

SUBMISSION TO COMMUNITY HOUSING AND HEALTH (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY)

COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item: 5

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SUBMISSION BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HEALTH SCRUTINY - UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS AND GETTING PEOPLE BACK IN TO WORK

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the role of Lichfield District Council in reducing unemployment, and helping people be ready for, find and secure work.
- 1.2 This item has been on the work programme for this Committee since June 2012 and is particularly timely, given the state of the economy and the likely impact of impending welfare reforms. Increasingly, unemployment is also seen a fundamental and key contributory factor to many social issues, such as poor health, poverty, homelessness and crime.

2. Unemployment in Lichfield District - an overview

- 2.1 Although Lichfield District has the lowest percentage of unemployment benefit claimants in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area (September 2012), the rate in certain parts of the district is relatively high. High unemployment is prevalent in Curborough (4.1% of the working age population), Chadsmead (4.3%), Chasetown (4.5%), Fazeley (3.1%) and Summerfield (4.1%), against a district average of 2.2%. The average for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area for the same period is 5.5% and 3.8% for the UK overall.
- 2.2 Comparisons across Staffordshire for January 2013 further indicate that the percentage of unemployment benefit claimants in Lichfield District (2.2% of the working age population) is lower than the county average of 2.7%. At ward level, the same five wards within the district evidence the highest levels of unemployment as identified in the September 2012 report referred to at 2.1 above, values now being recorded as: Chasetown (5.1%), Chadsmead (4.7%), Curborough (4.2%) and Fazeley and Summerfield (both at 3.8%). Levels of unemployment in four of the five wards have therefore deteriorated in the last four months.
- 2.3 It should also be noted that the number of unemployment-related benefits claimants in Lichfield District doubled between 2008 (800 claimants) and 2012 (1,600 claimants).

Trends in Jobseeker's Allowance claimants	March 2008	March 2009	March 2010	March 2011	March 2012
Lichfield	800 (1.2%)	2,100 (3.4%)	1,800 (2.9%)	1,600 (2.5%)	1,600 (2.7%)
Staffordshire	8,100 (1.5%)	19,800 (3.7%)	18,100 (3.4%)	15,300 (2.9%)	15,800 (3.0%)
West Midlands	99,100 (2.9%)	173,100 (5%)	178,000 (5.1%)	162,800 (4.7%)	172,400 (5.0%)
England	700,400 (2.1%)	1,272,900 (3.8%)	1,333,700 (3.9%)	1,246,600 (3.7%)	1,370,500 (4.0%)

- 2.4 The number of 16 to 19 year olds known to be not in employment, education or training as at December 2012 was 187 or 6.3% (total population: 2,946). This exceeds the Staffordshire average of 4.6%. As for all age unemployment, some wards are more adversely affected than others, Chadsmead being the worst at 11.93% and Curborough at 10.1%; also Boney Hay (7.1%), Fazeley (8.0%), Little Aston (8.7%) and Stowe (6.5%).
- 2.5 Levels of employment are important to the Council primarily because those who are in work are better able to pay rent, and so less likely to be evicted and become homeless. They are more likely to pay council tax and to contribute to the local economy. The unemployed may be drawn into criminal or anti social behaviour, and may turn to illegitimate money lenders ("loan sharks") to supplement their income. They are prone to poor mental health, through isolation and lack of self-worth, which may lead to alcohol or substance misuse. Their children may be less likely to work themselves when they reach adulthood, or to access further or higher education; their aspirations will be lower, and they are more likely to live in poverty.
- 2.6 Those who are not in employment are more likely to suffer a number of social conditions, such as worse health. The Health Development Agency advocates that, "all strategies and initiatives (should) have employment as a central component and outcome. We will then rightly have recognised the importance of work as a key public health intervention." (Worklessness and health – March 2005) The Marmot Review (February 2010) states: "Health inequalities arise from a complex interaction of many factors – housing, income, education, social isolation, disability – all of which are strongly affected by one's economic and social status."
- 2.7 The Lichfield District Local Plan: Strategy affirms that "the District Council will work with partners to ensure that education and skills levels are improved, that employers link more effectively to the local community, and that increased numbers of young people are able to find high quality work in the District rather than having to relocate to find employment."
- 2.8 In considering priority desired outcomes for workforce development, the Tamworth & Lichfield Economic Strategy advocates, "a clear message to local residents about local employment opportunities and the courses available to equip them to fill these."

