

WILTSHIRE POTENTIAL FUTURE JOBS FUND

Executive Summary

The Department for Work and Pensions Future Jobs Fund (FJF) is an element of the Government's Young Persons Guarantee and Backing Young Britain Campaign. It offers £1bn to local authorities and partners to create 150,000 new jobs between October 2009 and March 2011. This signifies the beginning of a new strategic relationship between DWP, CLG and local Authorities.

Wiltshire Council led a successful partnership bid to the Future Jobs Fund for the creation of 450 new jobs (over the 18 month life of the programme) in Wiltshire targeted at young people most in need (18-24 yr olds). The Future Jobs Fund will support the creation of a range of temporary jobs for young people and develop their education, training and skills further, to gain experience that will support applications for employment in due course and to gain skills that help to promote sustainability. The Future Jobs Fund aligns with the strategic aims of the Action for Wiltshire Programme; Wiltshire Assembly's (LSP) collective action to address the impacts of the recession on local communities. Each FJF opportunity will attract a maximum of £6500 grant bringing a potential £2.925 million for employment opportunities into Wiltshire.

Proposal

That Cabinet:

- notes Wiltshire's success in delivering a successful partnership bid to DWPs Future Jobs Fund
- approves Wiltshire Council moving to delivery of the programme subject to satisfactory negotiation with DWP over contractual arrangements
- endorses the recommendations relating to programme management as detailed in the report
- delegate authority to the Chief Executive to instigate delivery of the programme once management, monitoring and contractual arrangements have been finalised

Reasons for Proposal

The Report on the Impact of the Credit Crunch for Wiltshire Assembly identified that the 16-24 year old cohort seeking to enter the labour market over the next 18 months would face a greater risk of not only obtaining employment but also being displaced by next year's cohort who would be seen by employers as being less of an employment risk having just left full time education than those young people who had been unemployed for a significant period of time.

At the time of writing the bid (June 2009) JCP data demonstrated that the cohort eligible for FJF opportunities equated to 28% of the total JSA claimant population in Wiltshire. Wiltshire had 2,035 18-24 year olds claiming JSA, placing Wiltshire as the 4th highest of all the district and unitary areas in the South West. The data also demonstrated Wiltshire to be 3rd highest in

terms of the actual number of JSA claimants who had been claiming for between 6-12 months.

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Purpose of the report

- To inform Cabinet of Wiltshire's successful bid to DWPs Future Jobs Fund.
- To explain how this bid enables us to deliver Action for Wiltshire Programme outcomes.
- To inform the Cabinet of the programme management arrangements that are being put in place to ensure effective delivery of the Wiltshire Potential Programme.
- To seek approval to move to implementation.

Background

National Context

The April Budget allocated an extra £3.1bn to help people looking for work. As part of the Backing Young Britain initiative over £1bn was allocated to create 150,000 jobs through the Future Jobs Fund.

The minimum criteria for the jobs are that they are:

- additional – in other words that they would not have happened without the FJF;
- real jobs – meaning that they will be of at least 6 months in duration, a minimum of 25-hours a week, and paid at least the National Minimum Wage;
- suitable for young people, aged 18-24 years old, approaching twelve months on Jobseeker's Allowance and/or for long-term claimants on out-of-work benefits in areas of high unemployment;
- the jobs will deliver direct benefit to the local community
- the jobs require a maximum investment from the FJF of not more than £6,500 per job.

Local Context

The Future Jobs Fund is a key component of the Wiltshire Potential Programme, a priority within the Action for Wiltshire Programme which aims to bring together

opportunities for young people such as volunteering, work experience, apprenticeships and training opportunities to provide young people with a range of options for their future. Partners recognise the Future Jobs Fund offers potential to deliver priorities identified in the Wiltshire Potential Programme that address the negative impacts of the recession on our young people whilst the jobs created will benefit the wider community.

Progress to date

The deadline of 30th June for first round applications for funding only provided prospective bidders with weeks to develop applications. Wiltshire's successful application to the Future Jobs Fund is most notably due to close, collaborative working with supportive employer partners and significant commitment to making this work in Wiltshire by officers from Wiltshire Council, Job Centre Plus and valuable support from GOSW. Indeed, Wiltshire's successful bid is cited as an exemplar and being used by the South West Regional Employment & Skills Partnership as a case study. DWP itself is using Wiltshire as an example of effective partnership working.

In recognition of the strength of Wiltshire's response to the Future Jobs Fund, Jim Knight, Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform at the Department for Work and Pensions and Minister for the South West chose Wiltshire Council to host his visit for the regional launch of the Government's Backing Young Britain campaign on 29th July.

