

ANGUS COUNCIL

PERSONNEL & PROPERTY SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 MAY 2001

ANGUS COUNCIL TRAINING SERVICES: NEW DEAL 25+ CONTRACT

REPORT BY ACTING DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL

ABSTRACT

This report advises members that the Angus Council Training Services (ACTS) section of the Personnel Department has won a contract from the Employment Service for the delivery of the New Deal 25+ Programme and asks them to homologate the action taken in bidding for this contract. It also recommends the establishment of a post of Senior Development Officer within Angus Council Training Services to assist in the delivery of that contract.

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee

- i homologate the action of the Director of Personnel in successfully bidding for a contract from the Employment Service for Angus Council Training Services (ACTS) to manage the Intensive Activity Period provision of the New Deal 25+ programme in Angus, and
- ii approve the establishment of a post of Senior Development Officer, AP5, within the ACTS section of the Personnel Department

2. BACKGROUND

ACTS delivers a range of government employment and training programmes through contracts with the Employment Service and Scottish Enterprise Tayside. Its principal activity is the management of the Skillseekers programme for 16-18 year olds, but it also plays a major part in the delivery of the New Deal 18-24 programme. It is the lead body in Angus for the Environment Task Force (ETF) of the New Deal and, as a training provider, has delivered training and work experience to 154 individuals on this option in the past two years. ACTS' contract for management of the ETF was recently extended and now runs to 31/03/02.

The government has now broadened the scope of New Deal provision for those aged 25 and over and in doing so has moved to a new model of provision, which focuses strongly on making participants 'job ready' and finding them employment. Instead of the four option approach (subsidised employment, voluntary work, full time education and training and the ETF) of the 18-24 programme, the 25+ programme is based on an 'Intensive Activity Period' (IAP) during which participants will undertake a mix of work experience and placements and job-focused training all geared towards placing the individual in a sustainable job as soon as possible.

These IAPs are to be managed by Managing Providers who will be responsible for delivering the programme in a specific geographic area, directly, with partners, and through sub contractors.

ACTS has successfully delivered the ETF in Angus and it was considered that delivery of the 25+ programme would maintain an integrated approach which would benefit unemployed people and employers in the area. Consequently ACTS submitted a bid to act as Managing Provider. This bid was successful and the contract will commence in May this year.

The timescales set by the Employment Service for the tendering exercise prevented the then Director of Personnel reporting this bid to Committee. The Committee is now asked to homologate her actions.

3. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

The delivery of this contract will require additional resources. Its award also offers the opportunity to address other staffing issues within ACTS' structure.

As members may recall, there was a considerable rationalisation of ACTS' operations during 1998 and 1999 (Report 125/99, Personnel & Property Services Committee, 2 February 1999, Article 4 refers). This was intended to address the circumstances which resulted in a series of budget overspends up to the financial year 1998/9. The measures taken were effective. ACTS achieved a budget surplus in 1999/2000 and will do so again in 2000/01.

The rationalisation included a significant reduction in staffing levels. On 1 April 1998, the approved establishment of ACTS was 26.2 fte posts. By 1 April 2000, this had become 14.6. As part of the reduction, the number of managerial/supervisory posts fell from four to two. This resulted in additions to the workload of the Training Services Manager and as the rationalised ACTS has won and developed an increasing range of contracts and projects this has increased further.

This new contract will result in an increase of up to 80 clients per year. In addition to work with these individuals there will be a requirement for liaison with the Employment Service, employers and educational and training providers. To take on these duties it is proposed that one of the existing Development Officer posts take on the role of New Deal 25+ Co-ordinator, and be redesignated accordingly.

The contract will also increase the managerial workload and therefore the need to provide support to the Training Services Manager. Consequently it is proposed that a new post of Senior Development Officer (AP5) be established. The holder of this post would continue to carry their current workload but also undertake a range of supervisory and managerial tasks to assist the Training Services Manager.

The Acting Director of Personnel believes that this post can be filled from within current staff in ACTS. It is therefore proposed to advertise the post within that section only with the consequent vacancy filled by external advert. There would therefore be a net increase of one post, ie a Senior Development Officer, within the ACTS establishment.

On the basis of information from the Employment Service, the Acting Director of Personnel is satisfied, at this time, that these changes will enable ACTS to deliver the New Deal 25+ contract.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The annual cost of the Senior Development Officer will be approximately £27,500. This can be met from the income generated by ACTS' activities and would require no budget increase.

5. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Law & Administration have been consulted on the terms of this report.

6. CONCLUSION

The award of the 25+ New Deal contract is a further example of the success of Angus Council Training Services' delivery of high quality training and employment programmes which assist unemployed people and employers in Angus and supports the economic development of the area.

HUGH ROBERTSON
Acting Director of Personnel

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.