

Subject:	Rossendale Works – Employability Proposal	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	29 th November 2017
Report of:	Economic Development Directorate	Portfolio Holder:	Regeneration, Leisure and Tourism
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input checked="" 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. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To authorise the creation of the Rossendale Works employability proposal as outlined in this report. To allocate £50,000 from the Employment and Transport Reserve (£25,000 per year) for an initial 2 year pilot period.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The aim of this proposal is to increase labour supply, enabling business recruitment and subsequent business growth. It will tackle economic inactivity and raise income levels in some of the most disadvantaged households

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **A connected and successful Rossendale that welcomes sustainable growth:** our priority is to ensure that we are well connected to our residents, key partners and stakeholders. We want to make the most of every pound we spend and we are always looking for new and innovative ways to make the resources we do have, work harder for us.
 - **A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale:** our priority is to ensure that we are creating and maintaining a healthy and vibrant place for people to live and visit.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Loss of match funding

If match funding was lost then the project would not be able to proceed as planned. The employer placements project could proceed on a part-time basis with the Council funding but this would need a SOD alteration.

Partnership arrangement breaks down

Care has been taken to select Lancashire Sport as a delivery partner and a good relationship has been established. This will be maintained through regular project meetings.

Lack of engagement from businesses

Businesses need to come forward with placement opportunities. They will be made aware of the project through one to one meetings, forums, websites and social media. Once awareness is raised it is likely that this project will prove popular with Rossendale business owners.

Lack of engagement from individuals

Direct referrals from Lancashire Sports employability provision will be made to the Rossendale Works element. Close linkages will be established with existing DWP ESF providers who will be able to pass individuals through to the project as they develop. An SLA with DWP will refer people directly onto the project. These measures will ensure that a high number of people will be referred onto the project.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

5.1 Rossendale Council Corporate Strategy

This project links closely with priority two of the corporate strategy, a connected, growing and successful Rossendale and priority three a proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale. The Council is increasing Economic Development commitments and this project very much compliments these aims by providing active delivery to both businesses and residents.

Economic Development Strategy

The Economic Development Strategy is under development but it identifies employability as one of its priority areas. The recruitment of suitable staff is a reoccurring issue at business forums and individual one to one meetings. This issue of not being able to recruit suitable labour has the potential to hinder business growth in Rossendale.

5.2 Key issues

There are currently 5,200 people on out of work benefits in Rossendale, the employability rate is 72.9% and 43% of people with disabilities are not in employment (33% Lancashire average). Unemployment levels are higher in certain wards particularly in the east of the borough with Stacksteads and Bacup having the highest rates.

5.3 Project: Rossendale Works - engagement activities and work placements

This project will actively engage with economically inactive individuals by promoting engagement through sport, volunteering or activities. Candidates will either be in receipt of out of work benefits or be disengaged completely from society. After completing a series of confidence enhancing activities they will be offered the opportunity of a work placement.

The DWP will also be able to directly refer individuals to the placement programme who have not been engaged in the first outreach stage. Benefit claimants through an SLA with the DWP will continue to be in receipt of their benefits and not mandated to complete other tasks during the period.

The placement will be at a local business that is actively seeking to employ more people and will be visited to confirm suitability and enrolment into the project. The 4-8 week placement will be tailored to suit the needs, skills and interests of the individual. At the conclusion of the period they will either be offered employment or be given a reference to support them in their employment journey.

The project officer will be based with the Economic Development team enabling business connections and employed by Lancashire Sport. The post will be jointly line managed by the Economic Development Manager for the business placement element and Lancashire Sports Employability Manager for the sport and volunteering aspect. There will be regular performance management meetings between RBC and Lancashire Sport to manage the contract, measure outputs and deal with any issues.

