



Blackpool Town Deal Board Meeting

No 13 – Agenda Item 5.1

Report to: Blackpool Town Deal Board
Subject: Blackpool Youth Hub Business Case Review and Recommendations
Relevant Officer: Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director
Date of Meeting: 8th October 2021

1) Blackpool Youth Hub Project Background

1.1 Project Description

The project purpose is to support young people in the town to access jobs and training and to make a fully supported and smooth transition from school or unemployment into a positive destination.

While there is a range of provision available, Blackpool currently lacks an integrated NEET strategy and support for young people is fragmented, resulting in further disengagement. The Youth Hub will seek to address this issue directly, by providing a 'one stop shop' or 'one place base' for young people providing quality advice for young jobseekers aged 16-24. The hub will provide a focal point for young people and space for partners to collaborate and pilot what works, with a view to refining future service delivery and longer-term investment. The scheme will repurpose a vacant town centre unit within Bickerstaffe House, a Council owned building to deliver provision. The project will run from April 2022 to September 2023.

The project is seeking £500k from Town Deal with no co-funding. However, Blackpool Council have bid into the Community Renewal Fund for c£444k to develop the Youth Hub from September this year until 31st March 2021 when the funding ends. The CRF will enable the Council to develop a pilot scheme for around 7 months prior to Town Deal funding becoming available.

1.2 Rationale and Need for Scheme

The provision of employment and training support for Young People in Blackpool, currently outside the labour market or not in education, employment and training (NEET), is delivered through various agencies as set out below. The local authority's Childrens Services Department currently have a statutory duty to track and support young people who are NEET (aged 16-17), while 18-24 year old NEET fall within the responsibility of Job Centre Plus (JCP) to help them find work if they are claiming benefits such as Universal Credit. Prior to becoming NEET, or for young people at risk of disengagement, there is also support available



through DfE 'Opportunity Area' funding. Right to Succeed are also active in the area and have recently submitted a CRF application to deliver 'Pathways for all' which will seek to work with young people at risk of becoming NEET whilst at school.

At present, young people can access advice, training, and wider support services from the following organisations, to gain employment or progress towards economic activity through skills development and further training. This in turn involves a range of statutory funding; local government funding; national lottery sources; trusts and foundations; and European Funding sources. The following list of provision is not definitive as there will be other local provision, we are unaware of especially within the voluntary and community sectors:

- Advice – National Careers Service
- Skills/Training Programmes – B&F College (classroom based NVQs; traineeships; apprenticeships; T-levels; Princes Trust programmes, vocational courses, academic courses) Sixth Form Colleges, local private sector training providers funded by Adult Skills Budget and ESF (European Social Funds) funded programmes such as Skills Support for the Workforce and Skills Support for the Unemployed, and the Council's Adult Community Learning Service (19+).
- Employment Support Programmes – DWP (Restart, Kickstart, Work and Health Programme, JETS (Job Entry Targeted Support)) and ESF/Big Lottery Funded provision e.g Invest in Youth - delivered by community and voluntary sector agencies and social enterprises across Lancashire.
- Enterprise advice and funding – Princes Trust; Get Started (Blackpool Council)
- Volunteering opportunities– Blackpool Football Community Trust; Volunteer Centre.

However, whilst there is a range of provision available, Blackpool lacks an integrated NEET strategy and support for young people is fragmented, resulting in further disengagement. Employers equally remain confused as to how to engage with provision other than via individual initiatives or providers. The Youth Hub will seek to address this issue by providing a 'one stop shop' or 'one place base' for young people providing quality advice for young jobseekers aged 16-24. The hub will provide a focal point for young people and space for partners and employers to collaborate and pilot what works, with a view to refining future service delivery and longer-term investment.

There are three overarching key issues that the Youth Hub will aim to address:

1. The sheer scale of the challenge – an unenviable track record of having the highest youth claimant count throughout the pandemic, fading only slightly, and still third highest with 1,450 16–24-year-olds claiming benefit or 14.5% compared with 8.6% for the NW and 7.5% for GB (NOMIS, July 2021). Still almost double the national claimant rate in an authority designated the most deprived in the country (Indices of Multiple Deprivation).
2. The quality and intensity of support available – ensure that young people benefit from support that is tailored to their needs and includes specialist skills, training, advice or wrap around support to overcome barriers to participation in the labour market (such as mental health, substance misuse, basic skills deficits), and,



- 3. Joining up fragmented delivery & planning for future needs – while there is a plethora of support and agencies active in the area, this currently lacks co-ordination, resulting in young people falling between agencies and out of the system or being supported separately through different organisations duplicating time and effort.

1.3 Project Deliverables

- Number of public amenities/facilities created/sustained – 1. Retaining a physical ‘Youth Hub’, providing 252 square metre of dedicated learning and advisory space for young unemployed people from April 2022 (following a pilot phase commencing September 2021)
- Sustaining the Youth Hub Employment Advisory team (comprising a Youth Hub Coordinator, 3 x Youth Hub Employment Advisers and an Administrator) and DWP Youth Work Coaches to deliver tailored one to one support for individual NEET young people up to September 2023.
- Sustaining the colocation of the YHEA team with DWP’s Youth Work Coaches to September 2023.
- Offering employment support and information, advice, and guidance to 400 Blackpool young people by September 23.
- Supporting 35% of young people accessing the Youth Hub (140) into education, employment, and training by September 2023.
- Building on partnership working and service integration by strengthening the joint working protocols/MOU developed with partner agencies governing referrals, provision, and maximising positive outcomes for young people.

1.4 Funding Profile

| Fund Source | 2021 – 2022 | 2022 – 2023 | 2023 – 2024 | 2024 – 2025 | 2025 – 2026 | Total |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Towns Fund | | £327, 418 | £171, 734 | £0 | £0 | £499, 152 |
| Other | | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Total | | £327, 418 | £171, 734 | £0 | £0 | £499, 152 |

2) Annexes

There are three documents annexed to this report which provide further detail:

- 1. Annex Paper 5.1A – Is the TDIP report including the independent Appraisers summary of the project business case provided to the TDIP panel on 22nd September. This provides:



- A summary review of the 5 business case elements within the project Business Case highlighting strong performing areas and also any areas that would benefit from further attention or discussion
 - A series of overarching recommendations provided to the TDIP Panel for initial review and consideration and the TDIP Panel's recommendations to the Town Deal Board
2. Annex Paper 5.1B – The full EKOSGEN Appraisal scheme report
 3. Annex Paper 5.2 – The full Project Business Case (without appendices)

3) Recommendation

That the Board confirm that they are satisfied that the business case assessment process was thorough and robust and approve the Blackpool Youth Hub Business Case for sign off by Blackpool Council and Chair of the Town Deal Board, for onward submission to DLUHC.