

Connect to Work (CtW)

Annex 2



Options Appraisal Template

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Title for Business Need	Connect to Work Programme	
Pipeline Reference	TBA	
Author	Will Gardner	
Service Area	Adult Social Care	
Version	V1.0	
Date	January 2025	
Approvals Given	Approver	Date
Service Lead	[Insert Name]	[dd/mm/yyyy]
Category Manager	[Insert Name]	[dd/mm/yyyy]
Relevant Governance E.G. Project Board; DLT or other forum	DLT review	06/01/25

1. Description of Proposal

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Connect to Work is a nationally prescribed and locally commissioned supported employment programme, fully funded by the Department for Work and Pensions. Accountable Bodies across England (Oxfordshire County Council) will be responsible for design and delivery of a programme within the county with an initial four-year duration. (Appendix 1: Executive Summary) It is expected that around 2000 local participants will access the Oxfordshire programme through the provision of the Supported Employment 5 Stage Model and the Individual placement Support model, both accredited as high-fidelity models of engagement (Appendix 2). The indicative funding for Oxfordshire is £4200.00 per participant. Significant risks identified relate to standing up the service within timeline (Annex 3), the recruitment of practitioners to deliver the programme and identifying the ambitious numbers of participants required.

Initial indications show that other local authorities are planning a range of delivery strategies involving internal and external provision. (Appendix 2)

All options will be funded by the Department for Work and pensions through an agreed delivery plan.

2 Options Analysis

NB: There is no 'Do Nothing' option.

2.1 Option 1- The Council commissions the delivery of Connect to Work entirely by one or more external partners.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
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<p>Aligns entirely with the council's strategy of being an enabler and partner of choice rather than a provider of services.</p> <p>Reduces risks and costs associated with direct provision and employment.</p> <p>Utilises accredited IPS provision</p> <p>Costs can be contained within budget through procurement arrangements.</p>	<p>Does not use the services of Oxfordshire Employment, the only accredited 5-Stage Model provider in the county.</p> <p>New providers will not have established networks and employer engagement structures in place: these take time to develop.</p> <p>Resources are unlikely to be in place to continue the current LSE (Appendix 2) customer pipeline.</p>	<p>Broadening the supported employment and IPS provider offer in the county.</p> <p>Delivers a collaboratively commissioned and system -wide approach to reach and effectively engage those furthest from the employment market.</p>	<p>Poor provider performance: Over promising and under delivery against challenging participant numbers</p> <p>Lack of provider presence in advance of programme delivery</p> <p>Timescales will pose a significant challenge to a fully external delivery. (Appendix 3)</p> <p>Choosing large single providers may restrict collaborative approaches.</p> <p>Attracting and training a workforce within timescale will be a significant challenge.</p> <p>Does not use exiting 5 Stage Model HF</p>
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			<p>accredited provision</p> <p>Likely to mean the council's own high fidelity supported employment service is financially unsustainable.</p>
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2.2 Option 2- The Council commissions part of the programme delivery by one or more external partners whilst using its internal resource (Oxfordshire Employment) to deliver the 5 Stage Supported Employment workstream.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Aligns partly with the council's strategy of being an enabler and partner of choice rather than a provider of services.</p> <p>Reduces some risks and costs associated with direct provision and employment.</p> <p>Provides direct control of the provision of</p>	<p>New providers will not have established networks and employer engagement structures in place: these take time to develop.</p> <p>Requires additional internal employment.</p>	<p>Broadening the supported employment and IPS provider offer in the county.</p> <p>Provides a collaborative approach to programme delivery enabling a system wide approach to attract those furthest from the employment</p>	<p>Lack of provider presence in advance of programme delivery</p> <p>Timescales will pose a significant challenge to a fully external delivery.</p> <p>Attracting and training a workforce within timescale may not be possible.</p>

<p>supported employment.</p> <p>Supports 'hyper local' through existing networks of small provider provision.</p> <p>Utilises the provision, local networks and performance of the county's only high-fidelity provider of supported employment.</p> <p>Utilises IPS high fidelity accredited provision.</p> <p>Allows for the continuation of the current LSE (Annex 2) referral pipeline.</p>		<p>market with greater focus on hyper local delivery.</p> <p>Savings in core funding of approximately £150,000.00 per annum from moving current OE workstreams to CtW.</p>	
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2.3 Option 3- The Council seeks to deliver all Connect to Work delivery entirely in-house.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
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<p>Provides control of the provision of supported employment through direct provision.</p> <p>Utilises the provision of the county's only high-fidelity provider of supported employment.</p>	<p>Does not align with the council's strategic aims.</p> <p>The council does not currently have IPS fidelity accreditation.</p> <p>All financial risk would remain with the council.</p> <p>The council would need to recruit a significant number of new employees – circa 30 fte.</p> <p>Does not increase the supported employment provider footprint in Oxfordshire.</p>	<p>Broadening the high fidelity supported employment and IPS provider offer in the county.</p> <p>OE achieves IPS provider accreditation</p> <p>Savings in core funding of approximately £150,000.00 per annum from moving current OE workstreams to CtW.</p>	<p>Poor provider performance: Over promising and under delivery.</p> <p>Lack of market diversification.</p> <p>Timescales will pose a significant challenge to a fully internal delivery.</p> <p>Attracting and training a workforce within timescale may not be possible.</p>
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2.3 Critical Success Factors Table

Critical success criteria	Option one	Option two	Option three
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<i>Delivers a successful, innovative local programme aligning with local strategies.</i>	2	3	1
<i>Least Reputation Risk</i>	3	3	1
<i>Likely to provide best user outcomes and satisfaction.</i>	2	3	1
<i>Strategic Aims achieved</i>	3	3	1
<i>Total</i>	10	12	4

Preferred Option (s)

Option 3 should be discarded as it neither meets the council's strategic aims nor is likely to deliver strong and successful programme outcomes.

Option 1 and 2 both offer the opportunity to deliver a high quality, collaboratively commissioned programme. Both options offer opportunities to further involve 'hyper local' groups to provide high quality participant support through grant funding arrangements.

Option 1 Full external commissioning is likely to attract large providers with out of county experience of delivering both high fidelity models. Seeing more than one

provider will add complexity to the commissioning process and increased contract monitoring and reporting activity. A local front door and triage service is required; this provision already exists in county, provided by OXLEP. Duplicating this may cause confusion to customers.

Option 2 utilises the council's own high-fidelity accredited supported employment service (Oxfordshire Employment). This ensures that sustaining the current participant pipeline for Local Supported Employment programme delivery is achievable.

OE is the only in-county high-fidelity accredited provider of the Supported Employment 5 Stage Model; this option ensures full fidelity provision with an ILS accredited delivery Partner. Option 2 will require the direct employment by the council of approximately 5 fte additional staff members.

Option 2 is the preferred option with the potential to build on existing quality and performance whilst incurring little additional risk for the council. This option also produces annual full year savings of approx. £150,000.00 in OE operating costs.

1. Cost Estimate of Preferred Option

Subject to the agreement of a costed development plan, programme delivery is fully funded in arrears by the Department for Work and Pensions. Indicative funding information suggests that Oxfordshire would support around 2000 participants over the life of the provision with an indicative cost of £ 4200 per participant accessing either fidelity model (Revised from £4000.00 prior to publication of final guidance). Some participants will receive advice and guidance, the cost of which will form part of the delivery plan.

Reference	Link
Process Link	
Handbook	

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Version	Approved by	Date
V0.1		