

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

27 MARCH 2018

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek permission to apply for new, and to extend existing, funding for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) projects, Working Skills for Adults 2 (WSFA2), Nurture Equip Thrive (NET) Funding and Bridges Into Work 2 (BIW2), which will sit under the new Employability Programme. All three projects will be operated on a sub-regional partnership basis, led by Torfaen County Borough Council.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report supports the following corporate priorities:
- Supporting a successful local economy
 - Smarter use of resources
 - Working together to improve lives

3. Background.

- 3.1 On 10th December 2013, Cabinet authorised Council officers to continue working on proposals in more detail with a view to submitting early project applications for European funding support under the 2014 – 2020 programmes, and to report back to Cabinet as and when appropriate.
- 3.2 A range of European Social Fund (ESF) projects were successfully developed by BCBC officers in the intervening years. However, the only existing project which is in scope for this report is:
- Bridges into Work 2 (BIW2)
- 3.3 This project has been operational since September 2015, and is delivered in partnership, led by Torfaen County Borough Council (Torfaen CBC), and including Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Anuerin Bevan Life Leisure Trust (which operates in Blaenau Gwent) as well as BCBC. Cabinet gave approval on 28th February 2017 to extend the Bridges Into Work 2 project which runs until 31st March 2020.
- 3.4 The project is currently on profile to reach its existing numerical targets by March 2020. In addition to this, there are many real life case study examples which show how impactful the project is for individuals. These can be found at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.5 After the previous reprofile and extension, BIW2 has continued to be one of the top performing Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) projects and, within the

Bridges into Work 2 family, Bridgend is the top performing local authority. This demonstrates that the project is both needed and relevant in the context of our community and, for some individuals, participation has been a life-changing experience.

Table 1: Existing BIW2 Targets 1st September 2015 to 31st March 2020 and Outputs to 31st December 2017

	Participant	Qualification	Volunteering	Employment	Job Search
Economically Inactive (EI)	490	286	125	103	100
Long-term Unemployed (LTU)	253	99	82	43	n/a
Total	743	385	207	146	100
Outputs profiled to 31st December 2017	393	199	142	65	24
Outputs Achieved to December 31st 2017	402	225	143	81	13

- 3.6 BIW2 works with participants aged over 25 years and is funded under Priority One Tackling Poverty Through Sustainable Employment and Theme 1B – Inclusion and Engagement in the Labour Market. It targets economically inactive and unemployed people and supports them back to employment. BIW2 is focused to support eligible participants outside the former Communities First Cluster Areas, while the ESF funded Communities for Work (C4W) project operates within the cluster areas.
- 3.7 C4W also supports younger participants aged 16 to 25 years in the cluster areas and another ESF project in Bridgend County Borough Council, called Inspire to Work, also supports young people from all areas. This overlap of provision creates potential duplication in a number of local authority areas in South East Wales, and local management is required to ensure that this is dealt with successfully at local level to avoid confusion for participants.
- 3.8 These projects, together with those which are operated by other organisations in Bridgend, are currently providing a comprehensive service for those people who are economically inactive or unemployed.

4. Current situation / proposal.

4.1 Bridges Into Work 2

The opportunity has arisen to extend BIW2 to 31st December 2022, and the table below shows the numbers of existing and additional participants that can be supported and the outcomes achieved, based on performance to date.

Table 2: the new and total BIW2 Targets up to 31st December 2022

Targets	Participant		Qualification		Volunteering		Employment		Job Search	
	EI	LTU	EI	LTU	EI	LTU	EI	LTU	EI	LTU
Original to December 2020	270	170	145	95	87	64	58	26	21	n/a
Additional to December 2022	503	251	280	140	168	84	104	51	84	n/a
Sub Total	773	421	425	235	255	148	162	77	105	
Total	1194		660		403		239		105	

Based on the current performance, is it anticipated that the project will reach and quite possibly exceed these updated targets.

4.2 Working Skills for Adults 2 (WSFA2)

Work has been undertaken in Bridgend to look at the benefits of joining Torfaen CBC and the other BIW2 partners in delivering WSFA2 in Bridgend. The project is ESF funded and sits under the Priority 2 – Skills for Growth Theme 2A: Adaptability, Growth and Progression and aims to increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce aged 16 years and over, with no or low skills, in particular:

- Employed, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications;
- Employed, including self-employed participants with qualifications up to and including a lower secondary education.

