

Subject:	Employability	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny	Date:	12 th July 2021
Report of:	Director of Economic Development	Portfolio Holder:	Leader of the Council/ Economic Development
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: n/a
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the content of this report and the progress of measure 5 of the Economic Development Strategy.
1.2	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to feedback on the aspiration for the establishment of an employability youth hub in the borough and the response to the impact on unemployment caused by Covid.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

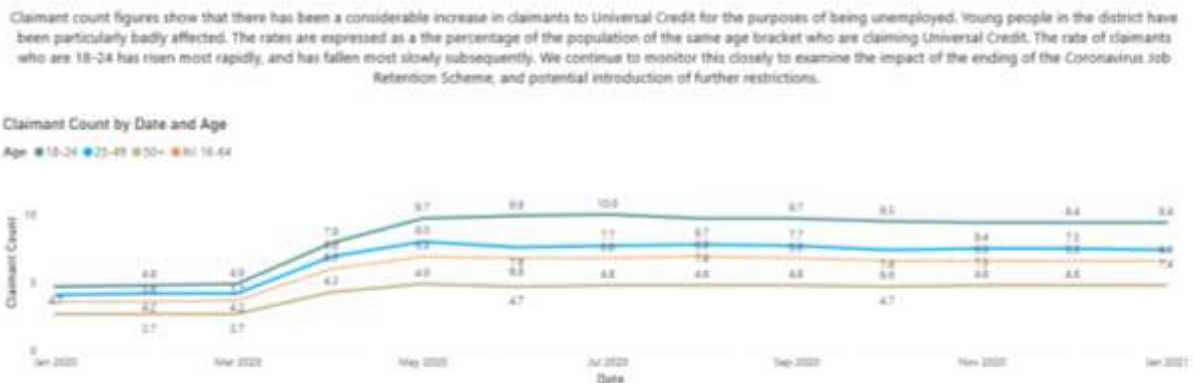
- 2.1 To inform members of the Council's performance in relation to priority 5 of the Economic Development Strategy prior to its determination by the Cabinet.
- 2.2 For information, members should note that the recommendations to Cabinet are as follows:-
- To continue to note employability and skills as a key priority of the Economic Development Strategy, ensuring strong partnerships and well marketed projects so that local residents know the support available to them.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The work carried out and covered by this report links to the following Council Corporate strategic priority:
1. A Thriving local economy
Work with schools, colleges and businesses to match future business opportunities with the right skill provision, to boost the number of apprenticeships and ensure more local people can benefit from local job opportunities.
- 3.2 Ensuring residents and communities reach their full economic potential; enhanced employment, skills and educational opportunities forms Priority 5 of Rossendale Council's Economic Development Strategy 2018. It clearly outlines actions and steps to take to reduce Rossendale's levels of unemployment and the upskilling of local residents.
- 3.3 The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on local residents and businesses, which were unforeseen at the time of developing the Economic Development Strategy. The latest data from the DWP highlights how this has effected local people:

In February 2020, Universal Credit claimants in Rossendale totalled 2978. In April 2021, it was reported a 109% increase in claimants, with a total of 6217 claiming the benefit.

The latest figures show a 101% increase in people between the age of 16-24 looking for work between February 2020 and now. The number of NEETS (not in education, employment or training) is 5% which meets the Lancashire average. The graph below shows that young people have been badly affected by the pandemic.



It is reported that 13% of Rossendale’s residents are still receiving furlough, which is on par with the Lancashire average.

Employability support forms a key action in the business recovery plan produced by Rossendale Borough Council to support both local residents and businesses.

3.4 Rossendale Council has initiated, supported and provided several mechanisms to achieve performance against this priority in the Economic Development Strategy, this has become vital since the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have emerged. These are summarised below:

1. Local Employability and Skills Forum – The Council recognises that the support of partners can add and enhance the offer to local residents currently out of work as well as upskilling those that are currently in a role. In February 2021, the Council set up the first forum, operating under the following objectives:

- Encourage collaboration between partner organisations delivering employability and skills related projects in Rossendale
- Add value to the existing employability and skills provision in Rossendale
- Identify gaps in employment and skills provision in Rossendale

The forum has now held 3 x meetings, with attendance from partners including, Lancashire Adult Learning, Newground, Princes Trust, Burnley FC in the Community, Active Lancashire, DWP, Lancashire Skills Hub, Procure Plus, FED CAP and Christians Against Poverty.

The forum is chaired by Cath Burns, the Director of Economic Development and is supported by various members of the Economic Development team. Key updates are provided by the DWP and the Skills hub, which means that Rossendale’s levels of employability can be assessed regionally and nationally.

2. Rossendale Works Employability Programme- A project in partnership with Active Lancashire and the DWP. The current iteration works with people with extreme barriers to work, very far from the labour market to get them to engage with

services that could support their career pathway.

The current project started in May 2020 and is due to conclude in March 2022. The project total is £141,000 and Rossendale Council contributes £60,000 over the 2-year period.

The project is designed to meet the needs of local people who have been struggling to get into the workplace. It uses the power of sport and excellent partner relationships to provide a holistic approach for local residents. If people are deemed work ready, 4-6 week work experience placements are sought, however in the majority of cases, a lot of work needs to be done to get to this stage.

The project is exceeding its targets, working with over 50 unemployed people, many of which experiencing barriers to work, such as long-term health conditions, being over 50, childcare issues to name just a few.

