

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	11
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Category	2. Decision within the functions of Executive		
Subject:	Ambition SCR		
Report by:	Assistant Director of Economic Growth		
Other Officers Involved	Chief Executives and Partnership Manager Partnership Consultant Programme Manager		
Director	Chief Executive Officer		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Deputy Leader of the Council – Cabinet Member for Regeneration Leader of the Council		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

REGENERATION – Developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities. The Ambition SCR initiative will affect the wider determinants of worklessness by commissioning activity that takes account of the effects upon the wellbeing of unemployed 18-24 year olds in local communities in respect of their health, wealth and secure employment; all of which contributes to building sustainable communities in the district.

TARGETS

2,400 young people aged 18-24 (77 in Bolsover district) will be referred to Ambition SCR by Jobcentre Plus for a gateway assessment;

1,650 young people (85 in Bolsover district) will be allocated a key worker and complete an intensive training and career development programme over a period of 12-18 weeks;

38% of young people completing the programme will move into employment (20 in Bolsover district) and, of those, 80% will sustain that employment within the workplace for a period of 26 weeks.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Ambition SCR will lever in additional external resources to provide a bespoke programme which assists young people to gain employment which would support the Council assisting residents with welfare reform changes.

THE REPORT

Ambition SCR is a £5m pilot project aimed at preventing young people (18-24 year olds) at risk of long term unemployment by providing training and then supporting them into work. The funding has been identified as underspend from the Youth Contract. Since the onset of the recession, Sheffield City Region (SCR) has seen a significant increase in youth unemployment and although mirroring the general trend, it remains stubbornly high and the statistics remain stark:

- In the period March 2008 to March 2012 youth unemployment in SCR doubled;
- 8.3% of 18-24 year olds in the city-region were still claiming JSA in July 2013;
- A young adult in the SCR is more than twice as likely as those over the age of 25 to be claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and in Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire the ratio is more than 3:1.

SCR seeks to deliver *Ambition SCR* - a locally determined, employment programme for 18-24 year olds that will:

1. Place 1,500 JSA claimants across the city-region into the labour market in a two-year period, commencing May 2014 with a minimum of 40% securing permanent employment;
2. Exceed the sustained job outcome assumptions for the Work Programme by harnessing the employer networks and public sector jobs leverage that have been developed through the City Deal;
3. Meet a need identified by the City Deal where substantial employer demand for the recruitment of young people has been unlocked but where there is a restricted supply of individuals that businesses consider to be job ready;
4. Establish both effective early intervention for those young adults joining the register for the first time who are at risk of long-term worklessness;
5. Establish a two-step approach to employment for those furthest from the labour market involving pre-employment training in the workplace of 12-18 weeks that utilises SCR's well-developed network of work placements in the public, private and third sector, leading to a sustainable employment opportunity for the job-ready secured through an extensive database of participating employers and negotiated by experienced jobs brokers;
6. Support motivate and 'grip' the young jobseeker by agreeing an immediate job goal, offering a training allowance, providing job survival coaching and adopting a 'whole person' approach that includes the provision of a key worker responsible for supporting and challenging the individual and connecting them to the range of support services that they might need and which are provided by local authorities (LAs) and their partners;
7. Provide in-work support for six months to both the young jobseeker and the employer to improve sustainability and progression in work, and to reduce benefit dependency;
8. Act as a demonstration project capable of testing and refining the delivery mechanism by which the city-region can address employability as part of its Growth Plan (Strategic Economic Plan).

In support of these objectives the SCR has:

- Designed the programme hand in hand with local DWP to address off-flow issues across SCR and to support and complement rather than compete with mainstream programmes;
- Drawn on pilot activity from across the city-region so that the programme builds on what is known to work;
- Sought business advice in shaping the programme to better meet the needs of employers and to best equip young jobseekers with the full range of skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that will improve their chances of employability;
- Connected, at the local level, related programmes, including the Big Lottery's Talent Match initiative and the design of traineeships that strengthen the city-region's approach to youth employment;
- Identified £7.5m match funding from SCR partners as an indication of the premium that they place on tackling youth employment;
- Located the governance of the programme within the LEP's employer-led Skills for Growth Partnership in which all of the relevant stakeholders are represented.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

SCR has the agreement of central government to deliver Ambition and the contract is in the final stage of negotiation. SCR has requested that each local authority considers its preferred method of delivery for the programme within its area and options available are;

- For Sheffield City Council to deliver the programme through a procurement route;
- To manage the programme locally and deliver in-house;
- To manage the programme locally through a procurement route;
- To deliver the programme in-house and extend services to neighbouring local authorities;
- To deliver the programme through a procured route in partnership with other local authorities.

