

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON 11 JUNE 2008**

SUBJECT: NORTH EAST WORK SKILLS PROJECT

BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's approval to participate in the North East Work Skills project.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D (10) and E (48) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the provision of programmes of Adult Education and applications to European Funding programmes.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) **Notes the potential for the Council to receive £40,000 from the Scottish Government to support provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in Moray.**
- b) **Subject to receipt of this funding, agrees to:**
- i) **the Council participating as a partner with Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils in the North East Work Skills Project (NEWS Project).**
 - ii) **a contribution of £72,000, split equally over three financial years, towards the costs of the North East Work Skills Project.**
 - iii) **establish a post (0.6FTE) of Project Officer (NEWS Project, East Moray) utilising this funding.**
- c) **Agrees to applying to the Highlands and Islands funding stream of the European Structural Funds to replicate the project in West Moray if the funding bid is successful.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A key survey (Adult Literacy in Britain – International Adult Literacy Survey, 1996) found that literacy, numeracy and core skills gaps affected over 23% of the indigenous population. This is estimated to account for 16,000 individuals in Moray. In July 2001 the Scottish Executive published the Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland Report, an initiative to address this issue.
- 3.2 Given the comparatively low levels of unemployment in Moray it is clear that substantial numbers of individuals with literacy needs are in employment. It is also clear that the industry sectors targeted by the project are perceived to be

industries which traditionally rely on a low skilled/low paid/low qualifications employee base with consequent impacts on the skills base and competitive adaptability of these industries. Recent research (A Study of Migrant Workers in Grampian – Communities Scotland, 2007) also indicates that high levels of migrant workers are employed in the same industry sectors and that numbers of migrant workers have more than trebled in the years 2003-2006 giving rise to serious language barrier issues in these industries.

- 3.3 The NEWS project underpins the community learning aspects of the strategic objectives of all three project partner Local Authority Community Plans and fits with the skills gap issues identified by the Moray, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Local Economic Forums. By addressing the skills gaps identified which are low levels of literacy, numeracy, core skills, ICT and ESOL, the project links to the learning and skills aims outlined in an array of national strategies including:

A Smart Successful Scotland,
Rural Scotland,
Skills for Scotland – A Lifelong Skills Strategy, 2007,
Work and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities – Communities Scotland, 2004,
Adult Learning Strategy
Adult ESOL Strategy, 2007.

The project supports the European Structural Funds Programmes by addressing the local labour market skills gaps of an at risk and marginalized section of low income/low qualifications employees.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This project will improve the literacy, numeracy, basic skills and ICT skills of 150 employees in low paid/low skills/low qualifications occupations within the food and fish processing, hospitality and tourism, care industry sectors throughout East Moray. East Moray is the geographic section of Moray which is eligible for the Lowlands and Uplands European Structural Funds. It covers the area in Moray east of Alves approximately. Seventy-five of these employees will develop English language skills (ESOL) by the provision of workplace learning for migrant workers employed in these industries. The project will achieve this through the provision of workplace-based training to these disadvantaged groups in the key industry sectors identified, leading to recognised qualifications. The overall aim of the project would be to secure and enhance the basic skills, adaptability and employment prospects of the targeted beneficiaries and support the competitive sustainability of companies for the overall benefit of the local economy. Addressing the issues of lack of literacy, numeracy, ICT, basic skills and English language skills will help employees to build confidence in their job roles and abilities. It will give them a sound basis for promotion possibilities and provide them with life enhancing and transferable skills which will benefit them for the future. Many have negative views of learning and few/no qualifications. The lack of basic skills facing employers in the target industries, all of which are strategically

important to the project area, is acting as a brake on local business and economic development.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

- All activities summarised in this report will help to achieve the Corporate Development Plan objective to maximise opportunities from European, Lottery and other funding sources and supports:
 - The Economic and Environmental Programmes to “Support employment opportunities for local people and increase prosperity throughout the area through active economic development and regeneration”.
 - The Social Programme to “Support and encourage measures that achieve Social Inclusion and enhance quality of life”.
 - The Educational Programme “To raise standards of educational attainment for all, especially in the core skills of literacy and numeracy”.
- All activities will address the priorities of The Moray Council as regards educational attainment, rural and economic development.

(b) Policy and Legal

- The Moray Council will participate in the project as a partner with Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

Financial:

- The total cost of the project over the three years is £643,346. Aberdeenshire Council, as lead applicant, requests a contribution from The Moray Council of £72,600 spread over the three years (2008-2011) with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils contributing £145,200 per annum each. The balance of £280,346 will come from the European Structural Fund.
- The 3 partners’ joint match funding contribution is 56.5% of the total fund.
- The Moray Council contribution will come from existing budgets, subject to receiving the Scottish Government funding for ESOL. These are £11,000 per annum from Moray Adult Literacies Partnership and £13,200 per annum from Moray Community

Learning & Development Partnership – ESOL Project. (£24,200 x 3 = £72,600)

Staffing:

- Each partnership will contribute to the appointment of three project officers and a project manager who will effectively organise, manage and monitor the project on their behalf. If agreed the Moray Council will establish a 0.6 FTE post to work in Moray. The post will be a fixed term appointment for three years (2008-11) and the related costs will be met from the project budget.

(d) Consultations

- Consultation on this report has been undertaken with Deborah Brands, the Principal Accountant in regard to the budgetary information; Grant Cruickshank, Principal Personnel Adviser in regard to Personnel information; and the Principal Development Officer, with regard to the application details.
- The Educational Services Senior Management Team has also been consulted and is in agreement with the contents of this report.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 This strategic project will improve the language, literacy, numeracy, basic skills and IT skills of 150 employees in low paid/low skills/low qualifications occupations within the foods and fish processing, hospitality and tourism, care and agriculture industry sectors throughout East Moray. It will:

- (a) Provide a strategic partnership approach to tackling workplace literacy and English language issues in North East Scotland.**
- (b) Tackle workplace literacy and English language issues more effectively through the co-ordination and rationalisation of partner training programmes;**
- (c) Improve levels of client satisfaction and build sustainable relationships with local employers'**
- (d) Ensure clarity of communication and focus of effort among partners through a single door approach to tackling basic skills gaps among employees in targeted industries;**
- (e) Ensure a consistent and coherent approach to project delivery and reduce duplication of effort among partners.**
- (f) The project will attract partnership funding from European Structural Funds providing good value for money from the Council's contribution.**

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Background Papers: Funding applications, correspondence and reports on file
in Educational Services Department
Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Children and Young People's Services
Committee/11 June 2008/North East Work Skills Project