Below are the agreed targets to achieve by March 2022. There is typically a time lag between people starting on the project and achieving outputs as candidates can take six months from starting the project to finding employment.

	Overall Rossendale works Targets
Total Approved Participants	140
Male	70
Female	70
Unemployed	65
Economically inactive	75
Over 50	20
Ethnic Minority	20
Limiting long-term health condition or disability?	36
Individual in education or training upon leaving	24
Unemployed - Individual in employment upon leaving	20
Individual in employment, 6 months after leaving	31
Inactive individual into employment or jobsearch upon leaving	38
Participants with childcare needs receiving childcare support	15

Since the start of RBC's launch of the employability project, which originally commenced in 2018, the following overall outcomes have been achieved:

302 residents engaging in project
250 in activities
75 placements
90 into employment

- 3. Rossendale Youth Works** – Rossendale has seen a 101% increase in 16-25 year olds claiming Universal Credit between February 2020 and April 2021 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council recognised this and in Summer 2020 applied

for support from the DWP with Active Lancashire to run a specific 12-month programme targeted at this age bracket.

The programme provides one to one support for individuals, helping to overcome potential barriers to get people into the workplace. Outreach and sporting activities take place in the community to engage people in the project and assessments are undertaken.

Partners such as Lancashire Adult Learning, Procure Plus and Burnley FC in the community run specific employability, skills and training workshops on a weekly basis which people enrolled in the project can easily access.

This project is fully funded by the DWP of £50,000 which funds a full-time Officer and the associated project activity spend.

These are the targets for the Rossendale Youth Works programme November 2020 – October 2021:

Outputs for Rossendale Youth	Target
Number of DWP referrals assessed for suitability for project	110
Number of people accessing engagement and employment activities	90
Number of people taking part in work placement opportunities	50
Number moving into employment	20

Since the start of the project:

50 local residents have been accessing the project
19 of these secured a work experience placement
13 are now in a full-time job as a result of our intervention

An animation was created by the Economic Development team which has received national recognition within the DWP and has been shown at various events and platforms to promote the programme to people under the age of 25.

The work of the Council has secured over 100 permanent jobs for local residents in very challenging circumstances.

- 4. Kickstart Gateway Organisation** – The Government launched the national Kickstart scheme, which provides funding for organisations to take 16-25 year olds on for 6 months in work experience positions. In March 2021 Rossendale Council was approved as a gateway organisation, processing applications on behalf of local businesses and helps them to secure 6 month roles for local residents. The Council receives a fee of £300 per person in a placement and a further £1500 if placed in a role at RBC. The Council has so far taken on 6 people through this scheme and is supporting another 17 work experience placement opportunities in Rossendale.

The Kickstart programme has been marketed nationally but in addition to this, the Economic Development team have been actively promoting this to local companies through the business relationship programme, business adviser meetings, the quarterly newsletter and attendance at the relevant business forums. The team have also arranged a Kickstart Livelounge session, presenting the roles and opportunities to young people in Rossendale.

5. Rossendale Youth Hub- On the 1st of June 2021, Rossendale Council cemented its partnership with the DWP to become the 2nd Youth Hub to operate in Lancashire and Cumbria. The hub is designed for residents between 16-25 years old to access a range of services within a single setting. The DWP are now permanently based at Futures Park which gives residents the opportunity to meet with work coaches outside of the job centre. The close proximity to Bacup is already proving successful and in the first week, 28 people accessed the support.

3.5 As well as existing projects, Rossendale Council is looking further into the future and is working on the following initiatives:

- Enterprise Advisors for the local high schools
- Summer employability and skills fair for the general public
- Online careers fair for high school pupils on the Start Platform
- An extension to Rossendale Youth Works with an application to the DWP in summer 2021
- A further iteration of Rossendale Works and an extension of its current format (MPT 1.1 and 1.4)
- An application to the Community renewal fund to evolve the Rossendale Youth Hub Offer in partnership with Active Lancashire
- To seek further opportunities through the Council advertised tenders, the NNDR relief scheme, planning applications and the business support programme.

4. RISK

4.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

5. FINANCE

5.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

6. LEGAL

6.1 No legal implications.

7. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 No policy or equality implications.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 To strengthen the employability offer in Rossendale by continuing to note it as an important priority in the Economic Development Strategy, ensuring each project is well marketed, partnerships are strengthened and that local residents are supported via the various mechanisms.

Background Papers

Document	Place of Inspection - online
Economic Development Strategy	Economic-Development-Strategy-2018-6-Nov-2018-

	ME.pdf (investinrossendale.com)
Cabinet Meeting February 2020	Agendas, reports and minutes Rossendale Borough Council
Cabinet Meeting November 2017	Agendas, reports and minutes Rossendale Borough Council
Media Releases	<p>Youth Hub - Rossendale's working for 16-24 year olds - Rossendale Council News (rossendaleneews.org.uk)</p> <p>Ross Youth Works Release - Employment successes for Rossendale Youth Works - Rossendale Council News (rossendaleneews.org.uk)</p> <p>Rossendale Works- Rossendale Works provides opportunity for Bacup resident to help others - Rossendale Council News (rossendaleneews.org.uk)</p> <p>Employability Forum Launch - Council launch employability forum to help Rossendale residents - Rossendale Council News (rossendaleneews.org.uk)</p>