



HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

2 NOVEMBER 2022

Report Title:	WIRRAL WORKLESSNESS SUPPORT SERVICE
Report of:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

In November 2021, the Director of Public Health and the Director of Regeneration and Place brought a report to the Health and Wellbeing Board regarding Health and Employment, outlining how good employment opportunities are fundamental as part of a collective effort to improve health outcomes. The report was supported by a presentation from Involve Northwest who were the incumbent suppliers of the Council commissioned Worklessness Support Service contract.

This report provides an update regarding the future delivery of the Wirral Worklessness Support Service.

The activities outlined in this report support the vision of the Wirral Plan 2021-2026, and the Health and Wellbeing 2022-27 strategy to 'create opportunities to get the best health outcomes from economy and regeneration programmes' and will contribute directly or indirectly to delivering the following themes of the Wirral Plan:

- Brighter Futures
- Inclusive Economy
- Safe and Pleasant Communities
- Active and Healthy Lives

This matter affects all wards within the Borough.

This report is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to note the report and supporting information contained in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 In November 2021 the Health and Wellbeing Board resolved that Council officers be requested to explore funding streams for the continuation of the work of the ReachOut Partnership.
- 1.2 The Council is only able to explore funding for the continuation of the Worklessness Support Service and not the individual incumbent supplier, namely Involve Northwest via the ReachOut Partnership.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 This is an update report and no other options were considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Wirral Ways to Work Programme

- 3.1 The Wirral Worklessness Support Service contract is the largest element of the Council's wider Wirral Ways to Work Programme managed by the Economic Growth Team. The programme is Wirral wide but has a specific focus within Wirral's most deprived communities. It is designed to engage eligible workless young people and adults and support their progression into education, employment, and training via a suite of flexible, tailored employment support services. The other 2 elements of the Wirral Ways to Work programme are:
 - Intermediate Labour Market Programme which is delivered by the Council's 14 to 19 team. This programme provides grants to local businesses to provide employment opportunities for young people who are not in employment, education or training.
 - Careers Information, Advice & Guidance which is delivered by Career Connect. This service delivers careers information advice and guidance to young people aged 16-29 with a dedicated advisor developing tailored action plans and mentoring support.
- 3.2 The current Wirral Ways to Work programme has been delivering since April 2016 and has achieved the following outcomes as of 30 June 2022:
 - Engaged 8,843 Wirral residents onto the programme,
 - Supported 4,718 Wirral residents back into employment or training; and
 - Positive outcome rate of 53%.
- 3.3 This level of performance is extremely successful for a programme supporting clients who are furthest away from the labour market. The Wirral Ways to Work programme is part of the wider Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority Ways to Work programme which has achieved a 41% positive outcome rate since April 2016. This demonstrates the Wirral service is outperforming the LCR average.

Wirral Worklessness Support Service

- 3.4 The Worklessness Support Service is a Wirral wide programme, however, delivery is focused within community work clubs located in areas with the highest levels of worklessness and deprivation. All participants have a dedicated Job Coach who deliver in depth on-going information, advice, and guidance and one to one mentoring. They conduct a personalised needs-led assessment, for each participant to identify barriers to employment which can be wide ranging including health barriers, caring

responsibilities, low confidence, transport/travel barriers and other employability related barriers including skills.

- 3.5 Job Coaches use a diagnostic tool to measure participant progression and personal development. Each participant has an individually tailored and personalised Action Plan to include goals and milestones reviewed collaboratively between the participant and Job Coach throughout their time on the programme. The Job Coaches provide a range of support services directly themselves to support the transition into employment as well as signposting and referring to organisations as appropriate. In work support is an important element of their work to ensure retention and progression, supporting participants to sustain their employment.
- 3.6 The programme has provided immense benefit to residents who have been supported into employment and training opportunities. This not only supports a more inclusive Wirral economy, but also improves the health and wellbeing and life chances of individuals and their families through increased household incomes, improved mental and physical health, personal confidence, social networks, and aspirations
- 3.7 The Worklessness Support Service is currently delivered by Involve Northwest, and Wirral Change who support Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in Wirral. Appendix 1 of this report provides case studies that give an insight into some of the personal journeys clients they are working with daily face. Appendix 2 of this report is a presentation by Involve Northwest to show progress in the previous 12 months since they last reported to Health and Wellbeing Board, the current employment landscape and some of the key barriers' clients are currently facing.

