

Briefing Paper for Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) 16th July 2014

Annual Performance of the Council's Jobs Strategy 2013/2014

Introduction

This paper gives details of the City Council's Jobs Strategy performance for 2013/2014, which will be considered by Cabinet on 5th August 2014.

Ahead of Cabinet, Scrutiny Board is asked to make any comments or recommendations on the annual progress of the Job Strategy for 2013/14.

Overview

The Jobs Strategy for Coventry was endorsed in March 2011, during a difficult economic climate. Over the strategy's three year timeframe economic circumstances changed. Economic indicators began to show improvements: unemployment fell, business confidence grew and new infrastructure projects came forward in the city. The Jobs Strategy for Coventry outlines the action that Coventry City Council is taking to lead in the creation of new jobs in the city, and the promotion of economic growth.

This paper summarises the progress made to deliver the strategy in its third and final year from April 1st 2013 to March 31st 2014. Key Objectives within the Jobs Strategy are to:

- Secure job opportunities through investment
- Help people get jobs
- Help people improve their skills

All performance measures have been met and have exceeded the targets set for the year. The following table shows the performance of the Jobs Strategy in 2013/14 against the targets set.

	Target 2013-14	Actual 2013-14
Business Investment		
a) Business Assisted	150	309
b) New jobs created	1,250	1,292
c) New Investment	£60m	£107.16m
d) New businesses investing	3	6
Employment		
e) No. of people engaged	2,500	6,959
f) No. of people into jobs	1,000	1,216
g) No. of young people into positive destinations	250	302

Secure Job Opportunities through Investment

Working with local businesses 1,292 job opportunities across the sub region have been created. This is through new businesses moving into the City as well as existing businesses expanding and creating new jobs. These businesses were primarily in the wider manufacturing and digital sectors and the professional and financial services sector that supports them. In total these businesses have invested over £100m to grow and improve their operations.

The Council is ensuring that businesses continue to recognise Coventry as the right place for them to invest and grow. The Council actively supported 6 new companies to invest in the city.

Council services have supported 309 businesses during 2013/14. This includes offering advice on a range of issues: financial, marketing, business planning, people management and well-being.

Help People get Jobs

The number of people engaging with the Employment Team far exceeded the target of 2,500 set for the year with nearly 7,000 people accessing employment support. 1,216 of Coventry's vulnerable residents that have engaged with the service have progressed into work. Many of these individuals have used the service offered through the Council's city centre Job Shop.

302 young people who are NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training) have been supported by the Council into work, further education, self-employment or another positive outcome. This is a significant achievement in light of the continuing difficult economic climate for the customers the service focuses on supporting.

The City Council's Job Shop has become a key feature of the way in which employment services are delivered to those looking for work in the City, which typically sees around 150 people each day. A new space has been created at the Job Shop, called the Youth Zone, which means that employer and recruitment events can also be held there. Recently 700 young people mostly NEETS, were engaged in two apprenticeship events at the Shop. Employers, such as Boots, Severn Trent, Blue Arrow, Harvester, Central Site and Jaguar Land Rover are also using the Shop from which to recruit or to participate in events.

In February 2014 a new service called the Employer Hub was launched, designed to meet businesses recruitment and skills needs, whilst widening access to vacancies for local people. Local business now has a facility from which to recruit and a central point of access for any recruitment or skills help, whatever their sector.

Help People Improve their Skills

The Skills and Growth Team have been focusing on providing up to date skills data and analysis that is available to all those organisations involved with the skills agenda. This has been used to strategically influence training delivery in the City to ensure that curriculum delivery matches skills demands. Significant support has been given to the LEP in relation to its Skills Strategy and the associated Action Plan.

The Skills and Growth Team is involved in the direct delivery of a number of skills projects. The Construction Shared Apprenticeship scheme won a number of awards and met its performance target of 30 young people starting an apprenticeship. To date 92% of those completing the scheme have progressed onto employment, self-employment or further training.

Community benefit clauses are now being written into development contracts that the Council procures as well as including wording in grant awards to businesses, and in our sales particulars when we sell Council land or property. Through the Social Value Policy which the Council adopted as a response to the Social Value Act, the "Think Local" message is being embedded into the commissioning and procurement process. This will create additional employment and training opportunities for unemployed people in the city.

Financial Implications

The 3 year Jobs Strategy for Coventry, has been funded from a number of sources amounting to approximately £11.4m over 3 years. This includes core revenue funding from the Council of £1.2m for 2013/14. External funding has played a major part in funding the range of services that deliver the Jobs Strategy. Typically this funds 50% of the total expenditure in this area.

Conclusion

If Coventry City Council was not to implement a Jobs Strategy a slower and a less inclusive improvement in the economic wellbeing of the city and its residents would be seen. By not acting proactively to seize investment opportunities, these may be lost to other areas, and Coventry would lose out on the positive benefits. The strategy plays a key role in reducing inequalities across Coventry, through ensuring that support is provided to those who need it most. If this did not happen, it would result in widening the inequalities gap across the city.

In May 2014, Cabinet approved the Council's second three-year strategy for Jobs and Growth for 2014-2017. Progress will be reported to SB3 at half yearly and annual points.

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