

## **Cabinet**

**18 January 2017**



### **DurhamWorks Programme - Youth Employment Initiative**

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#### **Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Margaret Whellans, Interim Corporate Director of Children  
and Young People's Services**

**Councillor Ossie Johnson, Portfolio Holder of Children and  
Young People's Services**

**Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local  
Services**

**Councillor Neil Foster, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic  
Regeneration**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of Cabinet with an update on the DurhamWorks Programme - Youth Employment Initiative.

#### **Background**

- 2 The DurhamWorks Programme is a European funded, Durham County Council led partnership project that supports young people aged 16 to 24 who are NEET/unemployed and resident in County Durham.
- 3 Delivery of the project commenced in April 2016 (after final approval had been received from the Department for Work and Pensions, following a delay) and significant progress has already been made, including: the recruitment of a DurhamWorks central team; the establishment of Service Level Agreements with 16 External Delivery Partners and 4 Durham County Council Delivery Partners; as well as the creation of a Subcontractor Framework which enables the procurement of specialist and targeted provision to enhance the DurhamWorks Programme.
- 4 There have also been a number of unforeseen challenges that have impacted on delivery of the Programme. However, as a result of the resilience and determination of DurhamWorks colleagues, a number of these challenges have been overcome. These challenges have included delays in payment being received from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for delivery of the Programme (with the first payment not being received until December 2016); the late introduction of a requirement by DWP 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.

## **Programme Outputs**

- 5 The overall target is to engage 5,830 young people into the DurhamWorks Programme. As of 9th January 2017, there were 2,247 participants registered on the Programme, of which 1,205 had been verified as eligible. In the DurhamWorks application, which was submitted in September 2015, the original target was to register 2,915 young people (verified as eligible) by the end of 2016. However, following the delayed start to the Programme, a request has been made to the Department for Work and Pensions to reduce this target to 1,000 young people (registered and verified as eligible) by the end of 2016. 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. The DurhamWorks Programme is already supporting a significant number of young people and employers, as illustrated by the Case Studies contained within this report (see Appendix 2: DurhamWorks Case Studies).

## **Financial Performance**

- 6 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.
- 7 The total expenditure to the end of Quarter 3 is £2,297,060 (consisting of £1,862,972 salary costs, £154,640 other direct costs and £279,445 indirect overhead expenditure). This is behind the approved profile of expenditure to the end of September 2016 of £5,809,142, based on the original expenditure profile agreed with the Department for Work and Pensions. The programme has been reprofiled and approval of this is expected shortly from DWP. This underspend is mainly due to the continued impact of the delay in approval of the DurhamWorks Programme.
- 8 The total cumulative match spend to the end of Quarter 3 is £573,911.58.

## **Marketing and Communications**

- 9 The first DurhamWorks marketing campaign commenced in October 2016 for an initial four-week period. This targeted 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. There will be a further marketing campaign commencing in January 2017 that will target employers.
- 10 A DurhamWorks Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/durhamworks](http://www.facebook.com/durhamworks)) is now 'live' and is being used by Advisors and Delivery Partners to engage with potential participants. Although there is an interim website in place ([www.durhamworks.info](http://www.durhamworks.info)), a new DurhamWorks website is currently being

developed and will 'go live' from January 2017 onwards. Further development work is also taking place to produce digital materials that will have a strong employer focus.

### **Participant Voice**

- 11 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 is developing an online survey that will be launched in the next few weeks. Participant focus groups are also being established.

