

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN CARDIFF: POLICY REVIEW SCRUTINY

Purpose of the Report

1. To give Members background information to aid policy review scrutiny of Employment Services in Cardiff.

Background

2. Following a review of its anti-poverty schemes, the Welsh Government Communities First programme ended on 31 March 2018. In preparation for this, Cardiff Council undertook a review of Employment Services in Cardiff and carried out consultation on proposals for future services. These concluded that:

*'..there is a need to changes services in Cardiff to improve accessibility, link together the many existing services and ensure that help is available to everyone who needs it, across the city.'*¹

3. At their meeting on 16 November 2017, Cabinet agreed the following recommendations:
 - a) *'Agree the approach to future delivery of Employment Services as set out in the report.*
 - b) *'Delegate authority to the Director of Housing, Communities and Customer Service to take the necessary actions to implement the new Employability Service and transitional arrangements.*

¹ Point 13 of Report to Cabinet, *'Development of a city wide employability provision & a new approach to building resilient communities'*, 16 November 2017

- c) *Authorise officers to review the approach to Building Resilient Communities programme, including a public consultation exercise, to inform a proposed way forward for Cabinet consideration.*
4. The new Employment Service comprises services directly provided by the Council. Access to the service is via a Gateway, which includes phone, internet and face-to-face access, available through community hubs, libraries and other community buildings. The Employment Service includes:
- a) in-depth mentoring and support;
 - b) support for self-employed people and those starting a social enterprise;
 - c) job clubs;
 - d) assistance with CVs and job searches;
 - e) support to those in low-paid employment and on zero hour contracts;
 - f) effective employer engagement;
 - g) opportunities for volunteering;
 - h) work experience placements; and
 - i) the monitoring of services via a single database.
5. The new approach brings together various funding streams, including '*Communities for Work*², the '*Employability Grant*³, '*Legacy Funding*⁴ and the Council's own Into Work resources to create one service provided directly by Council employees. The Welsh Government also made available £4 million Community Facilities Programme funding, where third sector organisations could submit bids to Welsh Government for capital grant funding for facilities that contribute to the community.
6. The aim of developing a single database was to provide one view of an individual to measure the success of interventions and outcomes, as well as to identify gaps or duplication in service across the city.

² Communities for Work is European Support funding of £583,610 per annum until 2020

³ Employability Grant is Welsh Government funding, of between £650,000 - £750,000 for 2018/19

⁴ Legacy Funding is Welsh Government funding of £563,361 for 2018-19

7. The Employment Service works with Economic Development to link with national and local employers to identify future skills requirements and inform future training provision.
8. Critically, the new approach recognises that a proactive approach is required to engage those individuals who do not feel able to seek help. The new service links to job centres, community centres, social landlords, health and hostel services and foodbanks to identify clients in need of the service. It also targets those most in need, such as those affected by Universal Credit and other welfare reforms.

Q1 and Q2 Performance

9. The Corporate Quarter 2 performance report, taken to Cabinet on 15 November 2018, includes the following information:

- a) **The number of people receiving into work advice through the Gateway:**

- i. Quarter 1 10,331
- ii. Quarter 2 11,395

- b) **The number of clients that have been supported into employment, having received tailored support through the gateway:**

- i. Quarter 1 252
- ii. Quarter 2 197

- c) **The number of employers that have been assisted by the Council's employment support services:**

- i. Quarter 1 87
- ii. Quarter 2 87

10. The Corporate Quarter 2 performance report states that nearly 100 people attended a Pop up Business School held in the centre of Cardiff for two weeks, resulting in 62 new start-up businesses being created.

11. The Corporate Quarter 2 performance report also states that there is a projected £60,000 underspend against Employability Services as a result of savings against employee budgets and additional income.

Previous Scrutiny

12. This Committee undertook policy development scrutiny of the Employment Services proposals at their meeting on 14 September 2017 and pre-decision scrutiny of the subsequent report to Cabinet in November 2017. Overall, Members were supportive of the proactive approach adopted to the cessation of Communities First funding.

13. Following their meeting in September 2017, Members:

- a) Highlighted the need to ensure marketing of the new gateway approach provides reassurance to potential service users regarding its independence and helpfulness;
- b) Stressed the need to ensure systems are in place to engage potential service users who face difficulties accessing employment services;
- c) Requested a progress report on mapping ESOL provision and accessing additional funding.

14. A copy of the Chair's letter and the response received was attached at Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet, with the information requested on ESOL provision included in Appendix 4 of the Cabinet report. The report to Cabinet also contained a separate section detailing the work that would take place to engage potential hard to reach services users.

15. Following pre-decision scrutiny of the report to Cabinet in November 2017, the Chair wrote to Councillor Thorne, Cabinet Member – Housing and Communities, stating the Committee's support of the recommendations to Cabinet. The Chair's letter also detailed Members' concerns that the respondents to the consultation on changes to Employment Services did not include more people seeking work or employment-related support and recommending that future consultation

exercises use different research methods to reach those most affected and enable their voices to be heard.

Way Forward

16. Councillor Lynda Thorne (Cabinet Member – Housing and Communities) will be invited to make a statement. Jane Thomas (Assistant Director, Communities and Housing) and Helen Evans (Operational Manager – Advice & Benefits) will attend to give a presentation and answer Members' questions on employment services in Cardiff.

Legal Implications

17. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

18. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are

implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- i) Consider the information in this report and the information presented at the meeting;
- ii) Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet on this matter; and
- iii) Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance & Legal Services

30 November 2018