



City Chambers
DUNDEE
DD1 3BY

5th December, 2025

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE TAY
CITIES REGION JOINT COMMITTEE

Dear Sir/Madam

TAY CITIES REGION JOINT COMMITTEE

Will you please attend a MEETING of the **TAY CITIES REGION JOINT COMMITTEE** on Friday 12th December, 2025 at 10:00am, to be held remotely.

Please submit any apologies to Veronica Thomson, Committee Services Officer on telephone (01382) 434205 or by e-mail at veronica.thomson@dundeecity.gov.uk.

Members of the Press or Public wishing to join the meeting should contact Veronica Thomson, Committee Services Officer on telephone (01382) 434205 or by e-mail at veronica.thomson@dundeecity.gov.uk by **12 noon on 9th December, 2025.**

Yours faithfully

ROGER MENNIE

Clerk to the Joint Committee

- 1 **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**
- 2 **CHANGE OF CHAIR FOR TCRJC**
- 3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 4 **MINUTE OF MEETING OF 3rd OCTOBER 2025 - Page 1**

(Copy enclosed).

PART 1: REGIONAL COLLABORATION

- 5 **HEADS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP UPDATE**

(Verbal Update by Ross Mackenzie, Dundee City Council).

PART 2: THE DEAL

6 RESHAPING THE TAY CITIES REGION DEAL

(Presentation update by Paul Thomson TCRD S95 Officer, and Mo Saunders PMO Programme Manager)

7 TARGETING HIDDEN TALENTS BUSINESS JUSTIFICATION CASE FOR APPROVAL - Page 7

(Report No TCRJC12-2025, introduced by Robin Presswood, Dundee City Council, and presentation by Ross Mackenzie, Dundee City Council)

8 AUDITED AND UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS

(Verbal update by Paul Thomson, TCRD S95 Officer).

9 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2026

Friday 20th March 2026, to be held remotely
Friday 19th June 2026, to be held in person (hybrid)
Friday 18th September 2026, to be held remotely
Friday 11th December 2026, to be held remotely

10 AOCB
- Tay Cities Region Deal Annual Performance Report and Benefits Realisation Plan Update

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 20th March 2026, to be held remotely

At a MEETING of the **TAY CITIES REGION JOINT COMMITTEE** held remotely on Friday, 3rd October 2025.

Present: -

Angus Council

Councillor Bill DUFF
Councillor Jill SCOTT

Dundee City Council

Bailie Willie SAWERS
Councillor Steven ROME
Councillor Georgia CRUICKSHANK

Fife Council

Councillor David ROSS
Councillor Alycia HAYES
Councillor Gary HOLT

Perth & Kinross Council

Councillor Eric DRYSDALE
Councillor John DUFF
Councillor Jack WELCH

Non-Elected Members

Alison HENDERSON, Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce
Ronnie PALIN, Skills Development Scotland
Matthew LOCKLEY, Scottish Enterprise
Hayley MEARNS, Voluntary Action Angus
Councillor Andrew PARROTT, Tactran

Also Present

Kathryn LINDSAY, Angus Council
Mark DAVIDSON, Angus Council
Greg COLGAN, Dundee City Council
Paul THOMSON, Dundee City Council
Roger MENNIE, Dundee City Council
Robin PRESSWOOD, Dundee City Council
Gregor HAMILTON, Dundee City Council
Lorna EDWARDS, Dundee City Council
Steve BELL, Dundee City Council
Paul VAUGHAN, Fife Council
Aileen O'HAGAN, Fife Council
Iain HAWKER, Fife College
Dianne MITCHELL, Fife Council
Thomas GLEN, Perth and Kinross Council
Serge MERONE, Perth and Kinross Council
Mark SPEED, Tactran

Mo SAUNDERS, PMO Programme Manager
Hannah HUTCHISON, PMO Project Officer
Jo ROSS, PMO Programme Co-ordinator

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, and under the terms of Standing Order 8, the Joint Committee appointed Councillor David Ross to chair this meeting, having been nominated by Councillor Bill Duff and seconded by Councillor Eric Drysdale.