4.3 There is a higher percentage of people in Bridgend than across the UK of people having low or no qualifications whilst in employment, and this can prevent their progression in work to a more sustainable position. Torfaen CBC and its partners have been successfully operating WSFA2 since September 2015 and, like BIW2, it has already gone through a reprofile and is now looking to extend to the end of December 2022. WEFO are keen to add BCBC to the project as the outcomes for working people are not being delivered in the Bridgend area, so there is currently a gap.

4.4 Working Skills for Adults 2 follows a holistic model of delivery that focuses on meeting the needs of individual participants in moving them closer to sustainable employment and career progression. Three groups of barriers for participants in the project have been identified and it is by tackling these that people will succeed in gaining a qualification, which can lead to improvements. These are:-

Personal Development Barriers - How and why people act – their drive

- Confidence
- Motivation
- Vision/Aspirations
- Socialisation/Social Isolation

- Expectations
- Participation

These personal development barriers can be the most difficult to overcome and it is for this reason that the community-based provision, at a time and in a location that suits the participant, is critical to ensure positive engagement before other barriers can be overcome.

Sustainability and Progression Barriers - Where and how people live – their environment

- Eligibility and ability to claim in-work benefits
- Dependent Care
- Transport
- Society: Culture of Workplace Opportunity
- Local Economy
- Time and Cost

Overcoming these barriers requires a combination of practical solutions and change in attitudes for participants. In-work poverty is a significant issue for many families and, by supporting participants to improve their qualification levels, it is anticipated that they will be able to find better paid, and more secure, employment with greater potential for career progression. Where this is not the case, and for those participants with basic skills deficits, the provision of these skills will assist them with the submission of claims for legitimate in-work benefits that can supplement their income and improve the quality of life for the participant and their family.

Employment Skills - What people can do – their skills?

- Experience (quotable work ethic)
- Work Specific Experience
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- ICT

A common characteristic for most people who have not engaged in education or training for a long period of time is a lack of self-belief that hinders their ability to engage with the opportunities they are offered. It is likely then that most of the participants will require support to address problems with confidence and motivation as well as an assessment of their skills and barriers to progression.

Skills play an important part in determining employment rates and employment rates decline with lower levels of qualifications. Skills and qualifications are not synonymous but a lack of qualifications can be symptomatic of low skills levels. People with no qualifications at all are undoubtedly among the most disadvantaged when it comes to employment, so it is a key facet of the project that these individuals are targeted through assertive outreach to develop the skills and qualifications they need to maintain sustainable employment and to progress in this employment through career development.

4.5 It is anticipated that in Bridgend, 833 participants will be engaged onto the project with 600, which is 72% of the total, will gain an essential skill, technical or job specific qualification by December 2022. This will complement the Nurture Equip Thrive project outlined below, as participants can be on both projects simultaneously.

4.6 Nurture Equip Thrive (NET)

Torfaen CBC, together with the four other BIW2 partners (including BCBC), was approached by WEFO to consider working on a new project to tackle in-work poverty.

4.7 Changes in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) approaches to their clients has seen many more unemployed and economically inactive people enter part time, flexible, zero hour contract or 'gig economy' jobs. Many of these types of jobs provide unreliable and unsustainable work, leaving people and families vulnerable. This has become a recent phenomenon, and statisticians have not caught up as yet, to provide reliable data that can show the extent of the problem at a local level. Anecdotally, there are increasing numbers of working people requiring the use of food banks to supplement the weekly shop, and approaching the Bridgend Citizens' Advice Bureau for support to deal with debt. Local DWP staff themselves agree that this is becoming a problem and anticipate that it will increase when Universal Credit becomes live in Bridgend in June 2018. They, therefore, welcome any support to make employment sustainable for working people and families.

4.8 There are a variety of solutions that can be considered through the NET project to support people suffering from in-work poverty to a more sustainable position. These include:

- Increased number of hours in current job
- Increased number of hours in new job
- Increased wage in current job
- Increased wage in new job
- Move from a temporary to a permanent contract of work
- Increased length of a fixed term contract
- Move to a role with increased responsibilities
- Increased responsibilities in current role
- Move to a role utilising the participant's skills and/or qualifications
- Securing an additional part-time role to complement current employment
- Receive a promotion in current role
- Move to self-employment

4.9 It is expected that the NET project will commence in April 2018 and run until December 2022. The project will aim to engage with 474 people to improve their in-work poverty situation and a success rate of 50% or over is anticipated. The project value will be £1,545,012, which will attract grant of £1,158,759.00. The match funding will come from the new Welsh Government Communities for Work Plus (C4W+) project.

