

**REPORT TO:** POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 23 JANUARY 2012

**REPORT ON:** EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES WITHIN DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

**REPORT NO:** 31 - 2012

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report the findings and recommendations of the Employability Services Project team in regard to the operating model for employability services within Dundee City Council.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that;

- 2.1 The current Personnel Employment Unit and Social Work Supported Employment Team be merged into one new employment service delivery model for people with health problems and disabilities. This service be part of the Social Work Adult Service.
- 2.2 The new service be physically located at the present Employment Unit offices.
- 2.3 City Development monitor the Council's asset portfolio for appropriate offices to accommodate both the new employment service and Discover Opportunities Centre in one building in the future.
- 2.4 The project now move to an implementation phase where Social Work and Personnel will organise the transition to the proposed new operating model by April 2012.
- 2.5 The new Social Work Employment Service and the City Development Employability Programme Team continue the work started in this project to further strengthen their working relationship and explore opportunities to gain further service improvements/integration of service for clients and the Council.
- 2.6 After six months of operating the new delivery model (i.e. October 2012) the SMT be advised of the final savings achieved plus any additional opportunities identified for greater service integration between the Social Work Employment Service and the City Development Employability Programme Team.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Costs will be no more than the existing delivery model. However, it is anticipated that a financial saving will result from the deletion of one manager post in Social Work (estimated net saving of £27,000 after accounting for new team manager grading). However, other costs may be incurred during implementation that would impact on this figure. Detail of final savings from the proposed changes will be produced during the implementation stage.

## 4 CURRENT SITUATION

4.1 There is a broad range of employability activity underway across Dundee, the Project Team took an approach which, whilst recognising this context, focused on the services delivered by the Council and identified that areas where there was a potential overlap of service were most likely to yield results in terms of better outcomes and greater efficiencies.

4.2 Presently employability related services are undertaken by three distinct teams within the Council. These are;

- The Employment Unit, which is part of the Personnel Department and is based at Dunsinane Avenue, Dundee
- The Supported Employment Unit, which is part of the Social Work Department and is based at Balmerino Road
- The Employability Programme Team, which is part of City Development and is based in the Discover Opportunities Centre (which is a multi agency centre managed and operated by the Programme Team) at 22-24 Crichton Street, Dundee

4.3 The Council also plays a role in funding employability initiatives within the City. Management and administration of UK and European funding programmes for employment are undertaken by staff in City Development and Chief Executive's Department. Examples of these funding streams are;

The European Social Funding (ESF) grants  
The Dundee Partnership Regeneration Fund

4.4 The Council supports self employment as a channel toward employability. Where clients of the aforementioned teams indicate an interest in self employment during their assessment interviews they will be guided normally to the E-Zone team within City Development for provision of expertise in regard to self employment. If the client is looking beyond a "sole proprietor" business they are likely to be introduced to the Business Gateway.

E-Zone is part of the Dundee Partnership's Employability Pipeline. Enterprise clubs being held at the Discover Opportunities Centre (DOC) approximately every 2 weeks.

### 4.5 Personnel Department - Employment Unit (EU)

The former Tayside Regional Council created the Employment Disability Unit to address the unmet employment needs of people with health problems and disabilities. This then became the EU.

For a period of time the unit size increased, reflecting the funding opportunities available and the unit's ability to access these. However, due to funding programmes ending, and reducing funding streams in general, the unit has reduced in size over the last 3 years.

Currently, the EU has 7 posts (see Appendix 1a), these are split 5 posts on service delivery, 2 posts (1.54 fte) on unit administration. The Unit Manager has recently taken early retirement, leaving the Assistant Manager to run the Unit and assist in this project review.

The purpose of the Unit is to create employment opportunities for disabled and disadvantaged people, also to support them to secure and retain appropriate employment.

Of prime importance to the EU is the ability to provide an intensive, at times, one-to-one service to enable disadvantaged individuals to access a wide variety of services in order that they receive the most appropriate means of support.

