

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
12 AUGUST 2009

Agenda Item	
Report No	

HIGHLAND EMPLOYER COALITION
Report by Director of Planning & Development

SUMMARY

This report outlines a request for the Council to facilitate the transfer of the Highland Employer Coalition from Working Ventures UK (Department of Work and Pensions) to Highland Opportunity Ltd.

This action supports the Council's commitment in the Single Outcome Agreement to ensure more people are supported into employment and that the impact of the recession is limited and sustainable economic growth is supported.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Highland Employer Coalition (HEC) is one of ten coalitions throughout the UK, of which two are in Scotland. These coalitions have until this point, formed the operational arm of Working Ventures UK (formerly the National Employment Panel) and are funded by the Department for Work and Pensions. HEC is a local network of employers in Highland and Moray who are acting together to increase the availability of work in the region and in particular to improve access to work for those people who are disadvantaged or disengaged in the labour market. There are some 320 employer contacts in HEC and it works in partnership with a wide network of public sector agencies with an interest in the provision of employability, particularly aimed at those most distant from the workforce. See Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has expressed the desire to continue supporting the activity of the Coalitions but in a revised, localised model, providing the opportunity for the Coalition and their activities to be more fully aligned with the requirements of the local area.
- 1.3 Working Ventures UK commissioned an external consultant to review the range of options for HEC. The options considered were scored against a series of criteria which sought to address the practical issues alongside the need to preserve the conditions which enabled the Coalition to build upon its strengths. Criteria established were:
 1. The willingness/enthusiasm of the potential host agency to incorporate HEC.
 2. The potential relevance and synergy between the activities of the host

- organisation and the current and future work of the Coalition.
3. Working arrangements which enable HEC to retain a level of operational independence.
 4. An arrangement that enables HEC to continue and improve links to employers, and to identify and use real time labour market intelligence in developing future activities.
 5. Satisfactory arrangements to deal with “technical” transfer issues such as receipt of DWP localisation funding, VAT liabilities, and TUPE.
 6. Positive longer term links/positioning for the Coalition re key local strategies and funding opportunities.
 7. Networking implications and keeping employers and partner agencies “on board” in terms of future Coalition development.

It was identified in the consultancy that Highland Opportunity Ltd. offered the most holistic approach and ethos to fairly provide the synergy and alignment for localisation of the Coalition. However, as the DWP has a preference that its funding should be directed to a recognised Public Sector organisation and the fact that HOL encounters particular tax issues if it directly receives grant funding, the Council has been asked if it could facilitate this transfer.

2. Proposed Transfer Arrangements

- 2.1 The proposal is that from October 2009 the grant funding from DWP for the HEC is transferred from Working Ventures UK to the Highland Council. This funding will be accompanied by two members of staff (TUPE Regulations) and an existing secondee from Jobcentre Plus, and is directly linked to the delivery of the attached business plan (relevant extracts in Appendix 2). The Council will in turn enter into a contract with HOL to deliver the business plan over the period until end of March 2011. As part of this contract HOL will accept and employ the two TUPE eligible staff and manage the one Jobcentre Plus secondee. The staff and secondee will be relocated from Cowan House to HOL’s offices in Castle Street and will report to the HOL Company Manager.
- 2.2 Previously the HEC team secured strategic direction from a local Strategic Group. This Group was chaired by Willie Roe, Chairman HIE, and comprised representatives from large and small employers in Highland and Moray areas. While currently in abeyance the proposal is to reconvene the Group once transfer arrangements are agreed. The Council as a large employer and lead partner (given its financial relationship with DWP) and Highland Opportunity Ltd. in its enterprise trust capacity, will be invited to sit on this Strategic Group. Council representation will be considered at a future Committee meeting.
- 2.3 The current arrangements in place to manage the Business Gateway contract with HOL will be extended to accommodate the management of this contract. Outcomes will be reported to PED Committee on a quarterly basis.
- 2.4 During the period until 2011, the HEC will work with partner organisations to identify alternative funding options to secure their activity beyond March 2011.

If, at the end of this period, HEC cannot become self sustaining, it is accepted that it will be wound up. If this situation arises, DWP have committed to underwriting any costs of staff redundancy that HOL will incur.