Councillor David Ross, in the Chair.

I APOLOGIES

Apologies had been intimated from Councillor Mark Flynn, Councillor George Meechan, Councillor Jonny Tepp and David McBeth who are voting members and Ken Gourlay and Carol Connolly.

II DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

III MINUTE OF MEETING OF 20TH JUNE, 2025

The minute of meeting of 20th June, 2025 was submitted and approved.

PART 1: REGIONAL COLLABORATION

The Joint Committee noted that there were no items on this part of the agenda.

PART 2: TAY CITIES REGION DEAL

VI RESHAPING THE TAY CITIES REGION DEAL

Paul Thomson TCD S95 Officer, and Robin Presswood, Management Group Chair gave a verbal update to the Joint Committee with the amendments on progress regarding the reshaping work.

The Joint Committee members were informed that progress was being made on the reshaping work by Partners. Assurances were being sought for all the Fund/Programmes/Projects within the Deal Programme, that they could still (i) deliver to their agreed awarded Deal commitments, or (ii) the original Project, subject to a substantive change, being considered and agreed. Panel session meetings have been scheduled for 10th and 13th of November, where the Management Group members are going to assess and review all assurance submissions.

Paul Thomson highlighted to Joint Committee members that there remains a significant risk within the Programme around the existing Deal Programme projects developing and securing their Business Case approvals the recommended year ahead of their awarded drawdown. All Partners were being asked, within the assurance work, to ensure that they have sufficient resource and experience so that they could confirm that they are able to meet this approach and reduce the risk to both their organisation and the Partnership in the delivery of the Deal Programme.

A further update would be provided at the December Joint Committee meeting.

The Joint Committee noted the position.

V DIGITAL SKILLS PHASE 2 FBC FOR APPROVAL

There was submitted Report No TCRJC 09-2025 introduced by Paul Vaughn, on behalf of Carol Connolly, Fife Council seeking approval of the Full Business Case (FBC) for the Digital Skills Project, TCD024.

A presentation was also given to supplement the report, which was circulated to the Joint Committee prior to the meeting.

The Joint Committee: -

- (i) considered the report and the FBC for TCD024 Digital Skills Project;
- (ii) noted that Management Group had approved the FBC for TCD024 Digital Skills Project and recommended it to the Joint Committee for approval;
- (iii) noted that the FBC for TCD024 Digital Skills was being presented, subject to Government and Thematic Board approval; and
- (iv) approved the FBC for TCD024 Digital Skills Project subject to Government and Thematic Board approval being secured.

VI HOSPITALITY SKILLS PROJECT TCD024e – OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

There was submitted Report No TCRJC10-2025 introduced by Paul Vaughn, on behalf of Carol Connolly, Fife Council, asking the Joint Committee to note that the Management Group had approved the Business Justification Case (BJC) for Hospitality Skills TCD024e.

A presentation was also given to supplement the report, which was circulated to the Joint Committee prior to the meeting.

The Joint Committee: -

- (i) considered this report and the BJC for TC024e Hospitality Skills attached at Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) noted that Management Group has approved the BJC for Hospitality Skills TCD024e and recommended it to the Joint Committee for approval;
- (iii) noted that the BJC for Hospitality Skills TCD024e was subject to Government and Thematic Board approval; and
- (iv) approved the BJC for the Hospitality Skills Project subject to Government and Thematic Board approval being secured.

XI PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2025

The Joint Committee noted the undernoted programme of meetings for 2025: -

Friday, 12th December 2025, to be held remotely

XII AOCB

The Joint Committee noted that there was no other business to be considered.

X DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday, 12th December, 2025.

The Joint Committee resolved under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the undernoted item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3, 6 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

X DUNDEE AIRPORT (REVENUE) BJC FOR APPROVAL – CONFIDENTIAL

There was submitted Report No TCRJC11-2025 enclosed and introduced by Robin Presswood, Management Group Chair seeking approval by the Joint Committee of the Business Justification

Case (BJC) for the Dundee Airport Investment - Revenue (TCD002).

