



CABINET – 2ND MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND (ESF) PROJECT: INSPIRE 2 WORK 2014-2020

REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide information on the current status of the Inspire 2 Work Project and seek match funding for this operation. To seek approval to agree use of earmarked reserves for the ESF Local Authority match funding.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Despite the recent upturn in the economy, unemployment and economic inactivity is still an issue for concern in the County Borough. Since 2013, Caerphilly officers have participated in the development of regional proposals seeking to build on the success of employment support operations delivered under the 2007-13 ESF Programme, including Bridges into Work, Pre-Vent and Working Skills for Adults.
- 2.2 A number of operations have now been approved by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and others are at an advanced stage of development, nearing approval. Those approved include the WG led Communities4Work operation, that matches some of their investment in the Communities First programme, with CF teams now supported to deliver employment support in the most deprived areas of Wales.
- 2.3 The successors to Bridges into Work and Working Skills for Adults were approved by WEFO in August 2015, the CCBC match funding for these operations was endorsed by CMT in July. Bridges into Work 2 will provide essential employment support for adults **aged 25+** in non-CF areas, whilst Working Skills for Adults 2 will provide upskilling opportunities for those who are low skilled and low paid in work, to address the in work poverty agenda. Both projects will provide direct delivery until January 2018, with project closure by the end of April 2018. Torfaen County Borough Council is the Lead Sponsor on these 2 projects.
- 2.4 Inspire 2 Work is at advanced business plan stage, this operation focuses on the clearly identified need to address the issue of young people 16-24 who are NEET (not in employment, education or training). This operation has not yet been formally approved by WEFO. The Lead Sponsor on this project is Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The report directly links to the 'Prosperous' section of the Single Integrated Plan for Caerphilly. Linking into P1 - Improve local employment opportunities including access to opportunities across a wider geographical area and P3 - Provide support to enable local people to compete for all employment opportunities.

- 3.2 The report also links to the 'Learning' section of the Single Integrated Plan, linking into L1 - Improve the level of basic skills and the number of achieved qualifications (formal and non-formal) to improve the life opportunities for families, L2 - Develop a multi-agency approach to address the impact of poverty on pupil attainment, and L3 - Children, young people and families have the skills and resources to access job opportunities.
- 3.3 The projects support the Welsh Government Delivering Community Learning for Wales (Published November 2010). This provides a policy statement that sets the direction of travel for Adult Community Learning to 2015.
- 3.4 Supports the delivery of the vision statement of the 5 County Gwent Adult Community Learning Partnership, which links to the Welsh Government document above.
- 3.5 Welsh language training provision under the Council's Welsh Language Scheme 2012, the Youth Service Strategy and the Welsh Government Health, Social Care and Social Services strategy "More Than Just Words" (Published 2012).
- 3.6 The project integrates with the Welsh Government Engagement and Progression Framework.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Inspire 2 Work is designed to identify and address the needs of NEET 16-24 year olds in bringing about their sustainable integration in to the labour market and thereby contribute to a reduction in youth unemployment. The operation will target unemployed and economically inactive young people from across the region and offer a person centred approach to determine barriers to sustained engagement in the labour market. Support will be offered in overcoming these barriers and will encompass a range of interventions all with a clear focus on the highest priority of sustainable employment outcomes.
- 4.2 Target groups to be engaged:
- 16-18 year olds who are NEET as identified by Careers Wales 5 tier model.
 - 19-24 year olds who are NEET- JSA claimants (non work programme / work programme returners)
 - 16-24 Vulnerable groups (e.g. BME, ESOL, young carers, young parents, homeless, pregnant, care leavers, young offenders) and those young people experiencing the most disadvantage and furthest from the labour market.
- 4.3 Caerphilly targets over 3 years to September 2018:
- Engaging with 305 participants
 - 61 gaining a qualification or work relevant certification upon leaving
 - 52 in education or training upon leaving
 - 86 entering employment or self-employment upon leaving
- 4.4 The Caerphilly CBC financial profile, as per the current business plan, is a value of £1,186,644, with an intervention rate of 68.3611%. This would draw down grant funding of up to £811,200 and the Authority would need to fund the balance of up to £375,444 as match.

CCBC is in principle committed to being part of the I2W Project and is currently working to provide an update to the Lead Sponsor (Blaenau Gwent) on the finances for the delivery model and business plan. Subject to a formal decision to support the match funding requirement, the Authority is committed to progressing as a Partner in this Project.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Equalities is a cross cutting theme for EU funding and each project must address this according to each theme. The planned investments inherent in the EU Funding programmes will however benefit many different groups in the community.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 To access this European Funding (circa £811k), the Authority will be required to provide match funding of up to £375k (over a period to September 2018). Unfortunately, due to the on-going reduction and uncertainty with regards to funding for Adult Community Learning it is not possible to identify funding in this area. Hence it is proposed that the sum of £375k is allocated from the Authority's Training & Apprenticeship earmarked reserve, which currently totals £882k. This Project lends itself to the original aims of the Authority's Apprenticeship Training Programme.
- 6.2 Its proposed that the Project is managed by the recently appointed ESF Co-Ordinator for Bridges into Work 2 and Working Skills for Adults 2. This will require some reprofile work with regards to the BIW2 and WSFA2 Projects, with key Central posts working across the 3 Projects. Unfortunately the timelines for the 3 Projects differ, with BIW2 and WSFA2 due to end April 2018 and Inspire to Work, September 2018. This will be factored into the budget profile for Inspire to Work to ensure that key roles are retained to the end of the Project.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Personnel implications are inherent in the development of new operations. This will be addressed via reports and project plans for the project, by the appropriate Officer.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Relevant officers of the authority have been consulted throughout the process of applying for these ESF operations

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To ensure that the Authority can be a Partner in this Project (subject to WEFO approval of the business case), it's recommended that funding is approved to utilise up to £375k from the Authority's Training & Apprenticeship reserves. The value of this reserve is currently £882k.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To provide enhanced support to young people 16-24 who are NEET (not in employment, education or training). To be achieved through accessing European Funding in partnership with other Local Authorities and Colleges.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000. This is a Cabinet function.

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