

REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 8 June 2022

PROPOSALS TO AWARD EMPLOYABILITY FUNDS

1. Executive Summary / Recommendations

- 1.1 This Report provides an overview of the current employment landscape and the proposed specific approach of Aberdeenshire Council and the Local Employability Partnership (LEP), which is branded locally as Employment CONNECT, to support individuals across Aberdeenshire who are unemployed.

In particular, the Report outlines the developing No-One Left Behind employability policy between Scottish and Local Government which aims to ensure that employability is aligned and integrated with service delivery at a local level. The Report highlights the increasing role of LEPs in local decision-making and the co-commissioning of local services.

The Report proposes a partnership grant process for employability service delivery, managed by the Council and delivered through the LEP, to ensure that the right employability services are delivered locally.

1.2 The Committee is Recommended to:

1.2.1 Note that the Council has been allocated £2,486,480 in grant funding from the Scottish Government for employability services.

1.2.2 Agree that the current employability grant programme continue until March 2023 pending a review; and agree that a local employability framework be established to replace the current grant programme effective from April 2023.

1.2.3 Agree that the Service will create a provider review framework and produce an Annual Report for Areas and report to ISC every 6 months.

1.2.4 Note that, in terms of the Financial Regulations, the Head of Planning & Economy has delegated authority to approve, allocate and award these grants following consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Spokesperson.

2 Decision-Making Route

- 2.1 Employability is a key priority of both local and national government. It is recognised as a major contributor to both local economic development and financial inclusion work to tackle poverty and deprivation.

3 Discussion

- 3.1 The Partnership Working Framework, signed by both Scottish Government and the 32 local authorities, is a new collective approach to employability where the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) work in

partnership to positively shape employability provision nationally and to deliver it locally via LEPs. The LEP will support redesigned services so that those in need are better placed to realise their potential, better able to find ways into paid work thereby reducing both dependency and inequality. The partnership model includes third sector agencies, employability providers and representatives of vulnerable community groups.

- 3.1.1 The LEP is well established and works across Aberdeenshire offering employability provision in a proactive and responsive manner to fit local need. The Aberdeenshire LEP has worked hard to build positive relationships between all providers in the area, a fact highlighted to Scottish Government in a recent survey.
- 3.1.2 The employability focus for the Aberdeenshire LEP is on those furthest from the labour market and those under-employed, as guided by the Scottish Government's No-One Left Behind (NOLB). There are plans for greater alignment and integration of employability services across local authority areas.
- 3.1.3 Aberdeenshire Council remains the accountable body for the employability grant funding from Scottish Government, with the expectation that the grant funding of £2,486,479.81 will be held for both Council led and co-commissioned services where partners work together e.g., within a locality. This ensures funding is spread throughout the range of local partners with the LEP directing where services are required.
- 3.1.4 In summary, the employability agenda is changing significantly over the next two years. The role of the LEP is evolving to have a greater focus on local decision making and the co-commissioning of services to private and third sector providers in the area.
- 3.1.5 A key element of the new approach to employability in Scotland is to ensure that the resources coming to a local authority area are distributed to best effect through a co-commissioned process by the LEP.
- 3.1.6 As well as establishing the Aberdeenshire Employability Grant Programme, a nationally devised, local government procurement framework for the commissioning of employability services has been developed with Scotland Excel. This procurement framework is now ready ahead of schedule and is available to be used in addition to the proposed grant programme.
- 3.1.7 At the time of writing this report, the Scottish Government funds allocated to employability service delivery in Aberdeenshire for 2022-23 totals £4,371,000. These funds will be split between commissioned services and payments to partners
- £1,884,304 is held in reserves at the end of 2021-22 for use in 2022-23 which includes £1,488,304 available for Young Person's Guarantee, £124,000 for No One Left Behind and a further £272,000 for the Parental Employment Support Fund and is to allocated to Partners

£2,486,480 is new grant funding allocations for 2022-23, and is available for commissioned services as follows:

- Young Persons Guarantee: £583,128 for 2022-23 activity (services for young people 16-24)
- Parental Employability Support Fund: £276,000 for 2022-23 activity (all age service provision for parents both in work, under-employed and unemployed)

- Long Term Unemployed (LTU): £960,000 which is 96 jobs within the third and public sectors. Combined two-year funding for 2021-23. 76 posts created (27 3rd sector and 49 Council).

