

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Youth Employment Hub</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>3 December 2020</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Interim Executive Director for Families Children and Learning</b>
<b>Contact Officer: Name:</b>	<b>Carla Butler</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Carla.Butler@brighton-hove.gov.uk">Carla.Butler@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have approached the council with a proposition to open an Employment Youth Hub for young adults in the city, funded through the DWP's Flexible Support Fund. Employment Hubs have already been opened across the UK, the DWP are keen to have Employment Hubs established across the South East as soon as possible.
- 1.2 The purpose of Employment Youth Hub is to provide a focussed holistic support programme to challenge the economic impact on employment on 18-24-year olds by increasing skills, confidence, and the increased uptake of traineeships/apprenticeships and employment.
- 1.3 This report sets out the case to apply to the Flexible Support Fund to create a physical Hub at Montague House and a virtual Hub hosted on the council's website.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 Agree that the council should proceed with an application to the Flexible Support Fund to create a Youth Employment Hub (Hub) utilising match funding of £42,402 (for one year) from existing posts in the Employment and Skills Team, within the Families Children and Learning Directorate.
- 2.2 Note the proposed use of ground floor space at Montague House which is available for occupation from 1st February 2021.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Young people's prospects in the labour market is a cause for concern, the number of unemployed young people aged 18-24 years in the city increased to close to 3000 in October, an 185% increase on February. The government has announced through its Plan for Jobs strategy a range of supporting interventions, these include the Kickstart Scheme - a £2 billion fund to create new high-quality meaningful 6-month roles for young people aged 16-24 on Universal Credit, an

expanded youth offer, a 13 week programme to support people into work, and dedicated youth employability coaches to help young people furthest from the labour market.

- 3.2 The success of these interventions is dependent on the ability to engage with young people physically and virtually. Without access to appropriate physical space there is a risk of disengagement. Being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is linked to poorer health and employment outcomes for decades. The DWP want to avoid the unemployed becoming less attractive to employers by virtue of being unemployed for long periods.
- 3.3 An Employment Hub will enable young people to:
- Attend interviews for Kickstart opportunities (DWP are required to interview candidates)
  - Attend their first claimant commitment meeting and subsequent work search reviews in an engaging and positive environment.
  - Access information, advice, guidance, through the DWP Youth Coaches and National Careers Service
  - Meet BHCC staff offering employment support services, for example the Youth Employability and Supported Employment Services
  - Meet local providers face to face to find an appropriate pathway
  - Attend group sessions/courses (adhering to current guidelines)
  - Access to IT and WIFI and support with applications/CV's
  - Meet employers promoting opportunities or providing careers information
  - Access information 24/7
- 3.4 The physical Hub will be supported by a virtual offer which will be hosted on the council's public facing web platform, it will offer information, sign posting and chat functionality.
- 3.5 Due to the pandemic it has been difficult to source premises within the current occupational property portfolio to host the Hub. A range of locations were considered including, The Brighton Centre, Hove Council Chamber, New England House and Phoenix House.
- 3.6 Montague House has been identified as a suitable and affordable venue, in addition to office space it offers access to multiple meeting and training rooms which can be utilised by providers and employers to promote opportunities and deliver training. The arrangements for use of Montague House, which is owned by the Council, will be such that no cost will be incurred should the funding not be extended beyond the first year.
- 3.7 The cost of delivering a physical and virtual Hub for year 1 is £231,566. The costs include staff resource, the property costs and a small allowance for resources. If the bid is approved as presented, the expenditure will be offset by a grant from the DWP for £177,426. Savings to the council of £74,767 achieved through charging staff time to the project will contribute to the costs associated with leasing and equipping the premises, and due to this the project will be cost neutral. Please see appendix 1 for further details of costs. It must be noted that until the bid is reviewed by the DWP there is no guarantee that it will be approved

as presented, and the council may need to enter into additional discussions regarding the funding model.

