



Renfrewshire  
Council

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**To: Economy and Jobs Policy Board**

**On: 22 March 2017**

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**Report by: Director of Development and Housing Services**

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**Heading: Project SEARCH Update**

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## **1. Summary**

1.1 In May 2015, Renfrewshire Council's Economy and Jobs Policy Board approved the commitment of £200,000 over two years to offer Project SEARCH, an employability intervention targeting people with learning disabilities or autism. The first cohort was successfully delivered with the second cohort currently being delivered. The purpose of the report is to provide members with an update on progress and to request delivery of a third cohort.

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## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- i. notes the progress to date in delivering Project Search;
  - ii. agrees to the delivery of a third cohort, commencing July 2017; and
  - ii. agrees that a further report is brought to the Economy and Jobs Board updating on Project Search performance.
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## **3. Background**

3.1 Project Search is an employability programme for people with learning disabilities or autism.

- 3.2 Project Search originated in the United States in Cincinnati Children's Hospital and is now active in 40 US states and 4 European countries, including the United Kingdom.
- 3.3 Participants essentially attend a college course which is delivered on location within a host business, in this case Renfrewshire Council. The course is delivered across term-time (August – June) and includes classroom-based learning, as well as three work placement rotations. Each rotation lasts for approximately 10 - 12 weeks and is supported by on the job coaching.

#### **4. Renfrewshire's Project Search**

- 4.1 Invest in Renfrewshire's Project SEARCH course has 12 places available for each cohort.
- 4.2 The course is delivered in partnership with Glasgow Clyde College, as they are only college in the West of Scotland currently delivering Project Search. Glasgow Clyde College leads on the qualification delivery of the programme, provides a college tutor and commits substantial funding by matching their student fees to the delivery costs of Project Search.
- 4.3 Job coaching is provided by a member of the Invest in Renfrewshire team and supplemented, as required, by Enable Scotland trained job coaches. This additional job coach service was procured through our usual processes. The costs are co-financed through the ESF (Social Inclusion) Programme.
- 4.4 Students initially attend a summer school, which is delivered at Glasgow Clyde College throughout July (one day each week) to help their transition into the course and also to bond as a 'team' of students. This has proven to be very beneficial for the students and has assisted with retention and outcomes.

#### **5. Cohort One**

- 5.1 All 12 available places for Cohort One (August 2015 – June 2016) were utilised.
- 5.2 Students completed work placements in areas such as, waste recycling, business administration, janitorial, catering, housekeeping within care homes and leisure assistant.
- 5.3 11 of the 12 students completed the course and successfully achieved an SCQF Level 3 Employability Award qualification, which is certificated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

5.4 9 of the students (75% of those who started the course) have moved onto a positive destination.

- 6 students secured jobs of 16 hours or more per week;
- 1 student secured a traineeship; and
- 2 students moved onto a higher level of training or education.

Invest in Renfrewshire continues to support the remaining 3 students towards a positive destination.

## **6. Cohort Two**

6.1 All 12 available places for Cohort Two (August 2016 – June 2017) were utilised. 11 students remain on the programme.

6.2 All students have successfully completed their first work placement and are currently in work placement rotation 2. Work placements are similar to those noted at Section 5.2.

Students are also progressing well towards the completion of their qualification.

6.3 Ongoing feedback from services on student progress has been consistently positive for this group of students. We are confident therefore that all of the students will complete the programme and many will progress to a positive destination.

## **7. Request for Cohort Three**

7.1 Board previously approved an allocation of £200,000 for the delivery of two cohorts. Expenditure for the first two cohorts has been well managed and has therefore been less than anticipated.

7.2 The programme has also proven successful to date in terms of positive outcomes for Cohort One and we expect this to be replicated with Cohort Two.

7.3 Board is asked to approve the delivery of a third cohort for a further 12 students to commence in July 2017 and running until end June 2018. Costs for this will be borne from underspends from the original budget allocation and from existing ESF Programme funds available until the end of December 2018.

7.4 Further reports on progress will be prepared for board.

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Funds are committed from the Invest employability budget and EU funds will part match fund the programme. The initiative is included within the council's Poverty and Social Inclusion ESF application where funding is committed and available until end Dec 2018.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – The Project Search co-ordinator post will be extended for a further year.
3. **Community Planning** –  
**Jobs and the Economy** – the programme will support vulnerable unemployed young people with a disability into work and will support them to gain work experience and qualifications.
4. **Legal** – none
5. **Property/Assets** – Project Search requires a training room and a 'homeroom' where the programme lecturer is available all day if any issues arise. A training room is currently available within Assurance House. Alternative arrangements will be made when the Employability Service transfers to Russell Institute.
6. **Information Technology** –many of the Project Search trainees will require a computer on placement. This is supplied through the host department.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** -  
The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report as it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – health and safety is in place for all participants and can be enhanced to suit each individual.
9. **Procurement** - none
10. **Risk** - none
11. **Privacy Impact** - none

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## List of Background Papers

- (a) "Invest in Renfrewshire Operating Budget 2015-16" Report to the Economy and Jobs Policy Board, 20 May 2015.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Development and Housing for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting.

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*8 March 2017*