
JOBCENTRE PLUS CO-FINANCING COMMUNITY REACHOUT PROJECT

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette,
Regeneration and Planning Portfolio**

Responsible Director - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is :-
 - (a) to seek endorsement for the Community Reachout Project, November 2006 – March 2008, to be submitted to the eighth Jobcentre Plus Co-financing round, and
 - (b) for Darlington Borough Council to be the lead authority and accountable body for the initiative and to enter into a Service Level Agreement with the four other Tees Valley Authorities.

Information and Analysis

Background Information

2. The five Tees Valley Local Authorities have been working together over the past two years through the Tees Valley Works Project to provide a holistic range of personal development and vocational training to local residents to assist them to obtain jobs. This project, funded through an earlier round of co-financing, has been very successful.
3. An opportunity has arisen to apply for further external funding to increase the number of projects and therefore the number of residents assisted. The eighth Jobcentre Plus Co-financing round is presenting the five Tees Valley Local Authorities with a chance to address the worklessness agenda and support their individual Local Area Agreements
4. The five Authorities are proposing to apply for external funding to deliver a Community Reachout Project. The project will provide Tees Valley residents with one-to-one support, assist with CV and job application preparation, and offer vocational training courses ranging from food hygiene to computer training, as well as confidence-building courses. It will address the barriers which are perceived as preventing a resident from entering employment.
5. The application will be submitted as a partnership bid between the five Tees Valley Authorities – Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Stockton on Tees and Darlington. The project will work with 547 unemployed individuals throughout Tees Valley, and will target 109 individuals for each Authority. The value of the project is £1,757,556, with £351,511 potentially available in each Borough.

6. Darlington will act as the Lead Authority and will therefore be responsible for ensuring that monthly claims are made to Jobcentre Plus and that the project is achieving its targets. Payment of grant will only be made on the achievement of targets a percentage payment when someone signs up to the scheme and another payment when they enter employment. Each Authority will take the risk ie. each Authority will receive the funding only as the targets of people joining the scheme are gradually met. This makes the additional financial risk to Darlington for acting as the Lead authority negligible. For previous schemes Darlington Borough Council has always achieved its target. Each Authority will also be responsible for employing staff to deliver the project within their own area, and this cost will be funded through the project. All costs relating to the project will be covered by Jobcentre Plus Co-financing funding.
7. This project will add to the strategic sub-regional initiatives already working across Tees Valley to tackle the worklessness agenda. Although Darlington will be the lead authority, the additional risk will be negligible as each Borough will be responsible for the project within their own areas. Darlington Borough Council will only have to pay out in advance for activities undertaken in Darlington. Careful assessment of the targets and the activities needed to meet them, in the light of experience of previous projects, together with regular monitoring of progress, will help to ensure targets are met. The total target audience in Darlington is 9,470 from which the project will support 109 beneficiaries.

Outcome of Consultation

8. The Community Reachout Project has been developed in conjunction with other Tees Valley local authority partners.

Legal Implications

9. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

10. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

11. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

12. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Recommendation

13. It is recommended that :-

- (a) Members support the submission by Darlington Borough Council of the Tees Valley Community Reachout Project, 2006 – 2008 for Jobcentre Plus Co-financing funding.
- (b) Members agree to enter into a Service Level Agreement with the other four local authorities in Tees Valley with Darlington Borough Council acting as lead authority and accountable body for this initiative.
- (c) If the bid for funding is successful, Members agree to the release of the funding.

Reasons

14. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) To support a holistic Tees Valley initiative aimed at training unemployed individuals and assisting them into employment.
- (b) To support the local economy by tackling skills shortages and providing unemployed individuals with the skills they require to find employment.

John Buxton
Director of Development and Environment

Background Papers

Tees Valley Community Reachout Project Jobcentre Plus Co-financing Prospectus

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