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**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC GROWTH, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE ON 13 APRIL 2021**

**SUBJECT: LOCAL EMPLOYABILITY PARTNERSHIP**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the range of activities and provision being delivered by the local employability partnership
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section II (A) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to long-term financial plans.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee considers the plans and progress on work associated with a range of local employability partnership interventions.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The partners within the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) have been focusing on a range of key areas which support the actions and outcomes outlined in the Economic Recovery Plan. This report is to provide an update on progress with these interventions and associated Scottish and UK Government funding grants that have been awarded to the partnership as a result of Covid19.
- 3.2 The funding offers are specific in terms of the client groups targeted and eligible costs restricted to the provision of key workers, supporting clients and the delivery of the youth guarantee scheme and increasing capacity, opportunity and flexibility for clients. Given the timescales associated with the delivery of this work in response to COVID19 and the Economic Recovery Plan the following actions have been taken.
- 3.3 In Moray, The **Young Person's Guarantee (YPG)** has been launched, we are committed to guarantee the opportunity of a job, placement, training or

volunteering for every 16-24 year old in Moray. The main objectives are to: Prevent and reduce the number of young people entering or remaining unemployed, support more young people to participate in employability programmes, including formal volunteering, increase the number of young people engaged in learning and skills development, increase the number of young people achieving qualifications, reduce levels of in work poverty and support career progression.

- 3.4 Increasing the number of young people accessing apprenticeships and training with a specific focus on equalities groups, supports inclusive sustainable economies by helping to tackle inequalities within the labour market.
- 3.5 The partnership has been allocated 490k from Scottish Government for the Council to take this forward, it is recognised the crucial role local employability partnerships have with this work. We know our young people are some of the hardest hit by the pandemic. This additional funding will ensure they can all get access to the opportunities and support they need.
- 3.6 This has been used to develop the **Moray Employer Recruitment Incentive (MERI) scheme**. This scheme offers up to £8000 to public, private and third sector employers who are able to employ young people over a 12 month supported job placement. The scheme is targeted at young people aged 16-24 who require additional support to progress into work and they must meet at least 2 barriers from our eligibility criteria. Further information is available via this link: <https://moraypathways.co.uk/meri>. We have received over 30 enquires from employers and 15 applications have been returned. We have committed funding for up to 50 places and commencement of placements is dependent on each application but will occur throughout 2021.
- 3.7 In addition to the local MERI scheme above, the UK Government have also launched a job creation scheme called **Kickstart** which is linked to the ambitions of the YPG. Chamber of commerce has been the main gateway organisation and are co-ordinating this universal offer for all 16-24 year olds who are claiming universal credit. They have reported that 132 local employers have applied for a Kickstart place. The places are being advertised by DWP using a phased model, 20 roles have been filled, 14 have started their placement and 6 are due to start in April. Moray Council made economic recovery funding available to pay living wage on 15 Kickstart placements, Human Resources are working with services to develop these.
- 3.8 The remaining funds have been allocated to enhancing **vital 1:1 keyworker support** delivered by the Moray Council Employability team. This includes providing support to young people out of work and those in-work via the MERI scheme. In the previous quarter, the team have received 46 Referrals to the team, 15 Adult learners (2 parents) and 31 young people. 11 learners have progressed into employment, 10 of these into a supported job placement via MERI scheme and 1 into full time employment. A total of 30 have started activities on pathways agreements and this included online learning options.
- 3.9 A **Third Sector Project Officer** who will work with third sector organisations to increase the menu of options available to young people will be funded.

Building capacity to improve the range of volunteering activity, work tasters, industry visits, apprenticeships and supported employment opportunities on offer to young people.

- 3.10 As part of the development of the Young Persons Guarantee, Scottish Government have invested in **local DYW teams** to increase the level of employer engagement in schools and post school. This has resulted in 4 X FTE new DYW Moray school Co-ordinators who are now in post and starting to work across the partnership. DYW Moray and Moray College UHI work in collaboration with education officers to develop the Curriculum supporting vocational and work related opportunities.
- 3.11 **Mentoring Young Talent Programme.** The Moray Council Employability Team received funding from the Care Experienced Attainment fund and via ESF employability funding to develop a mentoring programme for 12-26 year olds. 2 X FTE Co-ordinators work across all 8 Secondary schools with over 45 care experienced young people. 1 X FTE Post School Co-ordinator works with disadvantaged unemployed young people up to the age of 26 years. The programme has already made an impact with our care experienced young people at school. Mentors have indicated significant personal development through being involved in the programme. The mentoring approach works and the need for this type of intervention has been proven, now more than ever this is required due to the mental health impact the pandemic has had on young people.
- 3.12 Finally, the YPG in Moray will provide additional funding for **employability provision** and the partnership are setting up a new employability framework for public, private and third sector providers to sign up to. In planning activity, the Moray Council will exploit their scope and potential as employers, service providers and procurers and as an anchor institution with their Community Planning Partners look to maximise the economic impact for Young People. There will be a range of activities delivered, directly, in partnership or through commissioned local providers which will include some of the following:
- Youth Work
  - Formal Volunteering opportunities
  - Work Placements
  - Supported Employment
  - Skills Training
  - Mental Health Support
  - Digital Capacity Building
  - Digital Equipment
  - Accredited Training
  - Self-Employment Support and start-up funding
- 3.13 **Moray Pathways @ the Inkwel** - within our economic recovery plan, the partnership have also identified a need to improve digital poverty and inclusion. The Elgin Youth Development Group as a partner within Moray Pathways employability consortium have agreed to provide dedicated space in the Inkwel and the café area during the day to create a much needed employability and training hub. Funding is being provided by DWP and we have now recruited 2 X Moray Pathways Project Officers, DWP Youth Work