3. Assessment

- 3.1 The Council is being asked to facilitate the transfer of the HEC from the DWP/Working Ventures UK, to local control and direction in order that it can better align its activities with the requirements of the local area. HOL is seen as a suitable receiving organisation but for governance and financial reasons, the DWP would wish for the Council to be involved. This can be achieved in a straightforward manner whereby the Council and DWP will put in place a partnership agreement (whereby DWP will undertake to provide the required resources to deliver the Business Plan) and the Council in turn having a contract with HOL.
- 3.2 As the Council is the sole owner of HOL and has strategic and operational control of the company, the Council is able under EU Procurement law, to negotiate a contract with HOL direct rather than having to tender the contract.
- 3.3 The HOL Board on 24 July 2009 received a presentation on this matter by the HEC and agreed, if the Council (August 2009 PED Committee) was also in agreement, to act as the host organisation for the coalition and employ/manage the staff involved. The HOL Board recognised a strategic fit with the work of HOL and in particular an alignment with its objects of assisting access to employment and creating or expanding job opportunities in Highland.
- 3.4 While a direct agreement between HOL and the DWP would arguably be more straightforward in this matter, it is considered that for limited input and without ongoing financial implications, the Council can facilitate this transfer and in doing so ensure that the HEC can continue its work to increase the availability of work in the region and in particular to improve access to work for those people who are disadvantaged or disengaged in the labour market.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The Department of Work and Pensions have agreed to pay the Council the full costs involved in facilitating this transfer of responsibility for the Highland Employers Coalition from Working Ventures UK. The Council will receive the funding from the DWP quarterly in advance.
- 4.2 There is no obligation on the Council or Highland Opportunity Ltd to provide funding for the Coalition post March 2011. If the Coalition is unable to secure sustainable funding post March 2011, DWP have agreed to underwrite any costs of staff redundancy that HOL will incur.
- 4.3 The Council will manage the Highland Employer Coalition contract along side its existing Business Gateway contract with HOL. Hence there are no additional resource implications required to establish and manage this

additional contract with HOL.

5. Link with Single Outcome Agreement

- 5.1 The Council is committed in the Single Outcome Agreement to help build a competitive, sustainable and adaptable Highland economy. By facilitating the proposed transfer of the HEC from Working Ventures UK to Highland Opportunity Ltd. the Council will be supporting local employability efforts and hence specifically this will help deliver local SOA outcome 10 - More people are supported into employment. This in turn helps deliver local SOA outcome 7 – The impact of the recession is limited and sustainable economic growth is supported.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee is recommended to approve the entering into an agreement with the Department of Work and Pensions and in turn a contract with Highland Opportunity Ltd. to facilitate the transfer of the Highland Employer Coalition from Working Ventures UK to Highland Opportunity Ltd.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Planning and Development

Date: 30th July 2009

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Appendix 1:



The Highland Employer Coalition offers employers an opportunity to influence the employment market, have their voice in the employment arena, develop and shape employment opportunities and avail themselves of additional recruitment options.

Currently within the UK there are ten coalitions whose principal objective is to work with employers to help disadvantaged people move from worklessness into jobs that contribute to business productivity and growth.

The Coalition provides an opportunity for local employers to engage with the employment and skills systems and with other Government agencies, to influence labour market policies, and to raise the profile of the employers' perspective at both local and national level.

More specifically, the Highland Employer Coalition actively

- engages with employers to reflect their viewpoint in optimising job and career opportunities for people of working age in our community, who are currently not in employment.
- strengthens the connection between the needs of employers and training provision generally.
- helps to improve the knowledge of the local labour market and recruitment requirements for Jobcentre Plus staff.
- promotes best practice in fair, effective recruitment and retention amongst local employers.
- establishes links between local regeneration projects and employment programmes.
- serves as a catalyst for innovation and excellence.

It supports methods of preparing people to move into work, and are keen to engage with any initiative that can open job opportunities for the many people who are regarded as being disengaged from the employment market, such as those currently receiving benefits, lone parents or ex-offenders.

The Highland Employer Coalition works closely with a number of strategic partners to deliver a 'joined-up' approach to employment and skills issues that affect the region.

Our strategic partners are –

Employers – the Coalition depends on the hard work and enthusiasm of the employer members drawn from various companies, both large and small, throughout the region.

The level of involvement for an employer member can vary, but would normally include attendance at quarterly Coalition meetings. The members also play an active role in liaising with colleagues from their own industries or sectors to gauge and evaluate the strength of opinion within that group, and possibly attend ad-hoc meetings called to provide specific focus on a sector-centric or urgent issue.

