

Minute of Meeting

Economy & Jobs Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday, 22 March 2017	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor John Caldwell, Councillor Roy Glen, Provost Anne Hall, Councillor Jim Harte, Councillor Michael Holmes, Councillor John Hood, Councillor Paul Mack, Councillor Kenny MacLaren, Councillor Mags MacLaren, Councillor Sam Mullin, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Jim Sharkey

Chair

Councillor Roy Glen, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

M Crearie, Director of Development & Housing Services; A Morrison, Head of Regeneration, R Cooper, Economic Development Manager and V Howie, Finance & Resource Manager (all Development & Housing Services); and A McNaughton, Senior Committee Services Officer (Finance & Resources).

Apology

Councillor Lorraine Cameron.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Additional Item

The Convener intimated that there was an additional item of business relative to an update on the Learning and Cultural Hub which had not been included on the notice calling the meeting. The Convener, being of the opinion that that item, dealt with at item 8 below, was urgent in view of the need to update members timeously, authorised its consideration.

1 Revenue Budget Monitoring to 6 January 2017

There was submitted a joint revenue budget monitoring report by the Directors of Finance & Resources and Development & Housing Services for the period 1 April 2016 to 6 January 2017.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That it be noted that there had been no budget movements since the last report.

2 Capital Budget Monitoring Report

There was submitted a capital budget monitoring report by the Director of Finance & Resources for the period 1 April 2016 to 6 January 2017.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 Extension of Invest in Renfrewshire Employment Recruitment Incentive (RERI)

There was submitted a report by the Director of Development & Housing Services relative to the extension of the revised Invest in Renfrewshire Employment Recruitment Incentive (RERI) in order to increase the number of recruitment incentives for those aged over 50 years and create new recruitment incentives for clients who were chronic long-term unemployed on health related benefits participating on the City Deal Working Matters programme.

The report explained that the extension of the programme would allow up to 60 additional wage incentives to be provided from existing Renfrewshire Council European Social Fund (ESF) applications to support the creation of additional posts in local companies for priority groups.

DECIDED:

- (a) That it be agreed that the number of RERI places be increased to 60 at a cost of £24,000 to support clients of the Working Matters programme and an increased number of Invest in Renfrewshire clients who were over 50 years old; and
- (b) That further updates on employer recruitment incentives be reported to this Board.

4 Devolved Employability Services in Scotland

There was submitted a report by the Director of Development & Housing Services relative to devolved employability services in Scotland and advising that the Scottish Government would, on 8 March 2017, announce new devolved employability service contracts for Scotland at a value of £96 million to be delivered from April 2018 to March 2021.

The report explained that Renfrewshire fell within a work package area that covered the local authority areas of Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire and East Dunbartonshire. All five local authorities were interested in exploring a joint bid to deliver the services within the contract area. The Director of Development & Housing Services sought authority to explore the options and opportunities presented by the new contracts and, if viable, to submit a joint bid to deliver the contract with the other named local authorities.

DECIDED:

- (a) That it be noted that the new devolved contracts for Scotland would be announced on 8 March 2017;
- (b) That the Director of Development & Housing Services be authorised to explore the options and opportunities presented by the contracts and, if viable, to submit a joint bid to deliver services across the five local authority areas; and
- (c) That a further report providing an update on any actions taken be submitted to this Board.

5 Big Issue Invest - Corporate Social Venturing Fund

Under reference to item 8 of the Minute of the meeting of this Board held on 25 May 2016, there was submitted an update report by the Director of Development & Housing Services relative to the invitation from Big Issue Invest to contribute up to £50,000 to the Corporate Social Venturing Fund.

The report outlined progress achieved since May 2016 and advised that the programme would launch this year on confirmation of funding from Standard Life Investments, Edinburgh University, Virgin Money and the Scottish Government. Renfrewshire Council's investment of £50,000 would be used exclusively to provide loans to social enterprise companies in Renfrewshire, who would also benefit from access to a wider pot of funding.

A Service Level Agreement between Renfrewshire Council and Big Issue Invest would be established and funds would not be released until this was signed by both parties.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the allocation of £50,000 to the Big Issue Invest Corporate Social Venturing Fund for the sole use of loans to Renfrewshire companies be approved;
- (b) That it be agreed that the loan fund be released once confirmation of necessary funding from all partners was achieved and an appropriate service level agreement was signed by Renfrewshire Council and Big Issue Invest; and
- (c) That further updates be submitted to this Board.

6 Project SEARCH Update

Under reference to item 4 of the Minute of the meeting of this Board held on 20 May 2015, there was submitted an update report by the Director of Development & Housing

Services relative to the delivery of Project SEARCH, an employability intervention originating in the USA for people with learning disabilities or autism. At that time, £200,000 was committed to deliver Project SEARCH in Renfrewshire in partnership with Glasgow Clyde College for two years.

The report explained how the project was delivered and advised that during the first year, August 2015 – June 2016, Cohort One had provided 12 supported college places for students; 11 of whom had obtained a certified work qualification, and 9 of whom had secured a job, traineeship or had progressed to a higher level of training or education.

Cohort Two, being delivered August 2016 – June 2017, had also provided 12 supported college places and 11 students were currently progressing towards the completion of their qualification.

Expenditure for the first two cohorts had been managed prudently and was less than anticipated. Authority was sought to deliver a third cohort for a further 12 students to commence in July 2017 until June 2018 with costs to be met from the original budget allocation and from existing European Social Fund Programme funds available until the end of December 2018.

DECIDED:

- (a) That progress to date to deliver Project SEARCH be noted;
- (b) That the delivery of a third cohort, commencing July 2017, be approved; and
- (c) That a further update report be submitted to this Board on the performance of Project SEARCH.

7 Labour Market Update

There was submitted an update report by the Director of Development & Housing Services relative to labour market statistics for Renfrewshire as at end of January 2017 and providing comparisons, where data was available, with Scottish and UK labour markets.

The report advised that unemployment statistics had been changed nationally to incorporate new experimental Universal Credit figures. The number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance and the number of people claiming Universal Credit were now combined to provide an overall 'Claimant Count' figure as a measure of unemployment.

As at January 2017, the claimant count for Renfrewshire was 2,840 (2.5%) 0.1% lower than the same time last year.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the employment and claimant count figures for January 2017 be noted; and
- (b) That the change in reporting to new experimental statistics incorporating the Universal Credit figures be noted.

8 Learning and Cultural Hub Update

Under reference to item 7 of the Minute of the meeting of this Board held on 16 November 2016, there was submitted an update report relative to the application for funding towards the establishment of a Learning and Cultural Hub in High Street, Paisley, from the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.

The report intimated that the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund had awarded up to £1.5 million towards this project and advised that a full funding package had now been secured to meet the estimated project cost of £5 million.

DECIDED: That the grant offer of £1.5 million from the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund be accepted and the project delivered accordingly.