

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**LINCS2EMPLOYMENT – WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the background for the approval of a programme of work experience / training placements to support people who are currently claiming Job Seeker's Allowance to get back into work.
- 1.2 To seek approval to support the Lincs2Employment Programme council-wide.

**2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 North Lincolnshire Council was approached by Jobcentre Plus to look at how it could support the new government agenda around Work Experience and providing opportunities to those claiming Jobseekers Allowance to assist them to gain skills and experience to support them into future employment.
- 2.2 The Council has confirmed its support to Work Experience in general terms, allowing services to take on people through Work Experience but not agreeing to a comprehensive programme, only the provision of placements at the manager's discretion. To date it is fair to say that the take-up is relatively low.
- 2.3 The placements that the council has supported have traditionally been taken up by young people during summer breaks from education and for short periods of around two weeks. Where this programme differs is that it will provide sustained work experience / training placements with the council in a variety of different roles, aimed specifically at those with low skills claiming Job Seeker's Allowance.
- 2.4 The Economic Development Team, working alongside HR and Jobcentre Plus, has developed a programme in North Lincolnshire Council to support up to 37 people in a work experience placement programme across the council.
- 2.5 The programme will target those jobseekers on the register that do not currently have an NVQ Level 1 or 2 and have been unemployed between 0 and 12 months. This would provide some support to those who have not currently been referred through to the Work Programme provision at 9 or 12 months which has been identified as a target area for intervention. Placements would be available to anyone aged between 18 and 65.
- 2.6 As part of its support for the programme, Jobcentre Plus will provide:

- Benefits for those who are participating in the programme for up to 40 weeks
  - Potential contribution to other costs depending on circumstances including travel and childcare.
  - Personal Protective Equipment if required
  - Application sifting and selection if required
- 2.7 The value of Jobcentre Plus' contribution would be circa £120,291 including the value of benefit payments to those on the scheme based on 37 placements and the other contributions to travel, childcare etc.
- 2.8 As part of its support for the programme, North Lincolnshire Council will:
- Cover the cost of CRB clearance if required at a cost of approx £44 per person (£1,628 maximum total cost based upon 37 placements)
  - Provide induction training to each of those on a work experience placement
  - Secure funding to deliver Employability Skills training and NVQ Level 1 or 2 in an associated subject to the work experience placement.
  - Deliver basic skills training to those that require it, accessing external funding support
  - Be responsible for the day-to day supervision of the people on work experience placements for the period of the placement (usually 40 weeks) but the person would not be employed by NLC
  - Allow the person on placement sufficient time to undertake training and development activities – usually half a day per week
  - Guarantee those on Work Experience an interview, should vacancies arise in the same area as the work experience placement or in the same type of role e.g. Business Administration etc.
- 2.9 As a condition of accepting a work experience placement with NLC, the beneficiary would be required to sign a declaration that confirms they will comply with the Council's policies and procedures e.g. dignity at work, code of conduct etc. Should someone on a work experience placement not follow this, their placement would be terminated. Satisfactory attendance and conduct will be monitored and should this not be , their placement would be terminated
- 2.10 Placement opportunities council-wide include Sports development workers, Recreation Assistants, Administration Assistants as well as Grounds Maintenance staff. A full list of placement opportunities is included at Appendix 1.
- 2.11 The programme will complement the Council's plans to increase the number of apprentices, providing further opportunities to train and develop those currently unemployed. The number of work experience placements offered through this programme are over and above the apprenticeship opportunities that have been put forward across the council.

### **3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 This programme will support the government's agenda to "Get Britain Working". There are currently 4,757 people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in North Lincolnshire (November 2011), many of which have low or no skills and are further away from the labour market. The Lincs2Employment programme will support this group to make them "job ready" for employment opportunities in the future.
- 3.2 The Council will benefit from up to 37 people working full time for a period of 40 weeks without having to issue them with an employment contract. In return for this, the Council will provide up to 37 unemployed people with experience, training and development over the period of the work experience and support them to gain further employment in the future.
- 3.3 There are therefore two options for consideration:
- Option 1 – to support the creation of up to 37 full time work experience placements in a variety of roles across the council.
  - Option 2 – to do nothing and not support the creation of placements across the council.
- 3.4 Option 1 is the preferred option.

### **4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Option 1 would provide direct support to those who are currently unemployed and have low skills which can be a barrier to their future employment. It will support them to gain valuable skills and experience which will enable them to access employment in the future.
- 4.2 Option 2 would not address the issues facing those who are currently claiming Jobseeker's Allowance that have no or low skills.
- 4.3 It is recommended that Option 1 is pursued.

### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 Financial – The value of Jobcentre Plus' contribution will be circa £120,291 including the value of benefit payments to those on the scheme based on a maximum of 37 placements. This also includes discretionary contributions to childcare, travel to and from work and Personal Protective equipment. JCP's contribution will go direct to the beneficiary and will therefore not impact on the council's finance team in terms of additional payments.

