

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning & Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 21st March 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People & Economy

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: European Social Fund (ESF) Ways to Work Project

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this paper is to update the PPB on the recently awarded Combined Authority ESF Ways to Work contract.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) **The PPB welcomes the progress made to date and supports the implementation of the Ways to Work project.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Following submission of an outline application to the Access to Employment axis of the European Operational Programme, the Combined Authority was invited to submit a full application in October 2015. In January 2016, notification of a successful application was received from the Department for Work and Pensions. The project has a value of £42m over 3 years, with Halton's allocation worth £3.3m.
- 3.2 The Ways to Work project incorporates a 3-way match funding model: ESF, Youth Employment Initiative and Youth Contract Underspend (Youth Employment Gateway). Youth Contract Underspend is already being used by the Combined Authority for the delivery of the existing Youth Employment Gateway, which is now in Year Two. This is an employment support programme for newly unemployed 18-24 year olds in receipt of Job Seekers' Allowance and Halton is already exceeding the agreed targets. The Ways to Work project will enable an extension and a broadening of the Youth Employment Gateway to reach more residents.
- 3.3 The focus of the Ways to Work project is on young people and those furthest away from labour market. Across the Liverpool City Region it is expected that in excess of 19,500 participants will register on the programme, with 7,300 job outcomes being achieved over the duration of the project. For Halton, this translates to 506 adults and 729 young people participating on the programme, with 500+ job outcomes.

- 3.4 The Ways to Work project advocates an individualised approach to supporting residents in overcoming barriers to work through offering a broad range of interventions. It is an inclusive programme designed to work with those with multiple barriers including care leavers, those with mental health issues and those with low levels of literacy and numeracy.
- 3.5 One of the key elements of the Ways to Work project is the availability of Intermediate Labour Market (ILMs) placements of between 6 and 12 months duration for those young people furthest away from the job market. Incentivising employers to create additional opportunities for these residents alongside a range of other support interventions will allow residents to be individually advised and guided along the path to sustainable employment. The proposal is that 90 ILM placements will be offered in Halton over the duration of the contract.
- 3.6 The Ways to Work project will be delivered through the People & Economy Directorate of the Council, with the majority of delivery taking place within the Employment, Learning & Skills Division, which has provided the majority of match funding. Other match funding has come from the 14-19 Team and Inspiring Families. This match will allow for intense professional coaching for those young people with multiple issues.
- 3.7 The first registrations on the Ways to Work project have already been received—these are Youth Employment Gateway clients that have been on the YEG programme since 1st January 2016. Full implementation of the project will be from April 2016 when a restructure of the Employment, Learning & Skills Division will have taken place.
- 3.8 Halton’s progress against outputs and results will be reported regularly to the Combined Authority, alongside that of the other 5 local authorities. A Performance and Compliance Board will closely monitor progress against outputs/results and make decisions about any under/over performance. The Combined Authority will then submit a joint claim to DWP.
- 3.9 The outputs and results within the Ways to Work project are challenging but as a Combined Authority we are confident that these will be achieved as all 6 local authority delivery partners have vast experience of working with this client group and on employment support programmes.
- 3.10 Quarterly reporting to this PPB will take place to keep members informed of Halton’s progress.
- 3.11 Appendix 1 provides the Logic Model for the Ways to Work project.
- 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
- 4.1 Existing Welfare to Work programmes are available in Halton, specifically the DWP Work Programme, of which the Employment, Learning & Skills Division delivers 75% within Halton. The Work Programme contracts have very challenging targets so careful management of both the Work Programme and

Ways to Work project will be necessary in order to maximise outputs and results for both. Work Programme clients can access the various interventions offered through Ways to Work but Ways to Work must not duplicate any interventions that are already available in the Combined Authority.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Ways to Work project brings an investment of £3.3m into the borough upon the successful achievement of outputs and results. Successful delivery of the project would place Halton (and the rest of the Combined Authority) in a very good position for the next round of ESF Access to Work funding.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The implications for this priority are outlined in the report

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The implications for this priority are outlined in the report

6.3 A Healthy Halton

It is expected that referrals into and from the Ways to Work project will include health agencies and individuals with health related worklessness.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The match funding for the project has been identified and there is confidence that the outputs and results will be achieved. As such we feel there are no significant risks arising from this project.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The report seeks to promote equality of access in regard to how the borough's young people and adults are supported in their journey to sustainable employment.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.