

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE - 20 JANUARY 2009

SUBJECT: EVALUATION AND THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE VOCATIONAL
TRAINING FUND

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Abstract: This Report seeks to inform the Committee of the success of the Vocational Training Fund through its evaluation process and seeks approval regarding proposals for its future development.

1 RECOMMENDATION

- a) It is recommended that the Committee:-
- b) Note the content of the Vocational Fund evaluation and the impact that it has had on the individual beneficiaries that it aims to support.
- c) Approve £25,000 of the Fund be allocated against the "training for employers" strand and that it be administered by the Business Advisers within the Economic Development division as part of an overall business support package.
- d) Approve that the remaining balance of the Fund (£70,150) be allocated to the Working For Families team to utilise within their "Personal Development Fund" .
- e) Continue to support the scheme of delegation for administration of the funds on a day-to-day basis by the Head of Economic Development. This will allow the terms and conditions of the grant to be revised as and when required thus ensuring that other external funding packages are complemented.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 RGIT Montrose was formed in 2000 by the merger of Montrose Scotia Training International (MSTI) and the oil industry training interests of Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology (RGIT), now The Robert Gordon University.
- 2.2 2003 saw a change in operations at RGIT Montrose due to a multi-million pound management buy-out. The proceeds from this were shared between Robert Gordon's University and the RGIT Trust.
- 2.3 Council representation on the Trust successfully negotiated a £200,000 donation, (Article 34 of the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 8 June 2004, Report 729/04 refers), to be used in Angus as a Vocational Training Fund.
- 2.4 It was subsequently that all residents in Angus would have the opportunity to benefit from this fund.
- 2.5 In 2007 the Fund was closed in order to evaluate its success and to take stock of changes in government policy and other local policy drivers that would inform the

future administration of the Fund and to examine if the Fund could be made even more effective.

- 2.6 This Report seeks approval from the Committee to implement the proposed changes that will allow the Fund to complement other grant funding that is available across Angus.

3 FUND EVALUATION

- 3.1 Since it commenced in 2004 the Fund has awarded 82 grants. 74 of which have been for individuals. Once all grants have been completed the Fund is expected to have assisted over 200 beneficiaries.

- 3.2 The evaluation of the Fund targeted individuals who had directly benefited from funding. There were 67 individual recipients of the grant, this excludes those who benefited indirectly through the grant funding secured by a number of organisations and a number who were still undertaking training or withdrew from the programme. Of these individuals 21 returned their completed evaluation forms or completed the evaluation via a telephone questionnaire carried out by ACCESSLine staff.

- 3.3 Of the 21 beneficiaries 76% had improved their current employability situation by either entering employment, self employment or by moving into what they perceive as better jobs.

- 3.4 100% of respondents beneficiaries were pleased about the way the grant was administered and a copy of their comments has been included in appendix 1.

4 FUTURE FUND MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 At the beginning the target groups eligible for funding were:

- Training support for individuals who are unemployed
- Training support for those in employment
- Training support for employers
- Discretionary fund

- 4.2 Subsequently after evaluating the success of the Fund and taking stock of other grant funding available locally it is proposed that the same target groups are eligible for funding. However it is proposed that the grant allocations and levels of funding are revised and that the administration be spread across the Economic Development division.

- 4.3 It is therefore proposed that the Business Advisers within economic development will administer the support for employers funding, with £25,000 from the fund being allocated against this target group and administered as part of the Angus Loans and Grants Business package.

- 4.4 The remaining target groups outlined above would be administered by the new Angus Employability Team (currently Working For Families) within the division and be integrated into their Personal Development Fund. A copy of this is given in Appendix

2 (attached). It is also worth noting that the Personal Development Fund grant criteria is to be amended to complement the Vocational Training Fund support.

- 4.5 Table 1. below outlines the maximum funding levels proposed for the Fund with Appendix 2 outlining the full terms of funding support.