The Joint Committee agreed the recommendations in the report.

Councillor David ROSS, Chair.



REPORT TO: TAY CITIES REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE

REPORT ON: TARGETING HIDDEN TALENT PROJECT PHASE 1 TCD024f
BUSINESS JUSTIFICATION CASE

REPORT BY: ROBIN PRESSWOOD, DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT NO: TCRJC12-2025

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report seeks approval of the Business Justification Case (BJC) for the Project TCD024f Targeting Hidden Talent – Phase 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Joint Committee is asked to:
- i. Consider this report and the BJC for TCD024f Targeting Hidden Talent - Phase 1; and,
 - ii. Approve the BJC for the Hidden Talent Project Phase 1, noting that Government approval has been secured (subject to operational conditions set out in section 8) as has Management Group approval, and that the Subsidy Control Tay Cities risk assessment has been completed.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The Regional Skills and Employability Development Programme was awarded up to £20m as part of the Tay Cities Region Deal in the Deal Signing in December 2020. This project has been selected by the Regional Skills and Employability Development Programme and awarded up to £3.810m (£1.900m in phase 1). This project will engage up to 334 people in the region's most deprived communities who are currently furthest away from employment and facilitate their progression towards engaging with employability support. The BJC for Targeting Hidden Talent Phase 1 is presented for approval which if granted will enable the project to draw down the allocated funding. Funding is drawn down when the project submits a claim for money which has already been spent. The key project information is at **Appendix 1**, and an Executive Summary is at **Appendix 2**.

4. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

- 4.1. The Targeting Hidden Talent (THT) project aims to connect the Tay City Region's most deprived communities with employment opportunities, striving for inclusive growth and empowerment. It supports the TCRD and the Programme strategic objectives by raising awareness of job opportunities, aiding disadvantaged individuals, and tapping into diverse talent pools. The project will unfold in two phases from 2026 to 2030, with the second phase building on the insights gained from the first to ensure effective and responsive delivery. The project will enable clients to progress towards engaging with employability support and ultimately enter sustainable and fair employment. The support is designed to address critical barriers and challenges to both employability and engaging with the 5-stage Employability Pathways (also known as Strategic Employability Skills Pipelines) in place in the Tay Cities Region. This is defined as 'Stage Zero' pre-employability support, in keeping with the existing definitions for the stages of the Employability Skills Pipeline (i.e. Stages 1 to 5). Without the support of the project, the people in the target group across the four Local Employability Partnership (LEP) areas (i.e. Angus, Dundee, North East Fife and Perth and Kinross) would face challenges to accessing employability support and would be unlikely to engage and sustain engagement. The project will target the most employment deprived communities in the Tay Cities Region to provide highly targeted, resource intensive interventions. that are user-led and available to anyone who would benefit. Whilst this is a region-level project, it will take account of the characteristics of each area, reflecting a place-based approach.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. This project is currently profiled to spend a total of £0 capital and £1.9m revenue in phase 1 from the Tay Cities Deal funding. The funding is anticipated to be drawn down as follows. The project has not levered in funding.

Financial Profile (£) - Targeting Hidden Talent Project				
Year	2025 - 2026	2026 - 2027	2027 - 2028	Total
Current Profile	25,000	830,000	1,045,000	1,900,000

- 5.2. The financial allocation for the Skills Programme, and Projects therein, is confirmed annually. The Skills Programme can only assume the originally approved annual allocation of c.£2.39m per annum, although the total value of funding for the lifetime of the Programme continues to be a guaranteed £20m. Mitigations are included in section 6.3 including ongoing dialogue with governments and the identification of increased risk at the earliest opportunity.

6. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

6.1. Milestones

Deliverable	Due Date
Project Manager recruitment	31/12/2025
Local delivery teams established	31/03/2026
Delivery commences	01/04/2026
334 individuals in receipt of Stage Zero employability support	31/03/2028
210 individuals referred to and accessing full employability support (at least Stage 1)	31/03/2028

6.2. Outcomes and Targets

Targets	Baseline	Target Uplift	Due Date
Individuals in receipt of Stage Zero employability support	*	334	31/03/2028
Individuals referred to and accessing full employability support (at least Stage 1)	*	210	31/03/2028
Individuals progressing to at least Stage 3 employability support	*	150	31/03/2028
People supported to access skills courses	*	45	31/03/2028
Individuals in sustained employability support (at least Stage 3) at 3 months	*	120	31/03/2028
Individuals in sustained employability support (at least Stage 3) at 6 months	*	108	30/06/2028
Individuals in sustained employability support (at least Stage 3) at 12 months	*	96	30/09/2028
Individuals entering follow-on training or further education	*	30	31/03/2029
* Baselines not used in preparation of the BJC.			

6.3. Key Project Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Project Lead leaves post	Lead Authority Project Sponsor to identify resources to maintain momentum. Request to Skills Advisory Board (SAB) to allocate a project officer and project manager/programme manager support from other SAB activities temporarily.
Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) do not finalise and implement the THT Project Delivery Plans	Project Lead to support LEP reps and LEPs finalise and confirm plans through 1-2-1 support, ad-hoc meetings and/or additional workshops. Project Lead to support delivery through a strategic overview.
LEPs unable to recruit Key Workers	Proactive recruitment approach to ensure posts are filled. Secondments to be considered, potentially utilising enhanced remuneration/benefits packages
Challenges in gaining buy-in in communities	Ensure communities are involved in service design processes at a local level as far as practically possible. Ensure that pre implementation consultations with those organisations that are on the ground are well planned and well

	executed emphasising the 'win-win' nature of the THT resource and support
Over-reliance on experienced key workers results in competition for staff across different workstreams	Recruitment time to ensure no conflict with significant recruitment exercises from partner organisations. The opportunity to contribute to and shape a groundbreaking and innovative service that responds to one of the major anti-poverty and wellbeing challenges facing public policy will be highlighted in recruitment campaigns
THT Project delivery does not generate the anticipated level of sustained engagement with service provision	Ensure that all delivery is personalised and tailored to household/family circumstances as far as practicably possible.
LEPs unable to agree funding apportionment/failure to achieve spend/investment in target communities	Allocation methodology agreed prior to development of the BJC. Monitoring arrangements will be in place to monitor underspend and/or underperformance and identify corrective action.
Limited employability progression opportunities for project beneficiaries	Establish clear timeframes and referral routes within existing LEP employability and other related activity and services.
Inadequate engagement of stakeholders	At a strategic and regional level this responsibility is clearly articulated. All stakeholders and LEP partners have been engaged early in the project development process. The THT Project Lead has responsibility to ensure good communication throughout, supported, where appropriate by the Skills Advisory Board and Project Sponsor. At LEP operational level LEP coordinators have responsibility for appropriate stakeholder engagement in the development of the LEP Delivery Plans. Project Manager/ LEP coordinators have shared responsibility throughout the implementation phase.
Uncertainty caused by annual budget profiling. The use of annual budget profiling creates uncertainty for projects when planning future activities. This lack of clarity around the level and duration of funding may lead to delays, inefficiencies, or missed opportunities, as projects are unable to commit to or plan for multi-year delivery with confidence.	Quarterly Reprofiting: Projects will provide updated budget forecasts on a quarterly basis. These will be submitted to the Programme Owner who reviews and collates prior to submission to PMO, which will forward them to government. This will help ensure funding profiles remain responsive to project needs and delivery timelines. Improved Visibility: Regular financial reporting will improve visibility of future funding requirements, enable more informed decision-making, and reduce the risk of delays or missed opportunities. Stakeholder Engagement: Ongoing dialogue with government (funding bodies) will be maintained to ensure alignment on budget expectations and to flag emerging issues early.

7. DECISION PATHWAY

- 7.1. The project has met the decision pathway milestones as set out below and the next steps are also indicated.