3. Practical Initiatives Aimed at Reducing Unemployment

Lichfield District In To Work Group

- 3.1 In October 2008, the multi-agency Lichfield District In To Work Group was formed, to provide strategic drive and co-ordination to address worklessness. This group is led by the District Council. Membership includes: Job Centre Plus, the Tamworth & Lichfield Business and Economic Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce, South Staffordshire College, social landlords, training providers, mental health service providers, Staffordshire Young People's Service, Staffordshire Libraries Service, and Third Sector partners, including: Citizens Advice Bureau, Community & Voluntary Sector Support (CVS), GrowWell (mental health group), Cherry Orchard Garden Services (COGS), Live At Home, Business Enterprise Support and the North Lichfield Initiative.
- 3.2 The In To Work group was a finalist at the South Staffordshire Regeneration Awards 2010 in the Best Cross Cutting Project category for its work in increasing employability and assisting access to employment, training, volunteering and enterprise opportunities.
- 3.3 The In To Work Group has had a real impact in increasing the employment prospects of local residents, including:
- Delivering an innovative community-based child care training programme in 2009/10 that saw 33 local residents receive Level 1 training with 10 then going on to further education (accredited Level 2 course) 4 of those progressing to Level 3. Participants secured employment in childcare (1), youth work (1) and as a teaching assistant (1).
 - Supporting the GrowWell voluntary organisation in its work with mental health clients to involve them in horticultural work as therapeutic activity and to increase their employability.

- Supporting Cherry Orchard Garden Services (COGS) in its progression to becoming an independent Community Interest Company and in its work with adults with learning impairments to train and employ them as gardeners.
- Developing and delivering work clubs out of community settings in the most disadvantaged parts of the district, including libraries and community centres. This has become the main focus of the Council's involvement in this area of work.

Work Clubs

- 3.4 Work Clubs were first advocated under the Government's "Get Britain Working" programme (2010). This set out a number of major welfare to work reforms with a greater focus on partnership working with "Jobcentre Plus, providers, local authorities, employers and jobseekers working together to find new solutions to unemployment". With unemployment being increasingly recognised as a wider determinant of health (Marmot Review – February 2010), work clubs are also cited as best practice in the District Councils' Network publication, "District Action on Public Health".
- 3.5 Lichfield District Council has been a leading partner in the development of local work clubs, together with Bromford Living and Lichfield & District CVS. Work clubs provide help, information, advice and guidance to local people on employment opportunities and training through fortnightly "drop in" meetings. They support people to get into and back into the work place environment. They promote and provide volunteering opportunities, and have enhanced our own staff development. They are a key delivery strand of the District Debt and Financial Inclusion Strategy.
- 3.6 The first community based work club in the district opened on 1st March 2011 in Burntwood. There are now 5 work clubs, based in the areas of higher unemployment in the district: Lichfield Library, Burntwood Library, Handsacre Methodist Church, Jigsaw and St Barnabas Church in Mile Oak. Since the work clubs began, 93 people have been helped back in to work, with 24 going into volunteering and 177 receiving training. Training is given in functional skills (literacy, maths and computer skills) and to increase employability through confidence building, interview techniques, office skills, customer service and money management and budgeting skills. 15 volunteers currently help to run the work clubs. A total of 497 people were registered with the work clubs as at February 2013. A status report on local work clubs is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 3.7 Together with Bromford Living, the Council provides "hands on" support in the operation of the work clubs, but is recruiting and training volunteers with a view to improving the long term sustainability of the clubs and reducing the level of partner investment needed.

