

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF CABINET ON 11 JANUARY 2021

SUBJECT: Journey to Work Project

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DATE: 2nd December 2020

EXTN: 37845

PORTFOLIO AREA: Economy Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The report provides a background to The Journey to Work Project and summarises its achievements over the past year and its future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet notes the contents of the report.

1. BACKGROUND:

In early 2018, the West Sussex Local Authority partnership successfully applied for Strategic Investment Funds (SIF) for the first time. The 'Journey to Work' West Sussex programme became a reality with nearly £300k provided to support the wide-ranging employment services, either already provided by the Local Authorities, or projects that had been planned. In February 2019, the West Sussex Districts and Boroughs successfully applied for a second time to SIF for £500,000 to continue to provide support to unemployed people across the County.

This report summarises the outcomes and achievements of the Journey to Work programme over the second year of delivery, a year impacted by Covid19 for the final quarter. A year that has seen the inevitable development of different ways of working.

THE PROJECT

This Council has run its own Journey to Work project since 2013 and has successfully supported hundreds of Jobcentre Plus customers into work, training and volunteering over the years. The project has traditionally been operated by contractors – Connects Media. The Council still works closely with Bognor Regis and Littlehampton Jobcentres and has the formidable Arun Business Partnership as an employer base. The delivery team has been operating remotely with customers, old and new, since lockdown was introduced and has also utilised digital media and other methods of communication and support.

The West Sussex J2W Project is overseen by a Local Authority Steering Group (District and Borough lead officers) has met three times in person before lockdown and once, virtually, since. This meeting is strategic and covers Local Authority updates, funding, budgets, programme development and promotion. The delivery group has also met three times with two subsequent online meetings. Both groups have been successful in ensuring a smooth delivery of the programme and development towards ongoing, successful collaborative working.

Targets and Achievements

As laid out in the SIF funding application, the following headline outcome targets plus additional sub-outcomes have been achieved. Each Local Authority delivers its programme in slightly different ways and therefore have been recording a variety of information and in different formats.

The table below represents data collected between July 1st, 2019 and June 30th, 2020.

Target group	Target	Adur & Worthing	Arun	Chichester	Crawley	Horsham	Mid Sussex	Total	% Achieved
Client journeys started	1000	200	115	77	258	236	81	967	96.7%
Total interventions	2000	670	455	384	1024	798	143	3474	173.7%
Job Starts (Paid work)	300	25	49	11	50	108	12	255	85.0%
Work placements unpaid (includes taster days, volunteering)		32	12	14	3	28	0	89	
CVs Reviewed / provided		81	68	59	22	129	15	374	
Job applications supported		148	32	42	11	73	13	319	
Interview advice (includes mock interviews)		63	63	37	58	37	11	269	
Money Mentoring (Adur & Worthing only)		268						268	

The budget of £500,00 was disbursed between the six local authorities as in the table below, with an additional budget amount of £40k (managed by the Programme Manager), which could be used for anything the Local Authority leads felt was appropriate to develop or enhance their local projects.

The additional budget has mostly been carried over to support ongoing Covid19 projects development, in the new project year (started 1st July 2020), including virtual job clubs and other services delivered digitally.

Local Authority	Main project funding	Additional budget
Adur and Worthing	£95,000.00	£8,333
Arun	£45,000.00	£8,333
Chichester	£80,000.00	£8,333
Crawley	£100,000.00	£8,333
Horsham	£65,000.00	£8,333
Mid Sussex	£45,000	£8,333
Programme Manager (part-time)	£20,000	
Total	£450,000	£50,000

The recovery phase of Covid19 has seen DWP meet with all Local Authorities to discuss priorities for employment support in each local authority area, with the intention of providing additional Government funding to support targeted projects, alongside the existing J2W programme. This additional resource, if forthcoming, will support targeted projects such as 18-24-year olds, BAME and older workers. The SIF-funded projects will run alongside these additional projects.

J2W projects have had to adapt considerably since Covid19 affected physical support. All projects have worked remotely, some with more success than others. However, even with restrictions in place the Local Authority delivery teams have supported more than 90 people into work since lockdown started. The projects will continue to support people remotely for the foreseeable future, but face-to-face consultation and small group activity is considered a possibility moving into 2021. This will only be undertaken when our teams are confident of safety for all customers and employees.

With possible DWP funding for many of the Local Authorities increasing the level of resource in the coming year to help with the impact of Covid19 on unemployment and the economy in general, each Local Authority will combine the existing support to those furthest from the labour market with activity that supports people who need a swift return to work. In particular, projects to support young people (18-24) are to be prioritised.

Priorities of key partners JCP have changed regularly over the years and we are always developing and adapting to accommodate these, usually to ensure continued or new funding from the DWP. However, with the suspension of DWP funding in our area last year, we delivered our support to our local JCP offices for free in most of our districts and boroughs (Mid Sussex was the only DWP funded project). With Covid19 recovery plans has come a strong hint of additional Government funding for employment support projects, with a local focus and coordination between DWP and the Local Authorities. This partnership working will form projects specifically designed to support each local economy in a targeted approach and funding will be in addition to the current SIF-funded projects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the second year of the SIF funded West Sussex wide Journey to Work programme has been very successful, with 967 people supported with an average of 3.6 interventions per person, with at least 26% of those supported moving into paid work as a result of the projects. Based on SIF investment, each person supported has cost £517 each and job outcomes have cost £1,961 (known job outcomes only).

The third year of the programme promises to be even more successful with even more money available for each local authority to invest, increased provision through employability hubs and partnership working increasing the depth of provision. More referrals are coming from avenues other than JCP, and the programme's reputation continues to grow.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

None

3. OPTIONS:

None

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:

YES

NO

Relevant Town/Parish Council re: designs and objectives

x

Relevant District Ward Cllrs re: designs and objectives

x

Other groups/persons (please specify) Members all 3 tiers, Traders, Coastal Communities Team, public.

x

Littlehampton Regeneration Sub Committee made aware that the bid was being submitted.

5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)

YES

NO

Financial

x

Legal

x

Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment

x

Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act

x

Sustainability

x

Asset Management/Property/Land

x

Technology

x

Other (please explain)

x

6. IMPLICATIONS:

None

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

N/A

8. EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 11 January 2021 as this is a noting report

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None