



Glasgow City Council
City Administration Committee

Item 1

18th June 2026

Report by Susan Aitken, Leader of the Council and Convener for City and City Region Economy and Just Transition

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GLASGOW FUTURES EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGE

Purpose of Report:

To seek committee approval to award grant funding as part of the Glasgow Futures Employer Engagement Challenge.

Recommendations:

The City Administration Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of this report.
- Approve award to the highest scoring bid.

Ward No(s): N/A

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Glasgow Futures was launched in June 2024, delivering on a commitment outlined in the Glasgow Economic Strategy ‘to establish a holistic, all age employability pipeline based on individual need’.
- 1.2 Glasgow Futures consists of a programme of over 30 projects, delivered by more than 40 public and third sector organisations working together to provide specialist support through a no-wrong door model. The programme targets those furthest from the labour market or experiencing in-work poverty, with the full range of support detailed in the [Project Directory](#).
- 1.3 Priority groups include those with disabilities, ethnic minority communities, parents, and young people, with the delivery model largely based on the provision of key-workers. This model provides specialist 1 to 1 tailored support to individuals with varying need, helping people to overcome barriers, improve life chances and move closer to the employment market.
- 1.4 Glasgow Futures also includes interventions that support people who are work-ready to move into and progress in paid employment. These interventions include employer recruitment incentives, vocational training, paid work placements, and in-work support.
- 1.5 These interventions are part of a wider employer engagement approach. In the context of employability, employer engagement involves creating stronger, more active and productive relationships between employers and people facing barriers to work.
- 1.6 The Glasgow Futures programme is governed by the Local Employability Partnership (LEP), chaired by the Council and comprising key public, private, and third-sector partners. Investment in 2026/27 is £18.5m, consisting of Scottish Government funding (through No One Left Behind), UK Government funding (from the UK Local Growth Fund), and Council funding. Design, programme management, monitoring, and reporting responsibilities are undertaken by officers in Economic Development.
- 1.7 In October 2026, two large contracts will come to an end: Paid Work Placements, led by Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS); and Training for Work, led by Enable Works. These contracts were awarded following a procurement exercise in 2022, with activity delivered through a partnership approach with a network of smaller sub-contractors.
- 1.8 The Employer Engagement Challenge Fund (the Challenge) will see provision that replaces these services. Award will be made to a single partnership of providers who will collaborate to ensure a menu of opportunities is available for work ready participants to move into, and progress in, work.
- 1.9 The challenge fund approach was established by the LEP in response to feedback from local employability providers in the context of fair funding. It provides a route to market intended to stimulate innovation and collaboration.

2 The Employer Engagement Challenge

- 2.1 The Challenge was shaped by a robust evaluation undertaken by the LEP and published in July 2025. This evaluation recommended developing a more transparent and equitable method for allocating funding, aligned with the principles of the Fair Funding Charter. It highlighted the difficulties of delivering a collaborative model through a mixed economy of providers, noting that traditional competitive procurement can act as a barrier to innovation. The evaluation suggested that alternative commissioning routes may enable the LEP to maximise the value and impact of services.
- 2.2 Challenge funds tackle persistent, system level problems. This challenge relates to an employability system where engagement with employers is fragmented and misaligned with Glasgow's key sectors. It is an ecosystem that reveals continued difficulties for participants, services and employers in navigating support.
- 2.3 The Challenge seeks to bring together a partnership of providers who will work together to deliver cohesive and coordinated support for Glasgow Futures participants to progress into and in work. It will help quality employers to engage with a wider labour market confidently through a more integrated system that connects services, aligns interventions, and reduces duplication.
- 2.4 The Challenge focuses on:
 - joining up support for people and employers,
 - supporting priority groups into sustainable employment.
 - improving employer engagement.
 - embedding person centred, flexible, and culturally competent practice in delivery.
- 2.5 Unlike a procurement of services, the Challenge was not based on a defined specification. Instead, it invited bidders to design their own solutions to achieve the outcomes and set out a number of expectations that bidders would require to implement:
 - 2.5.1 A strong, adaptive partnership with one lead partner with a range of delivery partners bringing a mix of grassroots, specialist, and employer focused expertise. Partnerships should be flexible and have the scope to evolve over time, with the ability to onboard new organisations.
 - 2.5.2 Delivery of person centred, flexible support that provides seamless progression across services, including those not funded through this arrangement.
 - 2.5.3 Co-design and continuous improvement with participants, providers and employers working together as equal partners should be embedded in shaping delivery.
 - 2.5.4 There should be a focus on sustainable employment that is aligned with Glasgow's key sectors. This means ensuring support helps people to access, stay in, and progress in quality employment.

- 2.5.5 Embedding inclusion, cultural competence, and accessibility, demonstrating lived-experience expertise, cultural and religious sensitivity, disability-inclusive practice with specialist support, and flexible, family-friendly approaches for parents.
- 2.5.6 Demonstration of readiness to measure impact by evidencing progress towards outcomes but recognising that the formal outcomes will be finalised later in 2026.
- 2.6 It is noted that this challenge approach will be subject to a lessons learned review. This will draw on feedback from key stakeholders including successful and unsuccessful bidders, with a view to refining future commissioning options.

