

## **Appendix 2**

### **Employment and Skills – notes of potential projects for £50k allocation**

- To use SMEs as the engine for growth for both business and employment within Warwick District;
- To raise the standard of skills in business to ensure the sustainability & robustness of the business sector in the district;
- To identify gaps & barriers to jobs and training with our own tenants with the aim of assisting WDC tenants to get a job paying the living wage.
- That proof of concept pilots be included which will inform bids for funding from April 2015 (eg: European Structural & Investment Funds)
- That any work should be additional and complimentary to work already being provided by organisations.

In addition to supporting skills and employment growth and covering current gaps, we aim to use a portion of this money as a test mechanism for a number of pilots (as proof of concept), which will inform bids for funding from April 2015 (European Structural & Investment Funds 2014 - 2020).

### **Business Support & Skills Development**

#### **1 Skills development bi-annual seminars for SMEs**

Currently WDC deliver a Working Lunch programme which is held at Althorpe Enterprise Hub. These monthly two hour events, combine networking with a key note speaker, imparting knowledge and taster training. This was first introduced and implemented back in January 2011. Space at AEH is limited and the arch used for larger sessions is now being marketed for creative office space as originally intended.

Evidence shows that there are now a number of competing networking groups and models – effectively the market is saturated. The bi-annual seminars will focussing primarily on skills development for business and the feedback from current attendees of the networking is that they require more in-depth sessions.

#### **2 Key Sector Specific Training Seminars**

There are a number of key sectors within the district who will benefit from further seminars. The digital sector of Silicon Spa is one of these and discussions with the industry conclude that training on topics such as intellectual property will deliver significant benefits and increase the spread of benefits of key sectors.

#### **3 Start-up Support**

Since WDC output funding fell away and with the demise of Business Link, WDC continued to offer support through our delivery partners (Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce). The contract (value £20k) negotiated with CWCC was good value and at a greatly reduced price comparative to other

providers who were asked to quote. Last summer, WDC allocated a further £10k from our ED&R budget to continue with this work and to cover this support gap.

The funding, approval and ultimately the WDC Start-Up Programme came to an end in April 2014.

WDC have been working with the private sector, namely end users of the Althorpe Enterprise Hub, to create and implement a business mentoring network (Spokes for Business). So far Spokes have seen 20+ individuals who have approached WDC through existing channels. New enquiries from rural areas are fed to the Rural Growth Fund (RGF) business advice, urban are fed to Spokes.

A wider feasibility study is due to commence, within the wider Coventry & Warwickshire (C&W) area with other authority partners. Currently, business support offerings for new start-ups are confused and chaotic. Across Warwickshire there are 5 separate offerings available, depending upon district of residence. There a further 6, with other prerequisite eligibility criteria, such as Princes Trust (18-30 years), Community Development Agency (CDA) (for social enterprise), etc. It is anticipated that this will prompt the needs for a combined programme of consistent and simplified support that could be made available across C&W from April 2015.

In addition a gap is apparent for those businesses not considered to be 'new start-ups' or 'early starts' – those who have been trading one/two years+. It is understood that in the C&W area businesses are mostly likely to fail between the 2-4 years period.

*Opportunity:*

There is an opportunity to re-engage the CWCC to bolster the work being done by the Spokes network – layering on additional support, such as training events/seminars, to complement the mentoring package which is available.

#### **4 Business Support Mentoring**

In providing wider (more mass market) business support for start ups, there is the opportunity to allow the SPOKES network to deliver a higher quality grow-on business support/mentoring.

#### **5 Business Support Funding**

Opportunity: to enable the SPOKES team to award grants to business to help in their development.

#### **6 Business Support Re-engagement**

As CWCC have delivered large numbers of business support interventions for WDC after the end of the tenure of the Community Support Officer. There has been no follow up to assess the success of those start up businesses and to assess any further need (and provide support if needed). There is very limited engagement with those previously supported.

This funding provides the opportunity to re-engage with businesses to assist their growth and assess survival rates.