The EU operates the following key activities to deliver a service to tackle the unmet employment needs of disadvantaged individuals:

- Job club
- Work experience placements
- On-going support and assistance
- Consultancy and advisory

#### 4.6 Social Work Department - Supported Employment Team (SET)

Social Work established the SET in 1995 to address the employment needs of people with, predominantly, learning disabilities. Members of the team worked with the then Employment Disability Unit (Personnel Department) to further develop standardised approaches, processes and paperwork for their client groups. This was because there were similarities in the client groups being supported and a belief that "pooled" knowledge and experience would bring added benefits to the services provided.

Currently, the SET has 4 posts (see Appendix 1b for current structure), all are service delivery. The team also includes a clinical support worker (0.4fte) seconded from Craigmill Skills Centre, NHS Tayside. The Team Manager post is currently vacant (pending the outcome of this project).

The purpose of the SET is to support adults with a learning disability into employment (paid or unpaid). Staff also advise/guide other organisations who increasingly are becoming involved in employment support for adults with a learning disability. As necessary, the team also support clients in employment as some will have longer term support requirements.

The team operates the following key activities;

- Work experience placements
- On-going support and assistance
- Advisory
- Coordination of funded training initiatives for client groups

#### 4.7 City Development Department - Employability Programme Team (EPT)

The EPT was established by the Council in 2008. The team has 5 posts (see Appendix 1c). These are split 3 posts on service delivery and 2 posts (1.8 fte) responsible for team administration.

The Team supports the Dundee Partnership's Employability Group through strategic planning, facilitating partnership working, supporting implementation of the employability programme, funding and monitoring projects on the Partnership's Employability Pipelines. Delivering the Working For Families initiative and supporting

the delivery of co-located services through the Discover Opportunities Centre in Crichton Street, Dundee. "Discover Opportunities" is the brand name for the Dundee Partnership's Employability Programme. The Employability Pipelines, which co ordinate the services that the Partnership funds to support clients in their journey towards and into work are central to the Partnership's approach.

EPT's function is different to the other teams previously described and clients are predominantly not disabled. For those clients who directly approach the team, an initial assessment allows the team to refer each client to the most appropriate agency within the Partnership's Employability Pipeline (e.g. Triage, DEAP, Craigowl, Claverhouse) to support the client in their journey toward employment. Specialist support may also be provided in the form of assistance with child care and access to the barrier free fund including access to employment related training, Tesco vouchers for people awaiting their wages, for tax credits to be paid and travel to work costs.

Clients who have a disability are likely to be referred on to the Council's Employment Unit which is part of the Partnership's Employability Pipeline. The team use the Dundee Employability Management Information System (DEMIS) to monitor performance of agencies and progress of client referrals.

The benefits to Dundee are that the planning and delivery of employability services across the Partnership are more joined up and efficient than they otherwise would be and the delivery of services to clients are more effective as the employability pipeline promotes joint approaches to client's often multi faceted issues and barriers.

## **5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Findings**

- 5.1 The project team critically analysed the current operations of each of the three teams noted above. A member of staff of each of the three teams was shadowed to gain fuller information on the types of work undertaken and a "visioning" workshop was undertaken to allow staff participation in the exploration of potential new employability delivery models for the Council. Other council's were contacted to gain information on how their delivery models operated.
- 5.2 In general, other councils appear to have a similar delivery model to Dundee in that funding streams (especially ESF) are sought and coordinated via a council economic development department/section. They then work with delivery agencies and internal teams on monitoring of employability programmes and development of future funding bids. Where Dundee presently differs from most councils is in having two separate teams working in the area of employability for clients with disabilities. In other councils this service is delivered from the Social Work department and, in some cases, under the general heading of employability rather than specifics of supported employment or disabled employment.
- 5.3 It was apparent that the EPT operates in a different manner to the EU and SET and that combining all teams under one manager may not be the best model due to differing functions and the specialised nature of the service provided by EU/SET. Synergies in the areas of work undertaken between EU and SET were identified and the project team focused on this area of opportunity for the Council.
- 5.4 There is similarity in the processes that the EU and SET teams use and also the initial assessment work undertaken with clients. Staff of both teams are very much client

focused with the aim of ensuring "face to face" time with clients to understand their circumstances and assist them to prepare for work and take advantage of employment opportunities.