Work with employers falls into 3 categories

- Direct involvement; meeting and discussing where an individual employer's recruitment needs can be widened to embrace candidates that may appear more distant from the workplace.
- Sectoral involvement; identifying gaps in an industry sector and liaising with employers and training providers to increase the opportunity to a wider population

- Thematic approach; we include employers in the design and rollout of projects which are aimed at re-igniting the participants' desires, skills and ambitions by the attraction of a theme or activity that may not be directly associated with the workplace.

Working Ventures UK, the **WVUK Coalition Network** provides us with a wealth of experience of initiatives at national and regional level and a depth of best practice that we can call upon and feed into.

Jobcentre Plus, sharing knowledge and experience of the local labour market, and developing the understanding of the varying engagement requirements of employers with Jobcentre Plus staff.

The Coalition share an appreciation of the importance of, and actively work towards the successful implementation of Workforce Plus, the employability framework for Scotland with

- **The Scottish Government,**
- **the Highland and Moray Councils,**
- **the Chambers Of Commerce,**
- **Skills Development Scotland** and
- **Highland and Islands Enterprise**

who all have strong representation within the Coalition. They provide essential guidance and support as to how best we maximise our contribution to 'closing the opportunity gap' which is important on the agendas of the both the UK and Scotland's Governments.

In summary, the Coalition believes that in working together, opportunities for employment can be provided and, for each employer assisted in moving a person into sustained employment, the effect is more widespread than just one person getting a job – it will positively affect that person's health, their family, their friends and their neighbourhood and the further economic growth of the Highland area.

External representation

- Scottish Government workshops; Supported Employment and Employer Engagement
- Highland Employability Partnership (Workforce Plus)
- Highland Economic Forum
- More Choices, More Chances Steering Groups - Moray and Highland
- Highland Employment Network

Project Directory -

Changing Scenes - formerly known as Highland Lives is Working, this project is a legacy of Highland 2007 and BBC Scotland's Highland Lives project. The basic concept of Highland Lives was to provide the opportunity to any individual using film, photography, music and the spoken word to reflect what living in the Highlands meant to them. We added an employability aspect to the programme and adapted the training to be suitable to teams of unemployed people by intertwining key soft skills as identified by employers, such as motivation, personal and presentation skills, team working, resource management and communications. The group's primary aim of delivering a 3 to 5 minute film within a four week period forced them to absorb and display all that they learned in order to successfully complete the piece of work.

Quick to the Cut – run on separate occasions with Macdonald' Aviemore Highland Resort and the Inverness Hotel Group. This 12 week residential course is managed by Springboard Scotland and provides an opportunity for unemployed individuals from throughout the Highlands to gain SVQ level II accreditation in Cheffing Skills. Having identified some difficulties within the transition from worklessness

to full engagement within the participant group, we have also devised a series of **Bridging Programmes** throughout the Highlands to soften the change upon the candidate.

Lone Parent events – working with Jobcentre Plus and Working for Families, we have supported a number of awareness days, hosted by IT support centre Capgemini, for lone parents to consider the IT and contact centre sectors as an option to return to work, with work trials and placements. Capgemini also introduced new shift patterns to directly include lone parent lifestyles.

Barnardos Works – supporting Barnardos with their imaginative pilot to work with disengaged young people, through New Deal 18-24. Barnardos work closely with both the Young Worker and the Employer to provide training in employability and personal skills, providing work placement and real jobs to ensure the success of the opportunity into sustainable unsupported employment. The programme is partnered by some key employers in major industries such as Scottish and Southern Energy, Inverness Leisure and many other local employers from a variety of sectors.

Retail Academy – based on our previous success with a project called Get Ready for Retail with Debenhams and Morrisons, amongst others, we are now liaising with the sector skills council for retail, Skillsmart, to establish a learning centre for retail skills within the Highlands. This multi agency approach will see a town centre unit offering a range of guidance for people to raise their awareness of what the retail industry offers and signpost them towards employment in that sector.

Distribution Academy – we have transferred a programme devised in Renfrewshire by Kidd's Distribution Services and Jobcentre Plus to the Highlands, successfully overcoming many additional barriers that the relocation presented. KDS identified that a good driver demonstrates courteous and safe driving skills, a high level of customer service skills and blended these with the skills that they, as an employer demand, such as motivation, positive attitude and personal presentation. Employers actively supporting include AJG Parcels, Cannon Hygiene, Booker Cash & Carry

Jump on the Bus – a project devised and delivered by Moray College and supported by Mayne's of Buckie and Deveron Coaches to offer opportunities to unemployed people with a driving license to progress towards a PSV license.