Decision pathway milestones and planned timeline			
Stage	Milestone	Planned date	Date achieved
BJC V2	Submission of BJC V2 (to PMO who forward to Governments and SAB)	03/10/2025	07/10/2025
BJC	Governments' approval	November 2025	20/11/2025*
	Thematic Board recommendation	November 2025	28/10/2025
	Management Group recommendation	November 2025	27/11/2025

Joint Committee approval

December 2025

Pending

8. CONDITIONS

- 8.1. The Thematic Board have approved this Project with no conditions. Requests were made for further presentations to each Local Employability Partnership as part of the implementation of Delivery Plans. A proposed delivery partner may be updated in one area of the region.
- 8.2. The Governments have approved the business case subject to the following conditions*:

Condition	Owner	Completion Date
All relevant information is retained and up to date including monthly financial forecasts provided on a consistent basis	Programme Owner	Ongoing
Minor amendments to the BJC including a link to evaluations of other relevant projects	Project Lead	12/12/2025
Targets and Milestones that form part of the Benefits Realisation should be reviewed and amended, especially where they timescales are no longer achievable or realistic	Programme Owner & Project Lead	31/12/2025
Meeting with colleagues from relevant Scottish Government policy areas e.g. Fairer Futures Partnerships, Public Sector Reform/Whole Family Support	Project Lead	31/03/2026
The Project takes part in the benefits realisation exercise this year	Project Lead	31/03/2026

- 8.3. The Management Group have approved the business case with no further conditions.
- 8.4. The Subsidy Control risk assessment by Tay Cities Deal legal has been completed.

9. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty and Environment. The project will have a positive impact on equality, diversity, fairness and poverty.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1. The following have approved the presentation of this BJC:

Local Authority Project Management Officer: Rory Young
 Responsible Finance Officer: Clare Gillespie
 Management Group Sponsor: Robin Presswood

Report author: Rory Young
 Title: Team Leader (Economic Growth)
 Email address: rory.young@dundee.gov.uk
 Phone number: 01382 434697

Date: 28th November 2025

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APPENDIX 1

Project Information	
Project number	TCD024f
Project name	Targeting Hidden Talent
Project owner	Rory Young, Dundee City Council
Project Finance Director	Clare Gillespie, Dundee City Council
Management Group Sponsor	Robin Presswood, Dundee City Council
Award amount under TCD	£1.900m
Jobs: Target number of jobs to be created	15
Leverage to be achieved	Project is fully funded by TCRD monies

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APPENDIX 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City Deal Ask	Capital £	Revenue £
Year 6 – 2025/2026	0	25,800
Year 7 – 2026/2027	0	829,200
Year 8 – 2027/2028	0	1,045,000
Year 9 – 2028/2029	0	0
Total	0	1,900,000

Outputs	Target Date
334 Individuals in receipt of Stage Zero employability support	March 2028
210 Individuals referred to and accessing full employability support (at least Stage 1)	March 2028
150 Individuals progressing to at least Stage 3 employability support	March 2028
45 People supported to access skills courses	March 2028
Outcomes	Target Date
120 Individuals in sustained employability support (at least Stage 3) at 3 months	March 2028
108 Individuals in sustained employability support (at least Stage 3) at 6 months	June 2028
96 Individuals in sustained employability support (at least Stage 3) at 12 months	September 2028
30 Individuals entering follow-on training or further education	March 2029

TCRD Strategic Objectives	RSEDP Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive Growth An Empowered and Inclusive Tay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the understanding and awareness of job and learning opportunities for our residents. Putting in place the support required to help our more disadvantaged citizens succeed. Opening new and diverse talent pools to businesses and demonstrating the value of inclusive employment practices. Enhancing the ability of partners to work collaboratively to build a more inclusive, innovative, and future-proofed job market.

