1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:
- Provide Members with an update on the proposed employability outreach projects, with activities to be undertaken by Sport Changes Life (SCL) and Active Communities Network (ACN)
- Seek Member approval to take forward the proposals set out in appendix 2 and 3 with the aim of engaging those furthest from the labour market and helping move them towards employment.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- Note the project proposals received from Sport Changes Life (Appendix 2) and Active Communities Network (Appendix 3) to deliver a range of outreach and employability support activities
- Approve the budget allocation and delivery of the Sport Change Life pilot project, subject to the local target areas being agreed
- Approve the budget allocation and delivery of the Active Communities Network pilot project, subject to the local target areas being agreed and evidence of a discrete programme
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<th>3.0</th>
<th><strong>Main report</strong></th>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>Members will recall that, at the 24 June meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&amp;R) Committee, a report on the proposed way forward for the council on employability and skills issues was set out. One of the early intervention projects presented for approval was a Sport Changes Life pilot project, aimed at engaging disenfranchised young people and supporting their personal development, with a view to moving them towards meaningful work opportunities. Following discussion at committee, the report was approved subject to engaging with Active Communities Network as a delivery partner on this element of activity. Subsequently, at the Council meeting of 4 July, at the request of Cllr Lee Reynolds, it was agreed that the decision relating to Sport Changes Life be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>As Members will be aware, Belfast City Council has developed a 10 year Employability and Skills Framework which sets a vision of “Realising the potential of Belfast’s people and its economy by transforming skills, employability and aspiration, resulting in higher levels of business growth, employment and income”. The overarching target for this framework is to increase the city’s employment rate to at least 70% by 2025, this would mean moving over 17,000 additional Belfast residents into work. One of the most significant factors to achieving this target will be addressing the high levels of economic inactivity and long term unemployment in the city.</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>Members have committed to looking at how “inclusive growth” can be supported in Belfast, recognising the scale of investment the city is hoping to attract and the need to ensure the benefits of such investment are experienced across the city. At the May meeting of SP&amp;R, approval was given for officers to develop a Council-led employability pathway model for the city, (see Appendix 1). Whilst development of this model is ongoing, a number of pilot projects have been identified to kick start the council’s work in this area. However over time it will be essential to widen out this area of work.</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>A key success factor of this model is the provision of targeted early stage intervention and personal development that supports individuals into and through the pathway model, particularly for those hardest to reach. Outreach for these participants may not initially focus on employability, recognising the need for positive engagement to address individuals’ personal challenges before they can commit to positive action</td>
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such as an employment destination. In the pilot projects below sport and youth work is used as the initial outreach tool. However it is recognised that as we develop the pathway and our role much wider outreach will be needed.

3.5 Sport Changes Life

As Members will be aware, Sport Changes Life have presented a pilot proposal to the Council to deliver an outreach and engagement programme for young people using the medium of sport. The programme has two distinct elements as outlined below:

1. Schools Outreach Programme (Honour Roll Programme)

   Targeting up to 10 schools, this initiative will engage with 100 young people aged 14-16 year olds who are at risk of leaving education or in need of additional support, motivation or guidance. Each programme will be delivered over an 8 week period and will include a combination of sport-based and personal skill development sessions. The aim of the programme will be to positively engage with young people, support their personal development and improve their attitude to education.

2. eHoops

   - eHoops is a multi-disciplinary, sport-based engagement programme targeting 60 young people aged 16-24 year olds in disadvantaged areas, the programme offers an alternative to anti-social behaviour by encouraging participants into positive skills development and employment activities. The content of the programme Accredited Development Programme – this is a 24 week programme, accredited by Ulster University. It provides participants with an opportunity to gain a CPPD (Continuous Personal Professional Development) module. Delivered on a weekly basis, the programme will include multi-disciplinary sports activities and personal and professional development sessions

   - Mentoring support – to complement the programme activity, SCL mentors will provide weekly mentoring sessions for participants, over a 30 week period, to support their personal and professional development. Mentoring will be tailored to individual circumstances but will include the development of a personalised development plan and will focus on supporting the participant achieve a positive outcome i.e. employment or progression into further education. In addition, mentors will manage the referral of participants for 'next step’ support to external agencies and where possible will utilise
existing linkages with employers and training providers to provide meaningful employment opportunities for participants.

3.6 Should the Committee be minded to work in partnership with both organisations then the overall budget of £200k (non recurrent) will need to be divided equally between them. Both organisations would then bring match funding of £100k each. This has been accounted for below. The overall cost of the SCL pilot project would be £200,000 of which £100,000 would be provided by Belfast City Council and £100,000 from SCL and the Rory Foundation. For this investment the following outputs will be achieved:

- Across the pilot, 160 of the hardest to reach young people will be engaged through the schools outreach and eHoops programme
- 60% (36) of eHoops participants to achieve a positive destination in employment, further education, training or volunteering
- 80% (48) of EHoops participants to achieve a CPPD module.

3.7 It is proposed that the pilot project will be delivered in two locations across the city, focusing on areas of significant deprivation and challenge. Taking into consideration the key role of Ulster University in this project, it is proposed that one of the areas of focus could include communities adjacent to the Greater Belfast Campus development with an opportunity to identify another target location across the city.