4.10 Communities for Work Plus (C4W+)

The C4W+ project is part of Welsh Government's Employability Plan, and it will provide employability support to people who are either in or at risk of poverty, who are not eligible for C4W or other ESF regional programmes, including those who live outside Communities First postcode areas. While the Communities First Programme is coming to an end, for administration purposes, the CF postcode designation is still required, as many projects, including BIW2 and C4W, currently have project stipulations based on these postcodes.

4.11 C4W+ has the following aims and principles:

- Supporting individuals living in, or at risk of, poverty;
- Alignment with other Welsh Government Poverty Programmes, including Families First, Supporting People and Flying Start;
- Integration and co-operation with Communities for Work and other ESF funded employment support programmes;
- Providing the infrastructure for Communities for Work;
- Caseloading and mentoring;
- Providing a community based service;
- Supporting delivery from accessible, integrated community hubs;
- Alignment with Communities First Legacy Fund and Communities Facilities Programme investments; and
- Enabling flexibility in deployment of resources.

The project provides a unique opportunity to ensure that it can wrap around all other provision to ensure that everyone in Bridgend who needs employability support and is not eligible for other provision can be supported through C4W+. This is a unique opportunity as it means that, perhaps for the first time, comprehensive employment support provision can be delivered in Bridgend, with no potential participant having to be turned away because they fail to meet the restrictive eligibility criteria.

4.12 Welsh Government has provided funding of £642,565.83 for 2018/19 which has been confirmed and then it is hoped that they will provide the same amount for 2019/20 for C4W+ under the new Funding Full Flexibilities Pathfinder. They will provide confirmation of this during 2018/19. This will support the existing delivery in Bridgend of the ESF funded Communities for Work project, which would otherwise cease at the end of March 2018. C4W+ will also provide match funding for the ESF NET project in Bridgend, as it can also support clients experiencing in-work poverty.

4.13 Year 1 outcomes are to achieve in excess of:-

- 310 people engaged who are out of work
- 155 of which are case-loaded on to the project

Of these:-

- 87 undertake vocational training
- 17 undertake basic skills training
- 70 enter employment
- 20 set up a business

- 128 people engaged who are experiencing in-work poverty
- 64 of these have an improved in-work poverty situation

4.14 Employability Programme

There are five projects discussed or referred to in this report although permissions are being sought in relation to the first three of these:-

- Bridges Into Work 2
- Working Skills for Adults
- Nurture Equip Thrive
- Communities for Work
- Communities for Work Plus

In order to maximise delivery and outcomes and to thwart duplication, it is proposed they are brought together in one team and under the Improving Skills and Employability theme of the Bridgend Anti-Poverty Strategy. The programme will be managed by the Skills and Sustainable Development Manager and will be supported by two new posts funded externally from the projects within the programme. If all projects are approved this funding is sustainable until December 2022. If all projects are not approved, however, there will be a need to make financial adjustments to the remaining programmes to take account of any funding shortfalls.

- 4.15 The outcomes expected from the projects show the ambition and expected benefits for participants from bringing the five projects together. There will be less delay in referrals, as a common Triage process will be adopted across the whole programme. WEFO's ambition has been to "hide the wiring" for participants, so they are not caught up in administrative restrictions which prevent ease of transfer between projects as participants change status and become eligible for different interventions. The development of this new programme helps realise the ambition to create a seamless, comprehensive service for participants, getting them the right support in the right way, at the right time.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

- 5.1 There is no effect on policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 A local Equalities Impact Screening has been carried out and found that no individuals with protected characteristics are disadvantaged. The overarching objective of the project is to tackle poverty, increase access to training, volunteering and employment and, as such, the project will have a positive impact on equalities.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The table below sets out all funding required for the three projects in scope, which will sit under the Employability Programme, including the match funding source. The financial profiles are primarily made up of direct staff costs. All other delivery costs (including overheads) are claimed as a set percentage of the direct staff costs at a rate of 40%. These are known as the FR40 costs. This is in line with WEFO's new

simplified costs methodology.