3 The Funding Agreement

- 3.1 A multi-year investment of £5m has been allocated to the delivery of the Challenge, funded from the blended Glasgow Futures budget which is managed by the Council.
- 3.2 It is worth noting that the Scottish Spending Review commits up to £90 million per year to LEPs, through NOLB, for each year of the review period to 2028/29. While this remains subject to annual Scottish Government budget processes, it provides confidence that future funding will be available for the duration.
- 3.3 Single-year funding and funding reductions are strategic risks for the LEP. To mitigate risk, the Funding Agreement commits to 2026/27 investment, with an intent to continue funding across 2027/28 and 2028/29. The LEP will issue annual confirmations once future budgets are known with the recipients required to submit updated financial and performance forecasts accordingly.
- 3.4 The duration of the agreement will be from 1st October 2026 to 31st March 2029, with an option to extend based on learning, continuous improvement and evaluation. The Council must serve notice, no later than three (3) months prior to the date when the grant would terminate.

4 Application Process and Scoring

- 4.1 An open information session was delivered on 16th December 2025 providing prospective providers with a full briefing of the Challenge. A dedicated mailbox was set up to deal with any enquiries and a Frequently Asked Questions document was maintained and published on a weekly basis.
- 4.2 Further briefings for third sector organisations were delivered by GCVS, a key LEP partner. GCVS supplemented this offer making further capacity building support available for potential bidders.
- 4.3 Applications for the Challenge were submitted electronically through a secure Smart Survey portal which opened on 5th February 2026 and closed on Thursday 2nd April 2026.

- 4.4 Members can view background information, application packs and supporting documents which were published on the Council website prior to the portal opening. The Challenge was promoted widely across Glasgow Futures networks and social media channels.
- 4.5 Four partnership bids were received comprising a total of 52 partner organisations which are detailed in Appendix 1. All bids underwent initial technical and eligibility checks which covered the lead partner's Non-Domestic Rates position, governance arrangements and financial stability.
- 4.6 All four bids passed these checks and proceeded to the next stage where applications were scored across 7 weighted themes using the scoring definitions below.

	Themes	Weighting
1.	Challenge response	25%
2.	Partnership Quality and Co Design	25%
3.	Lead Partner Capacity and Experience	15%
4.	Performance Management	10%
5.	Financial Management and Resource Planning	10%
6.	Equalities & Human Rights	10%
7.	Learning & Continuous Improvement	5%
	Total	100%

Score	Level of detail	Definition
0	No detail	Does not meet the requirement, insufficient information provided.
1	Limited detail	Some attempt has been made to provide information but limited detail.
2	Some detail	Satisfies the requirement some evidence to support the response.
3	Acceptable	Satisfies the requirement with no reservations.
4	Good	Satisfies the requirement with some additional benefits.
5	Excellent	Satisfies and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria required. Response identifies factors that will offer potential added value.

- 4.7 As this was a grant process, price was not assessed as a competitive factor. Provided proposals remained within the overall £5 million allocation, applicants were not scored on cost. However, value for money was considered at every stage of the assessment, with scorers evaluating the proportionality of proposed activities, the justification of resources, and the anticipated impact relative to investment.

- 4.8 It is worth noting that, in line with Glasgow’s net zero ambitions, bidders were asked to detail how their proposal would support delivery of the Just Transition Skills Action Plan and how their organisations are addressing climate change risk plus practical steps they have taken to reduce their environmental footprint. These responses will be integrated into terms and conditions of funding with commitments monitored over the duration of the agreement to ensure that progress on employability and climate is tracked and supported.
- 4.9 The scoring panel comprised LEP partners including DWP, SDS, the University of Glasgow representing key strategic work areas. It also included council officers along with representatives from Glasgow Futures working groups on disability and minority ethnic communities. Training was delivered and guidance documents issued to scorers. Following individual scoring, moderation meetings took place where final scores were agreed by consensus.
- 4.10 Moderated scores were reviewed by the LEP where partners endorsed the recommendation to award funding to the highest scoring bidder.

5 Award Recommendation

- 5.1 The score of the successful partnership, the award value and the name of the Lead Partner that submitted the application on behalf of the partnership which has been recommended for award is shown below:

Lead Partner and Partnership Title	Total Score	Grant Value (2.5 years)
Enable (Leading the Way) – All in Glasgow – Collaborative Pathways to Employment	65/100	£ 4,999,382.64

- 5.2 The All in Glasgow -Collaborative Pathways to Employment Partnership consists of 14 delivery partners, including Enable, and 9 specialist providers as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 5.3 The proposal set out a system-wide, coordinated approach to addressing the Employer Engagement Challenge, responding directly to fragmentation, duplication, and unclear pathways identified through co-design with partners, employers, and participants. A core feature is the introduction of two dedicated coordination roles:
- A Service Connector to map provision, build relationships across Glasgow Futures services, and create coherent participant pathways.
 - An Employer Engagement Single Point of Contact to provide a clear, accessible entry point for employers, simplifying engagement with employability services.

