

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

#### **SUBMISSION FROM WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

##### **Introduction**

1. West Dunbartonshire has experienced one of the highest levels of unemployment in Scotland in recent years and its economy has performed below that of the West of Scotland and Scotland as a whole over the last ten years.

2. The latest figures for West Dunbartonshire, released on the 20 July show that 6.5% of the working age population is claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). The figure for Scotland is significantly lower at 4.2% while the UK figure is 3.8%. West Dunbartonshire and North Ayrshire have the highest rate of JSA claimants at 6.5%. Dundee City is second at 6.3%.

3. In total 3,844 West Dunbartonshire residents are claiming JSA. However with 255 unfilled jobcentre vacancies, there are 15.1 people for each vacancy. This compares unfavourably to the figures for Scotland which is 6.1 people per vacancy. This places West Dunbartonshire as the area with the third lowest number of vacancies per job seeker in Scotland and the fifth lowest of all local authorities across the UK.

4. The number of young unemployed people aged 18 to 24 claiming JSA is 1,085 representing 12.75% of the resident population of the same age. West Dunbartonshire has the fourth highest level of unemployment in this age group. Only North Ayrshire (14%), East Ayrshire (13.4%) and Clackmannanshire (13.3%) have a higher proportion of JSA claimants.

5. In West Dunbartonshire a total of 1,155 people have been included in the JSA claimant count for 12 months or more, this represents an increase of 12% since April 2012 and an increase of 126% since April 2011.

6. The Council recognises that current levels of unemployment within the area must be approached with new, innovative and coordinated responses. It has developed a range of support services, programmes and initiatives across Council departments described here:-

##### **Corporate Services**

7. Within the Corporate Services department, Employability, Community Learning and Development and Financial Advice Services have been aligned under a single management structure and rebranded under the banner of "Working 4U".

8. Working 4U is a key element of the Council's activity to tackle unemployment and poverty, focusing on the causes of poverty and improving the life chances of our

people. The Working 4 U model reduces duplication, costs and maximises the impact of a range of services. It facilitates improved access to employment opportunities, and contributes to the enhancement of skills and educational achievement in West Dunbartonshire. It provides a single entry referral pathway with new online and phone access points.

9. The Community Learning and Development element of the service provides a range of training and development opportunities primarily aimed at people who are not immediately ready for work. These training opportunities include literacy and numeracy training, confidence building and other soft skills training, and the Steps to Excellence course.

10. Working 4U services include the ESF and Community Planning funded Employability Programme, and Skills Development Scotland's National programmes - Get Ready for Work and Modern Apprenticeships. The range of employability services is summarised here:-

- **The Employability programme.** This programme became operational on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011. The Local Employment Team (LET) is at the core of the programme with several other projects providing specific support based on the individual client needs.
- **Local Employment Team (LET)** a team of eight workers provide mentoring support to clients to access employment, training, education, qualifications, confidence building, job search and funding.
- **LET's Health** is delivered in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Clients that are identified as possibly having mild to moderate mental health issues, creating a barrier to them progressing to employment, are referred for support to LET's Health.
- **Welfare Rights.** Within Advice Services, there are dedicated members of staff who provide welfare and money advice to clients at all stages of their journey into employment.
- **New Employment Wage Subsidy** is available to local businesses to subsidise new work opportunities for up to 26 weeks covering 50% of gross wages with a maximum payment of £140 per week.
- **Employer Engagement** is a tendered activity within the overall programme and became operational in March 2012, following the appointment of a private sector partner, Employment Enterprise. This project is in essence a pilot with a view to developing a single Employer Engagement service within West Dunbartonshire. This service is responsible for engaging with Employers to raise awareness of the support available to business.
- **Job Brokerage** is an additional tendered activity and became operational in February 2012. It works in close partnership with the LET who refer suitable clients to the project for end stage support. Dedicated one to one support is provided in the identification and application for suitable vacancies, as well as interview technique

training. The service will shortly launch a new website tool that brings employers and potential employees together.

- **Get Ready for Work.**

The Employability Service has delivered Get Ready for Work for over 10 years, consistently delivering positive outcomes in excess of the national average despite the low employer base within the area. This year the programme will provide valuable employability training and work experience opportunities for over 180 young people, many of whom will have had experienced high levels of deprivation.

- **Modern Apprenticeships.**

Council has outlined its intention to create up to 1000 new jobs, apprenticeships and accredited training places during the course of its five year administration. A development plan to take this intention forward is currently being prepared for elected member approval. Elements of the plan will focus support on people furthest from the labour market.

11. The Modern Apprenticeship Programme is a critical part of the Council's overall jobs growth plan. It seeks to radically increase the Council's intake of MAs from approximately 20 per year. Working corporately, a range of new opportunities in occupational areas have been identified, some already populated by apprenticeships and some in new occupational areas.

12. By September 2012, there will be 173 apprentices working with the Council across Level 2 and Level 3. This figure will grow further in the coming years.

13. A new Level 2 scheme has been implemented that is consistent with SDS delivery models. The apprenticeship lasts between nine and 18 months, and provides the apprentice with valuable work experience and skills, and the opportunity to achieve an SVQ Level 2 qualification.

