

CABINET

Wednesday, 13 March 2019

EAST SUFFOLK YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE – MYGO EAST SUFFOLK (REP1986)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Young people not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) continues to be a challenge within Suffolk generally and East Suffolk in particular relative to the country as a whole. As part of East Suffolk’s twin objectives of supporting economic growth and enabling communities it is imperative that we continue to address this problem by supporting young people to access employment, education and training opportunities. This is of benefit to the individual, local employers and the families and communities within which these young people live.
2. This paper sets out the current issues and proposes an initiative to tackle these. The purpose of the paper is to gain approval for East Suffolk, in partnership with Suffolk County Council, to procure a service that will proactively support young people to become positively engaged within the local economy.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All East Suffolk Wards
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor Michael Ladd Cabinet Member for Tourism and Economic Development
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Supporting Officers:	Paul Wood Head of Economic Development & Regeneration 01394 444249 paul.wood@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Nicole Rickard Head of Communities 01502 523231 nicole.rickard@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Across Suffolk the level of young people who are classed as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) remains above average compared to England and our statistical neighbours. Furthermore 12% of 16-24 year olds are unemployed and it has been proven that youth worklessness has a significant impact on a person's future in terms of lower pay, high unemployment, fewer life chances, reduced social mobility and poor mental and physical health.
- 1.2 In order to address this Suffolk County Council (SCC) and the East Suffolk Council (ESC) are intending to procure a youth employment service which will build on the previous Lowestoft MyGo model and extend provision across the whole of East Suffolk, albeit with a focus on the areas of greatest need i.e. Lowestoft, Leiston, Saxmundham and Felixstowe. The service will provide a combination of preventative and remedial measures to tackle youth unemployment, with a clear focus on providing both intensive support to young people to enable them to engage in education or work and challenge them to increase their aspirations and encourage them to realise their potential.

2 OVERVIEW

- 2.1 During 2018 SCC applied for external funding to roll out the MYGO youth employment service across the whole of Suffolk. At this time MYGO operated out of two physical locations in Lowestoft and Ipswich and also provided an outreach service into a number of market towns. The decision to expand the service was based on the success of the Lowestoft and Ipswich models in achieving greater positive outcomes for 16-24 year olds who were classed as NEET than had been previously experienced through the more generic Job Centre Plus offer.
- 2.2 Unfortunately the external funding bid was unsuccessful, however SCC were still committed to expanding the youth employment service initiative and therefore retained the match funding they had committed to the project. The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group subsequently added to this through the Suffolk Pooled Business Rates fund which meant that a viable service could be established across Suffolk. The funding secured has been allocated equally across each of the three paired districts and Ipswich and SCC have been working in partnership with each area to develop an effective model which enables a proactive and targeted approach to tackling the NEET issue.
- 2.3 In order to deliver an effective youth employment service across a diverse geographical area, different models and levels of provision and support will be required to reflect each individual young person's needs, aspirations and abilities. In east Suffolk we are keen to continue to address this challenge, adapting the model established through Lowestoft MYGO, by using dedicated work coaches to provide intensive support and challenge to ensure young people find and sustain suitable, and wherever possible aspirational, careers. The service will also include support for employers in overcoming any barriers associated with employing a young person and to encourage an appropriate range of training and employment opportunities for young people in this area.
- 2.4 In return for effective and intensive support young people will be expected to take greater responsibility for themselves, take maximum advantage of the opportunities made available to them and either re-engage in education and training or move off benefits and into work or education as quickly as possible/appropriate.

