

EPSOM AND EWELL HUB - APPLICATION FOR 2ND YEAR FUNDING

Head of Service: Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Wards affected: (All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:
Appendices (attached):

Summary

To support a bid for grant funding from the DWP's Flexible Support Fund to continue the work of the Epsom and Ewell Hub, with delivery partners.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Support that the Head of Housing and Community, in consultation with the Chair of Community and Wellbeing Committee, the Chief Finance officer and Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration, submits an application to the Department of Work and Pensions to fund a further year of the Epsom and Ewell Hub.**
- (2) Agree that the Council continues the delivery arrangements with Surrey Life-Long Learning to deliver this initiative.**
- (3) Delegate minor amendments to the bid to the Head of Housing and Community, in consultation with the Chair of Community and Wellbeing.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Approving the recommendations will enable the Council to apply for funding to continue the Epsom and Ewell Hub and help support those at risk of unemployment within the borough.

2 Background

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- 2.1 In January 2021 the Strategy and Resources Committee agreed to support an application to the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) for funding from the DWP's Flexible Support Grant to establish the Epsom and Ewell Hub (also known as the Youth Hub). The application was for 12 months funding which expires in August 2022.
- 2.2 The Hub was established originally in Bourne Hall before moving to an empty retail unit in the Ashley Centre, where it is still currently operating from. The hub supports young people who are not in work or training, helping them to find employment or approved training courses. The Hub also provides support to build confidence, develop good mental health as well as introduce employers to potential candidates.
- 2.3 The role of the Youth Hub is not to replicate existing DWP services but to leverage a range of additional partner and industry resources to provide employment information and advice, support employer connections, work placements and mentors to support young people find pathways into work.
- 2.4 The January 2021 S&R original report outlines the original proposal for the Hub and can be viewed via this link <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=969&Ver=4>

3 Review of first year of Hub

- 3.1 The Epsom and Ewell Hub has operated since August 2021 and in the first 10 months of operation, including a period of relocation, the Hub has engaged with over 160 young people, exceeding the DWP annual target of engaging with 150 young people in 12 months.
- 3.2 The relocation of the Hub from Bourne hall to the Ashley Centre in October 2021 has led to a significant increase in footfall and a significant visible presence and recognition by young people and their families as well as local businesses.
- 3.3 The Hub has achieved getting 36 young people into work, 14 into Kick Start placements, 4 Apprenticeships, 7 work placements as well as 175 social inclusion steps.
- 3.4 With a growing profile within the Ashley Centre, the Hub is expected to significantly exceed the DWP targets for 12 months up to August 2022.
- 3.5 In year 1 the Hub has developed strong partnerships with DWP, NESCOL, the Business Improvement District, Job Centre Plus as well as the Local Enterprise Partnership, all of whom join the Council and Surrey Life Long Learning (the delivery partner for the Hub) in forming the Hub's Steering group.

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4 Proposal for year 2 funding bid

- 4.1 The DWP have invited applications for a second year's funding for the Hub, which would start in August 2022 for a period of 12 months.
- 4.2 The DWP have indicated that they would welcome bids which develop the role of the Hub to include more interactions with local businesses. Whilst continuing to offer holistic employment support, the DWP has requested that the Hub becomes more active in regular employer SWAPs, where local employers attend the Hub with their vacancies and the Hub introduce potential candidates.
- 4.3 The DWP have also requested that year 2 funding should develop the role of volunteers in helping young people get back to work or training. It should also increase the engagement with businesses, including Surrey Chambers and the Federation of Small Businesses.
- 4.4 Although not required until August 2022, the DWP have indicated that the processes of year 2 bids can take time and have suggested the Council submits the bid without delay. As such a bid has had to be submitted ahead of this committee meeting to meet this timescale. This bid could be retrospectively withdrawn if support from this committee is not forthcoming.

5 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

5.1 Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1.1 The impact of the pandemic on the economic recovery of the UK will depend on local jobs to help the local circular economy. Supporting local households living on lower incomes will be significantly influenced by their unemployment status and resulting unaffordable housing costs.

5.2 Crime & Disorder

- 5.2.1 There are clear correlations between high levels of unemployment and increased incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour. Supporting young People to develop skills and employment will reduce the tendency towards undesired behaviours.

5.3 Safeguarding

- 5.3.1 Unemployment and its associated loss of income can exacerbate vulnerability in individuals who are more susceptible to abuse, neglect or coercion.

5.4 Dependencies

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5.4.1 The extent of the support available from the Hub will be dependent on the levels of funding awarded by the DWP.

5.5 Other

5.5.1 None

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The DWP bid forming this proposal is intended to cover all staffing costs, including any associated overheads and managerial costs.

6.2 The extent of financial support being sought from the DWP is £97,407.72

6.3 The main Council contribution is in the provision of accommodation for the Hub to operate from. It is intended that the Hub will continue to operate from the unit it currently occupies free of charge in the Ashley Centre. Should this no longer be available spare accommodation in other Council owned buildings, such as Bourne hall will be considered.

6.4 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The Skills Hub should be fully funded by the DWP bid as there are no Council budgets currently allocated to the scheme.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The delivery of the Hub will be managed through an arrangement between the Council and delivery partners.

7.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report

8 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

8.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged: Opportunity and prosperity and Safe and Well.

8.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

8.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** none

8.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** Unemployment can be associated with greater opportunities for anti-social behaviour and environmental crime. Employment will create alternative options for individuals, growing their confidence and life choices.

8.5 **Partnerships:** This proposal has built on the longstanding partnership between the Council and Surrey Life Long Learning partnership. The year 2 funding will strengthen further partnerships between the Council and businesses as well as the LEP and the Epsom BID and NESOT

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9 Background papers

9.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- [Strategy and Resources Committee 28th January 2021](#)

Other papers:

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