

# Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 14 January 2021

## Edinburgh Blended Employability Service

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Routine All <a href="#">7 and 31</a>
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### 1. Recommendations

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1.1 Committee is asked to:

1.1.1 note the co-production exercise and review undertaken to update, develop and realign the specifications for the Supported Employment, Complex Needs Employability and Edinburgh Targeted and Integrated Employability Service (ETIES) contracts; and

1.1.2 consider the findings and endorse progression to the tendering phase for an Edinburgh Blended Employability Service to replace the current three services.

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## Edinburgh Blended Employability Service

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The Council funds third party services to support Edinburgh residents in accessing and progressing along the Employability Strategic Skills Pipeline with the goal of securing and sustaining training and employment.
- 2.2 Due to significant changes in the labour market and the new operational context as a result of Covid-19, the following three services have been reviewed using a co-production methodology to ensure they remain fit for purpose and value for money:
  - 2.2.1 Supported Employment Service (All in Edinburgh);
  - 2.2.2 Complex Needs Employability Service (EnCompass); and
  - 2.2.3 Edinburgh Targeted and Integrated Employability Service (Next Step).
- 2.3 This report seeks approval to commission a Blended Employability Service for Edinburgh that will offer person centred employability services for each of the individual target groups, focusing on:
  - 2.3.1 a supported employment service for those with a disability or long-term health condition;
  - 2.3.2 intensive employability support for those with complex needs or additional barriers to employment;
  - 2.3.3 support for income maximisation and better off in work calculations;
  - 2.3.4 support for those facing in work poverty; and
  - 2.3.5 support with digital literacy for employability.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The Council works with external partners through the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal, Joined-up for Jobs network, Edinburgh Guarantee (Developing the Young Workforce) Partnership and Locality Partnerships to promote inclusive growth across the city.

### **Supported Employment Service**

- 3.2 The Council currently funds a Supported Employment Service, with 40% matched funding from European Social Fund (ESF). It follows the Scottish Government's five stage Supported Employment model.
- 3.3 The Supported Employment Service is a pan-disability service, supporting over 950 people per annum. It ensures a "no wrong door" approach for anybody with a disability or long-term health condition who is looking to secure, sustain and, where appropriate, progress in employment.
- 3.4 The current service is delivered by All In Edinburgh, a consortium of four organisations (ENABLE Scotland, Forth Sector, The Action Group and Into Work) with ENABLE Scotland being the lead contractor.
- 3.5 The current [contract](#) commenced on 1 April 2015 for an initial period of four years with the option to extend for a further two years. A further extension has been put in place due to delays with the co-production as a result of Covid-19. This extension is in place until 30 September 2020 with the option to further extend service delivery until 31 March 2022 if required.

### **Complex Needs Employability Service**

- 3.6 The Council currently funds a Complex Needs Employability service.
- 3.7 The service provides a range of supports to over 200 people per annum with complex barriers to accessing and sustaining education, training or employment. The service is for those in recovery from substance misuse, previous offending behaviour, homelessness and other complex issues.
- 3.8 The service is currently delivered by Access to Industry under the name of 'EnCompass' and is based in city centre premises with outreach provision where required.
- 3.9 The current [contract](#) commenced on 1 April 2017 for an initial period of two years with the option to extend for a further two years. A further extension has been put in place due to delays with the co-production as a result of Covid-19. This extension is in place until 30 September 2020 with the option to further extend service delivery until 31 March 2022 if required.

### **Edinburgh Targeted and Integrated Employability Service (ETIES)**

- 3.10 The Council also funds ETIES, with 40% matched funding from ESF.
- 3.11 The service aims to support over 1,100 people per annum who are short-term unemployed or facing in-work poverty. It helps them to secure and sustain employment and upskills unemployed and workless individuals into learning or work.
- 3.12 ETIES is delivered by Community Renewal Trust under the name of "Next Step" and focuses on reaching out to the most disadvantaged communities in Edinburgh.
- 3.13 The current [contract](#) commenced on 1 April 2019 for an initial period of two years until the 31 March 2021. The contract terms provide the option to extend for up to

a further two periods of 12 months. The contract can be terminated if required by providing six months' notice

