

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES

19 MAY 2014

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF WELLBEING

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH C.O.A.S.T PROJECT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet Committee Equalities regarding progress and achievements made by Bridgend Coast Project.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 This report demonstrates that the project has helped to support the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2013 – 2017:

- **Priority 1:** Working together to develop the local economy
- **Priority 2:** Working together to raise aspirations and drive up educational achievement
- **Priority 4:** Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent
- **Priority 5** Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles
- **Priority 6** Working together to make the best use of our resources

3. Background

- 3.1 The C.O.A.S.T.AL Project is a Regional Strategic Project covering six local authority areas Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

- 3.2 COASTAL stands for 'Creating Opportunities and Skills Team Alliance' It aims to promote vocational guidance, employment, skills training and lifelong learning opportunities for individuals who are currently economically inactive as a result of:

- Illness
- Disability (Mental Illness, Learning Disability,
- Physical Disability, Sensory Impairment)
- Substance misuse problems
- Serious social disadvantage associated with the transition from long-term care into adulthood

- 3.3 The City and County of Swansea is the lead authority for C.O.A.S.T.AL and has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Welsh European Funding Office (W.E.F.O) as part of the convergence programme.

- 3.3 Convergence is the highest level support from the European Structural Funds programme (2007 – 2013) maintained by the Welsh European Funding Office (W.E.F.O). The Convergence programmes for West Wales and the Valleys comprise funding from two separate European Structural Funds: the European

Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). C.O.A.S.T.AL is funded through ESF and sits in the West Wales convergence area. ESF aims to tackle economic inactivity and increase skill development and employment.

- 3.4 Bridgend C.O.A.S.T. has delivered a £2million training and employment project to participants across the county borough over the last three years. One million pounds was funded by ESF convergence grant funding and the balance was provided as “match funding” by Wood B, B Leaf and Environmental Projects managed by Bridgend County Borough Council (B.C.B.C.) The main aim has been to raise levels of employment and economic activity, and secure higher participation in the labour market.

4. Current situation.

Projection on targets set for Bridgend County Borough Council and the legacy of C.O.A.S.T

- 4.1 The information at **appendix 1** shows, in graphical format, a report of outcome data regarding the project to the end of April 2014. These graphs show targets for the number of people enrolled on to the project; the number of people entering employment; the number of people gaining a qualification; the number of people entering further learning and the number of people gaining a positive outcome. A positive outcome would constitute the following: an interview, non-accredited training, work placement or volunteering opportunity.

- 4.2 The data in the graphs is explained in more detail below:

1. Participants Enrolled onto the Project

- The graph shows that the expected overall target of participants enrolled onto the project for Bridgend by the end of June is 359.
- The graph also shows that Bridgend enrolled 462 participants onto the project at the point this report was run at the end of April 2014. This is the actual overall target for Bridgend and will not increase as the project stopped taking on new referrals in Feb 14th 2014.

2. Number of Participants Claiming a Qualification

- The graph shows that expected overall target of participants claiming a qualification by the end of the project is 216.
- The graph also shows that Bridgend has exceeded this target. The actual target number of participants that have claimed a qualification when the report was run at the end of April 2014 was 287 and it is anticipated that this target will increase when the project ends in June 2014.

3. Number of participants entering Further Learning

- The graph shows that the expected overall target of participants entering further learning by the end of the project in June 2014 is 90.
- The actual target of participants entering further learning also shown in the graph when the report was run at the end of April 2014 is 41.
- It is anticipated however, that when the project is completed at the end of June 2014 the target of 90 will be comprehensively exceeded. This will be as a result of work that is still continuing with people actively engaged on the project and evidence from files that are still yet to be closed.

4. Number of participants entering employment

- The graph shows that the expected overall target of participants entering employment by the end of the project in June 2014 is 36
- The graph shows that the actual target when the report was run at the end of April 2014 was 77. There is an expectation that there may be a small number of additional people entering employment before the project closes in June 2014 as we are still engaged with people who have interviews for positions.

5. Number of participants achieving a positive outcome

- The graph shows that expected overall target of participants achieving a positive outcome by the end of the project in June 2014 is 216
- The actual target when the report was run at the end of April 2014 was 242. There is also an expectation that there may be a small number of additional people achieving a positive outcome before the project closes in June 2014. We are still engaged with people who have interviews for positions and we have commenced the file closure process which may identify more positive outcomes

4.3 These Targets were re-profiled in 2012 and agreed by BCBC and the lead authority for C.O.A.S.T.A.L the City and County of Swansea.

4.4 All targets set for Bridgend C.O.A.S.T have been achieved and exceeded with the exception of the further learning target.

4.5 At the end of the project, all participants still active will be sign posted to the most appropriate employment or training organisation. Also, Bridgend is working very hard to achieve a Social Enterprise from the current work related projects that we provide at B Leaf, Wood B and the Environmental Project.

5. Effect on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 This is an information report and, as such, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The COASTAL project has been part funded via the European Social Fund which has met all the additional costs of delivering the outcomes identified above. Match funding has been provided to the scheme through the use of existing provision within the Day Services work related projects. The Council will receive £1m in grant monies covering the period 1 January 2011 to 30 June 2014 and has provided an equivalent amount in match funding.

8. Recommendations

8.1 This has been a very successful project and it is recommended that Cabinet Committee Equalities notes the information contained in this report regarding future ESF funding. .

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Background documents

None