

## **Process for inviting Standalone projects**

### **Background**

The delivery models for the Shared Prosperity Fund for the region have been agreed as follows:

- Anchor projects - Thematic projects that will manage major parts of the investment strategy
- Standalone projects – Strategic applications that will address challenges that are not covered by the Anchor projects. Applications will be invited via open calls.
- Commissioned projects- procured activity to deliver precisely defined activity that is not being fulfilled by the delivery models detailed above.

The Anchor projects will deliver major parts of the investment plan, with additional funding within the People and Skills programme to offer third party grants to organisations to deliver employability and skills projects where gaps are identified. As a reminder, it has been agreed that the following anchor projects be established. This approach is being replicated across the region

### **People and Skills Anchor**

The Anchor will consist of 4 elements:

#### **Employability**

A targeted employability programme to reduce unemployment and the number of economically inactive, by ensuring that all residents in Carmarthenshire receive the necessary support and training to enable them to enter the world of work. The programme will work with over 25; long and short term unemployed and any other individual who is not receiving support from any other employability project.

The programme will:

- Support people into employment
- Support individuals furthest away from the labour market into volunteering and paid work opportunities.
- Work with businesses to identify job and volunteering opportunities.
- Offer paid work opportunities
- Provide training opportunities
- Provide work preparation opportunities
- Work within the community offering support on job searches; applying for jobs and training.
- Support those underemployed to gain more hours and move into better paid jobs.

### **Youth Support**

This aspect of the project relates to seeking to address the gaps in NEET related provision

- a) To target vulnerable secondary age pupils in the county to prevent them becoming NEET aged 11-18. This approach enables delivery of additional, non-statutory interventions, to

strengthen transition, improve attendance, attainment, engagement and behaviour in those at the very greatest risk of becoming NEET.

- b) To target young people who have left secondary school and are judged to be NEET. Interventions would include supporting with access to training programmes, college and supporting young people towards employability.

The project will:

- Engage with individuals early
- Provide wellbeing support
- Support young people presenting with a range of complex needs
- Provide advice and support on housing, welfare, digital skills and numeracy skills
- Provide support within the community for young people.

### **Employability Support Fund**

This will provide targeted financial support to organisations who work with individuals who are furthest away from the labour market who have complex barriers that require specialist intervention. Organisations will be invited to submit applications for funding up to £200,000 to deliver the specialist support, each submission will be to identify the gap in provision and provide a proposal on how the funding will help in getting individuals closer to employment or volunteering through offering training and support.

### **Skills Development Fund**

This will provide targeted financial support to colleges, universities and training providers to deliver training including non-accredited short courses; accredited courses (short and up to 1 year). The main areas of skills development identified are listed below and these have been identified following consultation with employers across the county and region during preparation of the Employment and Skills Plan 2022 – 2025. The Skills Development Fund will enable individuals to be upskilled in areas where there will be job opportunities and where the existing skills gaps exist. The programme could help individuals gain additional qualifications to enable them to increase their hours of work and have a higher paid job. The key skills areas are:

- ✓ Green
- ✓ Digital
- ✓ Hospitality
- ✓ Care
- ✓ Manufacturing
- ✓ Customer Services
- ✓ Leadership and Management
- ✓ Problem Solving
- ✓ Confidence Building

Organisations will be invited to submit applications for funding up to £250,000 to deliver the training between May 2023 – December 2024. The applicants would need to demonstrate that there is no

duplication of provision either through existing FE/Apprenticeship provision or through the Personal Learning Accounts. It would add weight to the project if up to 10% match funding was included.

### **Options for Inviting Standalone projects**

A substantial percentage of the overall allocation for the County will be committed to Anchor projects. The Anchor projects however will continually be monitored to ensure that the activity meets the demands for employability support and skills development.

The remaining budget will be made available for more specialist support and help address some of the challenges identified in the Investment Plan that are not covered by the anchor projects.

An initial assessment of the key challenges and opportunities identified within the Carmarthenshire Investment Plan against the funding opportunities being made available within the Anchor projects is mapped in Table 1 for the People and Skills investment priorities. A similar exercise has already been undertaken in relation to Community and Business investment priorities.

Within the People and Skills area there are a number of key issues including above average level of Economically inactive; over 8900 residents (16 – 64) with no qualifications and only 21,300 residents (16-64) with a level 2 qualification. The Investment Plan for Carmarthenshire identifies this as a challenge and one that needs to be addressed in order to meet the increasing number of vacancies that cannot be filled across all levels and sectors. Looking at the economy of Carmarthenshire there are key areas that the skills gap is impacting and the four areas listed below have been identified within the Employment and Skills Plan for South West Wales as areas that either have a large number of vacancies; that have a poor perception as a place to work; require key skills in order to enter the sector or are a new and emerging sector where there will be huge opportunities to upskill individuals to enter the new emerging industries that are being developed in the county and the region.

Based on the findings, it is proposed that the call for applications for 'standalone applications' should specifically focus on skills for the following themes:

- Care
- Digital
- Green
- Hospitality/Catering

The stand-alone project should offer accredited short courses that will reskill individuals who are potentially thinking of a career change; are seeking employment or require upskilling to get into work. The project would create opportunities in key areas where there are a number of vacancies but not enough people having the correct skills in order to take up the roles. The project should aim to deliver as many projects as possible within the time to maximise the impact of the programme i.e, the number of individuals being trained and gaining a qualification.

Standalone projects will be invited via an open call and will be assessed against key criteria. All applications will be required to demonstrate that they can deliver by the end of December 2024 to allow sufficient time to close the programme by March 2025

**Table 1**

<b>People and Skills</b>		
<b>Challenges</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An above average level of Economically inactive people in the county many with complex barriers that restricts them getting into work.</li> <li>• High number of individuals who are NEET (not in education employment or training)</li> <li>• Access to jobs is a challenge in some instances owing to a lower population density and rurality.</li> <li>• Upskilling people to meet the changing skills landscape to meet the Net Zero industries in the region.</li> </ul>		
<b>Opportunities within local investment plan</b>	<b>Opportunities via Anchor projects</b>	<b>Proposed standalone themes</b>
Reduce the number of economically inactive individuals in Carmarthenshire and reduce the number of complex barriers individuals have in getting into work.	The People and Skills Anchor project will assist individuals with the training and advice/support to gain employment, with ongoing support for the individual and employer. The project will offer paid work opportunities, volunteering opportunities and specialist training.	
Support for specialist Employment support for individuals furthest away from the workplace because of complex barriers	The People and Skills Anchor will provide 3 <sup>rd</sup> party grant for public, private and 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector organisations. Specific focus on support for hardest to reach individuals Grants of up to £200k will be made available.	
Low wages – too many jobs do not pay enough	Opportunity via the People and Place Anchor to upskill individuals to new jobs specifically in Care; Green; Digital and Hospitality/Catering	Strategic projects focusing on short courses to deliver training in the four key areas that will support individuals to increase the opportunity to work across Carmarthenshire.
Underemployment – too many people cannot access jobs which meet their needs.	People and Skills Anchor will offer training for individuals to increase their opportunities to work for more than their contracted hours.	
Skills - supporting people and businesses to retrain, re-skill, and up-skill through blended traditional, online and work-based learning.		Strategic projects focusing on short courses to deliver training in the four key areas that will support individuals to increase the opportunity to work across Carmarthenshire.