

Report on	ESF Call 3 Match Funding Requests (2022-23)
Date of Meeting	7 July 2021
Reporting Officer	Head of Economic Development

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider financially supporting a number of match funding requests under ESF Call 3 (2022-23).
2.0	Background
2.1	In May 2021, the Economy Minister launched a third and final call for projects to apply for funding under the Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NI ESF) programme. The extended funding period is from 1 st April 2022 to 31 st March 2023 and a competition for funding will open to applications on 14 June 2021 for a period of four weeks.
2.2	The ESF is designed to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion. It supports participants to progress into further education, training and ultimately employment through funding organisations to deliver programmes for the unemployed and the economically inactive as well as people with disabilities and young people not in education, employment or training.
2.3	The lead organisations require match funding support as part of a wider cocktail of funding to allow the employability schemes to commence.
2.4	The funding requested from Council will potentially leverage substantial amounts of ESF funding into Mid Ulster and contribute to the achievement of objectives set out in the Council's Economic Development Plan.
2.5	<p>The maximum budget available from Council to match fund external projects is £50,000 during the 2022/23 financial year. However, beyond this point Council's economic development income is set to contract up to 80% from April 2023 onwards, due to a significant loss of EU funding. Members should note that beyond April 2023, this budget is likely to be required by Council's economic development function to deliver upon our own economic initiatives and commitments, to offset the shortfall in funding Council will soon experience.</p> <p>It is recommended however, that in 2022/23 financial year, the final year of ESF funding, Council support the following 4 projects which have requested match funding from Council. The full amount of match funding each</p>

	<p>organisation has requested from Council, has been reduced to fit within Council's £50,000 available budget.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Step Up to Sustainable Employment Programme (SUSE+). 2. Up for Work Programme (UFWP) 3. Job Match Programme (JMP) 4. Women Towards Education and Employment Programme (WTEEP) 				
3.0	Main Report				
3.1	<p>The strategic aim of the European Social Fund (ESF) Programme 2014-2020 in Northern Ireland is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce. The Programme funds activities which enhance and extend employment opportunities, in particular, for those groups at a disadvantage in the labour market who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or economically inactive.</p> <p>As part of the delivery of ESF support for employability development, the Council is currently committed to supporting four programmes under Phase 2 up to March 2022:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Step Up to Sustainable Employment Programme (SUSE+ Programme) 2. Up for Work Programme (UFWP) 3. Job Match Programme (JMP) 4. Exploring Enterprise 4 Programme (EE4P) <p>The lead organisations for the SUSE+, Up for Work and Job Match Programmes plan to submit proposals for ESF funding under the third call for the period 2022-23.</p> <p>In addition, the Council has received a match funding request from the First Steps Women's Centre for an additional Programme.</p>				
3.2	<p>Step Up to Sustainable Employment Programme (SUSE +) (Lead organisation: South West College)</p> <p>SUSE+ delivers skills development and employability support to help participants into further development, training, education and employment. The SUSE+ programme is a mentor led initiative with six mentors employed to support participants across the district. Whilst the initiative supports citizens in the urban areas of Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon, assistance for rural dwellers is a key focus of the programme and is reflected in the spread of mentoring resources across the district.</p> <p><u>Current Programme Performance 2018-21</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>District Sector</th><th>Outputs</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	District Sector	Outputs		
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	Participants Recruited	Qualifications	Specialist Training	Sustained Employment
Carntogher Moyola Magherafelt	177	232	168	46
Cookstown Torrent	183	255	186	52
Dungannon Clogher Valley	240	347	243	72
Total	600	834	597	170

Programme Proposal (2022-23)

South West College intends to apply for a 1 year extension to the current SUSE+ Programme in response to the ESF Call 3 which will run from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. The programme will continue to be delivered in its current format and will again be collaborative in its approach and it is envisaged that the partnership which was developed to deliver SUSE+ will be retained to deliver any new programme. It is intended that all current partners including the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will continue to support the programme for a further year in response to Call 3 of the ESF programme.

Projected Outputs (2022-23)

• 200 Participants (unemployed and economically inactive people)
• 425 Qualifications Achieved at Level 1
• 35 Essential Skills Level 1 Qualifications to be Achieved (Literacy , Numeracy and a strong focus on ICT)
• 44 participants or 22% of participants to Enter Employment on Leaving the Programme
• 44 Participants or 22% of Participants in Employment Six Months After Leaving Programme
• 16 Leavers From the Programme Join Education or Training Programmes
• 294 Specialist qualifications attained

Programme Funding (2022-23)

Source	Percentage	Amount
DfE/ESF	65%	£543,710.15
DAERA	10.16%	£100,000
MUDC	4.26%	£40,000
FODC	4.26%	£40,000
Radius Housing	2.99%	£25,000
SWC	13.33%	£62,767.01
Total	100%	£836,477.16

Recommendation : SUSE+

Based on current budget constraints, projected outputs / outcomes and funding package, it is recommended to approve a financial commitment of £25,000 to South West College for the period 2022-23.