14. Our existing Level 3 scheme has been expanded to increase overall numbers and develop new occupational areas, consistent with SDS delivery models. It lasts between two and four years and affords the apprentice the opportunity to gain an SVQ Level 3 qualification, in addition to valuable work experience and skills.

15. The key areas for MA employment are Construction Craft, Administration, Amenity Horticulture, Civil Engineering (roads), Contact Centre professional, Health and Safety, Youth Work, Care, Hospitality and Mechanics.

## **Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP)**

### **Work Connect**

16. Work Connect is a Supported Employment Service within the Community Health and Care Partnership in West Dunbartonshire.

17. Work Connect is specifically designed to support people with learning disabilities, mental health, autism or recovering from addiction into training, voluntary

work and employment. Work Connect provides individualised person centred support that is flexible and on-going for both the employer and the employee.

18. The service is currently working with 76 participants, and supporting 36 people in paid employment. Participants on the programme, who are currently not in paid employment, can take part in catering, horticulture or computing training whilst on-going efforts are made to obtain suitable employment. Support with obtaining an SVQ Level 1 and 2 in Quick Service Catering is also provided.

19. Work Connect provides a variety of opportunities for people to work in both the open employment market and our own Café/ Catering outlets. These provide meaningful, paid employment to adults with disabilities and are all open to the public.

20. In addition, Work Connect delivers the “Well Connected at Levensgrove” Project which is a partnership service with the Council’s Land Services and Education, and provides training opportunities in horticulture. It provides accessible garden areas with greenhouses, poly tunnels, raised beds, ground work and a fully equipped training room. This is a significant project in the West Dunbartonshire area and is accessed by more than 100 people.

21. Work Connect continues to focus on vocational profiling; job development; job analysis; job training and marketing in the open employment market. It provides support with benefits advice and direct support in the work place. In addition, Work Connect encourages the development of natural supports in which existing employees doing the same work have the opportunity to share their experiences and provide informal support to their co-worker with disabilities and support needs. To this end, Work Connect provides training and disability awareness and supported employment to those involved. Work Connect works closely with colleagues from both health and social work services and encourages specialist intervention where required.

## **Education Services**

### **MCMC, 16+ learning Choices, Opportunities For all, Activity Agreements**

22. The MCMC partnership group seeks to ensure that an offer of a place in learning or training is made to every 16-19 year old currently not in work, education or training. This will be achieved by delivery of improved post-16 transitions, and participation in learning and training, for all young people through 16+ Learning Choices, and Activity Agreements.

23. MCMC has representation from all of the key partners and is led by the Head of Service in Educational Services on behalf of the Council and Community Planning Partners. This group functions as a permanent sub-group of the CPP Children and Families Strategy Group, and oversees the implementation of the MCMC Action Plan. This plan is linked to the Workforce Plus strategy, Single Outcome Agreement and to the Integrated Children’s Services Plan.

24. A new Youth Employability Partnership group that focuses on both Opportunities for All and youth unemployment more widely has been set up. An early output for the group has been the creation of a draft youth employment plan focusing on the 16-19 year old cohort. This work will be embedded in the action plan of a new Youth Alliance in West Dunbartonshire that involves youth services providers from the public and third sectors.

25. 16+ learning choices will be further embedded within schools and partners involved at key stages as the foundation of post 16 learning. Work is currently underway to collate destinations of all potential school leavers. All schools have been given guidance on the process and further work will take place to record actual destinations.

26. Clydebank College was successful in its bid for the New College Learning Programme and now looks to secure 195 work placements. Whilst the course will be open to all, 16-19 year olds will be a priority group. The course will be bursary funded and student services will be able to assist potential applicants with financial calculations etc.

### **Earlier intervention – Transition planning**

27. It is recognised that looked after children are one of the most vulnerable groups in terms of transition and post school learning, and in particular those young people who are looked after away from home. We have developed a new transition model to include a local Skills Development Key worker getting involved at the point prior to transition. This allows an informed relationship to be developed prior to the young person leaving residential care.

### **Post 16 School Joint Action Team (JAT) - Following the Matrix**

28. Within West Dunbartonshire a risk matrix identifies young people who are likely to be at risk of making a successful transition to a positive post 16 learning destination. Our LAC are represented within this group and we adopt early intervention and transition planning (as above, for those looked after away from home). Within our schools we apply interventions that assist these young people to move on to a positive destination. It is important that a focus on these young people is continued post school and look to apply post school interventions and support when required.

29. At key times we measure the post 16 progress of our young people (this is achieved by using the SDS Insight database) who had appeared on the matrix. When required we apply the agreed support and activity that will best respond to and support individual needs. The JAT is populated by an Education inclusion officer, Post School Psychological Services, Skills Development Scotland Team leaders, 16+ learning choices co-ordinator and includes both Throughcare and Social Work representation as well as training and learning providers when appropriate.

30. The JAT normally meets six weekly and concentrates on young people who have a higher risk of not achieving a successful post school transition.

## **Whole System Approach**

31. We are currently working in partnership with our colleagues in Social Work Criminal Justice Youth services to offer Activity agreements as a means of avoiding criminal proceedings and court disposals for young people under the age of 18. The aim is to develop and introduce a range of evidenced based and early effective approaches for under 18's who have offended or present risk of serious harm leading to a reduction rate in re-offending .