## **7      Jobs Fair**

Following the success of March's Leamington Job Fair there is a plan to hold a second fair in March 2014. This would include: -

- Commissioning specialist skills training for job seekers, to undertake delivery of training seminars
- The event will include involvement from other partners, including CWCC, educational institutions, DWP work programme providers, Jobs Clubs and JCP.
- There will be opportunity to attend group training seminars, chat with JCP/jobs board, 1-2-1 sessions for individuals interested in starting a business and those needing help with applying for jobs.

The event will use the Town Hall once more and will tie into the business2business event taking place later in the month.

## **8      Additional Support for Personal Development of job seekers using Jobs Clubs**

An employment club was established at Brunswick Healthy Living Centre (BHLC) in April 2012. This created provision for residents of Warwick District with help and advice in order for them to find full or part time employment.

The service primarily, but not exclusively, focused on the local population of Brunswick Ward which has higher than average levels of worklessness.

Services that are currently provided are:

- Individual support and advice regarding Job search skills
- Access to computer facilities and free internet and other resources such as newspapers etc.
- Support with CV preparation and job applications
- Volunteer opportunities

The opportunity this funding provides is for the development of a programme of group sessions for clients who need more intensive support in order to maximise their opportunities for successful employment. Rather than a prescriptive set programme, BHLC aim to develop a new, flexible approach that can be tailored to meet individual needs within a supportive group environment. This will be a pilot, using some innovative new techniques with a view to developing a sustainable addition to the existing Brunswick employment programme.

### **Planned programme:**

- Develop a new innovative programme based on group work.
- Deliver 2 pilot programmes from January 2015 – March 2015 that will be evaluated.
- Clients will work on building a portfolio of skills and resources that are relevant to them.

- The programme structure will enable flexibility of delivery in order to tailor content to the needs of individuals within the group.
- Content will include core skills such as goal setting, confidence building and interview techniques.
- These core areas will be extended in various ways:
  - Working with local businesses, for example to offer opportunities of 'real world' mock interviews and work experience.
  - Encouraging clients to develop a portfolio of their skills and experience beyond the workplace.
  - Incorporating a brief video link into a client's CV which will showcase them talking about their skills and interests. This will enable clients who perhaps do not have extensive experience in the workplace to demonstrate more of what they have to offer. This innovative technique has been trialled in the North of the country and met with a very positive response from clients and employers. Our aim is to replicate the trial in our locality.

## **9 Housing tenant – access to work (over-coming barriers)**

This work will gather data from tenants on their issues and training needs. A fuller training programme will then be developed (or delivered through the procured route of proposal 9). Early considerations for training (based on feedback from business and DWP) include the provision of basic customer service training (using the recognised World Host) which has been used in one or two areas for unemployment support. These routes provide certified training and allow entrants routes into a number of types of businesses.

The Council is already working with the Warwick District Money Advice Partnership on money advice sessions and this joined up working with BHLC, Bromford, Orbit, Waterloo and CAB that will also provide another route to engagement with individuals in need.

## **10 Support for Professional Apprenticeship Programme with SMEs**

This will provide co-funding of the development of a Professional Higher apprenticeship scheme in Coventry and Warwickshire. PWC and Pera Training have recently discussed this potential opportunity to assist key sectors and SMEs across Coventry and Warwickshire.

This will help support the professionalization of apprenticeships across the Coventry and Warwickshire area. There is a proposal in development to follow the London Professional Apprenticeship model that will allow professional SMEs to develop staff whilst reducing the risk (and burden) on the business.

**Support considered, but not allocated funding:**

## **11 Co Support for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector educational work/projects**

Investigate co-support for work development projects utilising 3<sup>rd</sup> sector groups and "alternative" activity (training that isn't training)

Opportunity: Priority assessment and skills development for young mums whilst their toddlers are on activities – eg: Music and Rhyme sessions. This provides a route to long term engagement with younger mothers to assess their needs, provide support and training that will assist their prospects longer term.