Contact Centre Cadets – a multi agency bespoke project including Jobcentre Plus, Moray College, Vertex Forres and Kelly Recruitment to up-skill unemployed people in keyboard skills, customer service and personal motivation suitable for vacancies arising in the contact centre industry in Moray.

Care Academy – As Kidd's Distribution Services client base in the Highlands was within pharmacies and care homes, they quickly identified a labour shortage in the latter and devised the Care Academy, based upon the learning from the Distribution Academy, but with specific sectoral input. Employers supporting this development include Sense Scotland, Richmond Fellowship, Independent Living Services, HALO (Scotnursing), NHS Highland, Southern Cross and Leonard Cheshire. To be staged in August 2009.

Employer Toolkit for Flexible Working – a web based flexible working toolkit for employers has been commissioned by WVUK. We are currently discussing with HIE and the Inverness Chamber of Commerce to provide and maintain a Highland portal adapted to support local businesses.

Farm to Work – we have supported the development of a care farm project at Ballicherry Farm on the Black Isle along with other partners. This farm is a unique opportunity to provide supported and pre-employment care for an enormously important sector in the Highlands

Homeworking – we aim to provide a solution for those who are hampered by either physical or geographical barriers to employment within the Highlands. Working with HIE, BT and Vertex we are developing a range of Financial and Customer Services jobs that can be completed within the home environment, but fully integrated and linked to the central business 'hub'.

Highland Diversity Awards – we are a key partner in the annual event aimed at recognising and raising awareness of the vast range and depth of best practice that is displayed throughout the Highlands in the area of Diversity and Employability in recruitment and employment.

The 5 current award categories are

- Best Practice in Recruitment
- Best Practice in Staff Development and Retention
- Best Overall Employer (Commercial)
- Best Overall Employer (Social Enterprise)
- Individual Achievement

Best of Diversity - facilitating a series of Employer Roadshows throughout the Highlands and Islands, providing an overview of the business opportunities that can be gained from a company positively embracing Diversity and Equality. The key speaker is also a employment law expert from Law at Work, who provides case studies and relevant advice, and also salutary learning on what can happen if a company acts improperly.

Expanding Horizons and WOW courses – provided specifically at lone parents, we support short courses based in Moray College aimed at raising self esteem and self worth, this course includes a 'meet the employer' session, in which an invited employer representative will speak about the work of work and introduce an exercise such as problem solving which would be relevant in the workplace. The WOW course focuses on the individual even including grooming and self presentation skills training.

Open Doors Day - providing Industry Occupational Knowledge visits aimed specifically at key industry sectors, providing support for JCP customers and advisors to be more aware of key skills and industry drivers.

Regeneration and Environmental Industries – we are currently investigating how we might develop routeways to employment in the growth sector of Environmental Industries.

- Environmental Technology and services – such as Land, water and air pollution services and waste management.
- Carbon Management Industry – such as sustainable building and energy technologies.
- Renewable Energy Industry – such as wind, solar and alternative fuel generation.

Appendix 2:

Highland Employer Coalition Business Plan 2009 to 2011 (Extracts)

Employer Coalition Strategic Fit and Governance

The Coalition sits on a number of key strategic groups within the Highlands & Moray, providing the opportunity to influence local employability strategies and support operational development. This is augmented by representation on the Scottish Government employability strategy forums.

- Strategy Groups attended include

- Jobcentre Plus District – Employer Engagement and Partnership meeting
- The Highland Council Workforce Plus group
- The Highland Council More Choices, More Chances group
- The Highland Council Economic Forum
- The Moray Council Employability Action Group – covering both the Workforce Plus and More Choices, More Chances agenda's.
- The Highland Employment Network – key partners include NHS Highland, Highland Council, the Voluntary Sector and Jobcentre Plus.
- The Learning Centre Strategy Group – key partners include UHI Millennium Institute, Highland Council & NHS Highland
- Scottish Government Supported Employment forum
- Scottish Government Employer Engagement development group

Employer Coalition Strategic Fit and Governance (cont)

On a local basis there is ongoing planning and development of activities with our DWP colleagues, specifically Jobcentre Plus (JCP). Performance information is exchanged on a regular basis and at any given time there are jointly supported projects being developed and implemented.