In developing the bid, Wiltshire looked to the Local Agreement for Wiltshire to identify community benefit that jobs created under the Future Jobs Fund programme could deliver. In such context, the Future Jobs Fund will make a significant difference to delivery of actions aligned to the strategic aims of Wiltshire, and provide high value to the local community. The bid also ensures that jobs created are appropriate for and appealing to the target group. The partnership has worked with Job Centre Plus to integrate understanding of the cohort, the objectives of the fund and the type of work that would provide a good fit with the characteristics of long-term unemployed young people. New Deal and NEETS will be the main feeders into the programme. Partners have been encouraged to consider and build in where possible opportunities for programme participants to broaden their horizons and gain transferable skills and competencies. This has led to opportunities in areas such as the climate change agenda, the natural environment, community cohesion, creative industries and technology where young people can learn relevant skills in exciting environments which will inspire them to change the way they think about work. By offering a broad portfolio of new jobs, both within the various Council departments and with community partners, we have covered a range of occupational areas and settings and offered opportunities across the whole of the county's geography.

Whilst the bid has been fully approved, DWP are awarding the grants in three, six month tranches with 180 jobs to be delivered in the first tranche. With Wiltshire Council itself creating 70 FJF opportunities and external community partners will create 110 FJF opportunities. Sessions are currently being held with FJF Employers to prepare them for job starts. Whilst we have partners signed up to deliver the 450 jobs this does not preclude further bids and we are disseminating widely the possibilities of Future Jobs via the Wiltshire Co-ordinating Group and through the Local Area Agreement Ambition Leads Group. The Wiltshire Potential Partnership currently comprises 9 Wiltshire Council service FJF Employers and 8 external community FJF Employers as follows:

Wiltshire Council service FJF Employers are:

- Children and Education
- Action for Wiltshire - Wiltshire Potential Programme
- Climate Change and Private Sector Housing
- Community Leadership and Governance
- Connexions – Youth Support Service
- Development Service for Young People
- Libraries, Heritage and Arts
- Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning
- Visit Wiltshire Tourism Partnership / Countryside – Wiltshire Walks

External community FJF Employers are:

- Community First
- The Learning Curve
- North Wessex Training
- Selwood Housing Society
- Wiltshire College
- Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
- Wiltshire Wood Recycling
- Trowbridge Community Area Futures

In addition the following FJF non-employer partners are involved:

- WSEP, the three Local Economic Partnerships and Wessex Association Chambers of Commerce
- GOSW provide the critical friend/strategic challenge role and quality assurance.
- Job Centre Plus provides expert advice in general to the programme and on the cohort and jobs offered in this proposal.

Programme Management

A 'Future Jobs' Steering Group has been established to develop and manage the programme. The steering group will have responsibility for performance management and monitoring of all aspects of the programme. The steering group comprises both key partners and programme management staff as follows:

- Wiltshire Council – Economy & Enterprise and HR
- Wiltshire College
- Local Economic Partnership Representation
- Job Centre Plus
- GOSW

Wiltshire partners have extensive experience in managing and monitoring collaborative programmes and projects and this model has worked well for other programmes of significant size and profile such as LEADER + and Rural Renaissance. As described in the paper to Cabinet on the Wiltshire Council Apprenticeship Programme (Xxxx) our approach with the Future Jobs Fund will be to manage it under the Wiltshire Potential Programme. The draft structure is explained in diagrammatic format in Appendix 1.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

The Government has set a target for around 7% (10,000) of the total FJF jobs to be 'green'. The environmental focus of the bid was particularly strong and generated significant interest from GOSW and DWP.

In particular, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has propose to host up to a maximum of 65 of these jobs, on the basis of a 6 month minimum contract term and an 18 month programme would support 195 of the people more vulnerable to the impact of the recession in Wiltshire. The opportunities that will be created by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust will include Environmental Action and Learning Project Assistants, Trainee Estate Workers and Trainee Conservation Assistants. This proposal carries significant strategic fit given that the work undertaken will directly contribute to the achievement of NI197 (Management of Local Sites).

Among the FJF opportunities offered by other partners, Wiltshire College propose to create Farm Hand posts at their Lackham campus; North Wessex Training propose to create 30 Horticulture Technician posts, Wiltshire Council propose to create 10 posts within their Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing service and 1 Home Energy Efficiency Assistant within their Private Sector Housing / Climate change services.