3.3

Up for Work Programme (UFWP) (Lead organisation: Network Personnel)

UFWP seeks to engage and support participants who are not in employment, education or training (NEET's) to enter or return to the labour market.

Current Programme Performance 2018-21

As can be seen from the table below, outcomes from the programme have been exceedingly positive; job outcomes to date are 144% over target.

April 2018 – May 2021		
Outcomes	Target	Actual
Participants	293	300
Qualifications	641	674
Employment	45	143
Further Ed/H. Education	102	96

Programme Proposal (2022-23)

The new programme is based on the learning from the current initiative and will seek to engage and support those perceived to be at most distance from the labour market. Based on feedback from employers, Network Personnel plan to offer a bespoke programme which will incorporate personal development with employability support. They envisage this being the 'go to' provision for young people who fall out of college/work or are just unsure of their path in life. The Programme will provide tailored job search support which will involve interview skills, CV preparation and talks from local employers to develop skills and to provide guidance on what is expected from employees in the workforce. Participants will benefit from Network Personnel's wrap around support including benefit advice; information on subsidised childcare; peer mentoring and wellbeing support via our counselling service. Participants will also be given the opportunity to work with Network Personnel's Employer Engagement Officers matching them to local vacancies and progression opportunities for further training/education.

Projected Outputs (2022-23)

Outcomes	PROGRAMME TOTAL
Participants	75
Qualifications	75
Employment	15
Further Training/Education	17

Programme Funding (2022-23)

PROPOSED FUNDING PACKAGE 2022-23	£
ESF (65%)	176,150
DfE (28.5%)	£77,235
MUDC (3.5%)	£9,485
Workspace (3%)	£8,130
TOTAL PROGRAMME COST:-	£271,000

Recommendation : Up for Work Programme

Based on current budget constraints, programme scope, projected outputs / outcomes and funding package, it is recommended to approve a financial commitment of £6,250 to Network Personnel for the period 2022-23.

3.4

Job Match Programme (JMP) (Lead organisation: Network Personnel)

The JMP provides vocational training and employability support for those aged over 18 years old. It has a particular focus on supporting participants with specific barriers e.g. long-term unemployed, economically inactive, caring responsibilities, ex-offenders, addictions and NEETS. The programme covers Magherafelt, Cookstown, Dungannon, Omagh, Fermanagh, Ballymena, Antrim, Larne, Carrickfergus, Ballymoney, Coleraine and Newtownabbey. At present participants are supported by a team of Career Mentors, Facilitators, Employer Engagement Officers and a Wellbeing Advisor.

Current Programme Performance 2018-21

As can be seen from the statistics below (for the period April 2018 – May 2021), the programme has operated exceedingly successfully irrespective of COVID19, particularly with respect to job outcomes which are well ahead of target.

	ANNUAL TARGET	TARGET TO DATE April – May 2021	ACTUAL April – May 2021	PROGRAMME TO DATE TARGET	PROGRAMME TO DATE ACTUAL
REGISTRATIONS	418	70	96	1220	1297
Employment	63	11	32	184	562
Education and training	12	2	0	35	44
QUALIFICATIONS	706	118	162	2060	1951

Programme Proposal (2022-23)

The next phase of the programme will continue to reach out to those who are in receipt of Universal Credits and given the high numbers of those who are deemed to be economically inactive, will target those on sickness benefits, lone parents, carers and non-claimants. The Programme will focus on those who have recently been made redundant due to the pandemic and continue to take an 'employer led approach' with training and job search activities having direct relevance to the current job opportunities in the various geographical areas in which they deliver the programme. Network Personnel's Employer Engagement Officers will engage with companies on a daily basis to ascertain their staffing requirements and will match them to the participants who are work ready. Career Connection days will be offered whereby employers will meet groups of participants on our premises or remotely, explain about their skills requirements and carry out interviews on the day if required. In order to make the participants 'work ready', the Programme will continue to offer tailored job search support on a one to one basis using our skilled Career Mentors. This may involve interview skills; CV preparation and confidence building. A Wellbeing Advisor will also be on hand to provide support and guidance to those who need it in both a group and 1:2:1 setting. For those

who aren't work ready on programme completion, the programme will support a transition to Further Education or Apprenticeship Programmes.

Projected Outputs (2022-23)

Outcomes	PROGRAMME TOTAL FOR 1 YEAR	TOTAL MUDC FOR 1 YEAR
Participants	418	98
Qualifications	706	137
Employment	67	25
Further Training/Education	12	10

Programme Funding (2022-23)

PROPOSED FUNDING PACKAGE	£
Programme Total	£795,340
<i>Funding breakdown</i>	
ESF (65%)	£516,971
DFE (28.87%)	£229,615
MUDC (1.3%)	£10,332
OTHER COUNCILS M/F CONTRIBUTION (1.3%*2)	£20,664
WORKSPACE (2.23%)	£17,758
TOTAL	£795,340

Recommendation : Job Match Programme

Based on current budget constraints, projected outputs / outcomes and funding package, it is recommended to approve a financial commitment of £6,250 to Network Personnel for the period 2022-23.

