

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure

DATE 19 March

DIRECTOR Gordon McIntosh

TITLE OF REPORT Support for local employability training providers

REPORT NUMBER: EPI/13/005

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents the findings of a consultation exercise conducted by EP&I's Employability, Skills & Community Enterprise team with local employability training providers to explore the desirability and potential benefits of an employability training providers' forum. This is as per the recommendations of the EP&I Committee on 6 November 2012.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. The Committee approve that Officers within Employability, Skills and Community Enterprise host a training providers' forum, with a rotating chair.

2. The Committee approve that the Local Employability Training provider Forum provides regular updates to Aberdeen Works.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The development of a support mechanism for local employability training providers will have no additional financial resource implications on the service.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

If officers participate in this piece of work, it will mean that there is adequate and appropriate training provision available on a local level which may have a positive impact on the ability of local businesses to attract appropriate skills to support their needs, and a potential decrease in numbers of long term dis-engaged people within our communities.

## 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

At the meeting of the Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee of 6 November 2012, members considered a report which proposed that consultation be undertaken to determine the support and desirability of an Employability Training Providers' Forum. The recommendations were agreed and officers carried out a consultation exercise during December 2012 and early January 2013.

A total of 17 responses were received. The respondents were unanimously in favour of the proposal to create a training providers forum, with each respondent answering 'Yes' to the question: *'Do you feel there is a need to establish an Aberdeen Training Provider Employability Forum?'*

### Benefits

Respondents identified a number of potential benefits:

- Networking, where providers could meet and share knowledge and discuss best practice.
- A chance to share best practice
- An opportunity to focus on clients needs to support them to achieve the best possible outcome.
- Improve contact and communication between providers
- Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness the service provided across the city
- Promote joint working
- Help avoid duplication
- Enhance the client experience

"A Training Provider Employability Forum would provide networking opportunities; support best practice and assist draw on the membership expertise. It would also improve communication, reduce duplication and assist knowledge transfer between organisations. "

"Such a forum in Aberdeen City may encourage organisations to work together more and provide better value for money per client / service."

"A training and employability forum would promote joint working, improve communication and promote best practice. The forum would be an excellent networking event and allow individual organisations knowledge and expertise to be drawn upon by member organisations."

## Remit

Respondents favoured a remit which promotes best practice for providers in the city and which encouraged open communication, joint working and knowledge sharing. The remit of the forum will be agreed at its next meeting subject to the approval of the committee.

“The remit of the forum should be, improve working relationships between all employability partners, and look at joint bids for larger city wide work. It should also identify gaps in provision as well as duplication.”

“To promote best practice, offer support, manage/support change, improve efficiency and effectiveness, encourage development/learning among practitioners.”

“To establish and foster a productive and meaningful forum for all training providers and other relevant agencies in the City. A place where ideas can be exchanged and collaborative relationships be developed.”

## Management

It was proposed that that staff from ACC’s Employability Skills and Community Enterprise team manage and host the forum. The response was in support of this, but with a strong sense that the council’s role should be more facilitative than managerial. Respondents see the forum as a shared responsibility.

“ It should be facilitated and hosted by ACC, but the forum should be a partnership with rotating chair so no one organisation has to take on all the work and that decision making is a shared responsibility.”

“Yes, although we see the role as facilitative, rather than managerial.”

“Yes. This is ok provided it is not just an ACC initiative.

“I am happy with the managing and hosting part, but the chair of the forum should rotate.”

## Membership

Respondents were open about membership. The key theme was that members of the forum should be in a position to provide a positive contribution to the development of employability training provision in Aberdeen.

“Training Providers and funding agencies. Providers must have a good reputation and have a proven track record in their area of expertise.”

“All public and third sector organisations offering skills and/or employability training.”

“The group’s membership should be extended to all voluntary sector employment training providers in the City, Aberdeen College, Aberdeen City Council and a representative from the Community Planning Partnership.”

“Any Third Sector Organisation that is involved in the provision of Employability services to clients.”

“All operation (sic) training and employability organisations. I do not see it as a necessity for all organisations to attend every meeting, but potentially as a network.

#### Other Supporting Comments

Respondents were also given the opportunity in Question 12 to add further comments in relation to the establishment of the proposed forum.

The undernoted highlights how the establishment of the proposed forum will address many of the issues that are high on the agenda for external training providers

“The forum needs a clear link with Aberdeen Works and a rep from this group should sit on this group so that a clear link is established.

“Once the forum is established, there should be an agreed standard to which all organisations should adhere- this would strengthen partnership approaches to employers for work experience and paid employment. Employers will know what to expect from a trainee that has come from one of the Forum partner organisations. This document could strengthen joint funding bids.”

“I support the establishment of this forum in the absence of any other forum to engage with CPP on employability matters and developments.

“Training and Support may be better title...”

“Having previously worked within a framework which incorporated a number of local provides in the provision of employability services, I am aware of the benefits of this type of partnership working.”

## Going Forward

If the recommendations are supported it is proposed that Officers within the ESCE service will arrange a meeting for the respondents to discuss the findings and to develop an action plan. It is anticipated that ESCE staff will continue to facilitate the forum meetings and offer support as required.

### 6. IMPACT

The project contributes significantly and directly to the achievement of

#### **Single Outcome agreement (SOA) National Outcomes:**

1. We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
2. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful

#### **Aberdeen the smarter City**

1. We will enhance the physical and emotional wellbeing of all our citizens by offering support and activities which promote independence, resilience, confidence and self-esteem
2. Working with our third, public and private sector partners, we will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop knowledge, skills and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21st century.
3. Again, working with partners, we will create a City of Learning which will empower individuals to fulfill their potential and contribute to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our communities.
4. We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the city economy.

### **Equality and Human Rights implications**

The proposed Employability Training Providers Forum will adopt equal opportunity principles and actively engage with training providers that support and provide services for equalities groups eg NESS, GREC and organisations providing training opportunities in disadvantaged communities e.g. Pathways and SHMU.

### 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

### 8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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