- 5.5 EPT for the most part does not work with clients with disabilities with but will refer them onto the appropriate agency within the employability pipeline to ensure the client can be given appropriate assistance. Referrals tend to go to either the EU or Social Work.
- 5.6 The "visioning" workshop that was undertaken backed up the above findings in that it identified common areas of work that the EU and SET undertook. The workshop also highlighted that the two teams could effectively come together bringing the following benefits to the Council.
- "pooled" resources and expertise
  - single Council team for this service
  - streamlined processes
  - increased capacity
  - more efficient client service
  - utilisation of current administrative resource for both teams
  - increase funding opportunities (from increased client list)
  - optimised use of the current EU disabled access site
- 5.7 It was anticipated that this would potentially produce better outcomes for a greater number of citizens who experience disadvantage e.g. young people in transition, people with mental health difficulties, people with physical disability.
- 5.8 The workshop also identified inefficiency in "sign posting" of clients from EPT which could be addressed by a review of current client transfer processes between teams. Ongoing forums, both nationally and locally were identified as a way of ensuring that a more coordinated employability approach is achieved for the Council. These areas should be further explored to gain service benefits to the Council.
- 5.9 It is recognised that there are links between the needs that an individual may have to be supported into employment and other needs e.g. social care, housing, health promotion. An in-house service would ensure a more holistic response can be provided to individuals who experience disadvantage and poverty. This service is an important element in the Council's commitment to the Social Inclusion Agenda.
- 5.10 With diminishing public finances, there will be greater pressure on general employability programmes to maintain or improve employment outcomes while receiving less investment. The Council must ensure that clients who may have greater support needs to move to, and maintain, employment do not suffer as a consequence and this will require clear eligibility criteria and effective prioritisation of resources.

## **Conclusions**

- 5.11 The project team concluded that a more efficient delivery model would result from bringing the EU and SET together. It is envisaged that an employment service hosted within Social Work would serve to strengthen the employability focus within this department with resulting benefit to a wide range of clients e.g. young people in transition, people with mental health difficulties, people with physical disability who

may not be accessing this service at present. A new team based in Social Work could still maintain a presence in the Dundee Partnership's Employability Pipeline.

- 5.12 The time frame for establishing this proposed new model is April 2012. The previous Employment Unit Manager took early retirement in March 2011 leaving the Assistant Manager to run the unit on an interim basis pending this report. The SET Manager's post is also currently vacant. The project team are of the opinion that one Manager post can run a combined EU/SET team. There would be no requirement for an Assistant Manager, other members of the team undertaking limited cover in the Manager's absence. This may result in a financial saving to the Council. A new team structure will be developed. If this necessitates a reduced overall establishment, this will be addressed via the Council's establishment change process (ER/VR, redeployment, etc).
- 5.13 The possibility of physically locating this new team with the Discover Opportunities Centre was investigated but no suitable accommodation is available in the foreseeable future. City Development should monitor this situation as a co-location would be beneficial to clients.
- 5.14 With the reducing size of the EU, their office accommodation is now under utilised. Locating all staff of a combined team at the current EU site would increase the utilisation of this work space which is fully adapted for disabled clients and staff. The site could also accommodate a "hot desk" area for use by Social Work and community health staff. There is also a large meeting room that could be more flexibly used by the new team e.g. for other Social Work staff working with related client groups. It could also be more fully promoted within the Council.
- 5.15 The EU expertise in accessing governmental funding streams could bring benefits to Social Work as some of their current clients would qualify for funding. Levels of funding available to the Council are reducing and a fuller review of future implications and mitigation strategies would be beneficial.
- 5.16 The re-scoping of services which is being undertaken in Social Work community care services will make recommendations about the future direction of service delivery taking into account national developments such as "personalisation". As part of this exercise, potential reconfiguration of investment in a range of models of support, including employment, is being considered.
- 5.17 In July 2010 the Dundee Partnership's Employability Group commissioned the Training and Employment Research Unit at the University of Glasgow to evaluate the Dundee Partnership's employability programme of which EPT is part. City Development has submitted a committee report (379-2011) which contains an action plan to take forward evaluation recommendations. The Action Plan also sets out a series of actions for the Partnership to deliver on.
- 5.18 It is hoped that a new Social Work Employment service can strengthen existing links with EPT and improve throughflow of the clients into mainstream employability services. Greater joint working will also assist Dundee Partnership in achieving its action plan e.g.
  - Plan item 5; Pilot employability services for individuals with more challenging physical and learning disabilities
  - Plan item 9; Review Work Groups

- 5.19 The administration of the Future Jobs Fund programme accounted for a significant amount of a Support Workers time. This programme is now complete; the released capacity within EPT should be used to assist in action plan items.