3.5

Women Towards Education and Employment Programme (WTEEP) (Lead organisation: First Steps Women's Centre)

A further request has been received from First Steps Women's Centre (FSWC) to provide match funding for their Women Towards Education and Employment Programme (WTEEP). The Programme will provide a range of training including interview skills, ESOL, literacy and numeracy, health & wellbeing, progression and mentoring as well as a Job fair. FSWC will employ a Progression Worker to guide participants into further education and employment. The Progression Worker will also assist women in setting training and employment targets and working towards them.

Since 2015 FSWC has drawn down £2.5million into the Mid Ulster Council area, the majority from the European Social Fund programme, however, £479k was for a capital refurbishment programme (2017-18). This capital investment has doubled the size of the Centre and totally transformed the building into a modern Centre with facilities including 4 training rooms and an onsite crèche. Furthermore, 219 women gained employment since 2015 as a result of attending FSWC. The additional development of Wellbeing programmes has created a positive environment for many women to consider employment who had previously been labelled "Economically Inactive".

Projected Outputs (2022-23)

- **Interview & CV Skills** – FSWC has liaised with Terex to provide Interview Technique training;
5 X ESOL Courses for 110 Migrant Women. These courses will operate twice per week from September to March 2022. The aim is to improve the level of English in order for women to be able to gain employment and/or attend further education;
- **1 X Literacy & Numeracy** – up to Level 1 for 25 women
- **12 X IT Courses for 120 women.** These courses will range from Level 1 Sage Accounts & Sage Payroll, Microsoft Office, Excel and Beginners IT. There will also be introductory programmes including: iPad & Tablet, Digital Photography;
- **20 X Health & Wellbeing Programmes for 175 women** – These are aimed at building up the soft skills such as Confidence, Resilience, Assertiveness and Communication;
- **Progression & Mentoring work** – FSWC will employ a Progression Worker whose role is to guide women into further education and employment. The Progression Worker will assist women in setting training and employment targets and working towards them;
- **1 X Job Fair** – 25 organisations and 200-300 people attending.

Programme Targets (2022-2023)

Targets	2022-23
Job Creation	42
Qualifications	145
Number of Courses	39
Participants - places	264
Job Fair	1 event with 200-300 in attendance
Improvement in Soft Skills	225
Funding / Investment	£480k

Programme Funding (2022-23)

Source of Funding	Amount	Definite (Y/N)
ESF (65%)	£312k	TBC
FSWC (5.2%)	£25k	Y
Dept for Communities (15%)	£70k	Y
MUDC (5.2%)	£25k	TBC
Match Funding to be identified	£48k	TBC
TOTAL:	£480k	

	<p>Recommendation: Women Towards Education and Employment Programme Based on current budget constraints, projected outputs / outcomes and funding package, it is recommended to approve a financial commitment of £12,500 to First Steps Women's Group for the period 2022-23.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial:</p> <p>SUSE+ SWC total financial commitment sought is £25,000 for the period 2022-23.</p> <p>Up for Work Programme Network Personnel's total financial commitment sought is £6,250 for the period 2022-23.</p> <p>Job Match Programme Network Personnel's total financial commitment sought is £6,250 for the period 2022-23.</p> <p>Women Towards Education and Employment Programme First steps Women's Centre's total financial commitment sought is £12,500 for the period 2022-23.</p>
	Human: Officer Time
	<p>Risk Management:</p> <p>Risk level is mitigated as Council contributions will be subject to confirmation of funding from other sources.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	To be considered by Project Promoters.
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>To be considered by Project Promoters.</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members:-</p> <p>Approve the undernoted match funding requests under ESF Call 3 (2022-23) for Mid Ulster District, subject to the organisations being successful in their funding bids:-</p>

	<p>5.1.1 SUSE+ A financial contribution of up to £25,000 to South West College for the period 2022-23 to deliver the SUSE+ Programme.</p> <p>5.1.2 Up for Work Programme A financial contribution of £6,250 to Network Personnel for the period 2022-23 to deliver the Up for Work Programme.</p> <p>5.1.3 Job Match Programme A financial contribution of £6,250 to Network Personnel for the period 2022-23 to deliver the Job Match Programme.</p> <p>5.1.4 Women Towards Education and Employment Programme A financial contribution of £12,500 to First Steps Women's Centre for the period 2022-23 to deliver the Women Towards Education and Employment Programme.</p>
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	<p>Appendix 1 – South West College – ESF Match Funding Request</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Network Personnel – ESF Match Funding Requests</p> <p>Appendix 3 – First Steps Women's Centre – ESF Match Funding Request</p>