

All Committee meetings were cancelled with effect from 23rd March, 2020 due to the COVID-19 emergency.

The recommendations in this report were approved by an Executive Director of the Council, acting under delegated authority in terms of paragraph 2.1.1 of the Council's List of Officer Powers

1st April 2020 (CANCELLED)

Approved by Executive Director, Communities – 2nd April, 2020

Supporting the Levenmouth Plan – Increasing Employment Opportunities through Training – Locality Response Team

Report by: Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods

Wards Affected: Ward 21,22

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek agreement from the Area Committee for a contribution from the Local Community Planning Budget (LCPB).

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to agree a total contribution of £25,000 towards the continuation of the Locality Response Team approach in the financial year 2020/21. This funding goes towards management and running costs of a Levenmouth team under the auspices of the Locality Response Team approach.

Resource Implications

Approval of this funding will reduce the LCPB (Anti-Poverty) element by £25,000.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no legal implications inherent in this report. Risk management issues will be addressed in terms of the working arrangements for all participants within the Locality Response team. Any perceived risk will be mitigated by the application of high-quality training, ongoing supervision, and the issuing of approved PPE relevant to the jobs being undertaken.

Policy & Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment Checklist is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

Consultation

Members have stated that one of their main concerns in relation to local planning objectives is the need to ensure that opportunities are made available to local people to enhance their skills to provide the best opportunity to be ready for work. The type and range of skills imparted are important to assist local people to be aspirational in terms of what type of job they would like to do.

The offer from the Locality Response Team approach ties in with the feedback coming from local employers and candidates looking for training opportunities.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The criteria for spend from the LCPB requires authorisation from Area Committee before amounts of over £5,000 can be committed.
- 1.2 This report is to seek agreement from this Area Committee for a contribution from the Local Community Planning Budget.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 The Levenmouth Plan notes that economic development and increasing local employment is a priority for the area and notes that it is essential to make sure that all of the current opportunities are taken advantage of in a co-ordinated way and this includes a clearer picture of how all of the key drivers fit together.
- 2.2 Levenmouth has a number of challenges in terms of its ability to be robust during times of economic fragility. The area is perceived to be poorly served in terms of connectivity, still has comparatively low levels of educational achievement, although recent reports from the high school head teachers have shown an increase in achievement as well as positive destination data.
- 2.3 The Locality Response Programme that has been running in the area for the last 3 years assists in achieving some of the core aims of the Economy, Planning & Employability Services, namely
 - Providing a range of training programmes for youths and adults
 - Arranging work placements
 - Supporting learners to progress into work/training
 - Supporting and assisting the development of Community based training organisations
 - Targets 70% of all participants moving into a positive destination.
- 2.4 Locality Response training squads have ordinarily had a Fife wide remit and they have been used to resolve long-standing community concerns around environmental issues, or have assisted in larger developmental projects including the set-up of allotment sites etc.
- 2.5 The range and nature of the jobs they carry out are important, not only in that they achieve some of the diverse and unique aspirations of our communities across Fife, but

also that these challenges enable participants to put into practice a wide range of skills to bring about a solution to a problem.

- 2.6 The proposal for consideration today is to continue funding a Levenmouth Locality Response team (locally known as the Silverburn Squad) that has a single focus in the Levenmouth area. The team has been running in the area for 3 full years now and has made a significant contribution in tackling some long-standing environmental issues in the area.
- 2.7 The team have an anchor point in Levenmouth at Silverburn Park. The Park will continue to provide a range of opportunities for project related work around woodland management, horticulture, path construction and watercourse work etc. However, the scope of the work carried out extends to all parts of Levenmouth. A range of services in the area have been able to pull in the resources that the team affords, to carry out work which has proved problematic previously due to cost concerns or, work scheduling pressures.
- 2.8 This approach gives local management an amount of flexibility in getting work done in the area which is considered as locally significant, without having to compete for the time allocation of the team due to similar demands from the rest of Fife. It also allows us an option when Parks Streets and Open Spaces (PSOS) teams are overstretched to carry out time limited work in support of the Beautiful Fife competition for example, or a range of other gala and civic events
- 2.9 In light of the new initiatives around the River Leven and the introduction of the rail link in the area, discussions will be in place to assess how these capital projects can provide training opportunities for local people.

3.0 The Project

- 3.1 Participants in the project, all unemployed people from the local area referred by Jobcentre Plus staff in Leven, will complete a range of training which will enhance their ability to source paid employment in a range of trades.
- 3.2 Training and qualifications are provided within the 8-week training period, by Fife Council Skills Development Centre in Kirkcaldy and generally include:

- CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme)
- IPAF (International Powered Access Federation)
- WAH (Working at Height)
- Manual Handling
- Abrasive Wheels

In cash terms over 40 trainees will receive around £700 worth of construction related qualifications, which at a stroke removes a significant financial obstacle for them to apply for certain types of work.

- 3.3 As and when new courses run, LRT members are made available to attend along with their Squad Supervisor. The Levenmouth area is looking at separate support for Digger certification, to allow larger scale civils work to be carried out by the team in support of local projects. This aspect is currently in negotiation.

- 3.4 It is also important to note that given the rail link proposal, the management of the LRT have agreed to build in the separate qualification known as PTS or Personal Track Safety. This is relevant as it is the standard qualification required for any tradesperson carrying out any type of work within the curtilage of a railway track or station.
- 3.5 All participants in the 8-week voluntary period, have the benefit of support from Fife Council Employability staff who work closely with everyone to support them to secure longer-term employment with other employers – this process is enhanced with the added benefits of the qualifications (shown in 3.2), work experience and references to support their applications.
- 3.6 We can advise that previously Squad members have secured positions with PSOS on a seasonal basis. Traditionally, these posts attract huge competition, often staff are recruited on a repeated basis each season, and therefore to secure positions within the department is a significant achievement. Those who oversaw the interview process highlighted in their feedback that the work that these participants had undertaken with the Squad was a major factor in their success.
- 3.7 As noted above we will continue to explore all possible opportunities that may come from the large-scale capital projects which will be happening in the Levenmouth area over the next few years. We see a significant opportunity to secure training opportunities and work on the River Leven project where there will be a requirement for civils and path work.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 This project will make an impact on several environmental issues and concerns in the area. It is also important to note that the LRT approach supports aspects of training provided by the Community Trade Hub in Buckhaven, this close link to another training provider in the area
- 4.2 In addition this project meets the underpinning aims of the approved current Levenmouth Plan, notably around Opportunities for All.

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