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 The reviews of the Supported Employment, ETIES and Complex Needs Employability Service have been undertaken using a co-production methodology that seeks to engage with users, beneficiaries and other stakeholders to ensure that the resulting commissioned services are fit for purpose, minimise duplication, and utilise current good practice.
- 4.2 The initial consultation and co-production stages have now been completed and this report sets out the findings for consideration by Committee prior to moving into the procurement phase.
- 4.3 For the review a Project Steering Group was established to oversee the co-production and any subsequent commissioning process. The Co-production and Procurement plan is set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.4 The review found that:
  - 4.4.1 unemployment benefit claimants and those being made redundant has significantly increased as a result of Covid-19 and therefore the number of clients requiring employability provision is likely to increase;
  - 4.4.2 national employability provision is likely to increase due to additional funding as a result of Covid-19;
  - 4.4.3 there is still significant inequality and poverty and a need for holistic, person centred and local targeted employability services;
  - 4.4.4 there is an increasing request for mental health support for clients engaging with employability services; and
  - 4.4.5 there still remains a digital divide and which has been further exacerbated by Covid-19.
- 4.5 As a result of these findings, the following changes are recommended:
  - 4.5.1 intensive local employability support is required for those not accessing other employability provision and have additional barriers to employment;
  - 4.5.2 a dedicated supported employment service is required for those with a disability or long-term health condition;
  - 4.5.3 those with complex needs require specialist employability support alongside criminal justice, housing and drug and alcohol services;
  - 4.5.4 many still face in-work poverty and a dedicated in-work support campaign and service is required to work alongside employers;
  - 4.5.5 employability provision needs to include support for income maximisation and better off in-work calculations;

- 4.5.6 support is required for digital literacy alongside employability provision; and
  - 4.5.7 Mental Health support is required alongside employability provision.
- 4.6 This is likely to result in:
- 4.6.1 employability services that complement national provision and minimise duplication of other support provision;
  - 4.6.2 more effective targeting of services to those requiring intensive employability support to gain better employment outcomes;
  - 4.6.3 a focus on reducing inequality and fair work so that fewer people will face poverty; and
  - 4.6.4 more efficient delivery through integration of employability services with other public services.
- 4.7 New service specifications have been developed incorporating the above. With Committee endorsement, this will inform the procurement process which will then take place to secure contractors, ready to deliver the revised services from 1 October 2021.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 If Committee endorses the changes proposed, the co-production and procurement process will be continued and the aim is for all contracts for the Edinburgh Blended Employability Service to be in place from 1 October 2021 in order to meet budget requirements, provide certainty to providers and ensure suitable replacement services are in place as quick as possible to meet the changing labour market requirements.
- 5.2 It is recognised that the timescales involved in the commissioning are ambitious. There may also be unknown delays due to Covid-19 or Brexit implications. To allow for any delays during the tendering process, there is an option for an additional up to six month extension to the existing services until 31 March 2022, with any new contracts for the Edinburgh Blended Employability Service in place no later than 1 April 2022.
- 5.3 A further report is expected to be presented to the Finance and Resources Committee in May 2021 outlining the results of the tender process and the preferred bidders.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The contract costs will be met from existing budget and external funding as appropriate.
- 6.2 ESF currently contributes 40% matched funding towards the cost of the Supported Employment and ETIES contracts. ESF funding is currently approved by the

Scottish Government for these contracts until 31 March 2022 with a potential extension until 2023 if funds are available. The detailed eligibility of the replacement UK Shared Prosperity Fund is not yet available to determine whether this will be able to be used towards funding these services in the future.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 The current services were originally commissioned using a co-production methodology. The review and subsequent procurement and any replacement service specifications required are again being co-produced. This is being undertaken through a fully consultative process that includes and takes account of input from key stakeholders, service providers and service users.
- 7.2 An Integrated Impact Assessment and Data Protection Impact Assessment will be completed to input into service specifications.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 [Council Commitments – Delivering an Economy for All](#)
- 8.2 [No One Left Behind: Delivery Plan](#)
- 8.3 [A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Employment Action Plan - Progress Report.](#)
- 8.4 [A Consultation on the Digital Strategy for Scotland](#)

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Edinburgh Blended Employability Services: Co-production Plan.

## APPENDIX 1

### Edinburgh Blended Employability Services: Co-production Plan

#### 1. PROJECT STEERING GROUP

A Steering Group was identified and includes representation from CEC Business Growth and Inclusion, Capital City Partnership, CEC representatives from all relevant departments, Skills Development Scotland, DWP, NHS Lothian, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, EVOC and the Scottish Union of Support Employment.

#### 2. TIMELINE

The timeline for the co-production and procurement are as follows:

Stage	Timeline
Research	April – September 2020
Co-production	October - December 2020
Reporting of Co-production finding	December 2020 – January 2021
Procurement	January - May 2021
Implementation	May - September 2021

The timeline is based on having the new or revised contracts in place to begin in October 2021.

#### 3. CO-PRODUCTION

Alongside desk research and an evaluation of previous outcomes, an online questionnaire was developed to gather the views of citizens, including employability providers and stakeholders.

Usually, a number of workshops and co-production sessions would take place in physical spaces but, due to Covid-19, these were held virtually. This included virtual workshops and focus groups with stakeholders, the Joined Up For Jobs network, wider peripheral services and citizens. These are listed in the table below.

Using Caselink, our Management Information System, we have analysed existing service use and demand and highlighted any other useful findings.