Table 1. Proposed Maximum Funding Levels

Beneficiaries	Maximum level of Grant	Maximum Grant
Unemployed	100%	£1,500
In Employment (income less than £18,000)	100%	£1,000
In Employment (income more than £18,000)	50%	£500
Support for Employers	50%	£500 per member of staff (max per company £5,000)

- 4.6 It is also requested that the Committee continue to support the scheme of delegation for administration of funds on a day-to-day basis by the Head of Economic Development in consultation with the Convener of Infrastructure Services. To date all applications made under the vocational training scheme have been subject to rigorous process of applications, evaluation and final approval by the Head of Economic Development in consultation with the Convener of Infrastructure Services. If approved, the Head of Economic Development will continue the terms of the grant funding in order to achieve the best support package for individuals and companies and changes in local grant funding and ensure that a speedy response is made when dealing with all future applications.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Currently held within a suspense account there is a balance of £118,150 within the Vocational Training Fund budget. However there is an additional £23,000 of the grant monies that have been committed but not yet drawn down by a number of the grant beneficiaries. Therefore should these be fully utilised a balance of £95,150 remains in the Fund.
- 5.2 It is proposed that £25,000 be allocated against the business support strand outlined above with the remaining balance of the Fund being allocated to the Working For Families Personal Development Fund.
- 5.3 It is expected that the remainder of the Fund will be exhausted by 2011 and it should be noted, that as before, the remaining balance of funding will be carried across financial years.
- 5.4 Due to the Fund being closed in 08/09 the annual management fee of £4,000 has not been drawn down, however this is expected to recommence in 09/10 and 10/11 or until the fund is exhausted.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

7 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The issues dealt with in this Report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required.

8 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

8.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.

- Angus residents are well equipped for employment.
- Less young people need to leave Angus in order to access suitable employment.
- Economic constraints to active citizenship are minimised.
- Increased learning opportunities for adults.
- Increased learning opportunities for young people.

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Law & Administration and Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The Vocational Training Fund has proved to be a very successful in supporting those who wish to undertake training to improve their work prospects. By targeting the same beneficiaries as before and by distributing the funding to different sections within the division this will allow the funding to be marketed to a wider audience and complement existing funding streams already in the current market place.

ERIC S LOWSON
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

ECDEV/DV/FC/FM
14 January 2009

VOCATIONAL TRAINING FUND EVALUATION COMMENTS

Course Funded	Enhanced Employment	Pleased with the way grant was handled	Please explain your previous answer	Comments
Dog Groomer	Helped me start my own business as it paid for my training	Yes	It was very easy to understand and was dealt with very quickly	Thank you so much for the funding if I didn't get this I could not have paid for my training, maybe come time it will be available to others. Thank you again.
OLF BOSIET and Greenhand Training	It helped by getting me into the oil and gas industry so I could earn more money and work up the employment ladder.	Yes	It was dealt with in a quick and professional manner.	The Vocational Training Fund is a very good idea and should continue to allow others with my sort of background to give themselves a starting foundation to pursue the kind of career they want in life.
BOSIET and Greenhand Training	Obtaining BOSIET and Greenhand Certificates through the fund has helped me secure the type of job I really wanted. I hope to be moved on to Offshore Engineering within the next few years.	Yes	Easy, Straightforward application procedure, very helpful and efficient telephone response service at Angus Council, quick decision made and no quibbles about fully-funding.	I think that the fund is very worthwhile and makes a direct and significant difference in enhancing employment prospects. It is a pity that the fund isn't well known to young people, perhaps more resources should be committed to such a worthwhile, effective scheme.
Various Beauticians Courses	I am able to do my beauty treatments that I have trained for as a mobile business. Fit it in to suit myself and children. Cleaning is extra until business picks up 6-8am. 5.45 – 6.45 cleaning.	Yes	Fiona Cameron was always helpful and called me back if I were to leave a message.	It was a really helpful funding as would not been able to afford the training. Give me new skills and confidence.