Commissioning Third Sector Organisations

- 3.8 The Council also identified the need to help people get back into work as a strategic priority when commissioning voluntary and community sector partners in 2012. It now has three-year Service Level Agreements (2012/15) in place with two organisations: Business Enterprise Support and Live At Home. A report on the strategic commissioning process and the outcomes achieved to date came before this Committee in January 2013.
- 3.9 The SLA with Business Enterprise Support focuses on engaging unemployed people to consider enterprise as a route to work, and then supporting them to self-employment, helping them to develop their business ideas. The Live At Home SLA offers accredited training, volunteering and employment across a range of office, retail, catering, transport and caring skills.
- 3.10 Both SLAs are performing well, with all targets on track or exceeded in the first six months. BES had engaged 69 people, supported 56 towards self-employment, supported 23 in developing their business ideas and helped 3 people commence self-employment, 3 to find full time work and 1 into a placement. Live At Home had recruited and trained 35 volunteers across a wide range of skills and tasks.
- 3.11 Performance management meetings are now underway to review the last six months' performance and agree action plans for 2013/14.

Working in Partnership

- 3.12 The District Council is working with the County Council and other partners, including Job Centre Plus, schools, the police, social landlords and voluntary organisations to improve the way that we work with families who have complex needs, as part of the local response to the national Troubled Families agenda. In Lichfield, this is called Supporting Families. Unemployment is one of the three key factors taken into consideration in identifying these families, the others being anti social behaviour and lack of engagement with education.
- 3.13 Lichfield District is one of three districts within Staffordshire chosen by The Big Lottery to work with unemployed young adults aged 18 to 24 years to develop a programme that will give them and their peers real opportunities for employment or self-employment. (The other two districts are Newcastle-under-Lyme and Cannock Chase.) The bid has passed the initial stage of application, and is now developing further before progressing to second (and final) submission.

4. Community Benefits

- 4.1 Employed residents are likely to be healthier and to contribute to the local economy. They are less likely to fall victim to illegitimate sources of money-lending or to be involved in criminal activity or anti social behaviour themselves. They are less likely to be homeless.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 That Members note the report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The Council receives no funding to support this work, other than "one off" grants, such as from Improvement & Efficiency West Midlands (£10k in 09/10) and Local Public Services Agreement 2 (LPSA2) funding for 2009 to 2011 (£40k), allocated by the District Board.

7. Strategic Plan Implications

- 7.1 The Council's work in helping people get back in to work supports the following strategic priorities from A Plan for Lichfield District 2012-2016:
- Working in partnership
 - Supporting people
 - Boosting business

8. Human Rights Issues

- 8.1 There are no human rights issues.

9. Crime and Community Safety Issues

- 9.1 Employed residents are less likely to fall victim to illegitimate sources of money-lending or to be involved in criminal activity or anti social behaviour themselves.

10. Risk Management Issues

Risk	Likelihood/ Impact	Risk Category	Countermeasure	Responsibility
Local people not accessing vacancies resulting in higher levels of unemployment and financial risk to the authority (council tax arrears, homelessness, etc.)	Medium/High	Strategic/ Reputational/ Financial	Work clubs promote vacancies and support applicants in acquiring the necessary skills and in making applications	Community & Partnerships Manager
Work clubs not based in areas of greatest need	Low/High	Strategic/ Reputational	Location of work clubs set according to data and local intelligence about areas of greatest unemployment	Community & Partnerships Manager
District Council withdraws from work clubs	High/ High	Reputational	Programme of recruiting and training volunteers to run work clubs	Community & Partnerships Manager

**Appendix:
Work Clubs status report – February 2013**

LICHFIELD DISTRICT WIDE WORK CLUBS

February 2013

BACKGROUND

Work clubs offer support, information, advice and guidance to local people on employment opportunities and training. They can support people to get into and back into the work place environment. Information will be available to signpost people to agencies who can help and support them in employment and career opportunities.

The concept of Work Clubs is being taken up within the priority areas of Lichfield District; they are run by a variety of voluntary and statutory organisations.

CURRENT PROJECTS**BURNTWOOD WORK CLUB**

Supported by Bromford Living and Lichfield District Council, the club was launched on 1st March 2011, and meets fortnightly. Approximately 15 people attend each session with 199 people registered altogether. Training sessions are held on interview skills, CV writing, confidence building and any other identified subjects. 47 people have gone onto employment; 11 people have gone into volunteering and 48 people have been signposted into training.