No One Left Behind: £667,351 in 2022-23. (All age, all stage). NOLB includes Aberdeenshire Employability Agreement (AEA) for 16-18 school leavers not in a positive destination.

- 3.1.8 It is proposed to continue to use the current Aberdeenshire employability grants programme to award grants for the delivery of employability services during the period from April 2022 to end March 2023.
- 3.1.9 During this period the LEP will review ongoing arrangements with a view to creating a local framework for applications or pursuing a joint approach with Aberdeen City with whom we share providers.
- 3.2 A local framework will identify the specific target groups and priority areas, the types of provision required, the types of outcomes and impacts being aimed for, and any special requirements of the funding sources being used to finance the process. The framework will allow providers to come forward with their own ideas and suggestions for new services and provisions while addressing areas of particular need or gaps in locality provision. It will also promote inclusion and ensure those furthest from the labour market are proactively targeted and supported into sustainable employment.
- 3.2.1 An Assessment Panel of LEP members (as described below) and Council Officers will manage the assessment and scoring following the approved Fairer Aberdeenshire Fund process of Application, scoring Panel, decision to award or not.
- 3.2.2 Each application will be scored by at least three separate individuals from the Assessment Panel who then meet to agree a moderated score with comments. The moderated score is then presented to the full Assessment Panel for further comments on strategic fit and moderation if required.
- 3.2.3 Membership of the Assessment Panel will be drawn from strategic partner organisations represented on the LEP including:
- DWP
 - Skills Development Scotland
 - NHS/H&SCP
 - North East Scotland College
 - Council Services.
- 3.2.4 The LEP will make recommendations to the Head of Planning & Economy, who shall thereafter consult with the Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Spokesperson in line with the requirements of the Financial Regulations. .
- 3.2.5 Following recommended best practice, key stakeholders and potential bidders have been consulted and are in favour of this approach.

3.2.6 Regular progress will be reported through the Community Planning Partnership via its Tackling Poverty & Inequalities group and a review of the grant process, and suggestions for any further grant programme, will be reported to a future Committee Meeting.

4. Council Priorities, Implications & Risk

4.1 The following Council Priorities are relevant to the report.

Pillar	Priority
Our People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient Communities

They are underpinned by the principles of right people, right places, right time; and tackling poverty and inequalities.

4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply of the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	x		
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	x		
Climate Change and Sustainability		x	
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		x	

4.3 There are no financial or staffing implications.

4.4 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included **as Appendix 1** and there is a positive impact which in summary gives our citizens greater opportunities for employment, training and education resulting in better health and life opportunities.

4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: ACORP006 Reputation Management, if employability programmes were not delivered ACORP005 Working with Partners, failure to deliver programmes, These risks will be mitigated through the provide review framework.

4.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter of a Strategic Level: No Risk

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this Report and their comments are incorporated within the Report and are satisfied that the Report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Sections F.1.1b as it is a policy and resource matter related to Economic Development.

Alan Wood
Director of Environment & Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by: Ewen Allardyce, Employability Co-ordinator,
Date: 2nd May 2022

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – Employability Strategic Framework

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Local Employability Partnership

Assessment ID	IIA-000636
Lead Author	Ewen Allardyce
Additional Authors	Angela Hood
Service Reviewers	Gary Hughes
Subject Matter Experts	Kakuen Mo
Approved By	Alan Wood
Approved On	Tuesday May 17, 2022
Publication Date	Wednesday May 18, 2022

1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

Integrated assessment for Employment CONNECT No One Left Behind employability funding

During screening 2 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 1 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

In total there are 16 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 0 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated. The impact on 3 groups is not known, information is provided in the detailed sections of this document.

A detailed action plan with 2 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by alan.wood@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	No
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	No
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy reduce inequality of outcome?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	No

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Not Required
Climate Change and Sustainability	Not Required
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	No Negative Impacts Identified
Health Inequalities	Not Required
Town Centre's First	Not Required

4. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

4.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)	Yes			
Age (Older)	Yes			
Disability	Yes			
Race	Yes			
Religion or Belief				Yes
	Will find out by: This data will not be identified.			
Sex	Yes			
Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes			
Sexual Orientation				Yes
	Will find out by: This data will not be identified.			
Gender Reassignment				Yes
	Will find out by: This data will not be identified.			
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Yes			

4.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income	Yes			
Low wealth	Yes			
Material deprivation	Yes			
Area deprivation	Yes			
Socioeconomic background	Yes			

4.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Older)	The ability to retrain or upskill for gaining either promotion or new employment. Promoting self worth and wellbeing by becoming engaged in their future. Ability to gain employment if long term unemployed.
Age (Younger)	Through opportunities to be in a positive destination young people can gain a foothold into employment, training or education .

