Purpose of the Report

1. To provide members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with background information on the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) for County Durham, the DurhamWorks Programme, prior to an update presentation by Linda Bailey; Strategic Lead: Progression and Learning; Children and Young People’s Services.

Background

2. Members will recall that at the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 10th September, 2013 an overview presentation was provided to members on the EU Structural and Investment Funding Programme 2014-20 which included some detail in relation to YEI.

3. It was requested by members at that meeting that the committee receive a presentation on YEI at a future meeting as this was the first strand of EU funding available to be accessed. Arrangements were therefore made for an overview presentation to be provided to the committee focusing on YEI at the meeting on 22 January 2014 with further updates provided at the meetings on the 30 October, 2014 and the 29 September, 2015 on the development of the DurhamWorks Programme. In addition, members of the Skills Development Scrutiny Review Group have received further updates on the progress of the DurhamWorks Programme as part of the review project in February and March 2016.

4. As part of the refresh of the work programme for 2016/17 members requested that further updates be provided to the committee on the progress/development of the DurhamWorks Programme. Arrangements have been made for Linda Bailey; Strategic Lead: Progression and Learning to attend the meeting on the 26 September to deliver a presentation focusing on:
   • The DurhamWorks Programme Delivery Model;
   • Programme Outputs and Current Performance;
   • Examples of young people who are being supported by the DurhamWorks Programme;
   • Marketing and Communications.
DurhamWorks Programme - Youth Employment Initiative

5. The YEI was created by the European Council to tackle youth unemployment across member states. In the United Kingdom, a number of areas were identified as being eligible for funding, including County Durham.

6. The total funding available to support unemployed young people resident in County Durham is £17.04m. This consists of £6.39m YEI funding, £6.39m from the European Social Fund, and £4.26m of required match funding.

7. It was originally envisaged that the required match funding would be provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and/or the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). However, both the DWP and SFA subsequently confirmed that they would be unable to provide match funding. Therefore, Durham County Council decided to lead a partnership bid, called the DurhamWorks Programme, out of concern that the funding could have been lost to County Durham.

8. In January 2016, approval was received for the DurhamWorks Programme. The Programme targets young people aged 16-24 who are unemployed and resident in County Durham. There are 20 Delivery Partners in total, consisting of 4 Durham County Council services and 16 external organisations. They are supplemented by specialist and targeted provision that can be procured to meet identified need. Delivery of the Programme is until July 2018.

Progress to Date

9. Delivery of the DurhamWorks Programme commenced in April 2016 and significant progress has already been made, as follows:
   - A DurhamWorks central team has been recruited and individuals are now in post;
   - Service Level Agreements are in place with 20 Delivery Partners;
   - An Employment Engagement Strategy is in place;
   - A comprehensive marketing and communications plan has been developed and is currently being implemented. This includes a DurhamWorks website and a DurhamWorks Facebook page.
   - Extensive performance management and quality assurance systems are in place, supported by a recently procured data management system (Hanlon) which is utilised by all Delivery Partners.

10. A project inception meeting has taken place with DWP (who are the Managing Authority for ESF / Youth Employment Initiative) and the feedback in relation to DurhamWorks systems and processes was very positive. The first claim has been submitted to DWP and Delivery Partners are awaiting confirmation of payment.
Programme Outputs

11. The outputs for the DurhamWorks Programme are as follows:
   - 5830 unemployed, long-term unemployed, inactive participants;
   - 3777 participants who are in education or training, gain a qualification or are in employment, including self-employment upon leaving;
   - 1982 participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving.
   - 875 participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an Apprenticeship or a Traineeship six months after leaving.

12. The number of participants engaged on the DurhamWorks Programme (as at 12th September 2016) is 1268. Of these, 56% are in the 16-18 age category and 44% are in the 19-25 category. In terms of gender, 62% are male and 38% are female. 100 participants have progressed into employment opportunities, of which 46 have progressed into DurhamWorks generated opportunities.

Programme Governance

13. Due to the strategic importance of the DurhamWorks Programme, governance is overseen by the Improving Progression Executive Group of the Children, Young People and Families Partnership and the Business Enterprise and Skills Group of the County Durham Economic Partnership. Challenge, support and control are also provided by Durham County Council’s internal audit, procurement and finance services.

14. A Strategic Partnership has been established to oversee delivery of the DurhamWorks Programme, with representatives from Jobcentre Plus, the Federation of Small Businesses, the Wise Group (who are leading a Big Lottery Fund programme called Talent Match North East), Newcastle City Council (who are leading the Generation North East programme), Durham Community Action (representing the voluntary sector), Bishop Auckland College (representing the Further Education sector), and Durham County Council.

15. An Operational Group has been formed, consisting of Delivery Partners. This group meets on a monthly basis and its role is to review performance, identify mechanisms to improve delivery, and develop best practice.

16. Groups to support the ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds) themes of Sustainability, as well as Gender Equality and Equality of Opportunity have also been established.

Voice of Young People

17. In order to ensure the views and opinions of young people who engage in the DurhamWorks Programme are used to refine delivery, a Participant Voice Group has been established. This group will identify ways to effectively access feedback from DurhamWorks participants about what is and what is not working on the Programme.
Conclusion

18. Although there was a delay to the start of the DurhamWorks Programme (as a result of DWP not approving the bid until January 2016 and the YEI Funding Agreement not being signed until March 2016), significant progress has been made to establish and begin delivery of the DurhamWorks Programme. Delivery of the Programme will help to achieve the objective of further reducing the proportion of young people aged 16-24 who are unemployed and resident in County Durham.

Recommendations

19. Members are asked to note and comment upon the information provided within the report and during the presentation.

20. That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to receive further progress reports on the delivery of the DurhamWorks Programme at a future meeting of the committee.

21. That members of the Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to future meetings of the committee when an update on the DurhamWorks Programme is included on the agenda.

Background Papers:


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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – DWP’s claims process was delayed. The first DurhamWorks claim was made on 4th August 2016 and Delivery Partners are currently awaiting payment.

Staffing – None.

Risk – A risk register has been completed and is regularly reviewed.

Equality and Diversity – None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – None

Procurement – None

Disability Discrimination Act – None

Legal Implications – None