There will be a contribution from North Lincolnshire Council towards the costs of CRB clearance (a maximum cost of £1,628) which will be met from within the Regeneration & Planning Service budget for the project (£15,400) with contributions from other service areas as appropriate. A maximum of 11

email licences will also be required as part of the project which will cost a up to £440.

There will also be a cost relating to the provision of NVQ and other training that will be met from within the Regeneration & Planning Service budget for the project along with contributions from other service areas. This will be agreed with the employing service in advance of establishing the placement and the budget available will impact upon the amount of placements we are able to accommodate. External funding to cover the costs of the NVQ Level 1 / 2 training will also be sought from training providers, reducing the amount of costs that the council will incur.

Additional costs will also be kept to a minimum for example by delivering induction and other training courses by e-learning as much as possible, widening out internal training opportunities to those on placements, utilising free IT packages, existing licences and equipment that is not being used due to staff leaving etc which IT will support us with. Learning and Development has also offered to deliver the email training for those on placement at no cost as their contribution to the project.

Typical costs that will be incurred by services will be minor costs for stationary etc which would be managed within existing budgets. They will also be responsible for any role specific training required, other than the NVQ Level 1 or 2, e-learning Induction or employability skills training that will be covered through the Regeneration and Planning budget for the project. It is likely that the cost to other services will be minimal and would only require a contribution of a maximum of around £100 per placement (maximum total contribution £3,700), though it is anticipated that this will not be required for all placements.

- 5.2 Staffing – The programme will provide additional staff resource across the council in a number of different roles. It will require the commitment of time and support by those managers providing supervision for those people taking part in the programme. The programme will also provide potential development opportunities for staff looking to gain experience of supervising staff.

A member of the Economic Development Team within the Regeneration and Planning Service will be responsible for the coordination of the programme, ensuring all placements are suitable and working well, monitoring those people on placement and how they are progressing towards achieving their NVQ qualifications.

- 5.3 Property & IT – Depending on where the placement is situated within the council, this may have an impact on the need for desk space or IT equipment.

It will be the responsibility of the service area within which the placement is based to provide any equipment needed as part of their contribution to the project. With support from IT, Services will be able to utilise free IT packages (e.g. Open Office), existing licences and equipment that is not being used due to staff leaving etc to reduce the need to incur additional costs.

## **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out and the following impacts have been identified:

- Potential positive health impacts relating to those people taking on placement resulting from the provision of a positive role.
- Positive impact on those who have low or no skills that have been unemployed for between 0 and 12 months.
- Positive impact on participation in skills development and basic skills
- Positive impact in terms of supporting people access employment
- Risk – this will be managed through monitoring placement opportunities, management and supervision of staff, obtaining CRB clearance as appropriate and ensuring all those taking on placements sign a declaration that confirms they will comply with the Council's policies and procedures.

## **7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

7.1 Initial consultation with the unions regarding the programme and the condition from Jobcentre Plus that all people on the Work Experience programme would have a guaranteed interview for a job within the council was carried out by HR. Indications were that they are supportive of the proposal to assist people into employment through a programme such as Lincs2Employment. They would have no problem with the creation of these opportunities providing that they are additional to existing roles and not covering vacant posts. They have also been circulated this report and have submitted no further comments.

7.2 The report has been sent out for consultation to a number of officers council-wide as well as the unions. Any comments received have been reflected in the report.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 To support the Lincs2Employment Programme and the establishment of up to 37 placement opportunities within the council for people who are currently claiming Job Seeker's Allowance to get back into work.

## HEAD OF REGENERATION AND PLANNING

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report – Nil**

## Appendix 1 – Placement Opportunities

Job Role	Service Area	Work Base	Number	Manager
Trainee Events & Exhibitions Assistant	Infrastructure	20:21	1	Lynne Emeny
Trainee Cafe Assistant	Infrastructure	Normanby Hall	1	Susan Hopkinson
Trainee Garden Assistant	Infrastructure	Normanby Hall	1	Susan Hopkinson
Trainee Administrative Assistant	Neighbourhood & Environment	Hewson House	1	Steve Mercer
Trainee Assistant Street Sport Leader	Infrastructure	Hewson House	2	Maureen Moore
Trainee Assistant Sports, Play & Community Development Officer	Infrastructure	Hewson House	1	Maureen Moore
Trainee Greenkeeper Assistants	Infrastructure	Hewson House	2	Nick Over
Trainee Recreation Assistant	Infrastructure	Various Leisure Centres	4	Andy Bagshaw
Trainee Rights of Way Officer	Neighbourhood & Environment	Church Square House	1	Tim Allen
Trainee Country Parks & Nature Reserves Officer	Neighbourhood & Environment	Church Square House	1	Tim Allen
Trainee Diversity Officer	Corporate & Community	Church Square House	1	Liesel Dickinson
Trainee Refuse Collection (Loader)	Neighbourhood & Environment	Various	6	Graham Sykes
Trainee Beat Sweeper	Neighbourhood & Environment	Various	9	Michelle Button
Trainee in Horticulture	Neighbourhood & Environment	Various	6	Michelle Button
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