

Economic Participation – Consultation on Priorities for 2010/11

Introduction

This document has been prepared to begin to shape the investment priorities for Economic Participation grant in Central Bedfordshire 2010/11

EEDA have advised Central Bedfordshire Council that Economic Participation Programme 2010/11 allocation for Central Bedfordshire will be **£396,558 revenue**. Note EP becomes a totally revenue programme in 2010 / 11

Critical to shaping the priorities is discussion with current providers and a wider group of stakeholders. We have prepared a Workplan (appendix 1) against a fairly tight timetable to meet an implementation deadline of April 1 2010. It covers the critical elements including a review of the statistical baseline to assess the overall needs and particular issues , consultation with our colleagues within the Council as well as those of our partners; shaping priorities; designing activities and procurement.

Investment Planning

The initial milestone is to prepare and submit an Investment Strategy to EEDA by December 31st 2009 for their Board to consider in February 2010, having passed it through various local channels of approval including

- Council Executive Committee
- Local Strategic Partnership (Environment and Economy Theme Group)
- Local Strategic Partnership

We are planning to do this in early December 2009

We have included an initial statistical overview of the economic challenges and needs facing Central Bedfordshire over the next year which is the baseline for future investment.

We have also set out some initial ideas and suggestions for investment which were considered by the Environment and Economy thematic partnership in September

We have included a set of questions to gain views from partners and specialists active in the field of employment / enterprise / skills and training including :

- Adult Skills Partnership
- NI 152 Group
- Strategic Enterprise Group
- Tackling Poverty Together Group
- Neighbourhood Improvement Partnership
- Achieve Economic Wellbeing (CYPP)
- Job Centre Plus and EEDA,
- ESF Co-Financing organisations

Action

- 1. Your consideration of the challenges and our initial ideas is crucial**
- 2. Feedback and respond via the questions listed on page 8**

**3. Or direct by email to
Garth McKenzie / Economic Growth Group / Central Bedfordshire Council /c/o Borough
Hall, Bedford MK42 5AN**

Background

To refresh, the rationale and logic for an Economic Participation Programme is **to improve employability and increase economic opportunities for individuals to be able to participate fully in the region's economy**. EP is broad term encompassing employment; self employment; education skills and training.

Economic Participation is EEDA's primary mechanism for delivering the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) economic participation goal " Opportunity for all in the sustainable economy" The programme is one of EEDA's main responses to the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration as such it is aligned closely to the Local Area Agreements (LAA's). It is crucial therefore that to get best and added value EP must be invested in the knowledge and context of related national and regional policy for employment; self employment; education skills and training

Central Bedfordshire Council is accountable for the delivery of the overall Programme of Activity and as part of this agreement undertakes to maintain appropriate systems of internal financial and procedural controls.

Current programme :

The current programme for Central Bedfordshire is worth £1,075,583 comprising £674,493 capital / £401,090 revenue based funding for the period 2009/10 and designed to increase prosperity by raising levels of economic participation and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in the economy. We are participating fully in regional evaluation of EP and will prepare a partnership based self assessment as part of this.

The current allocation is split between 13 projects as follows:

Project Name	Funding allocation	LAA contribution	EEDA Outputs (09/10-11/12)
Healthy Steps to Employment	£50,000 (Revenue)	NI 163 NI 152 NI 116	Number of people assisted to get a job and / or number of jobs safeguarded = 25 Number of people assisted in skills development = 50 People helped to move off an out of work benefit (direct) = 25
Kingsland Initiating New Dreams	£50,000 (Revenue) £20,000 (Capital)	NI 152	Jobs safeguarded = 2 Job created = 3 Person assisted with skills development = 50 individuals Person assisted to get a job = 50 individuals Person who moves off out of work benefits = 25 individuals