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Younger)	<p>Young people leaving school with no positive destination have an opportunity through an Aberdeenshire Employment Activity to gain further skills for the world of work.</p> <p>Young poele have an opportunity to enter training on a 6 month programme or can enter straight into an apprenticeship with assistance from the Employment CONNECT partners.</p>
Disability	<p>Programmes are designed specifically to assist people with disability as a barrier to employment. Partner service providers are specialists in this area of work.</p>
Disability	<p>The ability to retrain or upskill for gaining either promotion or new employment with a provider who is a specialist in certain areas of disability and can enhance the provision and help given to each client. Promoting self worth and wellbeing by becoming engaged in their future with workers who understand their particular needs. Ability to gain employment if long-term unemployed through dedicated provision and assistance.</p>
Marriage or Civil Partnership	<p>Through increasing opportunities and access to employability and other services for families experiencing low income, highliving costs and limited employment opportunities.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>By increasing opportunities and access to services for those families with high costs, low income and access to limited employment opportunities. Using the Financial Health Check pathways to target those who are pregnant or have child under 1 by referring to the financial inclusion partnership.</p>
Race	<p>By increasing opportunities and access to services for those families with high costs, low income and access to limited employment opportunities.</p>
Sex	<p>through training and assistance in upskilling, retraining or core employability skills assistance, gender ceases to be a barrier to employment.</p>
Area deprivation	<p>Through more people being economically active the chances of improving the locality outlook are good.</p>
Area deprivation	<p>many areas of deprivation are bogged down in high unemployment, poor travel connectivity, poorer housing and opportunities. Through working as a partnership, not only with employability partners but other agencies such as housing, social work, criminal justice, DWP, education, community learning, 3rd sector and local groups we can collectively help an area start to thrive. Deprivation his not one circumstance but many and as such needs to be tackled holistically.</p>
Low income	<p>Opportunity to gain skills and either increase work opportunities or impact positively on under-employment and promotion opportunities</p>

Impact Area	Impact
Low income	The ability to retrain or upskill for gaining either promotion or new employment. Promoting self worth and wellbeing by becoming engaged in their future gives people the belief they can achieve better. Ability to gain employment if long term unemployed and come of benefits to earn more money and help come out of the low income bracket.
Low wealth	By increasing opportunities and access to services for those families with high costs, low income and access to limited employment opportunities.
Material deprivation	By increasing opportunities and access to services for those families with high costs, low income and access to limited employment opportunities. Further, by increasing access to services this will help close the inequalities gap and support an improved quality of life.
Socioeconomic background	By increasing opportunities and access to services for those families with high costs, low income and access to limited employment opportunities. Accessing the lived experience forum to help address the challenges of living in poverty and help those who experience inequality first hand in order to address services and ensure they are there when needed.

4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Data	Scottish Government	Work is seen as a major driver of bringing people out of poverty	Through employment people's self worth is raised, their mental health and wellbeing are in a better lace. The impact of working and earning to provide for themselves and/or family is fulfilling and beneficial.
Internal Data	Employment Support Team	Data and client feedback shows the benefit of good assistance in gaining employment and the feeling of self-respect and worth is heightened by gaining a job.	Unemployment can lead to mental health issues, money worries, lower self-esteem. Gaining employment helps change these viewpoints.

4.5. Engagement with affected groups

Most of our client referrals come through DWP and as such they are engaged directly with clients.

From the employability partnership clients are face-to-face, and help in the form the service takes to help them. We ask, where are you now, where do you want to go and how can we help you get there. National and local lived experience are consulted.

4.6. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

Specialist provision is offered based on the clients needs as we offer a client-centred approach

to employability. Lived experience and national lived experience all feed into the types of provision offered.

4.7. Evidence of engagement

National Customer Charter, Shared Measurement Framework have all had lived experience groups feed into the resulting output. Locally, as a person-centred employability service our clients feedback information, they help design the intervention they receive.

