



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board

14 October 2021

Report of the Head of Education Development – Chris Millis

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All

Employability and Skills Programmes within Education Leisure and Life Long Learning Directorate

Purpose of the Report:

To update Members regarding the Employability and Skills Programmes within Neath Port Talbot.

Executive Summary:

The Employability Manager manages the delivery of Employability and Skills themed projects namely Communities for Work, Communities for Work Plus, Communities for Work Plus Additional Funding, Skills and Training, Legacy Fund and Rural Development Programme.

Communities for Work (CfW), is funded by the European Social Fund and is in partnership with DWP. From the beginning of the programme (July 2016) to date we have had 1905 engagements and

662 job entries over the 4 delivery areas being Neath, Afan Western and Sandfields.

Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) is a 16+ employability programme which focuses on bridging the gaps of current ESF provision. CfW+ programme enabled those who were unemployed, not eligible for ESF employability programmes to provide one-to-one intensive support, advice and guidance, taking away restrictions of postcodes and being able to work with anyone of 16+. To date, both programmes are running seamlessly. Referrals continue to be a steady flow with 1545 engagements and 683 job entries.

Skills and Training helps and supports young people aged 16 plus providing traineeship and apprenticeship programmes. We had over 110 learners on the programme last year. An Alternative Curriculum programme is also offered to NPT schools. There are currently 55 young people on this element of the programme.

Commercial courses and training internally and externally generate income, qualifying over 1,800 people in First Aid, Paediatric First Aid, Manual Handling, Site Safety Plus, CSCS, Food Hygiene, Health and Safety last year.

The Legacy Fund continues to provide Welfare Rights support, school based counselling and Legacy Youth Workers, working with Partners.

Rural Development Programme has currently approved 33 projects via the LAG. The programme will run until 31st March 2022.

Background:

Communities for Work

Communities for Work (CfW), is funded by the European Social Fund and is in partnership with DWP. Funding for this programme will end in 2023.

This programme has two priority age categories, Priority 1 25+ and older and Priority 3 16-24 years old. Both provide an intensive mentoring one-to-one provision for those who are furthest away from the labour market with individuals either being long term unemployed, economically inactive or NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training).

From the beginning of the programme (July 2016) to date we have had 1905 engagements and 662 job entries over the 4 delivery areas being Neath, Afan Western and Sandfields. Mentors from NPT LA and Advisors from DWP work as one team to ensure the best results for their individuals.

Communities for Work Plus

Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) is a 16+ employability programme which focuses on bridging the gaps of current ESF provision. CfW+ programme enabled those who were unemployed, not eligible for ESF employability programmes to provide one-to-one intensive support, advice and guidance, taking away restrictions of postcodes and being able to work with anyone of 16+. This includes those who are in employment, looking to seek career progression, or have extra hours to increase their monthly earnings. Welsh Government recognise that In Work Poverty is increasing and this programme will help to provide support for those who are barely surviving on their monthly earnings. To date, both programmes are running

seamlessly. Referrals continue to be a steady flow with 1545 engagements and 683 job entries.

Communities for Work Plus Additional Funding

Due to the Covid Pandemic, Welsh Government recognised that extra resources needed to be implemented to ensure that employment would be at the forefront of getting people back into work. NPT were fortunate to have an additional 6 members to join our team and will remain until March 2022. Discussions are underway with Welsh Government to ascertain the financial proposals going forward.

Skills and Training

Skills and Training (S&T) aims is to provide the best possible service within work based learning contracts which are run in partnership with Pathways Training (NPT College Group), helping and supporting young people aged 16-19 years on a Traineeship programme and aged 16+ on an Apprenticeships programme, within the community of Neath Port Talbot and surrounding areas.

Traineeships and Apprenticeships have a long and successful history of providing young people with highly effective work-integrated learning to secure employment pathways. It is also a route to progression, and we have seen learners with low self-esteem and confidence being able to sustain work placements and going onto our Apprenticeship programmes becoming qualified Hair Dressers, Health and Social Care Advisors and Childcare Supervisors. Our learners thrive on off the job training, applying their skills, being empowered in paid employment. We had over 110 learners on the programme last year.