The Targeting Hidden Talent Project

The purpose of the Targeting Hidden Talent (THT) Project is to engage people that are currently furthest away from employment and are considered economically inactive. THT will provide support to enable clients to move towards economic participation. It will facilitate their progression towards engaging with employability support and ultimately enter sustainable and fair employment. The support is designed to address critical barriers and challenges to both employability and engaging with the 5-stage Employability Pathways (also known as Strategic Employability Skills Pipelines) in place in the Tay Cities Region. This 5-stage pathway is based on the Strategic Skills Pipeline model, which was developed as a framework to support the effective alignment and delivery of employability related services. It comprises of the following stages:

- Stage 1: Referral, Engagement and Assessment
- Stage 2: Needs Assessment
- Stage 3: Vocational Activity
- Stage 4: Employer engagement and job matching
- Stage 5: In work support and aftercare

The THT is defined as ‘Stage Zero’ pre-employability support, in keeping with the existing definitions for the stages of the Employability Skills Pipeline (i.e. Stages 1 to 5).

Without the support of the THT project, the people in the target group across the four Local Employability Partnership (LEP) areas (i.e. Angus, Dundee, North East Fife and Perth and Kinross) would face challenges to accessing employability support and would be unlikely to engage and sustain engagement.

The THT project will target the most employment deprived communities in the Tay Cities Region to provide highly targeted, resource intensive interventions that are user-led and available to anyone who would benefit. Whilst this is a region-level project, it will take account of the characteristics of each area, reflecting a place-based approach. During the development of the LEP THT Delivery Plans, each LEP identified specific target localities in their area for the THT project to focus on (see Section 4.2).

While it is difficult to quantify the hidden talent within the Tay Cities Region, applying the approach used to estimate hidden talent for Dundee’s Discover Work Strategy, it is possible that there may be around 38,000 people in Angus, Dundee, Fife and Perth & Kinross who could enter the labour market that are currently excluded from it.¹ Furthermore, some economically inactive people will self-refer or be referred to employability services and be ready to engage with the traditional 5-stage employability pathway. The most excluded and seldom heard will almost certainly not.

Evidence from employability-related services delivered across the Tay Cities Region suggests that there is a persistent gap in support for people who face barriers to engaging with services. This means that Stage 1 of the employability pathway is a step further away from what they need. There is clear recognition that if people in this group are to progress, there must be Stage Zero pre-employability support to help them take the first step.

The Discover Work Partnership, the LEP for Dundee, recognised that an increased level of Stage Zero / Pre-Employability activity is required for people who are furthest from the labour market. Other LEPs in the Tay Cities Region identified that similar gaps exist in service provision, as discussed at Section 4.2.3. In many instances, Stage 1 employability support is only realistic after a considerable period of pre-employability and wrap-around support. Therefore, we need to not only place employability within a wider multi-service context, but to place employability at the end of a longer journey for many of those supported. It is therefore clear that a regional approach will be most effective in tackling Stage Zero needs and providing the true level of support required for those who are furthest from the labour market to facilitate their sustained participation in employability support.

Based on the experience, insights and intelligence, Stage Zero support may include, but is not limited to:

- Support to obtain essential documentation for progressing within the labour market (e.g. opening a bank account, requesting a National Entitlement Card, birth certificate, and other documents);
- Basic skills support including literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, and financial capability;
- Support to overcome and/or manage health/disability/addiction issues; and
- Support with basic material needs such as food, clothing and essential healthcare.

While each LEP has identified slightly different gaps in local provision, there are many similarities. The THT outcomes that each LEP will work towards will ensure that people who need Stage Zero support are identified, reached and provided with the right support for them. This will lead to them being able to access traditional employability services, and importantly, be able to sustain and benefit from the support. Without the Stage Zero support, there is likely to be a much greater attrition rate.

Stage Zero activity will take cognisance of the learning from Dundee’s Child Poverty Pathfinder. The Pathfinder provides employability support for parents affected by a range of inequalities, to help these parents enter, sustain and progress work. This helps to secure and maximise income in a dignified way, to address child poverty. Lessons learned from the Child Poverty Pathfinder in Dundee include that targeted outreach to people that would not normally engage with support is highly effective and can help to build strong relationships through the key workers’ proactive contact with the individuals. While

¹ This includes unemployment (using model-based estimates at the local authority level), economically inactive people who want to work, and a proportion of economically inactive people who don’t want to work and but may be able to if given the necessary support.

this person-centred approach was considered a particular strength of the programme, qualitative interviews with beneficiaries showed a preference for coming back to the same key workers even after learning how to access support via other routes. This highlights the importance of striking the right balance between building these strong, trusting relationships with certain professionals, and avoiding 'dependency' on these relationships in the medium to longer term.