- 3.8 The physical Hub will be resourced with existing roles co-funded through the grant and two new roles fully funded by the project. One of the new roles will have day to day oversight of the Hub, develop a programme of events, and provide support to service users. The other role will work within the council to create placement and work opportunities for example Kickstart and improve access to opportunities for priority groups who are under-represented in the council in support of the councils Fair and Inclusive Action Plan.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Skills and employment is high on the government agenda through its Plan for Jobs Strategy and skills for life reforms. Following the financial crash of 2009, youth unemployment did not peak until 2011, there is likely to be strong on-going demand for the services provided by the Hub. The establishment of a Hub now will ensure that post pandemic when 'normality' returns, the city is well served with the appropriate infrastructure to aid recovery.
- 4.2 The proposed financial model is self-financing and entering an arrangement for the use of Montague House without a termination penalty after year one, enables the service to be implemented with the reassurance that unnecessary ongoing costs will not be accrued if future funding is not available. The space can be occupied from the beginning of February providing enough time to liaise with IT &D, Workstyles and Property Services.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The breakdown of the costs and funding streams for the first year of the project are shown in appendix 1. Grant funding for subsequent years is reliant on the decision of the funding body. In addition, the project requires funding of £0.075m from the BHCC budget and this will be dependent on any decisions made during the budget process which could impact on the ongoing availability of this funding.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis Date: 24/11/20

##### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Council owns Montague House and therefore the arrangement for use of the building will be made internally though an exchange of Head of Terms.

The delivery of employment support and advice as described in the report is within the Council's powers.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date 24.11.20

### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The aim of the youth employment hub is to facilitate supportive interventions which avoid young people from becoming entrenched into long term unemployment. By offering a physical and online presence, working with key stakeholders in the city and joining up activity with our Supported Employment and Youth Employability Team, the hub offers a greater level of accessibility and cohesion to those seeking support. The proposal to incorporate an IT suite into the hub will improve access for young people facing digital poverty. It is recommended that the hub should monitor attendance and participation to ensure that all of the city's young people are accessing services and able to meet their full potential. If this application goes ahead then further consideration will be given to ensuring that the project is as accessible and inclusive as possible to the young people who will most benefit from it.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Physical Employment Hub should aim to support the various city sustainability priority programmes including the overarching Carbon Neutral 2030 programme, the Circular Economy Framework, and The Living Coast Biosphere Programme.

### Brexit Implications:

- 5.5 The Council is currently preparing for EU Transition and considering related risks within its COVID response and recovery work. Due to the scale and ongoing challenges of COVID it is currently difficult to assess properly what the employment and skills impacts on the city might be in relation to the UK's changing relationship with the EU and the impact of the immigration changes on specific sectors in the city. However, it may be likely that some sectors where there is possibly a higher prevalence of EU nationals in the workforce, such as social care, construction, retail and tourism and hospitality may have vacancies due to EU nationals leaving the UK. This is by no means a certainty and local application figures to the EU Settlement Scheme appear positive but if gaps do emerge in the workforce of certain sectors the Youth Hub presents an opportunity to provide guidance and training that can help to fill those gaps.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

### Appendices: 1

<b>Youth Employment Hub Application to DWP Flexible Support Fund for £177,246</b>	£ <b>-177,246</b>
IT	-1,000
Workshops and events resources including refreshments	-1,950
Office expenses	-1500
Staff costs	-172,796
<b>BHCC expenses</b>	<b>231,311</b>
Total staff pay	172,796
Total IT	11,955
Total expenses for resources	3,450
Total Premises and security costs (Montague House)	43,110
<b>TOTAL INCOME - DWP Flexible Support Grant Funding</b>	<b>-177,246</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>231,311</b>
<b>OVERSPEND/-UNDERSPEND</b>	<b>54,065</b>
<b>BHCC Budget Released (funded by grant)</b>	<b>74,767</b>
<b>OVERSPEND/-UNDERSPEND*</b>	<b>-20,702</b>
<b>BHCC match funding</b>	<b>42,402</b>

\*Predicted subject to final agreement with DWP regarding proposed model.

Notes: Applications to the Flexible Support Fund can only be made by Local Authorities and the NHS. Funding is limited to 12 months. Restrictions on expenditure apply and property costs cannot be met by the grant itself.

