

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**15 JANUARY 2020**

### **SOCIAL MOBILITY PROJECT PROPOSAL**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 This report proposes financial support to continue Social Mobility Projects in Newark & Sherwood as reported in the June 2019 Economic Development Committee.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 June Committee considered an update report on work that had been carried out to support social mobility within the District. The aim of the work was to support those residents in the district on their journey to employment and provide school age children with opportunities to explore career opportunities available to them. It was proposed that further work on this issue would be addressed as part of the review of the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

2.2 In September 2019 a workshop was held with members to discuss the Economic Development Strategy. The workshop highlighted further investment was needed to continue to invest in the young people within the district which has been shown to be one of the least socially mobile areas in the country from the 2017 Social Mobility report. The focus was to achieve outputs that would make a difference.

2.3 Unfortunately work on the new strategy has been delayed. Principally the welcome announcement of the identification of Newark in the Future Towns Fund has necessitated a review of the Council's approach to Economic Growth. This has resulted in a restructure of the Growth & Regeneration Directorate including the appointment of a new Economic Growth Business Manager to take place in the February 2020.

2.4 Whilst a wider review will need to take place under the new Business Manager it is felt that momentum on social mobility should not be lost in the short to medium term. It is therefore proposed to seek an increase in 2020/21's revenue budget to support additional social mobility projects.

#### **3.0 Proposals**

3.1 A number of actions took place from May 2018 to begin to address and support projects for those in the local secondary schools. This involved working with partners in both the public and private sector, including the DWP, training providers and charity organisations.

3.2 As the previous report indicated, there is an opportunity to undertake some additional support work with the groups identified within the report through the schools and youth stages. The age groups start with Year 10 pupils (14-15 years of age) up to and including a number of 24 year olds who require additional support to gain employment. The support could be coordinated through NSDC and provided by the most relevant organisations over the next 12 months. This would require provision of a budget for each phase of the plan agreed through relevant committees.

### **Developing Employability Skills – Project in Partnership with Deere Apprenticeships.**

- 3.3 The Developing Employability Skills project was set up to provide the Year 10 students at Newark Academy with the opportunity to understand what skills their future employers would require. Their education and experience may make them eligible to apply for a job, but to be successful in most roles they will need skills that they are likely to develop over time. Some will be specific to the job, but the vast majority will be so-called ‘soft skills’ that can be used in any job or employment sectors. These soft skills are ‘employability skills’: they are what makes the young people employable. This area was highlighted at the D2N2 Skills Summit held in November 2019. Employers recognise young people are on a journey, but there are some things a number of young people do not bring when starting employment. These include resilience, self-development and the use of initiative. School staff and Deere Apprenticeships work together to determine the most appropriate units and methods of delivery. Each student will undertake 3 units. These include self-assessment to determine each student’s strengths and areas for improvement. Applying for a job and Preparation for an interview follow to equip students with employability skills in preparation for them to make the transition from education to work; exploring all aspects of the selection and recruitment process. The project completed at Newark Academy in June 2019 proved to be a great success. The Head of Year and Head Teacher had nothing but praise for the staff delivering the course. . They were amazed at not only the standard of the course but how it was delivered to their students and “would very much like this to happen again. “ To enable the course to be delivered again at Newark Academy but offering this also to The Magnus Academy and The Dukeries Academy would be the ideal. Match funding would be the way forward by working again in partnership with Deere Apprenticeship who are in the process of securing external funding for project delivery.

### **Newark and Nottinghamshire Agricultural Society (NNAS) Schools Project**

- 3.4 The NNAS project was set up to enable the Education Project already in place to provide much bigger and better practical farming challenges and experiences to the students attending the schools within the district. The project offered opportunities and experiences outside of the classroom for the young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The funds received made a significant difference to the variety and amount of sessions delivered over the academic year 2018-2019, helping to meet the future skills needs of the local economy. In order to continue to deliver the number of sessions as part of the High Level Work Plan Objective 1: Schools and Businesses to another cohort of students further funding would be required. The support would continue to be co-ordinated through NSDC and provided by the NNAS in partnership with careers leads from within the schools.

### **Cognitive Behaviour Training**

- 3.5 The work was delivered by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) work coaches for the 18 -24 unemployed young people. 2 training sessions were run in July 2018 and March 2019 for a total of 20 young people. The feedback was very positive stating “*They felt that it was different from any other training they had attended, made a difference and was very helpful*”. The social mobility gaps are still prevalent amongst the age group of disadvantaged young people. Newark and Sherwood has a strong economy with unemployment below the national average of 1.3% but opportunity is not available to everyone. This is a challenge which continually needs to be met. By injecting funds to work

with the 18-24 year olds who struggle to gain confidence to enter the workplace can only benefit the district.

### **Costings to Deliver a Partnership Programme**

3.6 Delivery of group “Developing Employability Skills” sessions across the 3 senior schools (Newark Academy, Magnus Academy and Dukeries Academy) for 2 cohorts per Year 10 students over 3 days is £4,000 x 3 totals £12,000 with the authority providing 50% funding and a possible 50% match funding coming from Deere Apprenticeships. In the event that Deere Apprenticeships are not able to match fund the programme the District Council would deliver a programme to the value of £6,000. Continued external provision of the NNAS School Project to be delivered in schools within the district would be £5,000. The delivery and support of a trainer to deliver one further Cognitive Behaviour Training session for 20 unemployed delegates within the 18-24 year old bracket would be £2,000. In total it is proposed that an additional £13,000 be allocated to the 2020/21 budget of A11851 49220 – Employment & Skills, in addition to the current proposed budget for the year.

### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 To continue to demonstrate the positive impact the District Council has on disadvantaged groups within the district.

### **5.0 Financial Implications – FIN19-20/7984**

5.1 The financial implications have been outlined in paragraph 3.6. The Economic Growth employment and skills budget for 2020/21 will require £13,000 revenue funding, this is in addition to the £20,000 currently proposed for 2020/21.

### **6.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

6.1 Objective 8 of the Community Plan- “reduce levels of deprivation in target area and remove barriers to social mobility across the district” In particular key activity 8.4 require we “Work with partner to tackle social mobility by creating strategic cross-sector connections to improve aspirations and youth engagement”

### **7.0 Comments of Director(s)**

7.1 Whilst it would have been ideal to have completed the review of the Economic Development Strategy the opportunities that the Future Town’s Fund presents has required a new approach as such it will be for the new Business Manager to complete this review process. In the meantime it will be important to ensure that continued good work on social mobility continues as proposed in this report.

### **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

a) the proposed approach to social mobility set out in section 3 of the report be approved; and

- b) the Economic Development Committee recommends to the Policy & Finance Committee that an additional £13,000 be included in the 2020/2021 Revenue Budget for Employment and Skills to support the proposed approach to social mobility.**

**Reason for Recommendations**

**To ensure that social mobility continues to be addressed as part of the Council's Economic Development Strategy.**

**Background Papers**

Social Mobility Progress Report – June 2019.

For further information please contact Veronica Dennant on Ex 5260 or Matthew Norton on 5852.

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