3 BENEFICIARIES OF THE EAST SUFFOLK MYGO SERVICE

- 3.1 The beneficiaries of the new service will be 16-24 year olds in east Suffolk who are unemployed and / or NEET. Based on the experience of the previous MYGO initiative it is anticipated that around 600 young people per year will be supported, with 75% of those with low level needs being supported into a positive outcome (work, education or training) and 35% of young people with high level needs being supported into a positive outcome or progression. These positive progressions include employment, training, apprenticeships voluntary work and further support.
- 3.2 In addition to these direct benefits there will be wider socio-economic benefits across East Suffolk. This includes previously disenfranchised young people becoming more engaged in the local labour market or making a positive progression towards securing sustainable employment. This will be of benefit to local employers and the east Suffolk economy at large as it will provide new entrants into a currently very tight labour market. Employers across all sectors and at all skill levels are finding recruitment challenging and this has been exacerbated by UK's decision to leave the EU, which has led to a significant reduction in EU migrant labour.
- 3.3 There will also be benefits for communities across East Suffolk since unemployment is both a cause and a symptom of some of the challenges experienced by particular communities in East Suffolk's towns, particularly in the more deprived areas. Addressing youth unemployment as early as possible is vital to avoid individuals accepting that unemployment is a legitimate working life choice. If this approach is successful it has the potential to raise aspirations within young people and counter a number of societal issues that deprived communities face.

4 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 4.1 The proposed new youth employment service supports both the economic growth and enabling communities strategic pillars within the East Suffolk Business Plan. By increasing the employment opportunities of young people within east Suffolk we are supporting both businesses and young people to become more productive. Furthermore increasing the number of young people engaged in positive endeavours such as employment, education and training has been proven to improve their life chances and reduce a whole range of socially negative activities and outcomes.
- 4.2 Being engaged in productive activity such as education, training and/or employment has also been proven to improve young people's mental and physical health. It allows them to feel much more engaged within their community and have a sense of pride that they are making a positive contribution to society. This initiative also supports the Suffolk wide inclusive growth agenda as it is increasing the opportunities for young people to benefit from the wider economic growth that is taking place.

5 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The ES MYGO service has confirmed funding from SCC, the Suffolk Pooled Business Rates fund and from SCDC's New Homes Bonus fund. Funding has also been provisionally confirmed from the East Suffolk Partnership. This funding will allow the service to run for two years and breaks down as follows:

Suffolk County Council:	£100, 000
Suffolk Pooled Business rates:	£100,000
ESP Funding:	£30,000
NHB funding:	£10,000
Total Funding:	£240,000

- 5.2 The East Suffolk MyGO Service is part of a Suffolk wide initiative which is part funded by SCC and the Suffolk Pooled Business Rates fund. As such it will be accountable to both the Suffolk Public Sector Leader's group and SCC in respect of the outcomes achieved through this initiative.

6 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken in relation to this project as it positively discriminates in relation to one of the protected characteristics groups (Age – young people) in that it targets young people, predominantly in our most deprived communities, who need support to get into employment, education, training or alternative activities that might contribute towards this, for example volunteering. The target cohort will include young people with disabilities and potentially will include young people from BME communities.
- 6.2 It has been developed in partnership with Suffolk County Council and the East Suffolk Partnership Programme Office, which includes a range of public and voluntary sector partners.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The development of new East Suffolk MyGO service proposal has been undertaken in consultation with Suffolk County Council, Job Centre Plus, the East Suffolk Procurement, Economic Development and Communities teams. Furthermore the relevant Cabinet members within both Councils have been consulted during its development.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Direct delivery of an East Suffolk youth employment service through the employment of dedicated officers by the East Suffolk Council was considered, however early market testing indicated that due to the knowledge, experience and infrastructure that would be provided through a specialist service provider this would create a more viable service and one where more funding could be directed at service delivery. Many of these potential providers within East Suffolk are within the community and voluntary sector and therefore the awarding of this contract has the potential to create an enabling effect on these community based groups.

9 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 Addressing young people who are NEET is a key issue for East Suffolk. Successfully addressing this challenge not only benefits the individual but also the wider east Suffolk area in terms of supporting local employers operating within a very tight labour market and also improving local communities where youth unemployment is prevalent.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet approves the procurement of a contractor to deliver the East Suffolk MYGO Youth Employment Service, currently up to the value of £120k per year for two years.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.