Similarly, S&T offer an Alternative Curriculum programme to NPT schools working with Ysgol Bae Baglan to upskill and qualify learners in Hairdressing and Barbering. Currently S&T have 55 young people

on programme. Others such as Ysgol Hendre Felin and Cefn Saeson opt for Construction work, ground works and Health and Safety where they train at Tir Morfa testing centre in Sandfields.

Commercial courses and training internally and externally (outside the local authority), generating additional income for the department, whilst developing a reputation for providing good quality, effective industry recognised training, meeting the needs of businesses locally and supporting individuals to maintain or develop their skills and knowledge. Last year alone we qualified over 1,800 people in First Aid, Paediatric First Aid, Manual Handling, Site Safety Plus, CSCS, Food Hygiene, Health and Safety.

Tir Morfa Centre has successfully been refurbished into a place where young people feel comfortable. Defined spaces have been reallocated to community groups to ensure that allotment space is used to its full potential.

Legacy Fund

The Legacy Fund was created to allow Lead Delivery Bodies to keep the "Best Bits" of the old Communities First programme. It was approved that NPT continue with the provision of a Welfare Rights Team now called Legacy Welfare Rights Team, and also keeping the Post 16 Transition Team, now called Legacy Youth Workers, within the Youth Service.

We were also successful in employing a Digital Inclusion Ambassador and Legacy Community Counsellor who have been integral to the success of providing digital platforms in our community, and counselling support for our young people especially during such difficult times.

The teams are currently working from home, but gradually are seeing vulnerable people who need face to face contact.

Rural Development Plan

In May 2015, following the submission of the Local Development Strategy, the Local Authority were successful in applying for £2,156,000 of LEADER funding. The new Programme officially started on 1st July 2015 and will run until 31st March 2022.

Achieving value for money is fundamental to the LAG's approach, to maximise benefit for the community. To support this, when invited to re-profile in June 2020 a request was made to increase the value allocated to projects in NPT, and extend the LEADER programme by 3 months to March 22. This was achieved by moving funds to utilise underspend, to increase available funds to support more/new projects, post COVID 19 recovery. This increase acknowledged a reduction in staff costs and less travel than anticipated due to 'lockdown restrictions' and is an example of how the LAG and Rural Community Development team are working to ensure the best use of available funds.

LEADER projects are funded on a minimum 80/20 basis whereby applicants must have secured at least 20% of the total project cost in order to apply for up to 80%.

Since the previous report in July 2020 the LAG has approved 14 new projects, taking the total projects to date to 33. Two of the 33 projects are 'Co-operation' projects working across Wales RDP regions to deliver specific projects e.g. the most recently approved Co-operation project is '*Prescribing Woodlands for Wellbeing*' delivered by Coed Lleol (Small Woods Association).

To date, total project costs committed to the 33 projects is £1,307,685 (80% RDP & 20% Match).

Welsh Government has announced it will be launching a successor RDP programme post Brexit in 2024, with a value of £106 million pounds. However, to date the allocated spend does not include LEADER. RDP teams across Wales are lobbying for a review of the announced spending package.

The Shared prosperity & Levelling up fund expected to launch in 2022 is being published in autumn 2021 and may hold opportunities for NPT to continue to support 'LEADER' activity in the interim period, with direct funds from UK replacing EU funds.

Financial Impacts:

There are financial implications within Rural Development Plan as this programme is ending on the 31st March 2022. All other budgets are being monitored at present.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

There are no Valleys Communities implications associated with this report.

Workforce Impacts:

There are no Workforce implications associated with this report.

Legal Impacts:

There no Legal implications associated with this report.

Risk Management Impacts:

There are no Risk Management implications associated with this report.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

For information

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

N/A

Implementation of Decision:

N/A

Appendices:

N/A

List of Background Papers:

N/A

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