Course Funded	Enhanced Employment	Pleased with the way grant was handled	Please explain your previous answer	Comments
BOSIET	It has enhanced it greatly, it has given me the training required to work Offshore. Unfortunately I still haven't found a job but still trying	Yes	Everything went smoothly the interview I had a Petrofac was great, they filled us in about life offshore, told us about potential employers etc.	I personally think it's a great idea. It lets people who actually want to improve their employment prospects get on and at least have a chance in doing so. I haven't found a job yet but it has allowed me to apply without the training I would never have been able to do the training.
OLF (BOSIET) and Greenhand Training	Since I completed my R.G.I.T training and my Greenhand I'm finding it is increasingly difficult to find a job in the offshore industry from which in trying to concentrate on.	Yes	I take my hat off to Fiona Cameron who dealt with my application as if it wasn't for her I would of never been able to do the training.	The training fund is a brilliant way to get people on the first step of the career ladder, a career that could change someone's life around. I've no faults with it at all.
Social work and the Law in Scotland.	Accessing the O.U. course has given me the knowledge about other vulnerable groups apart from adults (with whom I have primarily worked) and the legislation pertinent to making provisions for care and support. I have started work with the Civil Service since securing funding to commence the course and at interview was able to use a) commencing the course & b) sourcing funding in support of my application.	Yes	Mrs Cameron dealt with my application promptly and efficiently.	I feel lucky to have been told about the fund but feel perhaps many other people don't know the Council administers the fund.

Course Funded	Enhanced Employment	Pleased with the way grant was handled	Please explain your previous answer	Comments
BOSIET and Greenhand Training	I am still trying to get a job offshore. I hope to get a start soon.	Yes	Very helpful and quick	Very happy to find that the fund was available to fund the courses that people wanted to do.
Total Electrical Course (TEC20)	Following injury which prevents me from previous job (labourer) fund has helped me pay to gain qualification to enable me to get a new job.	Yes	Fiona Cameron was on hand for any queries.	I was prepared to pay for my course the fund helped towards this which means I am now in less debt for starting new job.
Chainsaw/Brush Cutter/Herbicides/Wood Chipper		Yes	It was very quick	
MSc Art Therapy	The fund helped to cover almost half of my course fees for 2007/2008. Without the fund I do not know where I would have found the money to complete my studies.	Yes	Perhaps it would have been easier and saved time if email applications were accepted. However, the application was relatively straightforward.	The fund made an enormous difference to my final year of study. Considerable stress was alleviated which enabled me to concentrate on passing the course. I am extremely grateful.
Diploma in Skin Care.	Skills and knowledge are now up-to-date and can offer wider range of treatments.	Yes	Communication was excellent and the speed with which my application was dealt with was very quick.	I think it is a fantastic fund for assisting people to up-skill and get back into work or improve their chances of getting a job.
Forklift Truck Operation	It gave me the confidence to go and try something new.	Yes	Great communication I was kept up-to-date with where my application was at each stage.	I think it's a great thing. It helped me try something new. Although I never got a job using my new found skills. It helped me (in the way of confidence) to try working for myself. Thank you!

Course Funded	Enhanced Employment	Pleased with the way grant was handled	Please explain your previous answer	Comments
MSc European Urban Conservation	Doing the course at Dundee University has given me valuable technical knowledge re the re-use of old buildings. It has also allowed me to meet various professionals in the conservation field and this has led to several potential jobs in this specialist area.	Yes	Fiona Cameron was very helpful. Was a bit complicated matriculating/fees etc, due to me doing the course part-time so fees had to be split over two years.	It was very helpful. I probably would not have done the course without it.
LGV Class C Licence – WFF		Yes	It was quick and helpful	Thank you very much.
Wireline Training	If he didn't have funding he would not be working as he could not afford to do course.	Yes	No problems.	Really good idea, and if it helps other people the way it has helped him, then that's great.
Chainsaw/Wood Chipper/Crop Spraying	Helped gain full-time employment.	Yes	Everything was well handled.	
Excavator Training Course	Gained full-time employment.	Yes	Very quickly dealt with.	
Chainsaw/Wood chipping and Herbicides	Provided crucial training for her to gain full-time employment.	Yes	Very quick and easy.	Training fund is crucial but not widely known about.

