

REPORT TO: BEST VALUE SUB COMMITTEE - 18 OCTOBER 2005

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT ON: BEST VALUE REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT GENERATION STRATEGIES

REPORT NO: 595-2005

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to implement the recommendations of the best value review of employment generation strategies.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the improvement proposals set out in section 7 of this report be implemented.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The actions outlined in this report aim to stimulate employment and training opportunities for a cross-section of the community including the most socially and economically disadvantaged.

5. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

This report has an impact on the following theme - 'the opportunity to undertake satisfying work in a diverse economy'.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1 At its meeting on 19 August 2003, the Sub Committee agreed a programme of best value reviews which included a review of approaches to employment generation. A review group was established under the chairmanship of the Chief Executive, which included representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, JobCentre Plus, Scottish Enterprise Tayside, the TGWU and Amicus trade unions, Dundee College, and the Council's Economic Development, Communities and Education departments.

6.2 In the early stages of the review, the group agreed to focus on four key issues:

- how to increase the current business birth rate
- business growth clubs
- key drivers for the Dundee economy
- initiatives to get people back to work

6.3 A background paper was prepared for the group on these issues, and the proposed 'way forward' is summarised in section 7 below. The proposals also take account of a number of strategic documents which have recently been produced i.e:

- the Council's Economic Development Plan 2005-2007
- the Dundee Partnership's Community Plan 2005-2010
- the Dundee Partnership's draft Local Employment Action Plan 2005-2007

7. IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

7.1 Increasing the Business Birth Rate

It is recommended that a five-pronged approach is adopted:

- develop a co-ordinated approach to entrepreneurial culture from schools to the workplace
- review the operations of the Business Gateway
- use the new Social Enterprise Partnership to stimulate growth in the social economy
- stimulate new enterprises in the "green economy"
- ensure that sectoral initiatives include an element focused on new business starts

7.2 Business Growth Clubs

It is recommended that the Chamber of Commerce be asked to take the lead in establishing a local business growth club.

7.3 Key Drivers for the Local Economy

Based on the updated strategies in the Economic Development Plan and the Community Plan, it is recommended that efforts should focus on:

- Building the City Region- working with national players (e.g. Scottish Executive, Scottish Enterprise) and local players (e.g. Local Economic Forum, adjoining local authorities etc) to accelerate the city region framework as a key policy and development tool. It has also been agreed that a consultancy-led exercise will shortly be undertaken to examine the medium to long term economic vision implications of the City Region involving all of the local stakeholders (with national and international perspectives).
- Sectoral Focus - build on the existing strategic focus on sectors with growth potential - e.g. life sciences; education; creative industries; digital media; leisure culture and tourism.
- Flexible Inward Investment Strategy - ensure that we are flexible enough to adjust our strategies and targets to meet (and anticipate) changing trends.
- Entrepreneurial Culture - ensure a co-ordinated and innovative approach to building the business birth rate and encouragement of fledgling and established enterprises.(see paras. 7.1 & 7.2)
- A Quality Shift- it is important that we reach for a higher gear in our journey to economic regeneration by striving for higher quality across the board including employment type; cultural environment; new building development; transport links and skills.

7.4 **Initiatives To Get People Back Into Work**

The Sub-Committee should note that the Dundee Partnership has now signed up to the Scottish Executive's Employability Framework Initiative by agreeing targets for reducing the number of people on benefits. The gross number of benefit recipients as at August 2005 was 17,500, and it has been agreed that we will target a reduction in this figure of 15% by 2007 and 30% by 2010. The draft Local Employment Action Plan shows the range of projects, initiatives and partners who will be involved in this process.

8. **CONSULTATION**

The Depute Chief Executives, Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) and Director of Economic Development have been consulted on this report. Members should note that Economic Development issues will be the topic for discussion at the next meeting of the Dundee Partnership Forum early in 2006.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Economic Development Plan 2005-2007
Community Plan 2005-2010
Draft Local Employment Action Plan 2005-2007
Background Paper on Key Issues for Best Value Review Group

Alex Stephen
Chief Executive 11 October 2005