Equality and Diversity Impact of the Proposal

The FJF offer has equalities considerations at its heart as it aims to provide opportunities for those most at need to gain work experience and develop skills.

Wiltshire Potential Programme management staff will work with Wiltshire Council's Equalities & Diversity Team to ensure that the Wiltshire Potential Programme overall will be continuously quality assured in relation to promoting equalities and inclusion as part of an integrated approach to delivery. The role of the Wiltshire Council Equalities & Diversity Team specifically will be to provide scrutiny of the programme in order to identify areas for progression and areas of success.

Risk Assessment

The partnership has the appropriate partners to ensure that risks associated with programme management, working with the cohort and employment legislation can be effectively managed. Job Centre Plus will provide the programme lead on engaging the cohort as the agency responsible for the client group. Wiltshire Council will act as Accountable Body with programme management undertaken through the Economy & Enterprise Service alongside European and National programmes already in management. Human Resources & Organisational Development will lead on aspects relating Wiltshire Council's role both as a FJF Employer in its own right and in establishing the framework within which other FJF Employers will be required to accept responsibility and liability.

Financial Implications

The Action for Wiltshire Programme Board has approved £250K to fund the management infrastructure of the Wiltshire Potential Programme. In managing the four programmes collectively (Future Jobs Fund, Apprenticeships, Train to Gain and ESF Business Clusters) Wiltshire Council have managed to reduce the management cost from an average 12.5% value to 8.4%. In addition we will be recruiting Future

Jobs Fund programme participants into junior support roles working on programme development and management.

The Action for Wiltshire Programme Board has approved to fund the subsidy required by some employers at a maximum cost of £150K based on a £100K capital and £50K revenue split.

Wiltshire Council is still awaiting the delayed Grant Offer Letter from DWP but programme staff are currently working their way through the technical guidance and have engaged colleagues in Financial Planning in a review of this. A high level financial risk appraisal is being undertaken by Finance and will be available ahead of the Cabinet meeting. Grant Offer Letters are now anticipated to arrive during week commencing 7th September. A Senior Finance Officer will be identified to work with the programme.

Legal Implications

Ahead of submitting the bid, the HR and Economy & Enterprise staff discussed the proposal with Unison. The proposal was met with a positive response with Unison considering it an excellent initiative to help the young unemployed people in our communities. The Service Director, HR & Organisational Development will sit on the Wiltshire Potential Programme Executive Group and will have an oversight of all aspects pertaining to employment both within the Council and contractual requirements with partners.

Wiltshire Council is still awaiting the delayed Grant Offer Letter from DWP but programme staff are currently working their way through the technical guidance and have engaged colleagues in Financial Planning in a review of this. On the 4th September DWP published guidance on working with JCP (covering vacancy handling, referrals and marketing). The steering group are currently digesting this and will be issuing guidance for FJF Employer Partners shortly. Grant Offer Letters are now anticipated to arrive during week commencing 7th September. All documentation pertaining to management and sub-contracting to programme partners will be approved by Legal Services prior to implementation, similar to arrangements that exist for other programmes under management.

Options Considered

Option 1 - Would a bid to Future Jobs Fund enable us to deliver the priorities of the Wiltshire Potential Programme?

The Action for Wiltshire Programme Board endorsed the bid being made given the alignment identified within the report.

Option 2 - What level of employment opportunities would be viable for Wiltshire to create through this programme?

Partners used the JSA on flow data to calculate that the client group currently standing at 2035 (June 2009) would have 40 a monthly on-flow of 40 per month. This volume should (unfortunately) supply a client group to more than sustain the programme.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our successful application to the Future Jobs Fund will enable the Wiltshire Assembly to achieve one of their priority responses to the recession – the Wiltshire Potential Programme, supporting up to 450 young people who otherwise would remain long-term unemployed. Supporting them not only with an employment opportunity but also developing them as assets for the Wiltshire economy. In doing this, it provides Wiltshire partners with significant capacity to address LAW priority actions and it enables us to better co-ordinate and manage a series of programmes around the employment and skills agenda within the public, private and voluntary sectors.

In summary through the investment of £250K LPSA Performance Reward Grant through the Action for Wiltshire Programme, Wiltshire can effectively manage £4.3 million of external funding to deliver benefits to the communities of Wiltshire.

Background Papers

1. 'The impact of the credit crunch in Wiltshire'
<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wilts-assembly-150309-impactof-credit-crunch.pdf>
2. Wiltshire Potential Programme Future Jobs Fund bid

Appendices

Appendix 1: Wiltshire Potential Programme Governance Arrangements and Delivery Structure