



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 19TH FEBRUARY 2015

SUBJECT: LOCAL EMPLOYMENT FUND – SUPPORTING LIFT

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report seeks approval to allocate the 2014/15 Local Employment Fund budget to Communities First in order to add value and enhance the Welsh Government's LIFT programme aimed at supporting people in workless households into employment within the Upper Rhymney Valley and Caerphilly Basin Communities First Clusters.
- 1.2 Subject to the views of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group the virement of the Local Employment Fund will be made by the Head of Programmes under delegated powers.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 As part of the Council's commitment to tenants outlined in the Offer Document the Council allocated £50,000 per annum for the first 5 years of the programme to create a suite of funds designed to engage and support the local community in helping to transform homes, lives and communities. The funds created include, the Local Employment Fund, a Community Improvement Fund and an Anti Social Behaviour Fund.
- 2.2 The Local Employment Fund was created to support initiatives to help unemployed / inactive tenants into work. £50,000 is allocated annually by the Council to the Fund. In previous years the Fund has supported the partial refurbishment of Hafod Deg, Rhymney as a community 'Hub', the employment of a Passport Support Officer to support young people participating in the Council's Passport Programme and working on the WHQS programme and the delivery of a pre Passport scheme delivered by White Rose Resource Centre for young people in New Tredegar.
- 2.3 The Council cannot deliver the transforming lives and communities agenda in isolation hence opportunities are sought to add value to existing Council or Welsh Government programmes in order to facilitate greater transformation opportunities and greater impact especially in the more deprived areas of the County Borough.
- 2.4 During summer 2014 the Welsh Government announced the introduction of the LIFT programme designed to support its Tackling Poverty agenda through providing training and employment opportunities for people in workless households. The programme is aimed at supporting people who have spent more than 6 months out of work and who face the greatest barriers to becoming employable. For example:
 - Young single parent households
 - Households in which adults have few or no formal qualifications
 - People with weak employment records
 - Individuals with disabilities

- 2.5 Research shows that households with these characteristics are much less likely to gain employment than others.
- 2.6 Originally the Welsh Government advised that in Caerphilly county borough the LIFT programme would only be piloted in the Caerphilly Basin Cluster (including Lansbury Park) however, they have recently approved an expansion of the project to the Upper Rhymney Valley Cluster area (including the Twyn Carno ward) hence the request to allocate the funds for 2014/15 to enhance and support the delivery of the recently announced wider programme.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards.
- 3.2 The WHQS Programme is coterminous with the Caerphilly Single Plan priority of creating 'Prosperous Communities' (P2).
- 3.3 The Council is committed to ensuring that the WHQS investment transforms not only homes but also lives and communities.
- 3.4 The Council's Local Housing Strategy "People, Property, and Places" has the following aim:
"To provide good quality, well managed houses in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations."
- 3.5 The proposal is coterminous with the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Action Plan and attempts to address some of the issues highlighted in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 St James 3 (comprising a large part of Lansbury Park) is the most deprived area in Wales in the recently published 2014 WIMD (previously ranking as the second most deprived area in WIMD 2011) and forms part of the Caerphilly Basin Cluster.
- 4.2 St James 3 is the most deprived Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in the Education domain. It falls within the ten most deprived LSOAs for the Income, Employment Health and Education domains, which have a combined weight of 75% in the overall index. It also falls within the 10% most deprived LSOAs for the Community Safety domain. The LSOA has changed little in overall rank since WIMD 2011, but its relative deprivation has increased substantially in the Housing and Access to Services domains, and Education domain moving from 24 in WIMD 2011 to 1 in WIMD 2014 (see page 11 WIMD 2014).
- 4.3 The Van Community Partnership Audit (2009) showed there were concerns in the area with what people termed as a 'benefit culture' and a general level of apathy associated with looking for work. There were also concerns about a perceived lack of employment opportunities in the area. The Van Community Audit also found lack of awareness of local training opportunities, a need for childcare, as well as interest in a range of training opportunities for the future.
- 4.4 The WIMD 2014 calculates that St James 3 is 3rd (out of 1909) most deprived LSOA in Wales in relation to Employment despite being adjacent to some of the borough's key employment sites.
- 4.5 The URV has the highest concentration of poverty in the County Borough. As such both the Council and the Local Service Board have identified it as a priority area for investment. It is also the targeted area for the Anti Poverty Steering Group. The Council have embarked upon a focused regeneration programme within Rowan Place in an attempt to address social,

economic and housing issues that have stigmatised the area for a number of years.

- 4.6 Twyn Carno 1 is the 2nd most deprived area within Caerphilly according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 and lies within the top 10% of the most deprived LSOA's in Wales in relation to Income, Employment, Health, Education and Community Safety. It ranks as 6 within the overall index of multiple deprivation. There are a high proportion of households within the URV where none of the adults aged 16-64 are in employment.
- 4.7 The Welsh Government has introduced the LIFT programme as part of its commitment to tackling poverty in Wales' most deprived areas. The programme will target 5000 households across Wales through the provision of bespoke support and mentoring. Every adult (16-64) within a household who is currently out of work will be provided with individual support to move towards obtaining employment through participating in training, overcoming barriers and undertaking work experience opportunities.
- 4.8 WHQS tenant liaison officers will be working closely with the Communities First cluster teams in both the Upper Rhymney Valley and Caerphilly basin to identify and engage with households in receipt of WHQS works who would benefit from and be interested in participating in the scheme.
- 4.9 The LIFT Programme targets households where no-one has worked for a minimum of six months and whose characteristics that make them less likely to gain employment. Opportunities provided through the LIFT Programme include: -
- (a) Training courses linked specifically to a participant's employability
 - (b) Work experience or placements, which enhance a participant's employability.
 - (c) Actual employment and volunteering which leads to a recognised qualification appropriate for work.
- 4.10 LIFT provision will tackle worklessness through personalised, intensive support aimed at addressing the holistic needs of the whole household. This caseload approach is innovative, challenging and ambitious as it deals with some of the people who are furthest from the labour market and largely fall outside education and training and other forms of support.
- 4.11 The current WG LIFT programme employs two Employment Mentors, one to work in each cluster area.
- 4.12 It is proposed to utilise the WHQS Local Employment Fund to add value to the LIFT programme through enhancing the delivery budget available to each area. The allocation of £50,000 from the 2014/15 Local Employment Fund will also enhance the support that workless households are able to access through the programme and the resources available to coordinate the programme in each area.
- 4.13 The Community Regeneration Manager will provide a six monthly report to the WHQS Project Board and the CHTG on the outcomes delivered during 2015/16 as a result of the WHQS investment and an additional report at the 12 month stage. The reports will highlight the number of tenants who have been engaged via the scheme as a whole.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equalities implications arising from the report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council allocates £50,000 per annum to the Local Employment Fund to support and add value to programmes and projects that support people currently unemployed towards opportunities designed to increase their employability.
- 6.2 No other initiatives have been identified for the 2014/15 Local Employment Fund budget hence the full £50,000 remains unspent.
- 6.3 It is proposed to allocate the 2014/15 underspend to add value and support the delivery of the LIFT programme throughout the Caerphilly Basin and Upper Rhymney Valley Clusters during 2015/16.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising from the report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Comments received as a result of consultation with appropriate officers are reflected in the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Members are invited to comment on the proposal outlined in the report in respect of the Local Employment Fund. Subject to views at Caerphilly Homes Task Group, the decision to vire the budget will be taken by the Head of Programmes under delegated powers.

10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To deliver and enhance the impact of the LIFT programme and the WHQS transforming lives and communities agenda.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Housing Acts and Local Government Acts 2000.

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