

SUBJECT:	Skills@Work (ESF PROGRAMME)
MEETING:	Individual Cabinet Member Decision – Cllr Sara Jones
DATE:	28th November 2018
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide a progress update on the European Social Fund (ESF) Skills@Work programme following the initial Individual Cabinet Member Decision [report](#) in February 2017 and subsequently to request approval for the Council to participate in the delivery of this regional funding opportunity.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To approve the Council's participation in the ESF funded Skills@Work programme.
- 2.2 To approve the appointment of annual fixed term officers, namely tutors, as required, who will be 100% funded to deliver activity for the duration of the programme.
- 2.3 To utilise the existing Coleg Gwent franchise grant for match funding purposes for which Coleg Gwent approval is in place.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 As recognised in the operational programme of the ESF 2014 – 2020 programme period, investing in skills is a key driver in the development of a modern knowledge-based economy in responding and adapting to economic changes. There is a strong correlation between qualification and skills and employment and earnings. For those in part-time work who are more likely to have low skills, the role of skills development in addressing in-work poverty is clear, particularly in up-skilling those with no or basic skills in order to support them to progress within the labour market.
- 3.2 The purpose of this three year Skills@Work initiative is to increase the ownership of generic, transferable skills at all levels from basic to level two, across the workforce of the region, through community provision. Thereby improving the opportunities for current low skilled workers, to sustain employment and increase earnings potential.
- 3.3 Community based provision will focus on supporting reluctant learners to engage with flexible learning opportunities outside of the workplace and will offer a range of provision including literacy, numeracy, ICT and other generic transferable skills resulting in an eligible qualification from basic to level 2. Basic literacy, digital literacy and numeracy skills acquisition will also form a key area to improve the mobility of the workforce and sustainable employment.
- 3.4 The partners involved are Monmouthshire CC, Cardiff CC, and Newport CC (NCC). The total value of the initiative is likely to be in excess of £2.5 million and we anticipate a total delivery value of £555,769 for Monmouthshire, £274,665 to be derived from the ESF contribution and a further £281,104 via match funding which will be drawn from the Council's existing Coleg Gwent franchise agreement. Exact figures will be confirmed once final approval is received by WEFO. Regular update reports including staffing and financial arrangements, will be presented to the Economy and Development Select Committee as the initiative progresses.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 Summarised below for Members' consideration from Future Generations Evaluation located in Appendix A:

The Skills@Work programme will increase the ownership of generic, transferable skills at all levels from basic to level 2 across the workforce of the region through community provision, thereby improving the life chances for currently low skilled workers to sustain employment and increase earnings potential. This regional programme will take a strategic approach to ensure a clear focus and alignment to regional priorities such as the LSkiP employment and skills plan and the Cardiff Capital Region.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

5.1 The initial proposal for this initiative was led by NCC in 2014 however due to complications with Further Education institutions and the withdrawal of NCC as lead sponsor, the initiative did not progress. Since then negotiations have been on-going. A report was approved by Individual Cabinet Member Decision on the 15th February 2017 advocating that the Council assume the lead sponsor role in order for the initiative to progress however since then NCC have taken back up the role of lead sponsor and the programme details have been finalised.

5.2 Options Analysis

Option	Benefits	Risks	Comments
Do nothing	None identified	Increased risk of currently low skilled workers failing to sustain employment.	Limited offer of learning opportunities would continue
Implement programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 1,000 citizens will have opportunities to enhance their skills • Over 1,000 will have an opportunity to sustain their employment and increase their learning potential • Coleg Gwent Franchise funding is maximized by its use at match funding to drawn in additional funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WEFO may withdraw funding due to Brexit; • The Council will assume full legal and financial responsibility for the entire operation - an all partner service level agreement will be put in place to mitigate any risks. 	Programme may finish earlier than anticipated

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- 6.1 An evaluation assessment has been included in Appendix B for future evaluation of whether the decision has been successfully implemented. The decision will be evaluated by Economy and Development Select Committee, which will make recommendations regarding any proposed changes to Cabinet. An annual report will be presented to Economy and Development Select Committee to review progress to date.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 As recognised in the ESF operational programme 2014 – 2020, investing in skills is a key driver in the development of a modern knowledge-based economy and in responding and adapting to economic changes. There is a strong correlation between qualification and skills, employment and earnings, with those in part-time work more likely to have low skills, emphasising the role of skills development in addressing in-work poverty and up-skilling those with no or basic skills to support them to progress within the labour market.
- 7.2 The project will utilise tutors from the existing pool of staff. The Council currently has 15 tutors on annual fixed term contracts who can and will deliver tuition for the project as part of their commitment to deliver the Council's Coleg Gwent franchise provision. The tutors will be 100% funded to manage and deliver activity for the duration of the programme if however, additional tutors are required to ensure deliverability, and they will be recruited accordingly.
- 7.3 The programme will be managed by the existing Community Learning Lead who will take the lead role in coordinating the project, utilising the match funding to contribute to their time as the project 'dovetails' into normal duties with regards to the coordination/day to day management of the Council's classes.
- 7.2 The project will engage with over 1,000 beneficiaries and we therefore anticipate direct engagement of over 500 participants over the course of the programme, meeting the following annual targets:
- 20, Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications – male;
 - 40, Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications – female;
 - 12, Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) – male;
 - 28, Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) – female;
 - 14, Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving – male;
 - 28, Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification upon leaving – female;
 - 8, Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (ISCED 2) level upon leaving – male; and
 - 20, Employed, including self-employed participants with up to and including a lower secondary education (ISCED 2) gaining an essential skills or technical or job specific qualification at lower secondary (ISCED 2) level upon leaving - female

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Although there are no cash implications for the Council for this initiative other than match funding of management officer time 'in-kind, when the offer of grant is accepted, the Council will assume full legal and financial responsibility for the entire operation. Therefore in order to mitigate any external risk an all partner service level agreement will be put in place.

9. **CONSULTEES:**
Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet

Decision following presentation of Individual Cabinet Member report on 15th February 2017:

Approved the request for MCC to act as lead sponsor in the ESF funded Skills@Work programme which will include the use of MCC Officer time as match funding for the initiative.

Approved the appointment of officers as required, 100% funded through ESF, to manage and deliver activity for the duration of the programme.

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**
a) Appendix A – Future Generations Evaluation
b) Appendix B – Evaluation Criteria

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Appendix B**Evaluation Criteria – Cabinet, Individual Cabinet Member Decisions & Council**

Title of Report:	SKILLS@WORK
Date decision was made:	28th November 2018
Report Author:	Richard Drinkwater

What will happen as a result of this decision being approved by Cabinet or Council?

Once approved regular six monthly progress reports will be presented to Economy and Development Select Committee to evaluate progress and outcomes and an annual report will be presented to Cabinet.

What benchmarks and/or criteria will you use to determine whether the decision has been successfully implemented?

The Skills@Work programme is a partnership between Monmouthshire CC, Cardiff CC, and Newport CC, Newport CC. As the programme is funded via the European Social Fund it will be monitored by WEFO and as it is also a regional programme, regular reports will be considered by LSkiP and the Cardiff Capital Region Programme Board to ensure it has a clear focus and alignment to regional priorities.

What is the estimate cost of implementing this decision or, if the decision is designed to save money, what is the proposed saving that the decision will achieve?

Quarterly appraisals by the Newport CC, the lead sponsor and WEFO.