

Notice of key decision to be made under General Exception provisions

The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Date of notice: 26 November 2020

To: Councillor Paul Sweet
Chair of Scrutiny Board

From: Sue Lindup
Skills and Employability Manager

An intention to make the following key decision, which is to be considered by the Cabinet (Resources) Panel on 9 December 2020, was not publicised in advance as required by the Regulations.

Report title: Kickstart Work Experience Programme

Classification: PUBLIC

The reason(s) for the omission from the forward plan of key decisions and the reason(s) why this decision cannot be delayed until the requisite 28 days have elapsed are:

The Kickstart Work Experience Programme is a Government funded programme offering paid six-month work experience placements to young people 16-24 years old. Kickstart will perform a vital role within the Council's Relighting our City strategy priority Generate More Jobs and Learning Opportunities to support young people in their pathway into sustainable employment.

The Kickstart programme was launched nationally in November 2020 and Councils in the West Midlands Combined Authority area are supporting the project through offering placements and support to local employers through a Gateway. Wolverhampton Council is in a position to provide up to 180 work experience placements through its own service areas and in partnership with a number of employers in Wolverhampton up until December 2021.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is the lead Government organisation for the Kickstart scheme. Whilst early discussions have taken place

This notice must be provided to the Chair of the Scrutiny Board and to the appropriate democratic support officer at least five clear working days in advance of the relevant Executive meeting.

with DWP, the Terms and Conditions of Service were not published by DWP until 30 October 2020. The Terms and Conditions of Service have been reviewed by the Council's Legal and Finance Teams.

Therefore, the reason that the scheme cannot be delayed until the requisite 28 days have elapsed are:

- Wolverhampton currently has the third highest percentage of youth unemployment in England at 15.9% with a total of 3380 young people claiming benefits (NOMIS September 2020). This has more than doubled since January 2020. This scheme will assist in responding to the urgent issue of youth unemployment in our city by placing young people in paid work who are claiming Universal Credit in Wolverhampton.
- There are currently 122 work experience placements ready to be submitted to DWP for approval before they can be offered to young people in our city. The DWP approval process takes up to 30 days and therefore a further 28 days would mean that decisions to offer placements in Wolverhampton could then not realistically start take place until at least February 2020.
- The Kickstart work experience scheme is time limited and all placements need to be submitted and approved by DWP before December 2021.