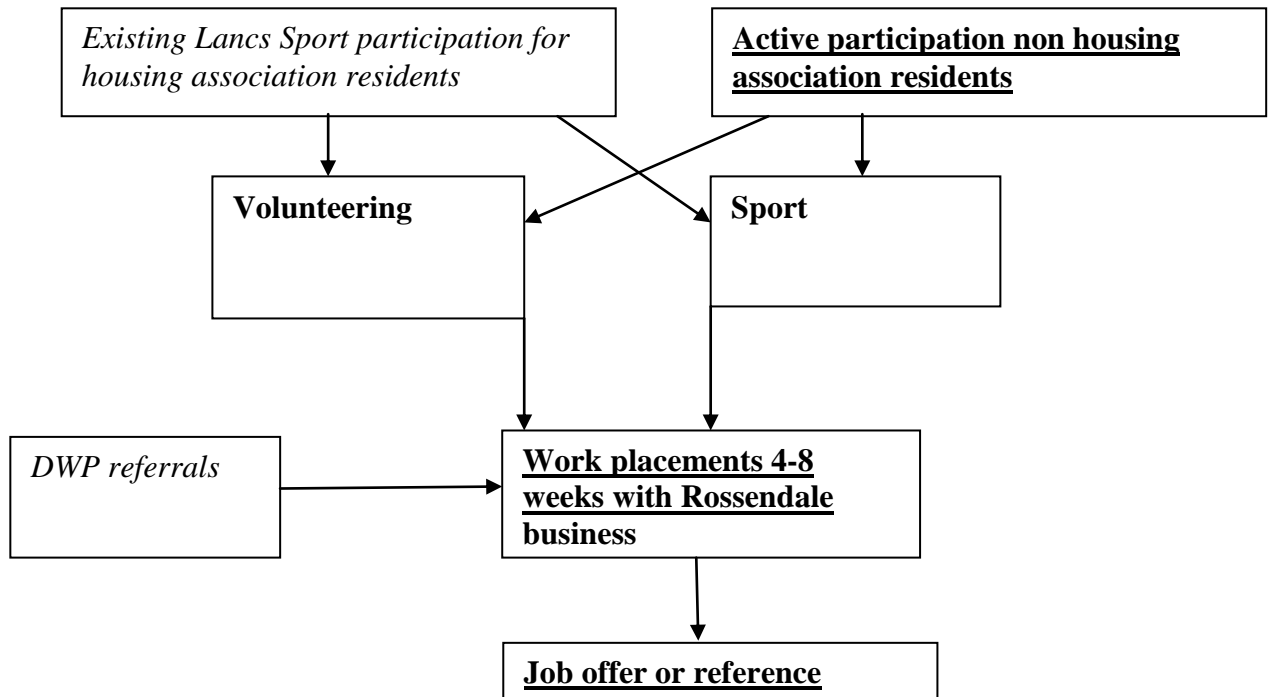
The concepts of this proposal are based upon successful projects already established in Chorley Council and the Lancashire Sports housing association project.

Summary of proposal

Bold underlined type = Rossendale Works funded

Bold type = part Rossendale Works funded

Italic type = Linked activity



5.4 Linkages

Lancashire Sport

They have a contract with DWP to operate the first outreach stage with match funding provided by housing associations. They do not have funding for people in non-housing association properties and this project will be additional to their current provision. It will be possible for housing association tenants to be referred in to the work placement phase which represents additional activity.

They have indicated their willingness to work with Rosendale and have developed a similar project with Pendle Council. They are willing to bring £20,000 of match funding from Sport England to the project, reducing the delivery cost to Rossendale as well as bringing their knowledge.

DWP –ESF- meeting rooms

The DWP have indicated that they will be willing to enter into a SLA with Rossendale to facilitate referrals and the continuation of benefits to residents on this project.

They have also provided Economic Development with a list of supported ESF projects. Local delivery is a key determining factor in securing engagement with this demographic and many of the Lancashire projects are based away from the borough providing a travel barrier to Rossendale residents. Economic Development has actively met with all Lancashire DWP project partners over the past few months and has offered them both training facilities and meeting rooms at Futures Park to encourage local delivery. The project officer will be encouraged to develop strong linkages with existing Lancashire employability provision and ensure complementary integration.

LEP Employability/ Skills

A hot desk will be provided within Economic Development to enable the employability and skills officers that cover East Lancashire to have a Rossendale base when required and make linkages to the project.

RLT

This project will require the usage of sport facilities which will be hired out as part of this project. Discussions have taken place with the Leisure Trust who are willing to provide the facility at a service rate as part of their relationship with the Council.

5.5 **Branding**

This project will be jointly branded as Rossendale Council and Lancashire Sport. The project will be providing regular publicity releases to encourage others.

5.6 **Pilot Period**

It is proposed to run this project for an initial 2 year period starting in April 2018 until March 2020. A decision on future RBC employability projects will be made during the subsequent review process.

5.7 **Implications and outputs:**

HR Implications

The post will be based in Economic Development but will be employed by Lancashire Sport on a two year fixed term basis.

Financial Implications

Cost per year

£25,000 RBC

£20,000 Sport England/ Lancashire Sport

£45,000 Total Cost

Outputs per year

Number of residents engaged	100
Number accessing sport	30
Number becoming volunteers	30
Number of residents enrolled on Rossendale Works – 4/8 week placement	50
Number completing placement	40
Number into employment (measured within 3 months after placement finished)	20

5.8 **Information taken into account:**

- LEP/ ESF Employability provision
- Lancashire Sport employability programme

5.9 **Options Considered:**

Option one: Partnership with Lancashire Sport brings substantial match funding as well as established expertise and is the recommended option.

Option two: To establish a RBC Employability and Skills Officer: This is not an option at the moment it would require 100% RBC funding but may be reconsidered after the trial period.

Option three: A do nothing example would not add value to existing provision and would not bring about change for local businesses or people.

5.10 Recommendations

To authorise the creation of the Rossendale Works Employability proposal as outlined in this report. To allocate £50,000 from the Employment and Transport Reserve (£25,000 per year) for an initial 2 year pilot period.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1 Financial matters are noted within the report.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

7.1 All relevant agreements and SLAs will need to be entered into between the relevant parties and stakeholders.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

8.1 No policy implications.

8.2 Consultation has been undertaken with Management Team and Portfolio Holder.

8.3 Any equality implications related to the project will be given consideration in a relevant and proportionate manner.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 This proposal will establish a Rossendale Works employability project in partnership with Lancashire Sport.

Background Papers

Document	Place of Inspection
General Exception Notice	https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/download/10714/decision_notices