

SUPPORTING PEOPLE INTO WORK – COORDINATING AND DELIVERING THE 'LOCAL' OFFER

SUMMARY

- Developing measures for stimulating growth in the local economy is the number one priority for the London Borough of Barnet. The council has worked with local partners to develop a local growth strategy as the primary means of meeting the challenges posed by continued austerity and increasing demand for services.
- Our strategy is underpinned by four key work streams:
 1. **Housing and regeneration** - the delivery of 7 major regeneration schemes across the borough, which will create more than 20,000 new homes and up to 30,000 new jobs over the next 20 years;
 2. **Business and Enterprise** - effective engagement and support to local businesses;
 3. **Investment in skills and employment** - with £1 million invested already; and
 4. **Investment in transport infrastructure and community facilities.**
- This Expression of Interest contributes to work stream 3 and is focused on bringing together local partners to support people on out-of-work benefits, resulting in stronger local economic growth, reducing unemployment, and lower dependency levels.
- If successful at the Borough level, there is a potential to scale it up to develop a wider sub-regional programme through Barnet's membership of the West London Alliance (WLA), which brings together 6 London boroughs with a total population of 1.8 million.

SECTION 1: BARNET'S PROPOSAL

- A coordinated programme – delivered by Barnet Council in partnership with Job Centre Plus and wider engagement from partners, including Middlesex University, Barnet College, local employers, work programme providers, and the VCS – for moving people into work.
- The programme would target a 5-10% reduction in the number of people claiming out of work benefits in Barnet, resulting in c.2000 people re-entering employment.
- The hypothesis is that benefit reform provides a strong incentive to a group of high cost individuals to find work, but that the current range of support available – both nationally and at the local level - could be more effectively targeted and co-ordinated into a streamlined 'local offer' to enable more effective access to employment.
- This will have a wider positive impact on the area, including reducing the risk to certain groups of slipping in to homelessness, stimulating demand for local services, strengthening the economy, and reducing the wider costs and consequences associated with unemployment such as increased incidence of mental health problems.
- We know from our successful programme of support to NEETs in Barnet that the range of support available to people seeking employment is extremely complex and that this complexity can act a disincentive to seek support and find employment.
- Working with Job Centre Plus and other partners, we will make the 'local offer' more accessible and easier to navigate by the 21,000 people claiming key out of work benefits in the borough, enabling them to rejoin the workforce more quickly and efficiently and reducing the local rate of unemployment closer to its pre-2007 level of around 5%.

- The 'prize' is: Reducing unnecessary complexity and bureaucracy; getting more people into work; and the potential to scale up the programme to a sub-regional level through our membership of the West London Alliance.

CONTEXT

- The welfare reform programme creates a strong incentive for individuals to find work. But the range of support available could be more effectively targeted and co-ordinated locally in order to enable them to access employment quickly and more efficiently.
- The following local factors can act as barriers to placing individuals in suitable employment:
 - Poor matching of individuals to jobs
 - Poor co-ordination of local partners
 - Duplication and gaps in provision focused on moving individuals into work
 - Lack of detailed knowledge of barriers to work and what works to overcome them

How Barnet compares: % of working age population claiming different kinds of out-of-work benefits

	Barnet (Numbers)	Barnet (%)	London (%)	Great Britain (%)
Job seekers	6,640	2.8	3.8	3.7
ESA and incapacity benefits	11,100	4.7	5.6	6.3
Lone parents	2,970	1.3	1.7	1.4
Others on income related benefits	750	0.3	0.4	0.4
Total out of work benefits	21,450	9.1	11.5	11.8

- There are three types of groups in the Borough that the programme will focus on:
 1. Those who have the skills and capabilities that, in a more buoyant economy, would expect to find work;
 2. Those who are not currently equipped to find/keep a job on a permanent basis but would like to work given the right opportunity and support; and
 3. Those who have been through the work programme but who are still unable to find employment.
- Those with the highest levels of need in the Borough are already supported through a range of existing mechanisms, such as our Troubled Families programme. This proposal focuses on the larger group of individuals who do not require intensive 1-1 support, but who are not working and are in receipt of out of work benefits.
- Civil Servants embedded into the council would work to support the development of a full understanding of this complexity locally, identifying what changes are needed to either simplify/streamline the system of central and local initiatives, and ensuring more effective co-ordination/navigation through by job hunters it is enabled and implemented.

