

# NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board February 2020

### Report of the Head of Property and Regeneration S. Brennan

#### Matter for Decision

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

**Report Title: Workways+ Short Term Unemployed (STU) supporting people most at risk of poverty to gain employment.**

#### Purpose of Report

To seek Members approval to accept the grant offered by Welsh Government to support those who are Short Term Unemployed as part of an extended delivery of the Workways+ operation as offered by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).

#### Executive Summary

Workways+ currently offers support to those who are Long Term Unemployed or Economically Inactive through European Funding. There was opportunity to apply for additional grant to further expand the provision and support a wider cohort of people to include those who are Short Term Unemployed (STU). The funding would be available until August 2023.

#### Workways+ Context

Workways+ was approved by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) in December 2015 and is currently contracted to run until December 2022 (an extension will be also requested). This highly successful operation supports long term unemployed people to overcome barriers which prevent them from finding work. This additional Grant will widen the remit of those that can be supported and therefore allow more people to access the provision and gain sustainable employment.

Neath Port Talbot CBC is the lead partner for Workways+ STU, joint partners include:

- Carmarthenshire County Council,

- Pembrokeshire County Council; and
- Ceredigion County Council.

The aim of the project is to increase the employability of Short Term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who are classed as having low/no skills (level 2 or below) or have a Work Related Health Condition / Disability.

There are 2 elements which are fundamental to the operations delivery:

- 1) **Mentoring Provision** – this ensures every participant has one point of contact to ease the transition into employment.
- 2) **Regeneration Department** – working alongside NPTCBC Business Team and the wider Regeneration Department ensures the operation is fully aware of businesses that are expanding, moving to the area, new developments and inward investment opportunities. This close working liaison enables Mentors to better prepare participants with a realistic occupational goal that is achievable.

## **Engaging with Participants/Marketing**

The Workways+ team are based at the Work Station, Water Street, Port Talbot but also have an established outreach provision across the county borough. Staff are able to meet with participants in convenient locations in all wards but also continue to seek innovative methods of engaging with the client group by having a clear presence in the community, via schools, at local events and other public venues to ensure accessibility. Other methods of engaging with participants include Facebook, Twitter, website and text message service.

## **Participant Barriers**

Workways+ adheres to eligibility criteria set out by WEFO which states that all participants must be unemployed for 1 year or more, or economically inactive (claiming sickness benefits or not in receipt of benefits). Unfortunately, almost 25% of those seeking support do not meet the criteria. The additional grant will enable Workways+ to expand and support those currently being turned away, whilst also providing targeted support to those most at risk of poverty.

## Operational Targets

Outcome	Total No. of Participants	No. of Participants in NPT	Notes
Project Starts	1207	391	
Enter Employment	399	129	16 hours or more
Gain Accredited Qualification	338	109	Addressing low/no skills barrier

## Financial Impact

Workways+ STU has been approved at a high intervention rate of 77.68%.

The total cost of Workways+ STU for the period until August 2023 is £3,862,113.

There is no requirement for NPTCBC to provide a cash contribution to the operation's match funding. After much discussion, this has been agreed as 'Staff Match' from the Welsh Government project Communities for Work Plus at a total value of £262,804.

## Staffing

The operation will employ a total of 25.5 Full Time Staff with NPTCBC employing an additional 4 staff (plus 2 staff as match funding).

## Integrated Impact Assessment

An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been undertaken on the Workways+ project to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. The Integrated Impact Assessment is attached to the report at Appendix I.

## Valleys Communities Impact

The project will very much have a positive impact on our valley communities providing outreach support to provide employment opportunities for our residents that require it.

## **Workforce Impact**

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

## **Legal Impact**

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

## **Risk Management**

The project maintains a risk register which is reviewed by its Steering Group on a quarterly basis.

## **Consultation**

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

## **Recommendation(s)**

- (1) To accept the Offer of Grant from the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) in relation to the Workways+ Short Term Unemployed project.

## **Reason for Proposed Decision(s)**

To enable the Workways+ project to continue delivery in according to the business plan and WEFO Grant Offer letter.

## **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

## **Appendices**

Integrated Impact Assessment – Appendix I

## **List of Background Papers**

None.

## **Officer Contact**

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