Coaches and a digital literacies project officer to co-ordinate the digital offer to support learners. This project will support all the training providers within the consortium and provide a welcoming environment to deliver 1:1 and group work /skills training for learners of all ages. The Hub is due to open its doors in May 2021.

- 3.14 The partnership are also responsible for driving forward and implementing the shared ambitions and actions of **No One Left Behind** and the response to Covid -19 and Brexit to ensure the right support is available in the right way at the right time. Support for Employability services are pivotal to avoiding the widening of social and economic inequalities by supporting those who are most vulnerable. The Moray Council Employability team have been awarded additional grants to support this vision:
- 3.15 **The Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF)** staff have been recruited to meet the aims to reduce child poverty through the delivery of flexible, responsive and user-led model of employability support for participants both in and out of employment. This support will help participants to access or progress in employment bettering their and their families circumstances, ultimately reducing child poverty rates. The focus is on increasing income for low income families. Some families may have more than one of these family type characteristics and the barriers are higher as a result. For those reasons PESF will focus support to those family types:
- Lone parents
  - Families with a disabled parent or child
  - Families with three or more children
  - Minority Ethnic Families
  - Families where the youngest child is under 1 year of age
  - Families where the parents are under 25
- 3.16 **Moray Employer Recruitment Incentive (MERI) for 25-67 year olds.** We are awaiting an announcement from Scottish government with regard to a boost in funding for our MERI scheme to target over 25 year olds. This funding will be specifically directed to our recruitment scheme and will be a much needed boost as furlough ends at end of September 2021. We will provide an update on progress with this at a future date.
- 3.17 **Partnership Approach to Continuing Employment (PACE).** In the period Oct 20 – Mar 21 PACE service has supported 12 local employers who have found themselves facing the risk of redundancy. PACE partners have support 223 individuals during this period. Sectors effected during this period have been Wholesale & retail trade, repair of motor vehicles & motorcycles, Accommodation & Food Services, Education, Human, Health & Social Work activities, Manufacturing and Financial and Insurance activities
- 3.18 **Leaver Initial destinations – Increasing post school participation**  
In 2020, Moray had a very positive, 93.1% measure of young people leaving school securing an initial positive destination. This was an increase from 92.8 % the previous year. Moray has on average seen an improvement; with Moray performing above the Northern Alliance and broadly in line with the national average for session 2019/20. As a result of much work being

undertaken the Moray data has improved, with Moray now being positioned 14<sup>th</sup> out of 32 local authorities. The Annual Participation Measure for all 16-19 year olds in 2020 was 93.5%, a 2.2 percentage point (pp) increase compared to 2019 (91.3%) and 1.4 pp higher than the national rate (92.1%). We are working as a partnership to establish how we collate data for all 16- 24 years because the pandemic has resulted in a huge increase in universal credit claimants within the 18-24 age group.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

The Council led local employability partnership activities will contribute to achieve the Corporate Plan priority to promote economic development and growth, also the LOIP priority of a growing and sustainable economy and in particular to the focus on targeted approaches to those furthest from the job market.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

The Council considers support for economic development issues on their merits, against the objective to facilitate sustainable economic growth and the desired outcomes of the Ten Year Plan and Corporate Plan.

**(c) Financial implications**

The work provided through the employability partnership is funded through Scottish Government programmes, the funding associated with no one left behind and young persons guarantee funding is specific in terms of the client group to be supported and the manner in which support can be provided.

**(d) Risk Implications**

As with all grant funding streams, there is a requirement for monitoring and reporting against targets and inappropriate spend would be at risk of clawback.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

The Moray Council employability team has increased from 6 X FTE workers to 16 X FTE staff, including keyworkers and project officers associated with the funding received. Posts associated with the funding are temporary.

**(f) Property**

No property implications arising from this report

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

The projects contribute to tackling inequalities in our communities.

**(h) Consultations**

Consultation has taken place with the partners within the Local Employability Partnership, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Economic Growth and

Development, the Legal Services Manager, the Property Resources Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Head of Financial Services and the Democratic Services Manager have been consulted and comments received have been incorporated into the report.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 The report provides an update on plans and progress on work associated with a range of local employability partnership interventions**

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Background Papers: Moray Economic Recovery Plan filed in Environmental Services, Economic Growth & Regeneration Section

Ref: SPMAN-813460984-99