures for 2013/14		Performance Measures for 2014/15		Performance Measures for 2015/16	Progress to 15/10/2015
Minimum of 60 users to attend sessions	62	Minimum of 150 users to make contact with the service of which 110 attend sessions.	133 108	Minimum of 150 users to make contact with the service of which 110 attend sessions.	87 68
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	62%	40% of attendees to show demonstrable improvement in work readiness, either through improved qualification or through gaining work experience	36% *
5% of attendees to show improved paid work outcomes	16%	7% of attendees to show improved paid work outcomes including those becoming self employed	17%	7% of attendees to show improved paid work outcomes including those becoming self employed	16% *
100% of course attendees to fill out evaluation with 75% rating the overall course as 4 or 5 out of 5 (good or excellent)	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)	100%	100% of course attendees to fill out evaluation with 75% rating the overall course as 4 or 5 out of 5 (good or excellent)	100% *
Minimum of 10% of attendees to be followed up 1-2 months post course/intervention	100%	All attendees to be followed up 1-2 months post course/intervention 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	45% *

* 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 October 2015 will be available in mid-December 2015.

APPENDIX 2

Training and Learning Project Performance Indicators for 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Performance Measures for 2013/14		Performance Measures for 2014/15		Performance Measures for 2015/16	Progress to 15/10/2015
Minimum of 50 people to access the service	60	Minimum of 120 people to access the service with 80% attending one or more courses	109 83%	Minimum of 90 people to access the service with 80% attending one or more courses	87 66%
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	49%	40% of attendees to show demonstrable improvement in work readiness, either through improved qualification or through gaining work experience	66% *
25% of attendees to show improved paid work outcomes	23%	25% of attendees to show improved paid work outcomes including those becoming self employed	21%	25% of attendees to show improved paid work outcomes including those becoming self employed	25% *
100% of course attendees to fill out evaluation with a satisfaction rating of 75%+	100/ 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)	100/ 95%	100% of course attendees to fill out evaluation with 75% rating the overall course as 4 or 5 out of 5 (good or excellent)	100%*
Minimum of 10% of attendees to be followed up 1-2 months	46%	All attendees to be followed up 1-2 months post initial contact to assess the outcome of the intervention	100%	All attendees to be followed up 1-2 months post initial contact to assess the outcome of the intervention	20% *

* 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 October 2015 will be available in mid-December 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	48
75% or attendees' evaluations to show improvement in financial capability	90%	75% or attendees' evaluations to show improvement in financial capability	100%
15% of attendees to demonstrate taking action to reduce managed debt.	14%	15% of attendees to demonstrate taking action to reduce managed debt.	35%
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.	60%
Level of take up of sustainable financial services (e.g. credit unions)	34%	Level of take up of sustainable financial services (e.g. credit unions) % (No target)	40%

APPENDIX 4

Mid Sussex NEETs Mentoring Project Performance Indicators for 2015/16

Measure	Performance to 30/09/2015
Minimum of 30 young people aged 16-25 to be supported by the project (10% through the Think Family case worker and 50% NEET for over 6 months)	24 (12% Think Family and 33% NEET over 6 months)
Creation of 9 new apprenticeship opportunities in Mid Sussex for NEET young people	0
Recruitment of minimum of 25 mentors.	22
Retention of 70% of mentors	90%
55% of attendees to show demonstrable improvement in work readiness, either through improved qualification or through gaining work experience	41% *
20% of young people to be Education or training 20% to be ready for work placements 30% of young people in apprenticeships 10% of young people to be in paid employment	*
100% of mentees to fill out evaluations of the project with satisfaction ratings of 75%+	*
Minimum of 20% of attendees and Mentors to be followed up 4-6 months after the completion of the mentoring to assess what the long term outcome of the intervention was.	*

* The information for these performance indicators is collected quarterly and in response to the amount of time the young person has been within the project. It is expected it will be available in mid-February 2016.