

Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

1 March 2022

Choose Work

1. Contacts

Report Author

David Hyland - Community Engagement Manager

Telephone: 01243 534864 E-mail: dhyland@chichester.gov.uk

Cabinet Member

Roy Briscoe - Cabinet Member for Community Services and Culture

Telephone: 07877 070591 E-mail: rbriscoe@chichester.gov.uk

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree to receiving £62,857 from West Sussex County Council Economic Recovery Fund, and delegate to the Divisional Manager for Communities the allocation of funds over three years (2022/23 – 2024/25)**

3. Background

- 3.1 Chichester District Council has for a number of years delivered a successful programme of support for local residents trying to get into or returning to employment. Periods of unemployment through a range of circumstances can be significantly detrimental to an individual's employment opportunities. Providing residents with one to one support in identifying their employment goals and bespoke support in getting them into work or closer to it has been very successful. In 2020/21, despite the pressures of the pandemic, the Choose Work service supported 66 new clients; 82% of clients were supported into paid employment.
- 3.2 For a number of years, broadly comparable services across the Districts and Boroughs in West Sussex have worked collectively to ensure equality of opportunity. Through this informal group funding from West Sussex County Council pooled business rates has been used to sustain the individual services in each area, coordinated by Horsham District Council. While this source of funding has ceased, a final contribution (for Chichester District Council £62,857) has been offered from the Economic Recovery Fund to deliver employment and training support for the next three years.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1 The bid to the Economic Recovery Fund highlighted the existing strengths of the service, and the funding is to support residents in securing employment, including supporting residents through retraining into new growth areas.
- 4.2 The award is intended to support the service over a three year period and no further funding will be available through this route. Therefore, the Districts and

Boroughs are encouraged to seek alternative sources of funding to sustain the service during and beyond the three year period, and additional resources have been included within the grant offer for fund raising support, proposed to be hosted and coordinated by Horsham District Council.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 Given the continued success of the existing Choose Work service, it is proposed to use the funds to maintain the current service for 2022/23. Demand for the service has continued to be high in 2021/22 (59 new client journeys started from April 2021 to end December 2021). Clients typically self refer to the service but it is well known to local partners and other organisations who can identify and support future clients.
- 5.2 The current service costs around £49,000 per annum to run and one third of the receipt will not cover the full cost of the service. In year one the balance will be funded from the Choose Work Reserve held for the service (estimated balance £41,500 at end of 2021/22).
- 5.3 During the course of 2022/23, officers will continue to work locally to identify other sources of funding – the Department for Work and Pensions had funded a one year “Youth Hub” for clients aged 18-25, and while that project will cease at the end of March 2022, further conversations are being pursued regarding funding.
- 5.4 In line with the terms of the Economic Recovery Fund grant, Horsham District Council are proposing to recruit a one year funding officer post on behalf of the Districts and Boroughs to identify sources of funding. Officers will continue to engage with that group to ensure the best outcome for the service in Chichester District.
- 5.5 As future funding is uncertain there will be regular monitoring in place in particular in Q3 of 22/23 to assess the financial position of the service.

6. Alternatives Considered

- 6.1 The service could be significantly reduced in scale. Halving the service would bring it in line with the identified funding source, but would significantly reduce the capacity at a time when client numbers are increasing (of the 49 new clients in the first three quarters of 2021/22, 12 (20%) presented in December). Sustaining capacity would seem to be in the best interests of future clients, while other funding sources are explored.

Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1 Historically the Council had made a capital contribution to the service, in the hopes that external sources of funding could continue to be identified to sustain the service. This has been broadly successful over a number of years but the reserve has, as intended, been utilised as match funding and reduced over time. Alone the reserve would not fund the service for more than 12 months. Sustaining the service remains dependent on attracting external funding, hence the proposals at 5.4 and 5.5.

- 7.2 Management of the service, including time dedicated to the actions described in 5.3 and 5.4 fall within the existing resources of the Communities Team.

7. Consultation

- 8.1 The bid to West Sussex County Council for this funding was developed by Horsham District Council with the full support of the respective departments from across the six District and Borough Councils in West Sussex.
- 8.2 The delivery of the service continues to reflect the changing needs of individual clients, and the feedback from past clients has allowed the service to adapt.

8. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1 Sustaining the current service will continue to provide positive benefit to existing and future clients, and expedite their return or entry to paid employment. Local businesses are also supported at a time when some are struggling to find new staff for vacancies.

9. Other Implications

Are there any implications for the following? If you tick "Yes", list your impact assessment as a background paper in paragraph 13 and explain any major risks in paragraph 9		
	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		X
Climate Change and Biodiversity		X
Human Rights and Equality Impact		X
Safeguarding and Early Help		X
Health and Wellbeing It is recognised that not being in work can be a major source of stress, and support into employment can alleviate. There are strong links, referrals and joint working with the Social Prescribing, Wellbeing and Housing teams.		X
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		X

10. Appendices

- 11.1 None

11. Background Papers

- 12.1 None