### **Employer Engagement Strategy**

- 12 An Employer Engagement Strategy has been developed which includes targets for the number of jobs and Apprenticeships that need to be created in order to enable DurhamWorks participants to progress into the labour market. In addition to supporting 1,651 young people into existing opportunities, the programme aims to create an additional 1,651 opportunities consisting of 433 jobs, 893 apprenticeships and 325 traineeship positions. £1.5m has been allocated to support in the region of 380 small to medium enterprises to create opportunities. The DurhamWorks Learning, Working, Earning Grant is being administered through the County Durham Community Foundation and at 9th January, 80 grants had been awarded.
- 13 A comprehensive Employer Support Pack is being produced, to underpin employer engagement activities. DurhamWorks is liaising closely with Business Durham to enhance the employer offer.
- 13 Business Advisors for the Durham Works programme are hosted by the Employability team and work closely with Business Durham and external business support agencies to maximise the support to business and ensure appropriate young people are put forward for Job opportunities. This process includes joint case conferencing, presentations to the Business Park community networks and joint company visits where appropriate.
- 14 Initial feedback from businesses has been positive reflecting the benefits of the preparatory work undertaken with clients before referring for interview and the opportunities for tailored packages of support for both young people and business. However, there remain instances of a mismatch between location / availability, skills and employment aspirations of some of the young people which will be addressed through the remainder of the programme.

### **Subcontractor Framework**

- 15 Following a process to identify gaps in existing DurhamWorks provision, it is expected that new specialist learning provision will commence delivery from January 2017 onwards. This will be targeted at specific vulnerable groups of young people e.g. young people living in rural isolation, and young people who have committed serious offences.

## **Programme Evaluation**

- 16 A methodology for evaluating the DurhamWorks Programme has been developed in conjunction with Durham University and procurement of this research project is currently being undertaken. The expectation is that evaluation of DurhamWorks will commence in April 2017.

## **Future of Youth Employment Initiative**

- 17 A recent communication from the European Commission<sup>1</sup> highlights the main achievements of the Youth Employment Initiative since its launch in 2013, in terms of providing direct targeted support to young people who are NEET / unemployed residing in areas with high rates of youth unemployment. As a result of progress made to date, the European Commission is proposing to extend delivery of the Youth Employment Initiative to 2020, by providing an additional €2 billion (€1 billion Youth Employment Initiative, matched by €1 billion European Social Fund). However, although it is encouraging that the Youth Employment Initiative is likely to be extended beyond the current end date of July 2018, the uncertainty engendered by the EU referendum result and the ensuing process to leave the European Union, means that there are no guarantees at this stage that any additional funding will be directed towards the DurhamWorks Programme.

## **Conclusion**

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

## **Recommendations**

- 19 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (a) note the information contained within this report;
  - (b) continue to monitor performance in relation to delivery of the DurhamWorks Programme.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative Three years On - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions' (October 2016).

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**Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – The Department for Work and Pension’s claims process has resulted in payments to the programme being delayed with the first payment being made in December 2016.

**Staffing** – None.

**Risk** – A risk register 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

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## Appendix 2: DurhamWorks Case Studies

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Rachael is visually impaired and has a real passion for equality. She accessed the ACT (Adviceline Call Training) programme with Citizens Advice County Durham through DurhamWorks, in order to gain work experience and develop her skills for employment. She is very positive about the support she has received through DurhamWorks and commented, 'I've never before had the opportunity of working in a real work environment...you showed that you are willing to help, no matter what.' Rachael has subsequently started a law course at East Durham College and her longer term goal is to become a Human Rights Lawyer. Work experience at a firm of solicitors is being organised for her.



Lucy engaged with the DurhamWorks Programme to develop her social skills, confidence and self-esteem.

Her Transition Advisor has helped Lucy to apply for Apprenticeships and prepare for interviews.

Following a successful work trial, she has been taken on as an Apprentice. Lucy has settled in well and is enjoying her new job.

The DurhamWorks delivery model ensures that Lucy will continue to receive on-going support for the duration of the Programme.



Weardale Adventure Centre is a provider of high quality adventure activities and outdoor adventure education. They are a new business, currently in their first year of operation. Lewis, a recent school leaver from the local area, approached the Centre to ask if there were any Apprenticeships. Recognising his potential, the Centre worked with a DurhamWorks Business Advisor to secure funding to support him. Lewis is now undertaking an Apprenticeship as an Outdoor Instructor.



Dunlop BTL is a manufacturer and distributor of bearings, transmissions and linkages for the automotive, industrial, construction and agricultural sectors. The company has expanded significantly in recent years and recently acquired new premises in Consett. DurhamWorks Business Advisors have helped the company to recruit new staff and the Managing Director commented, 'DurhamWorks was very helpful in helping us to find the right people for the job.'