Course Funded	Enhanced Employment	Pleased with the way grant was handled	Please explain your previous answer	Comments
Level 2 NVQ Hairdressing	It has given her the level 2 qualification so by doing this, it has opened a new path, new skills and a different careers as she is now a fully fledged hairdresser.	Yes	It only took two weeks between her applying for the grant and starting her course in Glasgow.	She would like easier access in finding information about the fund and had tried various places before finding out about Working for Families who advised her on the information she required to do this course and wants to say thank you for everything. This has changed her and her family's life.
Large Goods Vehicle Training Course	Ten folded his employment prospects. He has had no problem in finding jobs now. His wages have gone up and life is a lot better.	Yes	He was pleased when he received word he had got the grant as his had taken a while to process due to him being in low paid employment.	He thought it was a great help and has improved his lifestyle. It is good to know that this kind of help is out there to help people.

Introduction

The Personal Development Fund aims to assist individuals meet their full employment potential by offering assistance for certain types of training and in some cases assistance to overcome specific barriers into or sustaining employment.

This fund has been split into 4 themes:

1. TRAINING SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED
2. TRAINING SUPPORT FOR THOSE IN EMPLOYMENT
3. TRAINING SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS
4. DISCRETIONARY FUND

1. TRAINING SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED

What can the grant fund?

Any type of training will be considered for support, with the exception of training that is eligible for funding through New Deal, Training For Work, Skillseekers or any other funding source.

What can the grant offer the individual?

- Up to 100% of the training costs.
- A maximum grant of £1,500.

2. TRAINING SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EMPLOYMENT

What can the grant fund?

Any type of training will be considered for support that is initiated by the individual.

What can the grant offer the individual?

- If the annual income of the individual and or partner is less than £18,000 then up to 100% of training costs may be met, up to a **maximum grant** of £1,000.
N.B. Proof of income will be required for this grant.
- If the annual income of the individual and or partner is over £18,000 then up to 50% of the training costs may be met, up to a **maximum grant** of £500.

3. TRAINING SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS/SELF EMPLOYED

What can the grant fund?

All types of training will be considered for support that is additional to the employer's routine activities and considered innovative.

What can the grant offer the employer?

- Employers are encouraged to introduce the grant to their staff, however a maximum **grant** level associated with one company cannot exceed £5,000 in any 2-year period.
- Up to 50% of the training costs, up to a maximum **grant** of £500 per employee.

Applications for this fund will be administered by Business Advisers tel: 01307 473251.

4. DISCRETIONARY FUND

Training providers and organisations are encouraged to make applications aimed at assisting Angus residents with their employability prospects. These applications must be additional to mainstream activities and considered not to replicate current provision. In addition to this some discretionary funding may be offered to clients who face specific barriers to employment. However total funding will not exceed the maximum grant levels outlined in the training section.

CONDITIONS SPECIFIC TO ALL GRANTS

- All learners must be resident in Angus and have lived in the area for 3 months or more. However under exceptional circumstances this may be waived.
- All learners must be post compulsory education age (i.e. left school for more than 6 months).
- Recreational training is not eligible for funding i.e. hobbies/sports activities.
- Grant funding must be used for training activity and cannot be claimed against membership to a professional body, accommodation, equipment or learning aids etc. unless special dispensation is given.
- Training must not commence before approval is given, as grants cannot be awarded retrospectively.
- Grants are awarded on a one off basis and funding can last no more than 18 months. Undergraduate course funding will not be considered.
- Once approved training must start within 2 months of training approval being given.

All grants are discretionary and no guarantee of success can be given to those who apply.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

*Application forms for **individuals** can be obtained from the address below.*

Angus Employability Team
61 Marketgate
Arbroath
DD11

Companies should telephone: 01307 473251 before completing an application form.

As a guide the application process may take up to 8 weeks to complete, however it would be hoped that applications from individuals would be progressed sooner.