

Urgent Item

Reason for Urgency: Swansea Council is being required to deliver the Communities for Work programme by Welsh Government as an existing Communities First Lead Delivery body and the programme needs to be established by October 2015.

External Funding Panel – 5 August 2015

FORTHCOMING EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITIES FOR WORK

Purpose:	To approve Communities for Work a Welsh Government programme providing intensive employment mentoring and support run alongside Communities First.
Policy Framework:	ESF Programme Poverty & Prevention Business Plan WG Tackling Poverty Action Plan
Reason for Decision:	All external funding applications made by the City & County of Swansea must be approved by the LA External Funding Panel.
Consultation:	Legal, Finance and Access to Services. Poverty & Prevention Service – Tackling Poverty Unit
Recommendation(s):	1. The City & County of Swansea approves the running of the Communities for Work Programme within the Tackling Poverty Unit, alongside Communities First cluster teams.
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1.0 Introduction – The Communities 4 Work Programme

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the City & County of Swansea to accept the running of the new ESF (European Social Fund) Communities for Work programme on behalf of Welsh Government.
- 1.2 Communities for Work (CfW) is a Welsh Government programme tackling poverty through sustainable employment providing intensive employment mentoring and support. It will deliver across all 5

Communities First clusters in Swansea, operating as a separate but complementary programme to Communities First. The programme will focus on reducing the number of 18-24 year olds who are NEET and increasing the employability of economically inactive and long term unemployed adults who have complex barriers to employment.

1.3 The programme is funded by the European Social Fund up to 2018 with a possibility of an extension to 2020.

1.4 Recommendation:

1. The City & County of Swansea approves the running of the Communities for Work Programme within the Tackling Poverty Unit, alongside Communities First cluster teams.

1.5 One of the two target groups is adults with complex needs who are economically inactive facing barriers to employment (long term unemployed, economically inactive, lone parents, carers, , people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance/ Personal independence payments). Beneficiaries will include a high number of people from workless households and in all cases will have the ultimate goal of getting into employment.

1.6 Each Cluster will have a dedicated set of staff which will comprise of an Adult Employment Mentor, Youth Employment Mentor, and Triage Support Worker employed by the Lead Delivery Body (CCoS). They will be joined by a Parent Employment Advisor and Community Employment Advisor in Job Centre Plus. This is likely to mean 15-17 officers will be employed working across the 5 Communities First clusters, including a central monitoring and management resource.

1.7 Overall agreed performance of the CfW Programme is set nationally, but is managed locally with set performance figures. The performance requirements are 12 new enrolments per month, with 2 job outcomes per month for the mentors, with additional performance expected from the Advisors of a further 12 enrolments per month, and 4 job outcomes per month. These will be measured for each of the 5 Clusters

1.8 The key objective for the Communities for Work programme is to tackle poverty through sustainable employment by:

- Providing intensive mentoring and specialist employment advice to help overcome barriers to employment
- Providing motivation and confidence for participants to consider employment opportunities.
- Helping people gain the soft skills for example, time keeping in order for them to find and keep a job
- Helping participants acquire/update their job search skills in order for them to find and keep a job
- Helping participants acquire vocational skills in order for them to meet the demands of the labour market.
- Providing resources and support to help them apply for vacancies.

- 1.9 A barriers fund has been designed to help participants make the transition from inactivity to activity by reducing barriers to participation and employment. Awards can be made to purchase essential items or to cover costs that without which the individual would be unable to take up employment. This includes travel expenses, interview and work clothing etc.
- 1.10 Alternative sources of funding must be sought first, including Communities First, Job Centre Plus etc. Participants must have engaged in at least three interventions before C4W can be considered. Payments are at the discretion of the C4W advisor or mentor.
- 1.11 Welsh Government have recommended that the Adult and Young people's Mentors and the Triage officer sit within each of the cluster areas, and are managed by the Cluster manager. CCoS's proposal is to create a central team which links with each of the clusters, and is managed by one Communities for Work Programme Manager. A full proposal is being drafted and will be presented to Welsh Government as an alternative model for delivery.
- 1.12 The single team model is preferred due to the nature of the reporting and audit requirements for any European funding arrangements. Having one team with one manager will lower the risk and improve performance.

2 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 2.1 An EI screening assessment has been undertaken and a full EIA has been completed.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 WG has set indicative salaries for the CCoS employed posts. The Job descriptions are presently going through Job Evaluation to set the grade. This is likely to come in easily within the WG indicative salary range.
- 3.2 Salaries quoted are gross and inclusive of employers National Insurance, pension contributions and allow for a 1% per annum pay increase.
- 3.3 A budget to support finance and governance costs will be made available to the Lead Delivery Body through the Welsh Government Account Manager and will need to be agreed as part of the submission. This will include costs relating to the interface with the European Team to ensure consistency of approach and controls across all the Councils ESF (and other EU) projects.
- 3.4 It is set that this will be a contribution to salaries within the central team with 15% simplified costs. Simplified costs include an apportionment of office costs, ongoing IT, utilities and management costs. These costs will be applied to all salaries in the final agreement with Welsh Government.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 Funding arrangements for the CfW programme differ significantly from the Communities First programme. This is not a grant programme. The LA are being asked to undertake a specific activity on behalf of Welsh Government. The Lead Delivery Body (CCoS) will be funded through a “Service of General Economic Interest” which is provided in an “Act of Entrustment”, which has been agreed with WG legal and state aid teams to meet EU regulations with regard to procurement.
- 4.2 When the signed final letter of acceptance is submitted to WG the CCoS will become a joint beneficiary of the Communities for Work programme.
- 4.3 CCoS will need to comply with the terms and conditions of the funding offer.

5 Human Resources Implications

- 5.1 A recruitment process will need to take place once the full funding has been approved probably starting in September/October 2015 ready for full implementation from March/April 2016.
- 5.2 The Tackling Poverty Unit will follow all Council recruitment procedures including accessing those staff at risk and redeployees where possible. The programmes success will hinge on the staffs ability to do their job roles as effectively as possible, including the engagement, progression and achievement of outcomes for all of the participants.
- 5.3 Given that funding is for a finite period there may be associated redundancy costs at the point that financial support is withdrawn. Dependant on length of continuous service these costs may be significant and should be factored into any exit plan that is developed.

6 Background Papers

Appendices:

1. Guidance for Lead Delivery Bodies on preparing for Communities 4 Work.
2. Communities for Work – Draft Operational Guidance