The current model being proposed is for the Bolsover and North East Derbyshire District Councils to work collaboratively utilising the expertise of both councils with BDC providing the programme management (see Appendix 1 for details) and NEDDC delivering the direct service (see Appendix 2 for details). There is an opportunity for both Chesterfield and Bassetlaw Councils to be part of this approach.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial: SCC has allocated costs and targets to each district and these are appended to this report in Appendix 3. In summary, Bolsover's allocation over a two year period is £151,560 with a target group of 77 claimants supported. NEDDC has a contract value of £164,459 with 82 claimants supported and the combined allocation for Bolsover, Bassetlaw, Chesterfield and North East is £781,986. The programme is due to commence no later than May 2014 (for in-house providers) and will end March 2016. The first years funding will be provided up front.

Project guidance has indicated that project progress will be assessed after 9 months; if the project is not on target then the provider will have three months to turn the work round to

bring it on target. If the provider is not successful then it will be removed from the provider, (without financial claw back) and reallocated to another provider. SCC have agreed that there will be flexibility in programme to broaden the target group should this be a reason for service failure.

Legal: Depending on which delivery option is selected by the Council, a form of agreement will be required with SCR, the level of formality determined by the service provided. Ambition will be delivered across North Derbyshire directly or indirectly through SCR from April 2014 to March 2016. Supporting young people into employment meets the Council's strategic corporate priorities and builds upon work previously and currently undertaken. Risks identified such as a reduced number of referrals from DWP would be mitigated through contractual agreement that no financial penalty would be applied whereby service failure was attributable to reduced referrals, alongside the ability to agree a broadening of the participant catchment group.

Human Resources: Both the programme management and service provision would require additional staff resources for two years, which is funded directly by Ambition SCR. Further information is available in the Appendices. Initially, opportunities for programme delivery will be made available as secondments from across BDC and NEDDC. Appropriate recruitment procedures will be followed.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That Bolsover District Council works collaboratively with North East Derbyshire District Council, utilising the expertise of both Councils as per Appendices 1 and 2.
2. That programme management and delivery for Chesterfield and Bassetlaw is included within this model if the respective Councils wish to share this approach.

Proposal for Bolsover District Council to Programme Manage Ambition SCR

It is proposed that Bolsover District Council takes a lead on behalf of BDC and NEDDC for the programme management and performance of Ambition SCR across Bolsover and North East Derbyshire (potentially Chesterfield and Bassetlaw, but subject to negotiations with respective Councils).

The main areas of responsibility for BDC include:

- Agreeing an Inter-Authority Agreement to mitigate any financial risks for BDC and NEDDC associated with contracting with SCC on each other's behalf and potentially on behalf of Chesterfield Borough Council and Bassetlaw District Council;
- Implementing a performance management system for delivery staff to utilise that provides a framework for reporting to the contract holder;
- Setting up financial systems that will enable accurate and ongoing monitoring of programme spend against forecasted expenditure;
- Agreeing monthly targets against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and monitoring progress;
- Establishing a framework of training providers via a procurement exercise to meet identified needs of programme beneficiaries;
- Commissioning specialist training provision as required;
- Reporting monthly/quarterly (as required) to SCC and participating Councils;
- Submitting financial claims and ensuring draw down of funds;
- Fulfilling audit requirements;
- Setting up systems and administering the 'Back to Work' incentives; a key element of the Ambition SCR programme;
- Take a lead on any evaluation requirements
- Attending and contributing to project steering group meetings

It is proposed that the Chief Executives and Partnership Team (CEPT) takes lead responsibility for the above on behalf of BDC and NEDDC. CEPT is well placed to manage this initiative, having managed a number of external funding streams previously awarded to Bolsover district. Furthermore the team has recently taken lead responsibility for the BIG Lottery Talent Match programme on behalf of Bolsover, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire and Bassetlaw. As Talent Match is aimed at securing positive employment and progression opportunities for 18-24 year olds, it will sit alongside Ambition SCR as a complementary programme and provide economies of scale in terms of management for both councils.

