

# Economic Development Committee



12 January 2023

<b>Title</b>	<i>Youth Hub</i>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	<i>To provide an update regarding the Youth Hub</i>
<b>Report Author</b>	<i>Tracey Carter: Senior Economic Development Officer</i>
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	<i>N/A</i>
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	<i>N/A</i>
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Recovery Environment Service delivery Community
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Committee is asked to:</b>  Note the report
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<i>Not applicable</i>

## 1. Summary of the report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update with regards to the delivery of the Spelthorne Youth Hub.

## 2. Key issues

2.1 The Youth Hub is a location for 16 - 24-year-old people to receive help and support regarding their ability to obtain a job as well as provide support to develop skills and confidence. This initiative was created as part of the Governments response to the negative effect of COVID-19 on employment. A funding opportunity was made available via the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) on a national basis for local authorities to bid for to create a local Youth Hub in 2021.

2.2 In June 2021 the contract was issued to SBC by the DWP and delivery of the project was awarded for a 12 month period ending in December 2022. This project is for the whole Borough, but because it was felt that a number of candidates attending the Hub would be A2 Dominion tenants they were a key partner in the initial delivery of the facility.

2.3 We have worked with several other partners and stakeholders to ensure that we are collaborating with other organisations who also work with young people such as; Brooklands College, Fedcap, Surrey Choices, I Choose Local, Staines BID, BUPA, Heathrow Academy, McDonalds, Transfer to Transform, Association Learning Providers Surrey, Apprentiva, Thomas Knyvet School, Staines Rotary, Ashford Youth & Community, Voluntary Action North Surrey.

To date the service delivery has exceeded the targets set by DWP. Here is a table with targets as set out in the original application.

	Target	Outcomes by Nov 22
Number of young people supported:	189	254
Number of young people into work or apprenticeships:	50	88
Number of young people into training:	25	54
Number of young people into education:	25	20
Number of young people getting work experience:	25	29
Number of traineeships:	4	11
Wellbeing workshops completed:	60 (places)	10 courses (100 places)
live opportunities for young people at any one time published on the hub	25	100+

Here is a table showing the outcomes to the end of November 2022 as reported on the DWP returns.

DWP Report	Year to date (cumulative)
Referrals to programme	
Referrals to programme (DWP)	77
Referrals to programme (External)	197
Starts on programme (DWP)	69
Starts on programme (External)	185
Job outcomes (non Kickstart)	75
Job outcomes (Kickstart)	2
Apprenticeships/Traineeships	11
Work experience/Work placements	18
Social inclusion steps (att at courses)	54
Education starts	20

Courses run	10
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Although the target figures are reported differently on the DWP returns to the original figures set out in our application, you can see that that the vast majority of our customers came into the hub without being referred by DWP. Most of them were via people walking past and through word of mouth.

- 2.4 We originally started delivering the project from the Business Hub in Sunbury with DWP officers meeting clients on site and referring to the Youth Hub. Although this process is still in place it has been a challenge to get job seekers to attend the Business Hub as the location is harder to reach by foot. As the Business Hub has filled up it is also harder to have sensitive conversations with vulnerable young people in this environment.
- 2.5 The current location in the Old Decathlon store has proven to be far more popular and accessible for young people and job coaches. We have seen an increase in footfall and have captured passing interest from many members of the public who have in turn promoted the service to friends and family. The location next to the bus depot at the Elmsleigh centre is an ideal location to catch our target audience. Many young people who are NEET (not in education or training) are not claiming benefit and living at home with their parents. We would not have been able to reach these customers without having such a visible town centre location as they are unknown to the services.
- 2.6 We have also utilised the space available in the hub to deliver a range of other activities such as several Skills & Jobs Fairs (see **Appendix A** for more information). Other community uses such as the “Grab a Jab” service operate from the hub a couple of times a week, and the multi-purpose space is being used for training and meetings by organisations such as DWP and Staines BID. This also drives footfall and promotes our presence to residents and businesses. We are planning to hold a Skills and Jobs event in the Spring of 2023 to bring together stakeholders and partners to discuss issues residents are facing, the hub and future programmes that we can run to ensure we are delivering a service that compliments current provision and not duplicate.
- 2.7 The current site will be available for at least the next 12 months, so the service will continue to be delivered there unless there is interest in renting the location from another organisation.
- 2.8 There has been a tentative offer of a space in the new library once that is open however this does leave a problem of finding a new location to operate while the library is being refurbished. This however has not been agreed yet and discussions will continue with Assets Team to assess the situation and forward plan.
- 2.9 The new Jobs and Skills Hub will launch in January with two work coaches and then once the shared prosperity funds have been confirmed an additional two work coaches will be employed and will run until March 2025.