## 6 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

An equality impact assessment has been carried out and will be made available on the Council website <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/equanddiv/equimpact/>.

## 7 **CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1 The Employability Services Project Team, Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), and Director of Finance have been consulted on the contents of this report.

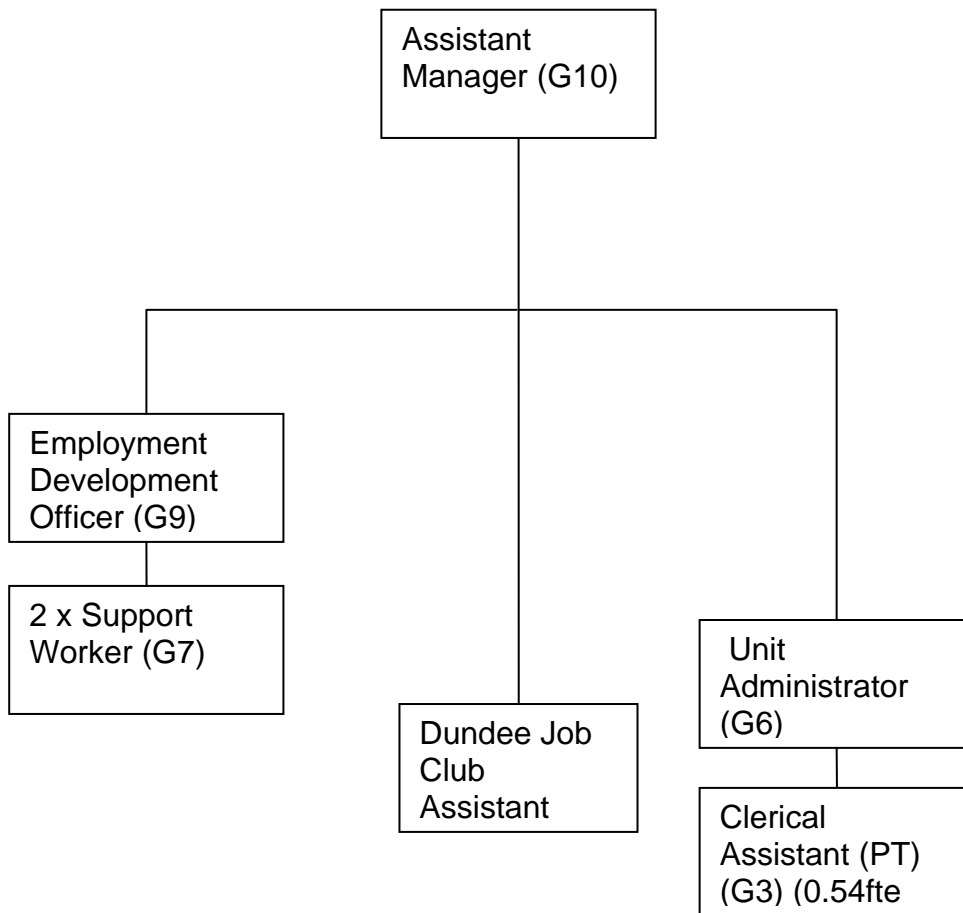
## 8 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 None.

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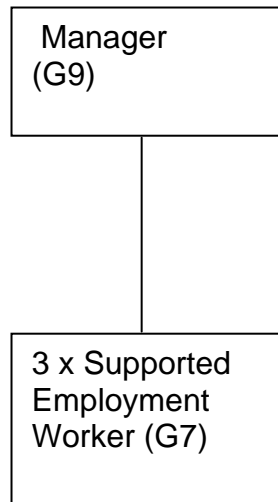
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**Personnel Department - Employment Unit  
Current Structure - as at August 2011**





**Social Work Department - Supported Employment Team  
Current Structure - as at August 2011**



**City Development Department - Employability Programme Team  
Current Structure - as at August 2011**