Bridges into Work 2

	Original Project Costs (May 2015 - March 2020)	Additional costs (April 2020 - December 2022)	Total Costs (May 15 - December 2022)
Staff Costs	1,682,313	1,166,129	2,848,442
FR40 Costs	672,925	466,452	1,139,377
Total Costs	2,355,238	1,632,581	3,987,819
ESF Grant @ 77.1216%	1,816,397	1,259,073	3,075,470
Staff Match	149,409	13,226	162,635
SRF Match	75,547	66,000	141,547
FR40 Match	313,885	294,282	608,167
Total Funding	2,355,238	1,632,581	3,987,819

Working Skills for Adults 2

Nurture Equip Thrive

	New project (Apr 18 - Dec 22)
Staff Costs	1,239,919
FR40 Costs	495,968
Total Costs	1,735,887
ESF Grant @ 71.8%	1,246,367
Staff Match	76,914
SRF Match	253,741
FR40 Match	176,865
Total Funding	1,735,887

	New project (Jan 18 - Dec 22)
Staff Costs	1,119,866
FR40 Costs	447,946
Total Costs	1,567,812
ESF Grant @75%)	1,175,859
Staff Match C4W+ Approved	119,952
Staff Match C4W+ Awaiting approval	164,328
FR40 Match	107,673
Total Funding	1,567,812

7.2 Cabinet should note that the figures provided in the report are subject to change, pending final approval by WEFO, and confirmed figures will be reported back to Cabinet for information purposes.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Cabinet is recommended to:-

8.1.1 authorise the Corporate Director Communities, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to apply for and accept an extension to the BIW2 programme, up to 31st

December 2022 in line with the Council's Grant policy, and subject to being satisfied that any grant conditions attached to the extension of funding are acceptable;

- 8.1.2 authorise the Corporate Director Communities, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to apply for and accept funding for the WSFA2 project, from 1st April 2018 to 31st December 2022 in line with the Council's Grant policy, and subject to being satisfied that any grant conditions attached to the extension of funding are acceptable;
- 8.1.3 authorise the Corporate Director Communities, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to apply for and accept funding for the NET project, from 1st April 2018 to 31st December 2022 in line with the Council's Grant policy, and subject to being satisfied that any grant conditions attached to the extension of funding are acceptable;
- 8.1.4 authorise the Corporate Director Communities, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to adjust the financial profiles in paragraph 7.1, should this be necessary as a result of negotiations with funders, or any individual project to being approved; and
- 8.1.5 note that Welsh Government has provided funding of £642,565.83 and has approved the submission for 2018/19 for C4W+ and then intends to offer the same amount for 2019/20 for C4W+, which will support the existing delivery of the current ESF funded C4W and provide match funding for NET. Should funding not be forthcoming from Welsh Government for 2019/20 then funding for the NET project can be readjusted to deal with the amount of match funding available going forward.

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Background documents

Cabinet Report on ESF projects 10th December 2013

Cabinet Report on Bridges Into Work 2 Extension 28th February 2017

Appendix 1

Bridges Into Work 2 Case Studies

Sian Ellis

Sian began the project with over 20 years' Residential Care Management experience and knowledge behind her with a wealth of accredited training and qualifications achieved during her working life. Unfortunately, Sian finished work due to ill health which had left her with a low level of confidence and anxiousness.

Sian wanted to explore a variety of employment and training opportunities and wanted to explore working with children and families as a possible new employment field but was also open to using the wealth of skills she had gained as a manager to consider administrative, financial and coordinating roles.

Support Offered by Project/Action Plan:

Sian met with Hannah King (Mentor) who helped put together an agreed plan of action which included various training courses such as Paediatric First Aid, Safeguarding, Working with Children with Autism Spectrum Conditions and ECDL. Sian also began working with Tracey House (ELO) to help her with employability opportunities, develop her CV and provide support for job applications. Possible placement opportunities were explored within family support roles with a range of support charities. However, Sian's key priority was to gain part time employment, so focus was given to this area with the ELO and Sian identifying a range of potential vacancies.

