

RURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

FUTURE JOBS FUND

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the committee of the success of the Future Jobs Fund and provide an evaluation of the project now it is approaching its conclusion.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the report.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 Background

The Future Jobs Fund was a Government (DWP) initiative to target young people between the ages of 18 – 24 who had been unemployed and claiming Jobs Seekers Allowance for a period of 6 months or above. They had found that a significant barrier to accessing employment was a lack of direct work experience, and the Future Jobs Fund aimed to provide such experience.

An invitation to bid for funding was issued to LA's by the DWP. Funding was to pay the salary for 25 hours a week at minimum wage plus some funding for relevant training. In addition there was some funding to cover administrative costs. Leicester City Council submitted a bid for funding on behalf of itself, the County and the Districts for a total of over 1000 jobs.

- 3.2 Leicester City Council led on the bid and Melton Borough Council offered to accommodate 30 individuals within the initial project period, 90 over the total project lifetime. This was substantially more than any other District in Leicestershire.

MBC initially planned to accommodate all Future Job Fund placements in environmental maintenance. However, it was realised that to meet the needs of the unemployed young people we needed to offer experience in a range of different areas. See appendix A for the areas in which FJFers have worked.

MBC also had planned to place FJFers in private sector organisations in the Borough, but we were told that this was not allowed, so we offered opportunities for work experience within the Council only.

To fit in with Employment rules we engaged with a Social Enterprise called New Life to act as a recruitment and training agency. They assisted us in recruiting eligible young people, paid their wages and provided training.

- 3.3 Initially the funding was to cover a two year period with a rolling programme of 6 month long opportunities. However, the project was brought to an early close, only allowing those FJFers appointed before the end of June 2010 to continue for 6 months.

The only exception to this was any FJFers who live in Leicester of which there are two working for us. These individuals have had their placement extended by six months to total a year's experience. They will remain with us until June 2011.

All other FJFers had to be in post by June 2010 to receive a six month placement.

3.4 Achievements

See Appendix A. We employed 22 individuals in total at Melton Borough Council. They have received a range of experience and support that will help them in future years. The chart shows where they have gone after their work experience with us.

Note that two employees are from Leicester. This means they were eligible for extension and have secured a further 6 months experience.

3.5 Issues

Although we have peaks and troughs of unemployment in Melton, at the time the project was ready to progress, we actually had a reduction in unemployed young people. This meant we found we were trying to engage with the longer term unemployed, but did so very successfully. We had assistance from the Family Intervention Project workers in some cases.

The way the project worked was that although Leicester City Council had secured the funding, unemployed young people had to be referred to the project by Jobcentre Plus. As JCP had a number of initiatives running, we were proactive in developing an effective relationship with them so that they could make appropriate referrals.

The commitment of time and effort from managers to put together job descriptions in a short time was substantial in most cases. Managers also supported and developed their FJFers in the role they were given.

We could not use FJFers to fill vacancies within the council and so needed to identify specific areas of work for them. This had the advantage of allowing us to complete pieces of work over and above our normal tasks.

CRB checks for those staff that needed them was problematic in that many young people don't have the ID that a CRB check requires, or it is difficult to get, adding a delay to their starting date.

In some cases attendance and timekeeping were initially very poor, but all FJFers became used to attending work regularly after a few weeks.

3.6 Evaluation

Overall the project has given 22 long term unemployed people valuable work experience that in many cases has helped them access employment and training. Many of the FJFers lacked confidence and self esteem initially, but the support and help they received from managers and colleagues helped them build confidence, form friendships with others and work on their own initiative.

Due to delays regarding contractual issues, we then had to rush implementation in order to recruit people before the cut off point in June. It would have been better for the project if we had had a longer lead in time.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This initiative fulfilled one of our corporate priorities in terms of skills development and

addressing vulnerable unemployed young people.

4.2 The project allowed work to be carried out that otherwise might not have been completed in the normal day to day running of the Council.

4.3 Key local partnerships were developed especially relationships with Jobcentre Plus.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The financial commitment in officer time to recruit and support FJFers was far outweighed by the benefits the organisation gained from the work that they did during their time with MBC.

5.2 The addition of 22 additional staff did impact on the availability of some resources such as fixed desk PC's.

5.3 In some cases MBC needed to fund equipment for FJFers.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 No legal implications

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 No Community Safety Implications

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 The Future Jobs Fund addressed the needs of young unemployed people.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 *To consider and give any Risks related to this report and if there are risks to complete the tables below. If there are no risks identified, then delete the table*

Probability

	↓				
Very High A					
High B					
Significant C					
Low D					
Very Low E					
Almost Impossible F					
		IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic
	Impact	→			

Risk No.	Description
	No risks

10.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 None

11.0 **CONSULTATION**

11.1 None

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All

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Date: 07/02/2011
Appendices : Appendix A- FJF table
Background Papers: n/a
Reference : X : Committees\REEA