Opening hours/Venue: 9.30am-11.30am every other Tuesday at Burntwood Library
Contact: Cheryl Rice Lichfield District Council on 01543 308763
 email: Cheryl.rice@lichfielddc.gov.uk
 Marie Bull Bromford Living on 01543 420890
 email:marie.bull@bromford.co.uk

MILE OAK WORK CLUB

The Club was launched on 13th May 2011 by St Barnabas Church and runs out of their community room on a weekly basis. The work club is community run with support from local agencies. They have approx 50 people registered averaging 2-3 attending per week. 17 people have gained permanent employment.

Opening hours/Venue: 10am-12pm every Friday at St Barnabas Church Hall, Mile Oak
Contact: Cheryl Rice Lichfield District Council 01543 308763
 email: Cheryl.rice@lichfielddc.gov.uk

JIGSAW COMMUNITY HUB

Jigsaw Work Club opened its doors on the 6th June 2011. Lichfield District Council has worked in partnership with North Lichfield Initiative to run the sessions linking in with the Internet Café. They have 85 people registered, 72 have gone into training, 3 into volunteering and 11 back into work.

Opening hours/venue: 9am till 12noon every Monday
Contact: Tracy Potts Lichfield District Council on 01543 308231
 email: tracy.potts@lichfielddc.gov.uk or
 phone Jigsaw on 01543 253666 or email: NLI1@mail.com

LICHFIELD LIBRARY – Lichfield District Council and Bromford Living launched the Lichfield Library work club on 5th October 2011 from 1.30-3.30pm and it runs fortnightly, offering information, advice and guidance. The opportunity to use computers to search for job vacancies, produce and update CV's. So far 114 have registered, 51 gone into training, 10 into volunteering and 15 into work.

Opening hours/venue: 1.30pm till 3.30pm every other Wednesday
Contact: Cheryl Rice Lichfield District Council on 01543 308763 or
 Marie Bull Bromford Living on 01543 420890

ARMITAGE WITH HANDSACRE – Armitage with Handsacre work club was launched on 12th September 2012 with a Routes to Work event. A bid for funding from Job Centre Plus was successful. The work club is supported by a partnership between Lichfield District Council, Bromford Support and Handsacre Methodist Church. The launch event saw 3 new people engaged and 2 people registering to the work club network. 8 local agencies took part in the launch event to give advice and guidance. The Work Club now has 49 people registered, 3 have gained employment and 6 have signed for up for forthcoming computer training.

Opening hours/Venue 1pm – 3pm every other Wednesday at Handsacre Methodist Church Hall

Contact Elen Dawson-Butterworth on 01543 301972
Cheryl Rice Lichfield District Council on 01543 308763
Email: Cheryl.rice@lichfielddc.gov.uk

DEVELOPING PROJECTS

CURBOROUGH COMMUNITY CENTRE PRE - WORK CLUB

Philip Mantom from Lichfield & District Community and Voluntary Sector Support (LDCVS) has worked with Curborough Community Centre to develop a targeted work club specific to young parents. The pre-work club started September 2012 aimed at young parents who may not be ready to consider attending a Work Club, but who would benefit from the opportunity to gain some personal development skills and to get some support in the things they will need for their family once they consider going into work. The pre-work club will be called "Monday Me Time"; it opens between 12.30pm – 2pm at the centre.

Contact: Kim Wilkins on 01543 417149 email: centremanager@btinternet.com

RESOURCES SUPPORTING WORK CLUBS

Work Clubs Website

The District Council has developed a page on its main website to promote work clubs in the district. The website page will include links into volunteering and training opportunities.

Facebook

The two Facebook groups set up for Lichfield and Burntwood Work Clubs have now been joined into one, encompassing all work clubs in Lichfield District under the Local Strategic Partnership heading, allowing people across all the work clubs to access and share information equally on volunteering, training and employment opportunities. The facebook group has now 102 people as members.

Work Club Leads support group

A work club leads support group has been set up to offer peer support and a chance to share good practice across the work club network. These groups are being run quarterly and are open to all work club leads in the area. We have developed links with new partners who have presented the services they offer to work club members; these have included Open Door, LDCVS and Job Centre Plus.