			Person who enters employment = 15 individuals
Skills for Work	£99,000 (Revenue)	NI 163 NI 152 NI 117	105 people assisted in skills development 25 gaining basic skills as part of Skills for Life strategy
Pre Start-Up Support	£80,000 (Revenue)	NI 163 NI 152 NI 117 NI 171 NI 172	Participant assisted with skills development = 50 participants Business assisted to improve performance = 35 New business created = 20 Person assisted to get a job = 60
Entry to Enterprise	£20,000 (Revenue)	NI 117 NI 171	Participant obtaining work based skills = 75 Person assisted who is 'NEET' = 25 participants
Social Enterprise Growth	£20,000 (revenue)	NI 163 NI 152 NI 117 NI 171 NI 172	Persons assisted in skills development = 20 Social Enterprises supported to improve performance = 20 Business created and demonstrating growth = 3
Route to Contract	£20,000 (Revenue)	NI 171	Businesses assisted to improve performance = 11 Voluntary organisations supported = 11
Access to Employment	£17,000 (Revenue) £44,500 (Capital)	NI 152 NI 117	Clients on out of work benefits supported through transport = 35 People assisted to get a job through travel planning = 15
Working Woodlands	£45,000 (Capital)	NI 171 NI 172	200 sq m converted Individuals supported to start a business = 10
Community Enterprise/Skills Hub	£350,000 (Capital)	NI 163 NI 152 NI 117 NI 171 NI 172	400 sq m converted
Ridgmont Station	£40,000 (Capital)	NI 152 NI 171 NI 172 NI 7	50 sq m converted Voluntary organisations supported = 4
Avante Garde – Room to Learn and Grow	£45,000 (Capital) £5000 (Revenue)	NI 163 NI 152 NI 117 NI 171 NI 172	100 sq m converted Individuals supported to start a business = 3 Voluntary organisations supported = 2
Kingsland Design and	£40,000	NI 163	Buildings converted

Development Brief	(Capital)	NI 152 NI 117 NI 171 NI 172	Individuals supported to start a business = 6 Job created = 12 People assisted in skills development = 250
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CONSULTATION

EEDA and Central Bedfordshire Council Economic Participation Programme – Investment Planning 2010/11

1) Introduction

As indicated EEDA have offered an indicative allocation of **£396,558 revenue** for 2010/11. Note EP becomes a totally revenue programme in 2010 / 11

The programme will commence from 1st April 2010 and run until 31st March 2011.

The programme will continue to be managed by Central Bedfordshire Council on behalf of EEDA and will be performance managed, with delegated decision making responsibility for project approval to the Environment and Economy thematic partnership of the Central Bedfordshire Partnership Board (LSP).

2) Programme Objectives – 2010/11

The Economic Participation investment programme in 2010 /11 will directly tackle goal 6 of the Regional Economic Strategy. The aim of this goal is to:

- Equip people with the confidence, skills and choices for employment and entrepreneurship
- Tackle barriers to employment in the poorest 20 per cent of communities
- Increase economic demand in areas with low activity rates
- Employers valuing a flexible, diverse and healthy workforce
- Support a vibrant, skilled and resourced third sector

At local level, the programme is intended to tackle local economic participation issues as identified by partners and support the achievement of the Local Area Agreement. Although there will be specific consideration as to the impact of the economic downturn and preparing for recovery

3) Summary of current economic performance in Central Bedfordshire:

EEDA commissioned consultants to refresh the Economic Participation Baseline Study, set out below are the headline findings

Central Bedfordshire became a unitary authority in April 2009 it has a total population of 252,100 and a working age population of 159,200 – so constituting around 4% of the region's population. Overall, Central Bedfordshire performs above or very close to the East of England average on all indicators. Over the last five years, Central Bedfordshire's performance relative to the East of England average has been strong – particularly in terms of the employment rate and qualifications indicators

a) EP challenges for the local area in relation to the impact of the recession

- Overall, the key finding is that the gap between the number of JSA claimants and notified vacancies has grown over the last 12 months. This means an increasing number of JSA claimants are competing for fewer vacancies.
- Looking specifically at August 2009 data, there were 4,910 JSA claimants in Central Bedfordshire competing for 965 notified vacancies.

- The greatest percentage reduction in vacancies has been in manufacturing and transport and communications.
- All industries have seen a decrease in the number of vacancies with the exception of public sector services, which saw a 30% increase in vacancies compared with a 22% increase across the East of England.
- Between August 2008 and August 2009, the number of JSA claimants has more than doubled – increasing from 2,190 to 4,910 JSA claimants.
- In August 2008, Central Bedfordshire had a rate of 1.4% but this has risen to 3.1% in August 2009.
- In the East of England, the rate has increased from 1.9% to 3.5%.
- **By gender.** The percentage increase in male JSA claimants far exceeds the increase in female JSA claimants.
- **By age.** The 25 to 49 year old and 50 year and over age groups have seen the biggest percentage increases at over 160% between January-June 2008 and January-June 2009. However, 18-24 year olds saw a similar percentage increase at 145%.
- **By duration of claim.** The greatest percentage increases have been in JSA claimants of up to 1 year, with a 195% increase in Central Bedfordshire claimants of between 3 and 6 months claim.
- **By ethnicity.** White JSA claimants and Asian or Asian British JSA claimants have seen the greatest percentage increases in Central Bedfordshire at over 150%.

