

Subject:	Rossendale Youth Works	Status:	For publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	10 November 2021
Report of:	Chief Executive	Portfolio Holder:	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. Cabinet to support a Department of Work and Pensions Flexible Support Grant Funding bid of up to £72,000.
- 1.2. To authorise the Monitoring Officer, if successful, to accept the grant and enter into a grant funding agreement with the DWP and extension of the Service Level Agreement with Active Lancashire.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To update members on the Rossendale Youth Works project and consider a funding proposal for approval to extend the project.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Rossendale Youth Works was established in November 2020 to boost employment provision in the borough. The funding for this project comes to an end at 31st October 2021. The project was initially set up at the request of the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) due to the effects of Covid. 100% grant funding is being offered to the council to extend the project for 12 months but there are tight timescales to ensure continuity of provision for candidates and staff. The DWP have invited Rossendale Borough Council to apply for an extension to the project for 12 months only. Longer term there may be new opportunities to apply for further funding on a more suitable basis.
- 3.2. The project is a key part of the council delivering on a key objective in its Corporate Plan: Our Place, Our Plan: working 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. Rossendale Youth Works is a key project to support the borough's recovery from the impact of Covid.
- 3.3 In October 2021 the Cabinet approved the extension of the Rossendale Works project to December 2023. Youth Works complements this approach.

4. ROSSENDALE YOUTH WORKS

- 4.1 Unemployment has risen sharply over the past 18 months as a result of the Covid restrictions. The whole country has seen a significant increase since March 2020 due to the Covid pandemic. Locally this has resulted in an increase in universal credit claimants, particularly amongst the 16-24 age group – the target age group for the project. In October 2021 there were 1,044 16-24 year olds claiming universal credit. This represents 17.1% of

all universal credit claimants. This is 2.1% higher than the North West average for the same age group and 3.1% above the Great Britain average (Source: DWP).

- 4.2 The Rossendale Youth Works projects complements the Local Economic Partnerships' Escalator delivery framework which links with other Lancashire projects to boost employment. DWP work coaches allocate candidates to each project based upon their individual circumstances and location. This ensures that Rossendale Youth Works is adding value, does not duplicate efforts and boosts the Rossendale employability provision.
- 4.3 The project commenced in November 2020 and has exceeded performance in terms of securing employment for participants. The table below shows how many people have been assisted by the initiative. This has resulted in 38 people moving into employment against a target of 20. The project tracks success by output monitoring and reporting to the DWP on a monthly basis. In additional project staff monitor those placed in employment for the first few weeks to identify and supply any additional support needs.

Output	Original Target	Achieved to Sept 21
Number of participants having been referred to the scheme by the DWP	110	100
Number of participants taking part in work placements	50	33
Number of participants moving into employment	20	38

- 4.4 Due to the success of the programme the council is seeking its extension in partnership with the DWP. The project will require no match funding from the council. A bid to extend the project has been developed with the input of the DWP. The additional funding requested is to enable delivery against an increase in the minimum requirements as required by the DWP. The outputs stipulated by the DWP have increased, detailed below:

Output	Target for new funding
Number of participants having been referred to the scheme by the DWP	100
Number of participants taking part in work placements	60
Number of participants moving into employment	30

The project is regular promoted through both Rossendale Borough Council and Active Lancashire. Both organisations use a variety of social media platforms. The project received recent publicity with the very successful Employability and Skills Fair plus the official launch of the Rossendale Works Youth Hub. Going forward the scheme will continue take advantage of marketing and PR opportunities.

- 4.5 These outputs have been agreed with our delivery partner Active Lancashire and have been used to inform the requested funding amount. The project will employ two project officers and will have some budget for associated employability activities: a package of support tailored to the participants of the scheme. These project officers will be employed and managed by Active Lancashire with supervision from the Economic Development Department. The continue to be the accountable body for the project.

5. FINANCE

- 5.1 The total cost of the project is £72,000, funded by DWP flexible support funding. There will be no additional financial implications to the Council.

6. RISK

6.1 DWP make no funding offer

The risk of this is low as we have been developing the bid in conjunction with the DWP partnership managers.

DWP make a funding offer lower than anticipated

The risk of this is low as we have been developing the bid in conjunction with the DWP partnership managers.

Partnership arrangement breaks down

The partnership with Active Lancashire is strong and has been operational with a service level agreement from April 2018. It is unlikely that this relationship will break down and the contract is managed through regular project group meetings where joint decisions are made.

Lack of engagement from businesses

Businesses need to come forward with placement opportunities. They are made aware of the project through one to one meetings, forums, websites and social media. The project has proved to be popular with local SMEs in the previous years of operation and has a strong reputation, as such this risk is low.

Lack of engagement from individuals

The Rossendale Youth Works Officer directly links with the job coaches in the youth hub who pass on referrals. Outreach activities take place across the borough and events held borough wide. This project has proved popular with residents over the previous years and the risk of lack of engagement is low.

Failure to deliver target outputs

This risk is mitigated through the bid by having a proven delivery model with Active Lancashire.

7. LEGAL

7.1 The legal implications are covered in the body of the report. All necessary legal agreements will be prepared in accordance with the recommendations.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The policy implications are outlined within the body of the report. The original EIA has been reviewed and there are no new emerging issues. Outputs relate to protected characteristics including females, young people, disabilities and BAME which has a positive impact on protected characteristic groups.

9. CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Rossendale Youth Works is one of the leading economic development projects being delivered by the council in partnership with Active Lancashire. This report will ensure its continuation for a further 12 months until October 2022 dependent on DWP funding. This will be used as a tool to get even more local unemployed people into work.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Rossendale Borough Council – Cabinet Report – 13 th October 2021	https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/10901/c3_rossendale_works_update