Outcome:

Sian secured several interviews, with good positive feedback received from interviewers. Tracey identified an excellent opportunity as a Support Worker with Ty Teulu, who support the care needs of young adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. Sian was encouraged to apply for the position as there was potential for it to develop into a residential management role. Sian was successful and was offered the role on a full time basis.

Quote from participant:

"I joined BIW2 through word of mouth. I initially wanted to get help with my CV and to undertake some training in order to update my knowledge and skills. I had been out of work for a long period of time, suffering from depression and anxiety and it's fair to say I was lacking confidence. I really didn't know which direction I wanted to go in and where I saw myself in the future.

Firstly, I met with Hannah who suggested that I be allocated an ELO). She immediately put me at ease and helped me identify where I needed to update my knowledge and skills I then met with Adam Johnson who registered me to undertake some on-line training with virtual college as well as attending a Level 3 Paediatric First Aid course, successfully gaining relevant qualifications and certificates. I regularly met with Tracey, I was aided to look at different options and seek out volunteering opportunities and was encouraged to start applying for paid work. Tracey was extremely supportive and she gave me a much needed confidence boost, I can honestly say that without the help I received I would not be in the position I am now. After months of applying for various jobs and with Tracey's guidance and support in completing application forms and notifying me of vacancies, I am pleased to announce that in May this year I secured permanent employment and I am really enthusiastic about my future. I feel very lucky indeed to be in a job which I adore, I feel so privileged to be back working in the care sector providing support to people with learning disabilities and what a sense of achievement and job satisfaction I get from my work. I can honestly say I am loving my life right now.

A very big thanks goes out to all in the BIW2 scheme, what a grand job you do".

Paul Thompson

Background:

Paul had previously been a participant on the Bridges into Work 2 project, where he successfully completed a motivational confidence building course, which he had found to be very beneficial, whilst also completing a volunteering placement with Kenfig Nature Reserve. However, due to ill health issues at that time Paul was unable to continue on the project. In April 2017, Paul's health issues had improved and he felt he was ready to re-engage with the project to gain help and support in looking for work.

Support Offered by project:

Paul was allocated to Julia Davies (Mentor) and Tracey House (Employer Liaison Officer) who both worked closely to support Paul to find opportunities for work and to develop his experience/skills. Paul expressed a keenness to gain experience assisting vulnerable adults within a supportive environment. He also enjoyed playing a range of musical instruments and was keen to be able to implement his skills by teaching individuals the joy of music. Upon discussion with Paul, Tracey outlined an possible placement where she thought his talent for music and his caring nature would be a real asset, so approached Lynda Hale, Co/Director of Ty Teulu, who manages a day care support service centre for adults with mild to moderate learning difficulties and disabilities, situated in the Ty Morfa Centre in Aberkenfig, as well as a respite facility – Ty Cysgu in Pencoed

A meeting was set up with Lynda to find out more about what the centre does and its activities/support they provide to service users and their families. The meeting went very well and both Lynda and Paul were keen to commence with a work placement for Paul to gain experience. Due to Paul's musical talents, Lynda wanted to engage him in developing music sessions with the service users by playing the guitar, etc. In June 2017, Paul started his placement with Ty Teulu. Tracey then checked with Paul on how his first session had gone and he replied back by saying' ***"it went really well, everyone enjoyed and had a great time, I'm going back next Thursday same time, Brill!"***

Positive comments kept coming back to ELO on how well Paul was doing in his placement and how well the service users were relating to Paul. His natural ability in showing exceptional care and empathy towards supporting the service users and staff proved his true strength and for Paul, his confidence levels were increased.

Outcome:

In early August 2017, ELO received excellent news to hear that Paul had been offered part time work as a Support Worker with Ty Teulu. Paul was very happy with this opportunity as it was not expected to result in employment. The project helped Paul with workwear and travel costs for his employment and Paul successfully started with Ty Teulu mid August 2017.

Quote from participant:

"The project (Bridges) has helped me in so many ways. I had become socially isolated having been unemployed for a number of years as a result of ill health. I thought I'd be unemployable at my age (54) but Tracey, my Adviser helped me to broaden my options. Tracey got me a voluntary position with Ty Teulu playing music with students with learning disabilities/difficulties. After a few months I was offered a contract for paid employment (p/t) and was absolutely delighted. Since beginning work my social life and self esteem has improved greatly"