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b) Skills and employability

- **Education and Skills**
 - Central Bedfordshire has a strong skills profile with the LAA having higher proportions qualified to NVQ Level 2, 3 and 4 qualifications than the regional average. For example, 29% of the working age population are qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above compared with the regional average of 26%.
- **Ill Health and Disability**
 - Central Bedfordshire has a smaller proportion of its working age population with a disability or a limiting long-term illness than the East of England average.
- **Young People**
 - The education indicators focussed on young people are only available at Bedfordshire level and not for Central Bedfordshire alone. Using this data, Bedfordshire performs well on all indicators.
 - In 2008, Bedfordshire had 5.8% of its 16-18 year olds 'NEET', a smaller proportion than the East of England's 6.2%.
 - 86% of Bedfordshire's 16-17 year olds were participating in education or training in 2007; above the East of England's 82%.

- Attainment was also strong with 51% of 19 year olds achieving NVQ Level 3 qualifications; above the East of England's 52%.

Enterprise and Business Support

To be completed

Priority Estates

The Council has identified 3 priority estates in Central Bedfordshire , Downside in Dunstable, Tithe Farm and Parkside in Houghton Regis

Tithe Farm for the purposes of the Future Jobs Fund bid was identified as an unemployment hot spot where the JSA claimant rate is 1.5% above the national average

The 3 priority estates are covered by a Neighbourhood Improvement Plan , EP investment will need to focus on these areas and co invest with a range of other (mainstream) measures for maximum impact and benefit to the community.

Local priorities which relate to Economic Participation as identified within the current Local Area Agreement are:

NI 152	Decreasing the number of working age people on out of work benefits
NI 117	Decreasing the number of young people Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)
NI 163	Increasing the number of working age people with a Level 2 qualification
NI 165	Increasing the number of working age people with a Level 4 qualification
NI 171	Increasing the number of new businesses registered for VAT
NI 172	Increasing the number of businesses showing growth in employment
NI 7+	Creating a thriving third sector

NI 152 has been highlighted as particularly at risk of achieving target in light of the current economic climate. The recession has had, and will continue to have, a negative impact on economic participation levels in Central Bedfordshire; although the region appears to have been slightly more resilient than some of England's other regions.

Priorities considered by the Environment and Economy thematic partnership are

1. Supporting unemployed young people (including NEET) to perform and secure employment or other economic opportunities during the downturn and in anticipation of economic recovery
2. Maintaining support for enterprise and social enterprise support especially in the pre start phase (adding value to the 'core' offer currently delivered by Business Link East)
3. Employment brokerage and intermediate / interim labour market support for 'graduates' of current provision .
4. Extending Future Jobs Fund to generate employment opportunities in /for our deprived rural as well as the Priority Estates

Question 1

How should EP investment most effectively tackle rising unemployment in particular sectors and amongst particular groups

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Question 2

Which LAA targets should be priority for EP investment / which indicator could EP make the greatest contribution?

		Tick
NI 152	Decreasing the number of working age people on out of work benefits	
NI 117	Decreasing the number of young people Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)	
NI 163	Increasing the number of working age people with a Level 2 qualification	
NI 165	Increasing the number of working age people with a Level 4 qualification	
NI 171	Increasing the number of new businesses registered for VAT	
NI 172	Increasing the number of businesses showing growth in employment	
NI 7+	Creating a thriving third sector	

Question 3

How should the £396,558 be allocated

- **across the themes of employability, skills and enterprise?**
- **areas?**
- **LAA indicator?**
- **Groups most affected by lack of economic participation**
- **Other?**

	Proportion / Percentage allocation	LAA Indicator focus
Employability		
Skills		
Enterprise		