Active Communities Network (ACN)

3.8 As Members may be aware, ACN is an international youth and community development charity operating across the UK, Ireland and South Africa. Since 2009, ACN have been delivering outreach and development services to young people in Belfast to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations enabling them to progress into employment, education and/or training. Engagement with young people is achieved through sports-based engagement and youth work.

3.9 To add value to their existing outreach activity, ACN have proposed a 6 month pilot project engaging with 200 young people across the city who are or at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). A summary of the key deliverables of this project are as follows:

- Social Action Programme: ensuring young people to develop new skills and broadening their horizons by volunteering in their communities
- Training package: to include NOCN (National Open College Network)
accreditation in employability and enterprise. Bespoke training packages will also be available to participants in areas such as sport, youth or in areas informed by employer needs.

- Mentoring support: available to all participants and tailored to their individual circumstances, mentoring provided will may include CV development, job search, application sessions etc.

- Employer engagement: utilising existing linkages with employers such as BT, ASDA etc. ACN will provide participants with access to work placement and/or employment opportunities.

The overall cost of this pilot project is £230,000, of which £100,000 will be provided by the ASDA Foundation, £30,000 from St. James’ Place and £100,000 would be provided by Belfast City Council. For this investment, the following outputs would be achieved:

- 200 young people to engage in a 6 month programme of diversionary activities
- 120 young people to participate on workshops to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations
- 100 (50%) young people to be engaged through the social action programme
- 60 (30%) young people to successfully complete an accreditation programme
- 60 (30%) young people to gain work experience/employment across a network of employers.

It is proposed that the pilot project will be delivered in four locations across the city, focusing on areas of significant deprivation and challenge. The identified areas will be informed through further engagement with Council however it may be possible to align these with existing Community Planning pilot areas or with other youth engagement or diversionary activity.

Whilst each of the pilot projects is distinct, both focus upon targeting young people who are at risk of or are disengaged from education, employment or training. To avoid the risk of duplication and/or confusion for participants, officers will work across both projects, if approved, to coordinate activities and refine the target markets. Pilot projects will be delivered on a cross-community basis to ensure equal access to support. Evaluations of both projects will be undertaken in order to ensure lessons learned, with a view to considering whether this approach could be mainstreamed or whether it may be appropriate to seek additional support from Belfast City Council in the future, as part of its work to address the key challenges around inclusive

| 3.10 | accreditation in employability and enterprise. Bespoke training packages will also be available to participants in areas such as sport, youth or in areas informed by employer needs.
- Mentoring support: available to all participants and tailored to their individual circumstances, mentoring provided will may include CV development, job search, application sessions etc.
- Employer engagement: utilising existing linkages with employers such as BT, ASDA etc. ACN will provide participants with access to work placement and/or employment opportunities.

| 3.11 | The overall cost of this pilot project is £230,000, of which £100,000 will be provided by the ASDA Foundation, £30,000 from St. James’ Place and £100,000 would be provided by Belfast City Council. For this investment, the following outputs would be achieved:
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| 3.12 | It is proposed that the pilot project will be delivered in four locations across the city, focusing on areas of significant deprivation and challenge. The identified areas will be informed through further engagement with Council however it may be possible to align these with existing Community Planning pilot areas or with other youth engagement or diversionary activity.

| 3.12 | Whilst each of the pilot projects is distinct, both focus upon targeting young people who are at risk of or are disengaged from education, employment or training. To avoid the risk of duplication and/or confusion for participants, officers will work across both projects, if approved, to coordinate activities and refine the target markets. Pilot projects will be delivered on a cross-community basis to ensure equal access to support. Evaluations of both projects will be undertaken in order to ensure lessons learned, with a view to considering whether this approach could be mainstreamed or whether it may be appropriate to seek additional support from Belfast City Council in the future, as part of its work to address the key challenges around inclusive
economic growth in the city.

As Members will be aware, Belfast City Council continues to demonstrate its role as an exemplar employer through the provision of jobs, pre-recruitment programmes and work placements. There are potentially opportunities to build on this activity and provide added value to the pilot projects. It is therefore proposed that officers will work with both projects to identify how the council could further support participants to achieve positive outcomes such as through the provision of work placements etc.

It is recognised that the Council needs to further develop its role in employment and skills across the city and that this report only relates to two small pilot projects. Further reports will be brought to the appropriate Committee as further programmes are worked up.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

The cost of the proposed pilot projects is outlined below:

- Sport Changes Life: total cost of £200,000 of which Council is requested to contribute £100,000;
- Active Communities Network: total cost of £230,000 of which Council is requested to contribute £100,000

If approved, the proposed budget for the pilot projects would be funded from the agreed non recurrent expenditure allocation, as set out in the June 2016 report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Equality and Good Relations Implications**

Pilot projects are designed to target individuals who face barriers to participation and promote equality of opportunity. Engagement with the Council’s Equality & Diversity Officer will take place to inform the targeting of these programmes.

**Appendices – Documents Attached**

**Appendix 1** – Belfast Employability Pathway Model