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Cabinet

15<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Council

22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2011

**Name of Scrutiny Board Chair:**

Councillor Lakha (Economy, Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Board) (3)

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Assistant Chief Executive

**Ward(s) affected:**

Not applicable

**Title:**

Recommendation – Representations to Government to make funding available for employment support initiatives

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

The Economy, Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Board recently discussed the work and achievements of the Economy, Learning, Skills and Employment Theme Group of the Coventry Partnership. The Board also discussed some of the policy changes within employment support and as a result of this it decided to make the recommendation shown below.

**Recommendations:**

**Cabinet**

That the Cabinet recommend the Council to make representations to the Government to provide more funding for employment support initiatives, given the benefits which such initiatives bring both to individuals and to the areas in which they live.

**Council**

That the Council make representations to the Government to provide more funding for employment support initiatives, given the benefits which such initiatives bring both to individuals and to the areas in which they live.

**List of Appendices included:**

Presentation given to the Scrutiny Board on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 by the Chair of the Economy, Learning, Skills and Employment Theme Group

Document giving information on Jobcentre Plus initiatives, discussed by the Scrutiny Board on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2010

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**Has it or will it be considered by Cabinet Member/Cabinet?**

No

**Has it, or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

Yes – 22nd March, 2011

**Report title:**

**Recommendation – Representations to Government to make funding available for employment support initiatives**

**1. Context (or background)**

1.1 At its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January, the Environment, Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Board was given a presentation (copy attached as Appendix 1) on the work and achievements of the Economy, Learning, Skills and Employment Theme Group of the Coventry Partnership. As part of this, the Chair of the Theme Group (Jane Beaver, the Manager of Jobcentre Plus in Coventry and Warwickshire) circulated a document showing the various employment support initiatives introduced by the new Government. A copy of that document is attached as Appendix 2.

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

2.1 The Board discussed these employment support initiatives at some length and was concerned at the reductions in the support which is now available.

2.2 It was particularly concerned that:-

- a) the Future Jobs Fund had ended, as that initiative had proved very successful in helping unemployed people to get jobs. It had provided 6 months' work experience for 18 to 24-year olds who had been unemployed for more than 6 months. A programme called Work Experience had been developed which would be targeted at those who were "harder to help", but would provide work experience for only 2 to 8 weeks.
- b) the help available for unemployed people who wished to start their own businesses had reduced and much of it now relied on help provided by volunteers.

2.3 The Board therefore decided to ask the Cabinet to recommend that the Council make representations to the Government to provide more funding for employment support initiatives, given the benefits which such initiatives bring both to individuals and to the areas in which they live.

**3. Results of consultation undertaken**

Not applicable

**4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

Not applicable

**5. Comments from Director of Finance and Legal Services**

5.1 Financial implications

Not applicable

5.2 Legal implications

Not applicable

**6. Other implications**

**6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / LAA (or Coventry SCS)?**

If more money were made available by the Government it would contribute to the Council's aims of making Coventry a more prosperous city and encouraging a creative, active and vibrant city.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

Not applicable

**6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

Not applicable

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**

Not applicable

**6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

Not applicable

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

Not applicable

**Report author(s):**

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**Directorate:**

Chief Executive's

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Rebecca Young		City Services and Development	8 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011	9 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011
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<b>Names of approvers: (officers and members)</b>				
Councillor Lakha	Chair of Scrutiny Board 3		7 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011	7 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011
Paul Jennings	Finance Manager (Corporate Finance)	Finance and Legal Services	10 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011	10 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011
Jos Parry	Assistant Chief Executive	Chief Executive's	11 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011	14 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011
Mark Smith	Senior Solicitor	Finance and Legal Services	10 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011	15 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011

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[www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings)