Scaling up

- Barnet is a member of the West London Alliance of London authorities which also includes Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon and Harrow. There is potential for the programme to be scaled up to the WLA level. With a population of 1.8 million, a 5-10% reduction could equate to up to 20,000 people gaining access to the labour force across west London.

ANNEX: HOW WE MEET THE KEY CRITERIA

i. Strong collaborative leadership and a clear vision for the area

- Barnet Council's new Corporate Plan 2013-2016 sets out a clear vision for Barnet as a successful London Borough where people want to live, work and bring up their families. Working with our local partners, our priorities are to:
 1. Promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough;
 2. support families and individuals that need it whilst promoting independent; and
 3. improve the satisfaction of residents and business with Barnet as a place to live, work and study.
- This EOI would directly support these priorities by strengthening the local economy, reducing dependence on public resources, and ensuring that those who need support to find a job receive it in a way that helps them to navigate the system effectively across many different organisational boundaries.

ii. Clear commitment from across local partners and a history of partnership working

- The challenging economic climate, combined with the high level of complexity associated with many of the services that the council and its partners face, means that there is a well developed history of partnership working in Barnet.
- For example, last summer we launched a £1m programme for supporting young people who are 'NEET' back into work. The programme, developed and delivered with a range of local partners – most of whom will be working on the proposal set out here (principally JCP, Barnet College, Middlesex University and the local VCS) has corresponded with a reduction of the number of NEETs in the borough.

iii. A sustained track record of delivery

- Barnet Council and its partners are delivering one of the most ambitious transformation programmes in the public sector. This involves changing the way that services from housing to social care to waste collection are delivered so that they are more efficient and improve the quality of the service being provided, creating a more successful economy underpinned by a strong core offer, and is resilient to the challenging economic climate.
- An element of this transformation is to ensure that long-term demand for public resources reduces whilst increasing opportunities for those who need them most. For example, in adult social care a greater focus on reablement services means that nearly 90% of older people who are discharged from hospital now remain out of the health system, resulting in a real saving to the public purse and a higher quality of life for the service users.

iv. An appropriate scale to drive reforms and savings across an area

- Barnet's large population of 356,000, combined with close working relationships with local partners including the NHS, police, schools and the third sector, means that we can quickly scale up successful pilots to a borough level and realise corresponding benefits.
- An example of this already is with a trailblazer pilot programme called Right to Control (RtC), that was carried out in 2010 by Barnet Adult Social Care and Health services. The programme aimed to give disabled adults direct control over the support that was available to them. The success of the initial pilot meant that from December 2012 the RtC

assessment process was scaled up and mainstreamed into the work of the council, becoming available and accessible to all service users in the borough who were eligible.

v. Each partner providing some dedicated capacity towards a single team that helps drive a system wide approach

- In Barnet, partners understand the need to break down silos between different agencies to address complex social issues, and as a driver for realising efficiencies and service transformation across the public sector in the long term.
- For example, our multi-agency 'Troubled Families' programme works to intervene early to improve outcomes for families who frequently use the public resources (i.e. the council, the NHS and the Police) reducing escalation to acute, high cost services. Because the programme is so broad, and given the nature of the issues it deals with, the Troubled Families approach requires extensive multiagency working in order to be successful.
- There has been some real success to date, with 322 families involved at the moment. This is forecast to rise to 705 by April 2014. Of the 30 families who are been on the programme for 6 months or more, 25 have done 2 or more of the following: Stopped offending; children back to school; successfully got a job

vi. Commitment to identify money flows and benefits across partners within the area, underpinned by data on need and current services.

- We are fully committed to understanding the way money flows across services and organisations in our welfare reform project, and have an established record of doing this in other areas. For instance in the troubled families programme described in section v above.
- The potential savings from the troubled families programme are substantial, and interventions can drive down costs to a number of agencies – in particular Children's Social Care (by reducing escalation into child protection issues); the police, and the Ministry of Justice (by reducing offending), and DWP (by increasing employment). CLG estimate the total cost of 705 troubled families would be c.£50m to the public sector.
- The approach taken with the troubled families programme is the same that we would apply to the supporting people to work programme set out in this expression of interest.