The Highland Employer Coalition will continue to fully support the Local Employment Partnership (LEP) agenda, indeed has signed up to it and employed a member of staff through its auspices.

Members of the Employer Coalition and its Network

Chair - The acting chair is Fiona Larg - Deputy Secretary, UHI Millennium Institute.

Members – Our members include multi national, international and small to medium sized employers. In addition there are a number of statutory bodies such as Skills Development Scotland, NHS Grampian and Highlands, the Highland and Moray Councils, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and the UHI Millennium Institute.

We have over 320 active employer contacts registered as category 2 or 3 on the HEC employer stocktake report, (see criteria below **).

Wider Network – the Coalition works with a wide network of partners thereby engaging a diverse and influential knowledge pool. Key network partners include – private, voluntary and public bodies for example Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Leonard Cheshire Disability, Volunteer Highland, Economic Development Association (Scotland), Scottish Council for Development and Industry, Inverness Chamber of Commerce, Moray Chamber of Commerce, Barnardos Works and HISEZ.

We will continue to support awareness-raising for employers in the areas of Equality and Diversity. In addition we will actively support JCP, HIE and Highland Council by continuing to develop the work of the Best of Diversity employers roadshows and will continue to lead in the Highland Diversity Awards.

Key Aims and Objectives of the Employer Coalition

Our aim is:-

“To broker circumstances which strengthen the economies of the Highlands & Moray by working for and with employers, to reflect their needs. The result of which, is improved and increased opportunities of employment for those disadvantaged or disengaged in the labour market”

We will:-

- Engage employers to increase the take up of public employment and skills services, particularly for people disadvantaged in the labour market
- Secure or sustain employer leadership in employment and skills systems enhancements
- Improve the demand led focus and quality of provision and services
- Be an exemplar in sharing and facilitating best practice in employment and skills between employers and employment and skills partners
- Work with and support Jobcentre Plus by providing employer led participation including pre-employment skills training in activities we support.
- Investigate the sourcing of additional and alternative funding for sustainability to 2011 and beyond.

Planned Activity – all activity will be comprehensively monitored on a monthly basis.

Activity	Timeline	Additional Information
Home Working Pilot initiated	Summer 09	<p>The Coalition will continue to facilitate and influence an employability aspect to HIE's Financial and Contact Centre Employers' Forum. We have identified specifically a home working opportunity being pursued within this sector, primarily by Vertex and BT who are operating a small local pilot with a consortium of partners to support the development of home working in the Highlands.</p> <p>Key partners include HIE, Highland Council and Jobcentre Plus.</p> <p>We will support the continuance of alternative working patterns with employers such as Capgemini and TSC, and we are developing a Flexible Working Toolkit, which will be supported by the Inverness Chamber of Commerce and HIE.</p> <p>This is an extremely important development as it opens opportunities for those disadvantaged geographically while enhancing a more environmentally friendly working practice.</p>

Retail Academy	Autumn 09 – Spring 10	In partnership with Skillsmart (Sector Skills Council for Retail) we will continue to promote the development and introduction of a Retail Academy in Inverness. The Academy has the backing of several major retailers and will provide ongoing training opportunities for those interested in pursuing a career in this sector, specifically those disadvantaged in the labour market. The Coalition made a financial contribution to the programme in 08/09, future involvement will be via the Project Manager who will assist with development and set up.
Changing Scenes	Summer 09 onwards	Having successfully managed the pilot phases of this initiative the Coalition will continue to work with our partner Skills Development Scotland to ensure the mainstreaming and roll out of Changing Scenes throughout Scotland. This will be done through a consultative and advisory role.
Quick 2 the Cut	Ongoing	The Coalition will continue to work with Springboard Scotland for the development and evaluation of the Quick 2 the Cut programme. This demand led programme continues to assist the needs of the hospitality sector and has been hailed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority as an exemplar of innovation and training. Ongoing involvement will be via non financial resources of the Coalition through support, promotion and enhancement.
Social Enterprise	Spring 10 – Winter 10	Identified as an area of expansion and development and a key priority for the Scottish Government. We will build on the relationships we have with the sector to utilise its unique working practices by providing unemployed people with a wide and diverse range of training and work placement opportunities.
Care Pathway	Summer 10 – Spring 11	The care sector has identified difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitably skilled, qualified and motivated people. We will work with employers to develop a sector routeway which meets their needs while providing unemployed individuals living in the Highlands and Moray with the opportunity to understand the diversity of roles and offer appropriate training. The Coalition will engage with a range of key partners to secure funding for the programme development.
Open Doors Days	Autumn 09 - Summer 11	Providing Industry Occupational Knowledge visits aimed specifically at key industry sectors, providing support for JCP customers and advisors to be more aware of key skills and industry drivers.
Environmental Industries	Autumn 09 onwards	Investigating and developing routeways to employment in the growth sector of Environmental Industries. Environmental Technology and services – such as Land, water and air pollution services and waste management.