<b>Communication Plan</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Current Contract Holders</b>		
Virtual meeting with Community Renewal	Meeting to inform them of the plans to re-commission and the timeline	Sept 2020
Virtual meeting with Access To Industry	Meeting to inform them of the plans to re-commission and the timeline	Sept 2020
Virtual meeting with Enable	Meeting to inform them of the plans to re-commission and the timeline	Sept 2020
<b>Elected Members and Committees</b>		
Initial briefing paper to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee	An initial briefing was submitted to inform Elected Members of the need to re-commission the services	Sept 2020
Virtual meeting with the Convener and Vice Convener of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee	Virtual meetings have taken place to discuss the need to re-commission and to ensure a thorough understanding of the reasoning	Sept 2020
Committee Report to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee	The report will provide details of the emerging themes from co-production and an overview of the specification	Jan 2021
Briefing event to Elected Members	A briefing will be offered to Elected Members so they are aware of what is in the specification and to answer any questions	Jan 2021
Report to Finance and Resources Committee	This report will outline the results of the tender process and the preferred bidders.	May 2021
<b>Citizens</b>		
Citizens' Survey	A survey has been promoted through the JUFJ network, Steering Group and wider network to provide insight and experience from citizens around the employability services. This includes current service users and those who are not currently accessing employability services.	22 Oct 2020
All In Edinburgh client focus group	CEC facilitated this focus group with clients from across All In Edinburgh.	26 Nov 2020
Encompass client focus group	CEC facilitated this focus group with clients from Encompass	30 Nov 2020

Next Step client focus group	CEC facilitated this focus group with clients from Next Step	8 Dec 2020
Deaf Action client focus group	Deaf Action offered to facilitate a focus group with their clients to feed in to the consultation	TBC
Survey to JUFJ service users	A survey was posted on the JUFJ noticeboard and via email to the network to disseminate to service users.	22 October 2020
Survey to wider audience service users	The survey was also disseminated to service users via the Steering Group to ensure that as many people have an opportunity to complete it.	10 Nov 2020
CEC Tweet to promote the citizens' survey	We requested that the CEC Twitter account promote the surveys to service providers and citizens to encourage wider uptake of this from those we would otherwise not be able to reach.	19 Nov 2020
<b>Stakeholders</b>		
Steering Group	Key stakeholders will be included and will help inform the process and the outcomes, including development of an Integrated Impact Assessment.	28 Oct 2020
Focus group with the End Poverty Edinburgh Group	Facilitate a focus group with members of the End Poverty Edinburgh Group to gain their opinions and insight.	TBC
Survey to wider stakeholder audience	The survey was emailed to a wider stakeholder audience to get a more complete picture and help inform the specification.	10 Nov 2020
<b>Service Providers</b>		
Information notice on the JUFJ noticeboard	This will provide an overview of the plans and an invitation to view the Prior Information Notice on PCS. Interested parties can submit record an interest. It will also include an invite to the co-production event.	15 Oct 2020
Email to JUFJ network with link to JUFJ Notice	The email detailed an outline of the commissioning, a link to PCS and the JUFJ notice. It also provided details of the 4 November co-production event.	20 Oct 2020
Email to the Advice Agency Forum	The email included details of the Nov 4 event and was sent to the Advice Agency Forum. This includes those who are primarily	20 Oct 2020

	services providing benefits and debt advice. They include voluntary sector organisations, housing associations, NHS Lothian contacts and DWP officers.	
Virtual consultation event with JUFJ network	This included a presentation of the plans for commissioning, a rough outline of the services required and the procurement process. The session broke into smaller focus groups to have discussions around set questions.	4 November 2020
Survey to JUFJ network	A survey was circulated to the JUFJ network via the JUFJ noticeboard and emailed to other interested parties. It included the same questions used at the consultation event.	22 October 2020
Survey to wider audience of services	A survey went out to services that support clients with complex needs, criminal justice, housing etc. This was disseminated by the Steering Group members	10 Nov 2020
Promotion of Surveys through Public Contracts Scotland	A notice was published to advertise the surveys to those who have noted an interest in this contract	10 Nov 2020
CEC Tweet to promote the service provider survey	We requested that the CEC Twitter account promote the surveys to service providers and citizens to encourage wider uptake of this from those we would otherwise not be able to reach.	19 Nov 2020
Focus Group with All In Edinburgh Operational Group	This focus group will allow all parties within All In Edinburgh to provide insight into the operational aspects on the service, using the same questions from the survey and the JUFJ Co-Production event.	3 Dec 2020
Focus Group with All In Edinburgh Steering Group	This focus group will allow all parties within All In Edinburgh Steering Group to provide insight into the managerial and planning aspects on the service, using the same questions from the survey and the JUFJ Co-Production event.	4 Dec 2020
Emerging Themes event	An event will take place to provide an overview of the emerging themes from all of the co-production.	16 Dec 2020
Bidder Briefing event	After the specification is published on PCS, a bidder briefing session	26 January 2021

	will be advertised so that interested parties get a chance to hear a procurement and strategic presentation and to ask any questions.	
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