The Dundee Child Poverty Pathfinder also attempted to develop a novel way of measuring impacts for families, to demonstrate value for money using break-even modelling. This approach estimates how many people would need to have achieved a particular outcome for the intervention to break even, based on a combination of the value of achieving this improvement and the estimated costs of delivering the programme. The holistic approach of the Pathfinder lent itself to analysis through HMT Green Book WELLBY valuation of benefits, alongside a more standardised approach of including annual GVA benefits to the local economy (welfare weighted). The outcomes that were monitored were new jobs facilitated by the pathfinder, improved financial sustainability (from moving from "just getting by" to "doing alright" or "living comfortably"), and improved subjective wellbeing (based on 0.5-point improvements to life satisfaction scores). It was acknowledged in the evaluation of the Dundee Child Poverty Pathfinder that, in order to use break-even modelling in future programmes, more comprehensive before and after (shortly after engaging, then at 6-to-12-month intervals) data would be required to track clients progress towards these outcomes. This would enable an artificial control group to be created to construct a counterfactual of how these outcomes would have changed in the absence of the programme.

Employability providers providing Stage Zero support will contribute to activity stemming from the Tay Cities 'Targeting Hidden Talent' Project. This will be provided as part of the wider employability pathway services delivered by each LEP.

The THT Project Board has developed a set of objectives for the THT project which will contribute to the Regional Skills and Employability Development Programme's strategic objectives. These are to:

- Highlight and promote employability pathway support to the region's most disadvantaged citizens;
- Ensure appropriate resources are invested in target communities to increase engagement with employability programmes;
- Ensure that people that would not otherwise engage in economic activity are enabled to do so;
- Increase active engagement of individuals and families in target groups with employability services, and support the achievement of positive employability-related outcomes;
- Increase the identification of hidden talent within the region and support its progression along employability pathways; and
- Support No One Left Behind and LEP actions to integrate and align employability with other services.

There is a wide range of activity across the region that encompasses an element of employability and has a role to play in tackling poverty and inequalities. However, as discussed, the THT Project is distinct from existing employability services and is designed to add value and increase the pipeline of people who are ready to engage with the traditional employability pathway.

Current employability provision includes activity undertaken through:

- The Scottish Government's No One Left Behind Employability Strategic Plan 2024-27;
- Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26;
- Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (and wider Holistic Whole Family Support); and
- Child Poverty Pathfinders / Fairer Futures Partnerships (FFPs) delivered in Dundee and Perth & Kinross, along with delivery elsewhere in Aberdeen City, East Ayrshire, Glasgow, North Ayrshire, Inverclyde

Cohorts targeted by No One Left Behind, Child Poverty Pathfinder work and Whole Family Wellbeing Fund activity are also covered in LEP THT Delivery Plans. Consequently, there is complementarity rather than duplication.

However, not every LEP area has these interventions operating locally, for example Fairer Futures Partnerships are not delivered in Angus or Fife. Even where they are being delivered, the scale is not at the level required to address known employability challenges that the THT project is designed to tackle. Therefore, THT will align, complement, (and where appropriate) integrate with these interventions and provide substantial added value.

The focus of the THT Project is on specific Stage Zero employability considerations in the first instance. Nevertheless, the project acknowledges the importance of other, varied support needs to address multiple barriers to employment and employability. The THT project is positioned as the 'glue' that binds all interventions being delivered together. Additionally, the THT Project can maximise the impact of a comprehensive and coherent package of funds – some of which are explicitly being delivered alongside other interventions (e.g. Child Poverty Pathfinders).