4.8. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

The service is about helping people into employment, training, education or volunteering. There is always an option for a client and there is no time limit on how long to get them where they wish to be.

4.9. Improving Relations

The Employment CONNECT partnership goes a long way to doing this but talking and communicating with the local community is always the best way to do so. We use social media to gain a lot of traction in localities.

4.10. Opportunities of Equality

Through employment the risks of inequality are diminished, through training and upskilling the ability to advance within a workplace is enhanced as is the ability to gain other employment.

5. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details
Chair of Employment CONNECT partnership	<p>Lead Officer Ewen Allardyce</p> <p>Repeating Activity Yes</p> <p>Frequency Every two months</p> <p>Duration 2 hours.</p> <p>Expected Outcome Better designed action plans for local people and more aligned employability services for Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>Resource Implications Employment Support Team personnel resource covers this.</p>
Review and Audit of Grant Funding application, outcomes and provision performance.	<p>Lead Officer Angela Hood</p> <p>Repeating Activity No</p> <p>Planned Start Friday April 01, 2022</p> <p>Planned Finish Friday March 31, 2023</p> <p>Expected Outcome Goals achieved</p> <p>Resource Implications Staff time.</p>

APPENDIX 2

LOCAL EMPLOYABILITY PARTNERSHIP (LEP) STRATEGIC FUNDING FRAMEWORK 2022-2023

Introduction

This strategic framework outlines the areas of investment and the governance structure which will be used to allocate and monitor all Scottish Government Employability funding.

Governance

The Scottish Government employability funding lies within Economic Development budgets. The allocation of the funding requires agreement from Infrastructure Services Committee as the policy committee responsible for this agenda. In line with the Aberdeenshire Tackling Poverty Action Plan, there will be consultation with the Communities Committee to ensure an aligned approach.

The Community Planning Partnership's 'Tackling Poverty & Inequalities' group produce an annual report which outlines the outcomes and added value from existing resources and outlines the programme for the next year. Employability is seen as a major tool in reducing Poverty and Inequality and is featured within the Report.

The Local Employability Partnership uses a partnership approach when allocating funding through the use of a Project Assessment Group. This is a partnership working group which meets as required to assess Employability bids and operates in a similar way to the Fairer Aberdeenshire Fund. This process helps ensure there is no duplicate funding of commissioned services to address Employability or Poverty & Inequalities issues in Aberdeenshire.

The proposal is to use this group to assess applications or proposals for allocating the £2,486,480 financial resources within the headings and amounts outlined below.

Wherever possible projects will be co-designed/co-delivered with communities and a rights-based approach will underpin development. In line with Aberdeenshire Council's Financial Regulations 415.7b, this Grant scheme will be managed through officer delegation with six monthly update reporting to ISC and an Annual Report to Areas.

Principles of Investment

When agreeing investment through the No One Left Behind Employability funding programme, proposals should:

- Take a person-centred approach to gaining employment, training and/or education;

- Take a strategic, and where appropriate, cross service/partner approach;
- Enable sustainability of projects/activities funded through short term/non-recurring arrangements;
- Facilitate co-production or a participatory budgeting approach;
- Build capacity – to leverage extra funding and support additional;
- Add additionality or sustainability to other funding streams, and in particular, those that are time limited;
- demonstrate a response to issues/opportunities within the community impact assessment;
- Recognise place; and
- Recognise community wealth building pillars.

Focus for Employability Investment

The investment areas will focus on the principle areas listed below which are all recognised as barriers to gaining employment. Other areas will be considered and reviewed.

- Long-term unemployment
- Under-employment
- Those furthest from the labour market
- Single Parents & Parents
- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Disability
- Digital accessibility
- Travel issues

Sectoral Areas of concern (not exhaustive):

- Care & Childcare
- Fishing & Processing
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Construction & Engineering

Sustaining Investment

It is anticipated the areas of employability investment will help support the sustainability of projects.

These projects will have:

- demonstrated positive outcomes from previous work;
- Allowed a level of creativity and innovation to develop new projects and activity

This will help mitigate poorer socio-economic outcomes as a result of the pandemic.

To support sustainability, the LEP will review each project quarterly as per Scottish Government reporting and audit requirements to ensure outcomes and challenges are being met and discussed and on an annual basis when reviewing the 3-year Strategic Plan.