		Carbon Management Industry – such as sustainable building and energy technologies. Renewable Energy Industry – such as wind, solar and alternative fuel generation.
Response to economic upturn		Working with partners to be responsive to employment and up-skilling opportunities arising from positive responses from the economic situation – these may be currently unknown or unidentified, but will become apparent as business trends reflect the strengthening economy.

Local Employer Indicators and Targets **

Objective 1:-

Employers Engaged:- as per the Highland Employer Coalition Stocktake**

- Phase 1 - Employers involved in local network and are maintained contacts - for example sign up for new letters, referrals from existing members.
Target 09/11 – 255 employers
- Phase 2 - Employers involved in Employer Coalition related activity - Board members, attending events, attending seminars, enquiries following newsletter, commenting on Welfare to Work policy, awareness raising and development events for advisers.
Target 09/11 – 232 employers
- Phase 3 - Employers involved in outcome generating activity - developing a route way, working with providers, people into jobs, involved in Local Employment Partnerships, using a product or changed their recruitment practices to be more embracing.
Target 09/11 - 200 employers

Objective 2 –

Secure and sustain employer leadership in employment and skills systems enhancements. We will continue to support key partnerships such as The Highland Economic Forum, Highland Employer Network and the Chambers of Commerce in the development of a Fairer, Healthier Highland, with the aim to improve employer awareness of the overall employability agenda, but specifically Diversity, Equality and the Welfare Reforms.

Target 09/11 – Influence change with key Associations, Federations and Lead bodies (such as EDAS, IoD, CBI, SCDI, NSIG) in the Highlands – 6, Network Employer awareness - 400

Objective 3 –

Improve the demand led focus and quality of provision and services by providing adviser & intermediary support through IOK and other events.

Target 09/11 – Advisers 253, Intermediaries – 294

Objective 4 –

Be an exemplar organisation by sharing and facilitating best practice by facilitating employer workshops and assisting employers to change their recruitment practices

Target 09/11 – 5 Employer Workshops & 24 employers to change their recruitment practices

Objective 5 –

Disseminate key learning to ensure lessons and legacy is not lost – will be captured in narrative and annual report as well as sharing info as appropriate with old WVUK network and partners.

We feel that these objectives provide a clear path for us to follow, but recognition of their success needs to be measured with a degree of pragmatism and therefore, in addition we will work to ensure those disadvantaged or disengaged are supported as they move towards the labour market. To that end we aim to deliver the following targets for 09/11:-

Job Outcomes

- 340 job outcomes for those not currently in employment, specifically those disadvantaged and disengaged in the labour market

Work Experience and Voluntary placements

- We will assist, in conjunction with our partners, 270 work and voluntary placement opportunities to be undertaken by our priority customers (as above).

Training opportunities

We will assist in conjunction with our partners 380 training and personal development opportunities to be undertaken by our priority customers (as above).

Risks.

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to secure a “legal employer” who will support our localised integration	Talks have taken place with a range of key strategic partners and providers. Feedback has been very positive and emphasised the need for the work of the Coalition to continue. An agreement, in principle has been reached with Highland Opportunity Limited – a Highland Council company limited by guarantee to take on that role.
Employers choose not to engage with the Coalition	We are constantly working with and for employers to support them with their recruitment and development needs. Independent consultation with David Smart Consultancy highlighted that employers feel they have benefited from our support and wish this to continue. Our monthly monitoring captures that our employer work continues to grow.
Funding	We will strive to attract additional funding to support our

	activities up to and beyond March 2011.
Economic Downturn	Anecdotally, there is a fear that when the economy re-strengthens, employers will recruit with the 'freshest flowers' available. This will mean that disengaged individuals within our target groups will be marginalised and find it even more difficult to move back into employment.
New approaches	There is a risk that as the identification of the need for new, innovative approaches are recognised, there may not be the funding or operational infrastructure to deal with such requests and subsequent developments, as there would have been within the WVUK bidding process.