Appendix 1 EP 2010 /11 Investment Strategy Work Plan

2010/11 Economic Participation Project Plan - £400,000 Revenue Funding				
<i>Key Milestones</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Proposed Dates</i>	<i>Actual Completed Date</i>
Review of evidence base	Evidence base Review EP Baseline Study results Review local evidence base (LAA/ CYPP/NEET/NIP) Review ESF Regional framework Mapping of sub regional programme activity in 09/10 Luton, Bedford etc use to flag potential areas for collaboration in 2010/11 Consider national skills/employment and enterprise priorities Overview of key regional delivery programmes JC+, LSC and EEDA Job Centre + local delivery map Review NINJ/ MKSM strategy Draft section 1/2 of Investment strategy	SH SD/Nicola Stokes SH / MC GE SH SD SH /SD SH/SD	Oct Oct Oct / Nov Oct Oct Oct Nov	
Internal discussions	Draft themes and linkages Identify linkages to ESF FJF mainstream programmes Formulate & consult options/ priorities for 2010/11 EP projects clarity on added value	SH / MC SH SH/MC	Oct-09 Nov-09	
Consultation				
Internal	Prepare consultation document with key strategic partnerships and organisations internal	MC/ ESF programme AD's in CFL Sustainable Comm. NEET/Connexions Adult Ed and Libraries LAA Manager	Oct	
External	With key strategic partnerships and organisations	Current EP providers (rev) Child Poverty Group TPT Group NI 152 group NIP Steering Group/Economy SEG	2 /3 Nov Nov 5th Nov 9th Nov 4th Oct 7th	

		JC Plus Adult Skills Partnership Achieve Economic Wellbeing EEDA	Pam Brown call Nov 4th via email	
Key Milestones	Notes	Who	Proposed Dates	Actual Completed Date
Investment Strategy	Draft v1 EEDA template Equality Impact Assessment Framework	Initial feedback from EEDA	Nov/Dec	
Approvals & Governance	Start Exec report inc delegated powers Start ward member consultation Draft themes to Sus Comms Leadership group Draft themes to LSP Thematic Partnership Draft themes to full LSP CBC Economic Impact assessment & review of Investment Planning process 2008/09 EP Investment Strategy sign off by Exec. Committee and LSP Final draft to EEDA	SH GM SH SH SH SH	Early Nov Mid November End November 8th December 15th December 30th December	
Activity planning and procurement	Define projects Define Procurement process Prepare Prospectus and secure Exec /LSP approval EEDA board approval Funding agreement contracts issued Commisioning/Tendering process agreed (join with ESF) Prospectus prepared and issued inc Exec approval Proposals received/appraised & approved SLA's Issued Delivery starts All paperwork signed and approved	GM/SD GM/SD GM/SH EEDA SH/GM GM GM/SD GM/SD GM/SD GM/SD GM/SD GM/SD	Feb-10 Feb-10 Feb-10 Feb-10 Feb-10 Feb-10 Feb-10 Apr-10	

Appendix 2 Mainstream programmes

Existing provision includes:

- Jobcentre Plus and Learning Skills Council mainstream – including Pathways to Work, Integrated Employment and Skills Service (see diagram).
- Business Link East – Information, Diagnosis, Action Planning and Brokerage.
- ESF provision: JC+, LSC, EEDA and Central Bedfordshire/Bedford Borough Councils – including Enterprise Coaching and Worklessness in RSLs.
- Central Bedfordshire Future Jobs Fund – 90job starts by 30 April 2010 (80 young people / 10 Unemployment 'Hotspot' people).
- Migration Impact Fund.

Appendix 3

Consultation with current providers under the EP programme

2009 EP Application Process

Q1. How useful were the guidance notes you received?

Very Useful
at all

Quite Useful

Not very Useful

Not useful

Q2. Could the application form be improved

Q3. Did you receive adequate support in the application and appraisal process?

Q4. Was the 'e' – tendering process easy to use or would you prefer an alternative means to submit an application / tender

Q5 Do you think clearer more comprehensive guidance about what we were expecting in the applications would have been useful?

Yes, definitely

Possibly

No

Q6. If yes, how would you have liked this to happen?

Guidance notes
specify)

Workshop

Other (please

Q7.If there is a relevant investment specification for 2010 /11, would you submit an application again?

Yes definitely

Possibly

No

Don't know

Q8. As a current provider are there issues around continuing / deepening need , continuity of provision etc. that should be considered when shaping the investment strategy for 2010/11

Service Level Agreements

Q9. Did you have any feedback on the service level agreement?

Q10. How could the support or communication on EP be improved?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback survey, your views will help us improve the process next time.

Please return your survey to Sarah Hughes, Central Bedfordshire Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 5AN