

ECONOMY, ENERGY AND FAIR WORK COMMITTEE

DRAFT BUDGET 2019-20

SUBMISSION FROM ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL (OFFICER RESPONSE)

Draft Budget for 2019-20

Employment support and fair work

How Scotland's new employment support budget is helping people into work

- What are your views on how contract awards are decided and how "payment by outcome" works?

The awarding of the Fair Start Scotland contract was a fair process. However, it would have been good to see an outcome payment on commencement of employment or a four week sustainment. A great deal of work goes into supporting participants to overcome their barriers prior to moving into employment. For example, items such as PPE, tools, etc. often provided to allow acceptance of a post. In some cases the participant may fall out of work prior to 13 weeks therefore no outcome fee claimable.

- How can the Scottish Government ensure "guaranteed service standards" and avoid "[parking and creaming](#)"?

Cannot comment, no experience of this.

- How well do the newly devolved services work with reserved Job Centre Services?

Scottish Government has been happy to engage with JCP offices within Argyll and Bute. Likewise the Council's Employability Team staff has built up good relationships with JCP staff across Argyll and Bute through employability contract delivery over a number of years.

- What can be done to ensure high levels of participation when the programme is voluntary?

Introduction of small financial incentives to participant on top of existing benefits to ensure regular engagement and progression to employment (£10.00 per week and £100.00 on reaching 13 weeks continuous employment). Eligibility from day one unemployed for all participants.

EJFW/S5/18/DB19-20/11

- How are delivery agents and the Scottish Government helping people move into sustained and fair employment?

Assistance and support to overcome barriers; signposting to third party organisations as appropriate; encouragement to attend weekly job clubs and apply for vacancies which includes assistance with compilation of CVs, completion of application forms, speculative letters and mock interviews.

- How should success be measured?

All positive outcomes should be measured. Participants may move into further education which is currently not recognised. In many cases this is a massive step for some participants and the qualifications obtained provide a positive step towards securing sustainable employment.

The role of the enterprise agencies (Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise) in supporting and growing good quality employment

- How are the budgets of the enterprise agencies used to help businesses employ more people?
- What are the examples of the enterprise agencies safeguarding jobs?
- How do the enterprise agencies use their budgets to attract foreign investment?
- How do the enterprise agencies use their budgets to improve job quality and ensure fair employment?
- What has been the impact of recent budget reductions on the enterprise agencies' ability to provide, maintain and safeguard employment within the areas they serve?
- How are the enterprise agencies' budgets being used to address productivity and employment gaps between Scotland's top and bottom performing local authority areas?

Apprenticeship levy

- How is Apprenticeship Levy money being used in Scotland?

The Apprenticeship Levy places a disproportionate burden on public sector employers, particularly in an area like Argyll and Bute, where the three largest employers are public sector (MOD, ABC, NHS).

The Argyll and Bute Council pays in excess of £650k per annum into the levy. This is in no way recouped by the limited scope the council has to access small (£10-15k) amounts of money from the Levy for workforce development. This therefore restricts the public sector from investing in workforce development, as overall our budgets are reduced significantly. The areas of investment in the apprenticeship programme are focused on IT and STEM, although important, this does not support public sector workforce development, which is under particular pressure from 1140 hours, teacher recruitment challenges and social care recruitment challenges.

- Has this UK Government policy led to employers taking on more apprentices?
As above, the areas of investment in the apprenticeship programme are focused on IT and STEM, although important, this this does not support public sector workforce development, which is under particular pressure from 1140 hours, teacher recruitment challenges and social care recruitment challenges.

Community and Locally Owned Energy

For further context, please see: the [CARES](#) scheme and [Local Energy Scotland's](#) involvement in delivering the scheme.

- What are your views on the Scottish Government's approach to financing and supporting community and locally owned energy?
- Is there adequate funding to hit the 2020 [target](#) of 1GW of community and locally owned energy by 2020 and 2GW by 2030?
- Which technologies (heat and/or electricity) have the most potential to transform community and locally owned energy, and are resources being adequately targeted?
- Are the organisational structures adequate to enable this?
- Is the joint focus on community and locally owned energy the correct approach? How might support for community energy be better targeted? What are the benefits and potential drawbacks of different ownership models?
- Are there any other issues in relation to Scottish Government support for community and locally owned energy that you would like to highlight?