

**Economy and Enterprise
Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**



13 January 2017

**DurhamWorks Programme –
Youth Employment Initiative**

**Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of
Transformation and Partnerships and Margaret Whellans,
Interim Corporate Director of Children and Young People's
Services.**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the DurhamWorks Programme - Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), 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 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 received further updates on the progress of the DurhamWorks Programme as part of the evidence for the review at meetings of the review group held 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 of the DurhamWorks Programme. As a result, Linda Bailey; Strategic Lead: Progression and Learning attended the meeting on the 26 September 2016. Linda will be attending the meeting on 13 January 2017 to deliver a presentation focusing on: progress and challenges to date, programme outputs, financial performance, marketing and communications, employer engagement strategy; subcontractor framework; and programme evaluation.

The DurhamWorks Programme

- 5 The DurhamWorks Programme is a European funded, Durham County Council led partnership project that supports young people aged 16-24 who are NEET / unemployed and resident in 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.

Progress to Date

- 7 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee were informed at the meeting on 26 September 2016 that delivery of the DurhamWorks Programme had commenced in April 2016 (after final approval had been received from the Department for Work and Pensions, following a delay); a DurhamWorks central team had been recruited; Service Level Agreements were in place with 16 External Delivery Partners and 4 Durham County Council Delivery Partners; and a Subcontractor Framework had been established which enables the procurement of specialist and targeted provision to enhance the DurhamWorks Programme.
- 8 However, there have also been a number of unforeseen challenges, including a delay in payment being received from the Department for Work and Pensions for delivery of the Programme to date; the late introduction of a requirement by the Department for Work and Pensions that, at the start, all DurhamWorks participants must have extensive and verified evidence of their eligibility for the Programme; as well as a delay in the data management system (Hanlon) being fully operational.
- 9 As a result of the resilience and determination of DurhamWorks staff, a number of these challenges have been overcome, thus enabling continued progress to be made in a number of key areas, as follows:
 - (a) **Employer Engagement** – An Employer Engagement Strategy has been developed which includes targets for employment and Apprenticeship opportunities to be created in order to enable DurhamWorks participants to progress into the labour market. A comprehensive Employer Support Pack is being produced, to underpin employer engagement activities. DurhamWorks is liaising closely with Business Durham and Regeneration and Local Services to enhance the employer offer.
 - (b) **Learning, Working, Earning Grant** – A number of employers are benefitting from a DurhamWorks ‘Learning, Working, Earning’ Grant to the value of up to £5,000 to support the employment of each DurhamWorks participant. 61 grant applications have been approved to date and it is expected that this number will increase significantly in due course as a result of increased employer engagement activity.
 - (c) **Subcontractor Framework** – Following a process to identify gaps in existing DurhamWorks delivery, new specialist provision is commencing from January 2017 onwards. This is targeted at specific

vulnerable groups of young people e.g. young people living in rural isolation; young people aged 18-24 years of age who are disengaged from all support services, including Jobcentre Plus; and young people who have Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities.

- (d) **Marketing and Communications** – The first DurhamWorks marketing campaign took place in October 2016 over a four week period. This was targeted in areas of County Durham that have the highest proportion of young people who are NEET / unemployed. The focus was on making the DurhamWorks brand more recognisable to potential participants. As a result of this activity, there has been a significant increase in the number of enquiries received about the Programme. A new marketing campaign is commencing in January 2017 that is targeting employers. Also, a DurhamWorks Facebook page is now 'live' and is being used by Advisors and Delivery Partners to engage with potential participants. A new DurhamWorks website will be 'live' from the end of January 2017 onwards.
- (e) **Participant Voice** – A Participant Task Group has been established, in order to ensure that the views and opinions of young people who engage in DurhamWorks are captured and utilised in order to inform future delivery of the Programme. To this end, the Group has developed an online survey and participant focus groups are also being established.
- (f) **Programme Evaluation** – A methodology for evaluating DurhamWorks has been developed in conjunction with Durham University and procurement of this research project is currently being undertaken. This will seek to capture the economic impact of the Programme and the expectation is that evaluation will commence in March 2017.

Programme Outputs

- 10 The overall target is to engage 5,830 young people into the DurhamWorks Programme. As of 14 December 2016 there were 2,179 participants registered on the Programme, of which 1100 had been verified as eligible. In terms of age and gender of verified participants, 44% are 16-18 years of age and 56% are 19-25 years of age. 62% are male; 38% are female.
- 11 Following the introduction of the requirement that all DurhamWorks participants must have verified evidence of their eligibility for the Programme, a robust process for gathering and verifying participant eligibility has been developed. It is, therefore, expected that this will result in the number of DurhamWorks participants with verified evidence of their eligibility increasing significantly over the coming weeks. Further information will be provided in the presentation to accompany this report.

Financial Performance

- 12 Although the delay in payment being received from the Department for Work and Pensions for the delivery of the Programme has created a challenge in

terms of managing the financial performance of the Programme, confidence remains that the entire £17.04m Programme will be successfully delivered by July 2018.

- 13 The total project funding claimed to the end of Quarter 3 (September 2016) is £2,295,528. This is marginally ahead (£7151) of the re-profile of expenditure to the end of September 2016 of £2,288,377.

Future of the Youth Employment Initiative

- 14 There may be additional funding available for the Youth Employment Initiative, as a result of the decline in the value of sterling vis-à-vis the Euro in recent months. The Department for Works and Pensions has indicated that it will be confirmed in spring 2017 as to whether there is additional funding for the DurhamWorks Programme.

Conclusion

- 15 As this report outlines, significant progress continues to be made in delivering a successful DurhamWorks Programme, which is already resulting in more young people aged 16-24 who are NEET / unemployed being supported into education, employment and training.

Recommendations

- 16 Members are asked to note and comment upon the information provided within the report and during the presentation.
- 17 That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to receive further progress reports on the delivery of the DurhamWorks Programme at future meetings of the committee.
- 18 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:

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Report – YEI – update - 26 September 2016.

Contact:	Linda Bailey	Tel:	01325 375 940
		E-mail:	linda.bailey@durham.gov.uk
Author:	Stephen Crass	Tel:	01325 375 944
		E-mail:	stephen.crass@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The Department for Work and Pension’s claims process has been delayed. The first DurhamWorks claim was made on 4th August 2016 and Durham County Council and Delivery Partners were expecting payment by the end of December 2016.

Staffing – N/A

Risk – A risk register is regularly reviewed.

Equality and Diversity – N/A

Accommodation – N/A

Crime and Disorder – N/A

Human Rights – N/A

Consultation – N/A

Procurement – N/A

Disability Discrimination Act –N/A

Legal Implications – N/A