Within the Ambition SCR funding that has been earmarked for both Councils, a proportion will be allocated to programme management. The overall management/delivery costs are still to be finalised and are subject to:

- Confirmation from Chesterfield/Bassetlaw councils of their preferred approach
- Final confirmation of numbers from SCC

An assessment of the impact of the work on the team and the need to buy in/employ additional staff resources will be determined prior to the project starting.

Proposal for North East Derbyshire District Council to Deliver Ambition SCR

The Ambition Model has been developed using best practice from employment initiatives, including NEDDC's Working Community Project and the Family Employment Initiative. The Ambition model can be seen at the end of this Appendix and further detail follows.

It is proposed that this model is delivered using two levels of employees, a Team Leader and Key Workers, depending on the number of local authority areas to be covered.

The Team Leader would be responsible for employer engagement as a work placement is a key feature of this model and it is critical that the right placement is found for the right individual. This will be in addition to managing the Key Workers to ensure that a consistent and co-ordinated approach takes place and to monitor progress so that specific targets are met.

The role of the Key Worker is central to the successful delivery of the programme. The Key Workers would provide intense 1-1 support to the young people prior to employment, during the work placement and in work support for the first 6 months of employment.

To enhance and develop existing skills of employees from NEDDC and BDC, it is proposed that secondment opportunities are provided for these roles. Backfill could be provided using Ambition funding.

The Programme

Referrals will be received from the Department of Work and Pensions by the Team Leader. The young person will be allocated a Key Worker who will undertake an individual assessment using a holistic whole person approach, to look at any personal, attitudinal, social, familial, financial, health and housing issues and barriers to employment that the young person may have. The young person will be signposted, with support, to other agencies with the required expertise, depending on the young person's needs.

An in-depth work focused Individual Development Plan will be developed with the young person to include a career plan and identification of training needs. The Individual Development Plan will have defined activities and agreed timescales and progress of this will be encouraged and monitored by the Key Worker.

As part of their Individual Development Plan, the young person will participate in a Level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at Grades A* - c) Traineeship which will last for 12 weeks. A Traineeship is an education and training programme, with work experience, that is focussed on giving young people the skills and experience that employers are looking for and helping young people become work ready. This Programme will include careers guidance, literacy and numeracy in addition to motivational and job coaching.

The benefits of the Traineeship for the young people are that they will:

- understand the concept of a career ladder, identify an immediate job goal and agree the milestones and activities necessary to progress
- develop the employability and vocationally-specific skills and qualifications that support these objectives

- acquire the self-confidence, maturity and resilience that increases their chances of job survival
- acquire the work history on which many employers place a premium when selecting new recruits.

The young person will be with the employer for 2 days per week and will spend 3 days per week in training. The young person will receive support through a mentor in the organisation and their Key Worker throughout their placement with regular review meetings to monitor progress and resolve any issues as they arise. There will be a guaranteed interview, which could be an exit interview, with the employer at the end of the placement. The young person will also gain a formal reference from the employer which will help with future job applications.

The employer will be encouraged to employ the young person after completion of the traineeship and will be incentivised by the Wage Incentive grant (up to £2,275). If the employer chooses not to employ the young person, then further intensive job search support will be provided by the Key Worker. Apprenticeships will also be promoted as an option of employment for the young person and employers will be incentivised to employ apprentices using the Apprentices Grant for Employers (£1,500). If the employer does employ the young person, then continued 1-1 support will be provided by the Key Worker for the young person. A two day work trial can also be offered to the employer before a decision is made regarding employing the young person.

If during the traineeship, further support is required, then the person can undertake a further 6 weeks of training. Alternatively if the young person is work ready and has found employment then they can come off the programme early.

Another key element to the Ambition Programme is to encourage young people to progress whilst they are in employment. Progression can include increasing hours, a temporary position becoming permanent, an increase in duties or promotion. Again the Key Worker will provide support for the young person to encourage them to progress in their first six months of work.

Ambition SCR – Delivery Model