# Coventry Partnership Economy, Learning, Skills & Employment Theme Group

Scrutiny Board 3  
26<sup>th</sup> January 2010

Carl Pearson / Jane Beaver

*'Raising aspirations, narrowing the gap'*

## **ELSE Vision:**

**“A prosperous Coventry with a good choice of jobs and business opportunities for all the city’s residents”**

*Coventry’s Sustainable Community Strategy*



## The ELSE Theme Group

- The ELSE group is responsible for the preparation and delivery of the economic theme of the Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), and agreeing measures to implement it
- There are a wide range of partners on the ELSE group, which is split into two modes of operation:
  - ELSE Strategic Group (CP Chair)
  - ELSE Management Group (JB Chair)
- The strategic ELSE group meets quarterly and the ELSE management group meets monthly in between the Strategic meetings

## What We Set Out To Do

Tracking and targeting four cohorts of identified priority groups into employment:

1. People with Level 5 qualifications and above, claiming JSA for less than six months
2. Supported those people in Future Jobs Fund placements into training/ sustained employment
3. Supported Employment Placement Scheme completers into training/ sustained employment
4. Supported Young People aged 18-19 claiming JSA, who have been designated as not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)

## What We Have Achieved

- Priority 1 - 46 % into Employment
- Priority 2 - 38 % into Employment
- Priority 3 - 59 % into Employment
- Priority 4 - 28 % into Employment

## Other Achievements 2010-11

- Two network events
- Communicating and informing via organisations presenting at the ELSE group meetings
  - Whitefriars – Integrated Housing, Employment & Skills project
  - Work and Health Project
  - Financial Inclusion Updates
- Contribution to the Health and Inequalities Strategy; Carers Strategy; Sustainable Communities Strategy

## What the Future Looks Like

- The Changing Landscape of Employment Support
  - LEGI Ending
  - Single Work Programme
  - Get Britain Working – Coventry's Enterprise Clubs / Work Clubs/ Academies – Work Experience
  - CCC Job Strategy
  - NEETs Employment Placement Scheme (50)
  - Apprenticeships/ Construction Apprenticeships
  - Employment Support – Probation Scheme /Preferred Supplier for Work Providers



# Discussion & Questions



*'Raising aspirations, narrowing the gap'*

# Jobcentre Plus Get Britain Working

jobcentreplus

Get Britain Working is built around the new integrated welfare to work initiative, The Work Programme, together with a number of supplementary programmes.

As part of the Get Britain Working initiative we have recently launched:

- **Work Clubs** as a way of encouraging people who are out of work to share skills and experience to help them secure employment;
- **Work Together** as a way of developing skills through volunteering.

We have also announced the creation of the **New Enterprise Allowance** to help unemployed people who want to start their own business

In addition we are developing options to encourage:

- pre-employment training and work placements through **Service Academies**;
- greater insight into the world of work through **Work Experience**.

## The Work Programme

The Work Programme will offer local provision tailored to meet the needs of the individual.

The Programme will be designed and delivered by contracted providers. They will be able to develop partnerships with other organisations of all sizes to deliver practical, local support to jobseekers.

Ministers have yet to confirm which customers will receive this support but the aim is that it should be available to jobseekers with greater needs for help in getting into work.

There will be two contract package areas in the West Midlands, covering:

- Birmingham/ Solihull/ Black Country;
- Herefordshire, Shropshire/ Staffordshire/ Coventry/Warwickshire/ Worcestershire.

The deadline for receipt of bids is 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011 . Successful Providers will notified early April with delivery from early summer .

## Work Clubs

Work Clubs were launched from 4 October

The aim is that Work Clubs will provide unemployed people with a place to meet and exchange skills, share experiences, find opportunities, make contacts and get support to help them in their return to work.

A key priority is that Work Clubs will be available in the most deprived areas of the country and Jobcentre Plus will encourage local employers to establish links with and support local Work Clubs

Where there is relevance to the local labour market, Work Clubs can also give an insight into particular industries or employment sectors.