5.4 This model is underpinned by:

- A city-wide Employer Engagement Working Group, with representation from all partners.
- A shared employer engagement tracker, ensuring coordination, avoiding duplication, and allocating a named “relationship holder” for each employer
- A Community of Practice to improve collaboration, share best practice, and drive continuous improvement.
- An Expert Advisory Group providing oversight on:
 - disability inclusion (with UNCRPD alignment)
 - anti-racist practice
 - engagement with priority parental groups

5.5 The proposal gives reassurance of Enable’s capacity and experience to lead and manage this partnership based on examples of partnership delivery in Glasgow and across Scotland.

5.6 Details on each of unsuccessful applications are included in Appendix 1 of this report. The lead organisations from each unsuccessful bid will be invited to meet with Council officers and representatives of the LEP where they will be provided with full and detailed feedback on their applications.

6 Grant Implementation and Management

6.1 The grant will be managed by operational teams within the Economic Development. The team will meet with the Lead Partner on a regular basis to address any operational areas which require discussion, agreement and/or resolution.

6.2 As detailed in the Glasgow Futures Background and Grant Operation document and the Terms and Conditions of the funding agreement, the Lead Partner will follow the Performance, Monitoring and Compliance process described.

7 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: The value will be met by grant funding from the Scottish Government and the UK Government.

Legal: No legal issues. A Subsidy Control Scheme that covers this and futures awards under Glasgow Futures will be published to the relevant UK Subsidy Control Website

Personnel: There are no personnel implications.

Procurement: There are no procurement implications.

Council Strategic Plan:

Grand Challenge 1: Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities.

Grand Challenge 2: Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens.

Grand Challenge 4: Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative, and efficient way for our communities.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify.

The proposal directly delivers on Outcome 1.

The award will improve the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of employability and participants with a particular focus on reducing inequality.

Provision will be compliant with the Equality Act 2010. The proposal has the potential to impact on the council Equality Outcomes in relation to the following improvement aims: Improve economic outcomes for people with Protected Characteristics; and Improve access to council Family services by people with protected characteristics.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

Positive impact.

The EQIA, in summary, does not detail any negative impacts by implementing this Fund.

The GCC EQIA is available here:

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/1328/Equality-Impact-Assessment-EqIA>

This award supports the No One Left Behind (NOLB) programme. The EQIA for the programme is available here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/no-one-left-behind-equality-impact-assessment-update-summary/>

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address

The Employer Engagement Challenge is designed to support the most socio-economically disadvantaged individuals in the city with a strong

socio-economic disadvantage.

focus on minority ethnic communities, disabled people and people with health conditions.

Fair Work First was included as part of the award criteria.

Climate Impacts:

*Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions?
Please specify:*

The Challenge Fund is aligned with a number of activities contained in the Climate Plan, in particular relating to: communication, engagement and skills; and green economy priorities.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

No negative climate implications identified.

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

The proposal will facilitate transition to net zero through the formalisation of stronger skills and employment pathways.

Funded partners will work towards reducing carbon footprint associated with their operations.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N

No data protection implications identified.

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

8 Recommendations

8.1 The City Administration Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of this report.
- Approve award to the highest scoring bid.

APPENDIX 1 – Partnerships and Scores

Project	Lead Partner	Partnership Organisations	Total Score	Bid Value (2.5 years)
All In Glasgow – Collaborative Pathways to Employment	Enable	<p>Delivery Partners</p> <p>One Parent Families Scotland GCVS FARE Scotland Barnardos Street League First Steps Future Training SWAMP Hi People Wheatly Foundation Move On Training West of Scotland Regional Equality Council Men Matters</p> <p>Specialist Providers</p> <p>GTG Training Kings Trust Apex Scotland Salus Scottish Asian Business Chamber Flexibility Works Generation UK Chamber of Commerce Flourish Glasgow</p>	65/100	£ 4,999,382.64

Glasgow Inclusive Employment Alliance	Bridges Programmes	Glasgow Chamber of Commerce Glasgow Clyde College Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre Awaz Empower Women for Change Glasgow Disability Alliance Jambo Radio The Lennox Partnership Next Step Initiative SAMH Scottish Union of Supported Employment Worker's Educational Association	50/100	£4,984,865.54
Glasgow Collective	SAMH	People Plus Scottish Ethnic Minority Deaf Charity Flexibility Works Bridges Programme CEMVO Outlet YoMo Impact Arts Articulate Lead Scotland Citizens Advice Bureau Volunteer Glasgow Apex Scotland Next Generation Training	41/100	£4,997,437.18

Empowering Pathways	CEMVO	Glasgow Chamber of Commerce Rangers Charity Foundation Community Renewal Equate SAMH Inclusion Scotland Wing Hong DRS Youth Afro-Scot Relief Support Working Rite	40/100	£2,951,701.20
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