Contract Duration

- 3.8 At the last presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2021 there was 12 months remaining on the Worklessness Support Service contract.
- 3.9 In June 2022 the Economic Growth Team commenced an open and competitive tender for the service from 1 November 2022 to 31 March 2024, with the option to extend for a further 31 months subject to funding. Two submissions were received, and the Director of Regeneration and Place awarded the contract to Involve Northwest on the basis that that their submission was the most economically advantageous tender to Wirral Council.

Planning for Health and Economic Recovery

- 3.10 The broader strategy for Wirral's economy and regeneration plans is integral to efforts to address existing social and health inequalities within the borough. This is particularly significant in the aftermath of COVID-19. Places such as Wirral, with existing economic and health inequalities, have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Additionally, the current cost-of-living crisis will impact on Wirral's community and economy increasing demand for local services and the financial resilience of the borough. This requires an enhanced focus on regeneration to mitigate these as well as identifying opportunities to respond to a new way of working and living.
- 3.11 The Council has embarked on a transformational regeneration programme including the Left Bank programme, which is underpinned by the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and the emerging Local Plan. This presents a unique opportunity to use the Council's significant regeneration programme to support local people to gain employment. Wirral's Economic Strategy 2021-2016 provides a fresh articulation of Wirral's economic and social objectives, and its Inclusive Economy theme recognises the current levels of inequality with many residents, specifically those for deprived

communities, experience a range of physical and mental health issues that prevent them from securing employment. Joint working across Public Health and Regeneration, with programmes to address health related worklessness are therefore essential to provide more upstream and person-centred approach to support those furthest from the labour market to be equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities available.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Worklessness Support Programme includes funds from the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme in England with match funding provided by Public Health. The total secured resources provide funding for the initial 17-month contract period.
- 4.2 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is the Government's successor programme for European Funding. As part of the LCR UKSPF Investment Plan submitted to Government, funding for this type of activity is identified from 1 April 2024. The Worklessness Support Service contract specified extension provisions within the contract, with the appropriate break clauses, to ensure that the Council has an effective delivery model in place in readiness to deliver.
- 4.3 The Economic Growth Team will continue to source all available external funding routes wherever possible to minimise the level of Council investment throughout the lifetime of the contract.
- 4.4 The Economic Growth Team will also continue to review the level of investment needed in terms of the scale and scope of this service using intelligence on local worklessness data and by reviewing the availability of Government led replacement interventions, delivered in the main by the Department of Work & Pensions.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this update report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are long term risks in relation to recurrent funding and therefore the sustainability of the services referenced within this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The services described within this report are currently commissioned for a specified period using grant and or other short-term funding, therefore they are not secure in the long term. Whilst UKSPF may replace the loss of EU grant funding post 2023, the current UKSPF programme only identifies funding available until the end of March 2025 and the level of investment available is not comparable to previous EU programmes.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 This project supports the Inclusive Economy theme of Wirral's Economic Strategy which was developed in full consultation with partner organisations and residents.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 The potential impact of the Worklessness Support Service Contract has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Economic Strategy, which can be found here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>. No material changes to the EIA are required because of this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Delivery of the Worklessness Support Service will be based in a range of accessible community locations across the borough, therefore reducing the requirement for residents to travel to a central Wirral location to access the service. The procurement criteria for this contract included a social value assessment, with the recommended supplier providing some measures in relating to carbon savings from energy efficiency measures within their tender response. Involve Northwest has a full organisational sustainability plan for all employees to adhere to. No direct climate implications.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Community Wealth Building is a people-centred approach to economic growth which reorganises local economies to be fairer and stops wealth flowing out of communities, towns, and cities, and instead places control of this wealth into the hands of local people, communities, businesses and organisations. A key theme in the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy is Fair Employment and Just Labour Markets and the Worklessness Support Service contract supports residents of Wirral back into the labour market via a community-based delivery model.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Case Studies provided by Worklessness Support Service
Appendix 2: Presentation from Involve Northwest

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Economic Strategy 2021-26:

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=50083184>

Wirral Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-27:

https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/media/3681/209_healthandwellbeingstrategy_v8.pdf

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Health and Wellbeing Board	3 November 2021
Health and Employment: Report of the Director of Public Health and the Director of Regeneration and Place Officer Decision Notice: Director of Regeneration and Place, Worklessness Support Service	27 September 2022