There are currently 4 Work Clubs in Coventry:-

Numidia Academy Education & Training Ltd  
Coventry Refugee Centre  
Radford Community Centre  
Transport Museum

## Work Experience

Work Experience will be part of a package of additional support options available to help individuals into work, prior to referral to the Work Programme.

Work Experience will be targeted at those customers who are harder to help, particularly those who want to work but find a lack of experience a barrier (for example, first-time jobseekers).

Work Experience opportunities will be available for 2- 8 weeks and the first placements will be available for claimants to take up from late January 2011.

## Work Together

Work Together was introduced on 4 October.

Through this initiative Jobcentre Plus will help unemployed people to consider taking up volunteering whilst they are looking for paid work, as well as ensuring they are fully aware of what they are able to do. Through taking up volunteering opportunities individuals can develop skills that will help them to find paid employment.

Individuals who are interested in volunteering will be given further information and will be signposted to:

- local organisations that have agreed to support unemployed people;
- on-line support;
- information on specific opportunities.

The voluntary and community sector can play a significant role in supporting the delivery of Work Together.

## New Enterprise Allowance

The New Enterprise Allowance will give extra help to unemployed people who want to start their own business. Initially the Allowance will be available in those areas which face the greatest unemployment challenge.

Customers will get access to a business mentor who will provide guidance and support as they develop their business idea and through the early stages of trading.

Once a customer can demonstrate they have a viable business proposition they can claim financial support consisting of a weekly allowance payable at the same level as their JSA payments for 3 months, and then at half that rate for a further 3 months.

In addition, if they need start-up capital, they may be able to access a loan of up to £1,000 to help with start-up costs. Overall, the New Enterprise Allowance can offer financial support of up to £2,000.

## Enterprise Clubs

Similar to Work Clubs, Enterprise Clubs will offer people considering self employment the opportunity to meet up and get support to develop a business idea.

We are currently working with the Chamber of Commerce to develop the model.

## Service Academies

Service Academies will offer customers access to pre-employment training and work placements.

The proposals are still under discussion and involve consultation with other Government Departments, colleges and



# Jobcentre Plus Future Developments

## Universal Credit

The 21st Century Welfare paper launched a public consultation about ideas for improving the working age benefit system.

A key outcome is Universal Credit, which will replace a range of working age benefits with a single payment that provides both in-work and out-of-work support.

Under Universal Credit, customers will receive benefit as a single payment, rather than being split into, for instance, Income Support, Tax Credits and Housing Benefit.

The Universal Credit system will ensure that anyone on benefits who starts work will be better off than had they remained on benefits

Administration of the Universal Credit will be undertaken by the Department for Work and Pensions. It is hoped that the first new claims will begin from 2013 and overall it will take five years to complete the transition from existing schemes.

## Incapacity Benefits

In the spring of 2011 the process to review 1.5million incapacity benefits customers will begin.

Evidence clearly shows that appropriate work is good for physical and mental health and well being. Consequently, the focus will be identifying work that individuals can undertake. New claimants for incapacity benefits now receive this approach and the aim is to offer the same level of help to existing customers.

Customers assessed as fully capable of work can make a claim to Jobseekers Allowance and those who cannot work or have limited capability to work will move to Employment and Support Allowance.

Customers with severe disabilities or health problems will not be asked to undertake the assessment.

Following the Spending Review announcements there will be a number of changes to the ways in which Jobcentre Plus is organised.

As a result, there will be a reduction in the number of regional administrative centres from 11 to seven. Following the changes, the current West Midlands region will form part of a wider 'Central England' territory which will also cover all of the current East Midlands Region and the counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

In addition, the number of Jobcentre Plus Districts in the existing West Midlands region will reduce from five to four. The new Districts will cover:

- Birmingham and Solihull;
- The Black Country (Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Walsall);
- **Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire**  
- District Manager Jane Beaver
- Shropshire and Staffordshire.

The aim is to have the new structures in place by the spring of 2011 and a key element will be the retention of a local presence throughout the West Midlands.

