

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	10.
Date:	4 th April 2011	Status	Open
Category	2. Decision within the functions of Executive		
Subject:	Family Employment Initiative – Transition Funding and Suspension of Contract Standing Orders		
Report by:	Partnership Consultant Programme Manager		
Other Officers Involved	Chief Executive's and Partnership Manager		
Director	Chief Executive Officer		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor E. Watts, Leader of the Council Councillor A. Tomlinson, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

REGENERATION – Developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities by ensuring continued availability of support for local people seeking employment, and taking into account the effects upon the wellbeing of residents in local communities in respect of their health, wealth and secure employment; all of which contribute to building sustainable communities in the district.

CUSTOMER FOCUSED SERVICES – Providing excellent customer focused services

TARGETS

Over 100 unemployed people to be supported to gain employment and contribute to National Indicator 153.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Supporting local people to access employment opportunities and come off out-of-work benefits.

THE REPORT

Background

On 14th July 2008, Executive Members approved the suspension of Contract Standing Orders to allow Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) approval of £274,622 to the Family Employment Initiative for the period July 2008 – March 2011 (Minute No. 188 refers).

The Family Employment Initiative (FEI) is an area based initiative, managed and delivered by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust (CRT). FEI was initially established in 2006 and works with hard to reach families and households to break down barriers to employment. The FEI has developed a very successful approach to reaching disadvantaged families and, since the approval of WNF in July 2008, the FEI team has supported over 400 people back into employment. This has been achieved by a dedicated team of advisors based within the Bolsover District, funded through various funding streams/organisations including WNF, CRT, Single Programme, Derbyshire County Council and Job Centre Plus. Unfortunately, Derbyshire County Council, Job Centre Plus and Single Programme have already made their intentions clear that funding for FEI will not be available from April 2011 onwards due to funding cuts and constraints.

On a more positive note, the Department for Communities and Local Government announced on 10th March 2011 that England's coalfield communities are to receive £30 million to reduce deprivation and inequality and that the funding will go to the Coalfields Regeneration Trust over the next two financial years to help it make social and economic improvements to former mining communities.

Staff at the CRT have previously discussed with the Chief Executive Officer, Leader and Deputy Leader of Bolsover District Council of their intentions to continue supporting the FEI within Bolsover should CLG announce further funding. Following the announcement on the 10th March, a proposed budget has been received from the CRT which provides indicative costings for a team of three Community Employment Advisors plus one Co-Ordinator and one Administrator along with running costs and a budget for a Back to Work Fund which can cover training costs, interview expenses etc. The indicative cost for 2011/12 is £250,148, and 50% of this would be met by the CRT.

This report is recommending that BDC provide the remaining 50%, i.e. £125,074 from the Council's Transition Reserve to enable FEI provision to continue within the district for a further 12 months. This investment would be expected to return an outcome of over 100 unemployed people gaining employment. It is expected that funding this transitional period during 2011/12 will provide the necessary time required to determine the FEI's strategic fit alongside the Coalition Government's Work Programme which is expected to be launched later this year. It is anticipated that there may be opportunities for the FEI to be a sub-contractor to the successful prime-contractors of the Work Programme, either way ongoing continuation funding should not be required.

ISSUES/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Providing BDC transitional grant would lever in the same amount of additional monies through the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, bringing in a £1 for every £1 spent.
2. The FEI has provided a valuable service to local residents over the past four years and has built up an established reputation. If this service was to cease at a time when unemployment levels are still high and the Coalition government's Work Programme is yet to be contracted, it could have devastating effects for local communities in terms of lack of support and advice to seek and gain employment. Further to this, the old Pathways to Work programme, delivered by Phoenix Enterprises will also cease to exist from June 2011 leaving further gaps in provision for unemployed local residents.
3. This funding should be seen as transitional funding for the FEI until potential sub-contractor arrangements with the prime-contractors of the Work Programme are put in place.
4. The FEI complements a number of other interventions that have been commissioned through the WNF, in particular the Bolsover Employment and Training Initiative (BETI) that will continue until March 2012. Providing continuation funding for the FEI in 2011/12 will enable cross-referrals between FEI and other interventions to continue and added value to be gained.

IMPLICATONS

Financial: BDC transitional grant fund the FEI to an approximate value of £125,000 for the period April 2011 to March 2012 which will complement funding of the same amount from the CRT.

Legal: The suspension of Contract Standing Orders 4.8.3, 4.8.4, 4.8.5 and 4.8.6 in relation to the FEI as a tendering process would usually be required under the Local Authority's Procurement procedures.

Human Resources: Resource committed to finalise the details of the proposal and ongoing monitoring to review progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 1. the report be received**
- 2. Executive supports the proposal for £125,000 transition funding to support the Family Employment Initiative for 12 months to cover a transitional period before the implementation of the Coalition government's Work Programme**

3. Executive suspends Contract Standing Orders 4.8.3, 4.8.4, 4.8.5 and 4.8.6 for the reasons given above in relation to the Coalfields Regeneration Trust.

REASON FOR DECISION TO BE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

In order to develop flourishing rural communities and improve the health of the district.

ATTACHMENTS: Y
FILE REFERENCE:
SOURCE DOCUMENT: