

Executive Summary BEDP WNF Worklessness EINA

Policy Outline

The Birmingham Economic Development Partnership (BEDP) Worklessness WNF Business Plan has been developed by the Core Management Team (CMT) of the Employment Strategy Group (ESG), (Birmingham City Council, Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus) for the £57M allocated to the Partnership. This partnership provides the mechanism for strategic leadership on economic development matters for Birmingham. The ESG was created to develop an inter-agency employment and skills strategy and address the inequalities gap in employment, skills and learning attainment for ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

The Worklessness WNF Business Plan takes forward the objectives and interventions agreed in the LAA Delivery Plan Priority Outcome 4 “increase employment and reduce poverty across all communities to support people from welfare to work”, which was approved by BEDP at its meeting in August 2008, and by the Be Birmingham Executive on 21st August 2008.

The aim of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) is to make big improvements in the quality of life of the people of Birmingham. The LAA sets out the priorities for the local area agreed between central government and a locality (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level. It is the delivery plan for the new Community Strategy – Birmingham 2026.

The LAA target is to reduce the proportion of the working age population claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods (i.e. in those neighbourhoods with a worklessness rate of 25% and above), by 3% from the baseline of 30.8% to 27.8% by 2011. Traditionally the key measure for employment has been the “Unemployment Rate” i.e. the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in a defined area (City, Ward) or the percentage of JSA claimants expressed as a percentage of economically active (i.e. people in work or claiming JSA).

However, increasingly the focus has moved to measuring “worklessness”. The intention being that whilst those claiming JSA should be assisted into work there are also many others claiming out of work benefits who should also be helped into work.

The Local Area Agreement employment target (National Indicator 153) is the reduction of Working Age Client Group (WACG) in priority areas. As a result of the economic downturn a revised target has been negotiated to reduce the gap between the rate for the worst SOA's in the city and rate for the worst SOA's in the WM region. Therefore Birmingham's rate is to be 0.1 percentage points below that of the region at the end of the LAA (March 2011).

The priority areas are those Super Output Areas (SOAs) that have a worklessness rate of 25% or above. The baseline rate is the average for the period August 2006 to May 2007. There were 187 SOAs identified as a priority based on baseline statistics from May 2007. (See Map). A further 48 SOA were brought into scope following a refresh of the analysis of local need based on worklessness figures from August 2009.

The WACG comprises those claiming JSA, Incapacity Benefit, Lone Parents Income Support and those claiming other income related benefits.

The aim is to deliver sustainable economic growth for Birmingham through comprehensive city centre, targeted area and neighbourhood based regeneration. Localised patterns of need and agreed employment & Skills actions have been addressed through the drawing up of Neighbourhood Employment and Skills Plans (NESP) and Constituency Employment and Skills Plans (CESP), developing key sectors and the knowledge economy and supporting people from welfare to work.

In addition there is a suite of city-wide strategic interventions designed to retain the capacity of the voluntary sector in readiness for the delivery of employment support activity and address identified barriers to those entering the world of work.

- These include Discretionary Housing payment, supporting the transition from benefits to work and sustained job outcomes
- Innovations Fund, provides grants to test new approaches and interventions
- Workwise, supporting those hardest to reach clients providing vital extra pre and post employment support in respect of transport
- Apprenticeship Academy, a one year pilot to deliver 50 apprenticeships in a range of skill shortage areas.
- Customised Access Training for Employment (CATE), providing additional resources to meet the recruitment needs of employers aiming to support over 3,500 people with pre-employment support, and securing 1,400 jobs for priority clients.
- Town Centre Management, 12 town centre managers will support local businesses in the local centres, safeguarding and securing jobs.
- Local Provider Forums, to develop the capacity of local providers to deliver local interventions, and support local strategic partnerships in the commissioning and delivery of local interventions.
- IHIE, providing support through the Health and Wellbeing agenda.

LAA Outcome 2 will pick up the requirements of graduate and higher technical workers through projects like Graduate Advantage, Graduate Enterprise, Design Space, and Enterprising with Pride.

The outcome of this Delivery Plan is to increase employment and reduce poverty across all communities by supporting people from welfare to work, through targeted interventions to reduce to reduce Worklessness in the worst neighbourhoods in the city and to reduce the proportion of people living in poverty.

The WNF Worklessness Delivery Plan will compliment the delivery of main programme activities commissioned by partners like Job Centre Plus, i.e. Flexible New Deal, Pathways.

Throughout the whole process a rigorous strategic and local performance monitoring framework will be in place with monthly reports being received to enable gaps and inequalities to be identified once activity is being delivered.

Steps taken to carryout the EINA Assessment

Lead officer convened task group with representation from JCP, LSC, BCC WNF Team, and Third Sector. The group established its remit and terms of reference before embarking on the exercise of undertaking the assessment. The group met initially on a monthly basis receiving feedback from the organisations via their representatives. In addition to the core task group regular updates were sent to and

feedback received from CMT a subgroup of Be Birmingham Core Strategy Group. Agreement and sign-off was obtained from CMT in respect of the plan to carry out the assessment and consultation process.

Consultation was undertaken within Local provider forums, third sector agencies and existing constituency and ward arrangements to ensure a wide a range of views as possible. Feedback and comments were limited as most of the target audience had been fully involved in the construction of the NESP's and CESP's.

Key objectives within the action plan have been noted and agreed by CMT.

Summary of main findings and impacts identified

Risk identified 1: Individuals or groups could inadvertently be excluded or omitted.

Techniques adopted for addressing risk identified in the EINA:

The Employment Strategy Group (Birmingham City Council, the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus) recognised the need for a new approach and commitment between partners to address key challenges and deliver on worklessness outcomes. This new approach aims to deliver on priority outcomes for the LAA 2008-11 and beyond. This will be achieved through:

- o **Improved partnership working:** The Birmingham Worklessness Protocol sets out a new commitment between partners to deliver on worklessness outcomes, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and identifying key actions to drive up performance on tackling worklessness in Birmingham.
- o **Strategic leadership by the City Council:** The City Council has acknowledged the critical leadership role it must take on this agenda, and has taken positive steps to address this. The aim is to provide a more focused, co-ordinated approach that will strengthen BCC capacity to deliver and contribute to the worklessness agenda with partners.
- o **Integrated approach:** The delivery model provides an integrated employment and skills (IES) system with a single client offer and a single employer offer. It offers personalised, bespoke support tailored to meet the needs of clients and employers. This will provide seamless pathway from training, personal development into the world of work and avoid clients falling through the system. Clients will be tracked through the process.
- o **Spatial targeting:** Partners have agreed to target all future commissioned resources to SOAs with a worklessness rate of 25% and above, in line with the LAA National Indicator 153, and the emerging Multi Area Agreement for Employment and Skills 2010-2013. This will include Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Regeneration Zone funding, and will mean clearly focused and targeted interventions.
- o **Delivery – strategically commissioned and locally delivered:** The framework for managing delivery and performance is crucial for achieving a significant impact. Neighbourhood Employment and Skills Plans (NESP's) will be developed for areas with high concentrations of Super Output Areas (SOAs) with 25% and above worklessness rate, and Constituency Employment and Skills Plans

(CESPs) for fragmented SOAs with 25% and above worklessness rate. These action plans will identify a coherent package of interventions, using the IES model, and will provide locally tailored interventions to address barriers to employment and retention in employment. However there will be a 10% tolerance for those who require the intervention but fall outside the targeted areas. Through this targeted approach services will be clearly focused upon those demonstrably most distanced from the labour market and facing multiple barriers.

- o **Linking the development pipeline with the worklessness agenda:** The NESP's and CESPS will be complemented by Area Investment Prospectuses, which seek to stimulate employment demand, and ensure linkages between job opportunities created through these developments with access to employment from priority neighbourhoods.

- o **Mainstreaming employer engagement:** The City Council realigned its resources to establish an Employment Access Team (EAT), which builds on the success, and mainstreams the work of the Employment Hubs. The City Council is uniquely placed in engaging with developers at an early stage. The EAT will complement the work of partners on employer engagement and the single employer offer.

This approach builds on lessons learnt from successful interventions to tackle worklessness, reflected in the integrated employment and skills model. These include

- o improved local intelligence to effectively target resources to the needs of a particular group or individual;
- o a wider range of outreach and contact strategies to effectively engage specific groups or individuals;
- o A strong client focus approach, which addresses and meets the specific needs of individuals;
- o A portfolio approach with a coherent package of interventions to address the needs of individuals;
- o proactive client tracking or "Hand holding" to support individuals to access employment and post-employment support
- o engaging with employers and providing bespoke training to match priority clients to vacancies
- o Continuity of infrastructure to ensure joined up approach, confidence to clients and opportunities to build on learning
- o Local worklessness champions to drive forward performance

Risk 2: Procurement/commissioning process could inadvertently exclude particular agencies that represent service access point for particular communities or groups

Techniques adopted for addressing risk identified in the EINA:

Without care and planning the WNF commissioning strategy and process could preclude particular groups or agencies from submitting bids to undertake delivery of the interventions, which might in turn adversely affect the service take up and progression for members of excluded communities. The size of the contracts being awarded may prove to be a barrier for 3rd Sector agencies and smaller community groups and specialist delivery agencies due to their capacity to deliver.

This potential adverse impact has been identified and a series of interventions have been put in place to minimise the impact:

- 10% Constituency Development Fund- established in each constituency to address service gaps for particular needs and priority groups identified locally through Constituency Strategic partnerships or local provider forums
- 3rd Sector Capacity Building programme: Awareness events and the commissioning of independent technical and consortia building support in order to assist third sector groups focusing services on particular disadvantaged groups to submit competitive and sustainable service tender applications. This resulted in over 40% (33% in terms of contract value) of the WNF constituency contracts being let to consortia led by third sector agencies. The groups had either a community specific focus (e.g.; Birmingham Disability consortium) or a geographical focus e.g. Ashiana group in Sparkbrook)
- Innovations fund: established to resource new and innovative engagement techniques to be focused on particular target groups and/ or communities and to compliment the main constituency commissioned contracts.
- Commissioning of strategic service contracts with a specific focus on the access needs of excluded groups over and above the special targeting in the main constituency commissioned service contracts. Through this approach specific service contracts were let to exclusively focus on the needs of the following groups: Formerly Homeless; Refugees and New communities; those with ESOL and language needs; Those at serious risk of offending, those with a record of offending and individuals with needs related to drugs and alcohol abuse.

Summary of Actions to be taken in response to full EINA analysis

Section 3 of the initial EINA screening (page 7/8) identified the potential areas where the policy could contribute to inequality and human rights.

The subsequent detailed assessment set out in pages 12-29 demonstrates the comprehensive work that was undertaken to ensure that key stakeholders were engaged. Racial background and age appear to be a significant issue, however there is less evidence that the needs of the LGBT community and Carers has been directly addressed in the consultations that have taken place, therefore some additional focus and analysis will be needed in this respect.

In respect of human rights the underlying policy, together with the extensive consultations undertaken, provide a robust foundation for the delivery of the policy to address the inequality that exists within neighbourhoods to access training and employment to enable people to move from welfare to economic activity.

The following additional analysis and evaluation actions are recommended from the full EINA process:

	Actions	Target Date	Person Responsible
Involvement & Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Development & Implementation of consultation framework. o NESP/CESP Refresh conducted through CSP & Local Provider forums 	31/10/2010	Andrew Barnes/ Judy Thomas
Data Collection & Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Review the practical application of data capture & Client tracking system in view of impact requirements. Ensure all equality categories are fully captured. 	31/10/2010	Lynette Morris/ Graham Edwards
Assessment & Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Establish clear performance framework for the sharing of detailed output & impact information at strategic level through Employment Strategy Group & at local level through Constituency Worklessness theme group. Ensure all equality categories are fully captured. 	31/10/2010	Graham Edwards Lynette Morris
Procurement & Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Review of service commissioning process & specifically 1/3rd sector involvement & subsequent practical impact on the service impact and quality. 	31/3/2011	Graham Edwards / Andrew Barnes
Monitoring, Evaluation & Reviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Embed the Monitoring, Evaluation & Reviewing of impact into monthly programme reporting. Ensure all equality categories are fully captured. 	31/3/2011	Lynette Morris/Graham Edwards

Future Arrangement for monitoring and Review

The WNF Programme will be monitored by the WNF Programme team

Key Questions are:

- ◇ Are the contractors meeting the targets set
- ◇ Are levels of take and positive progression appropriate within all relevant target categories (ethnicity, disability, gender, LGBT, Carers, Lone parents, other categories)
- ◇ What are the interventions doing to the worklessness rate?
- ◇ Are we achieving what we set out to achieve?
- ◇ Are outcomes still relevant?

- ◇ How will the work continue beyond WNF? What will be the legacy?
Sustainability, mainstreaming services

Extensive data capture will take place throughout the programme delivery with management reports being produced monthly so that the impact and effectiveness of the function can be assessed and practice refocused if required.

Note the WNF Programme runs until March 2011. The full impact of the programme will not be able to be assessed until the final programme report has been completed. Therefore the findings of the EINA will need to be presented in terms of good practice that can be applied to subsequent services and commissioned delivery and disseminated to key strategic partners through the Employment strategy Groups structures.