### **3. Options analysis and proposal**

3.1 No options given as this report is only for noting.

### **4. Financial implications**

4.1 The Youth Hub was funded by a grant from DWP of £118k from October 2021 to December 2022. Due to a budget underspend on staffing as a result of resourcing issues, in October DWP agreed that Spelthorne could continue to use the surplus funds (£10k) to provide continuity of service and apply for year 2 grant funding. Our bid was successful (confirmed on 21 November) with an additional sum of £68k awarded from January 2023 to January 2024. This is for the recruitment of 2 x Work Coaches only. There are no funds available for running costs of the project.

4.2 The process of ensuring we have the right resources in place commenced in November 2022 with an aim of ensuring we have cover and capacity to deliver the new service in January / February 2023.

Additional funding has been sought from the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) to cover a wider "Jobs and Skills Hub" service which is made up of Jobs & Skills Hub provision of £226k and Bounceback Street (for people aged 45+) £127k. Although SPF funding has not yet been released, it is expected to be approved in December 2022 but will not be paid until April 2024. In the interim the Hub will be funded from the business rates retention pot as per the report which was agreed by Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 10 October 2022 (which will be replenished when the SPF funding becomes available). The monies will enable the Hub to continue to operate until March 2025.

### **5. Risk considerations**

5.1 There is a risk that we will not be able to employ suitably skilled work coaches quickly enough to start when the A2D contract ends which will result in a gap in the provision of service.

5.2 When the facility was originally set up, there were issues around securing the right level and number of staff resources. This impinged upon our ability to deliver a fully effective service at the outset. In order to mitigate this risk moving forwards, it has been decided to deliver the future service inhouse and recruit the staff directly to ensure control over the quality of service.

### **6. Procurement considerations**

6.1 The Procurement team were consulted when the contract was awarded.

### **7. Legal considerations**

7.1 The Legal team were consulted when the contract was awarded.

### **8 Other considerations**

8.1 The objective is to increase the local capacity to deliver employment and well-being for NEET (Not in Employment or Education) and young people at risk of becoming NEET, online and off-line. A report has already been submitted previously with detailed information via MAT where support was approved. Support has been provided by the legal team to ensure that the procurement and delivery are carried out correctly.

### **9 Equality and Diversity**

9.1 Information about the Youth Hub has been circulated to the 'hard to reach' communities. The overarching aim of the Youth Hub is to provide support to all residents with a particular focus on vulnerable and hard to reach groups such as refugees, single parents and disabled people.

## **10 Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

10.1 We have repurposed and re used old furniture within the building and recycle wherever possible.

## **11 Timetable for implementation**

11.1 Nov 2022 – putting resource in place to deliver 2 Work Coach positions  
Dec 2022 - A2 Dominion Contract ends  
Dec 2022 - Shared Prosperity Fund decision made by central government  
Jan 2023 – Jobs & Skills Hub launches  
Jan 2023 – DWP funding starts  
Feb 2023 – Start recruitment process for 2 x Work Coaches (subject to SPF agreed)

## **12 Contact**

12.1 Tracey Carter – t.carter@spelthorne.gov.uk

**Background papers:** *DWP monitoring report Oct 2022*

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – examples of events run from the Youth Hub and a summary document outlining Build Environment activities.