

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

**Executive 9 September 2015**

## **Proposal to Adopt a Client-based Approach to Delivering Construction Skills in Taunton Deane**

### **Report of the Economic Development Officer**

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mark Edwards)

#### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Officers are seeking the Council's approval to work with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to adopt a Client-Based Approach (CBA), to deliver employment, apprenticeships and training through planning obligations related to major construction projects.
- 1.2 The Council considered and resolved to adopt the CBA through **procurement policies** at its meeting in September 2011. However, by proposing to deliver the CBA through **planning obligations**, officers are seeking a slightly different and wider reaching resolution to the Executive Committee's decision to deliver the CBA through the Council's procurement policies.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 As part of their planning development management function, local authorities can request contributions, either financial or in kind, through planning obligations for measures directly related to a development. This arrangement derives from S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2.2 'Section 106' agreements can include contributions to ensure that developments complement and benefit the local labour market and economy, by raising skills and enabling local people to compete for the jobs generated. Specific measures can include training (pre-employment and vocational), apprenticeships, employment advice, interview guarantees, work placements, transport arrangements and childcare. Many Local Authorities and other public sector bodies are already using charters, voluntary agreements and contract clauses to achieve this, tying developers and construction companies into delivery of a minimum number of skills and employment opportunities.
- 2.3 CITB is the Sector Skills Council and Industry Training Board for the Construction industry. The Client-Based Approach (CBA), facilitated by CITB,

and a product of the National Skills Academy for Construction, provides a toolkit to deliver employment, apprenticeships and training for public sector clients through their construction projects. Based on successful National Skills Academy for Construction projects, it includes all of the necessary components to deliver opportunities using benchmarks that have been 'employer approved'. The CBA would also build on Taunton's 'Taunton Protocol' by ensuring that firm, measurable outputs for providing construction skills are delivered.

- 2.4 Whilst the KPIs and benchmarks developed for the CBA apply to construction projects only there is the potential to work together with other Sector Skills and Training bodies to develop opportunities in other sectors locally.
- 2.5 The KPIs and benchmarks, approved by employers within the Construction sector, will be used by the Council to justify and secure s106 contributions for education, employment and skills through the planning process. Economic Development Officers will liaise with colleagues in Development Management to embed the CBA in the planning process.
- 2.6 Taunton Deane Borough Council's Core Strategy makes direct reference to the importance of Employment & Skills initiatives. Policy CP2 'Economy' states that "the Borough Council and its partner organisations will work with developers and contractors on allocated sites to secure job sustainability by improving local skills and employment opportunities by ensuring that an optimum proportion of jobs are sourced from within the local area and employers investing in relevant training and learning schemes for employees". This is supported by Policy CP5 'Inclusive Communities', which states that "Development proposals will make provision and access for all to Training and Employment Opportunities – raising the skill and wage level as well as diversifying the range of jobs".
- 2.7 There are a number of significant infrastructure projects on the horizon, for which TDBC will be the planning authority. These include the urban extensions at Monkton Heathfield and Comeytrove, Taunton Town Centre Redevelopments, and Junction 25 Employment Site Delivery. Each planning application would have a dedicated Employment and Skills Plan, submitted by contractors, with KPI's and associated benchmark targets.

### **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 CITB has approached the Council to adopt a Client Based Approach to delivering construction skills locally. The approach would be embedded in all planning obligations relating to allocated sites, and would open up the opportunity for the Council to apply for National Skills Academy for Construction Status.

### 3.2 Officers propose that the Council:

- Confirms its commitment to jointly adopting the CBA and applying for National Skills Academy for Construction Status;
- Revise the necessary Planning policies and processes to embed the CBA;
- Maintain ongoing dialogue between Planning and Economic Development Teams to monitor qualifying planning permissions.

### **Author's Comment**

- 4.1 In adopting this approach, the Council can strengthen its commitment to generating and safeguarding jobs within the local economy, supporting a rebalancing of the economy and providing leadership to other public, private and voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 4.2 It is inevitable that the majority of contracts will not run in parallel with the academic year. Therefore, particularly when apprenticeships are offered, it will be vital to make timescales explicit.

### **5. Finance Comments**

- 5.1 There is currently no financial request of the Council in relation to the scheme. Officer time to draft and administer the contracts would be met from within the Economic Development team, working closely with the Development Management service.

### **6. Legal Comments**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

### **7. Links to Corporate Business Plan**

- 7.1 This proposal links to the 'Quality and Sustainable Growth and Development' and 'Vibrant Economic Environment' Aims of the Corporate Business Plan.

### **8. Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct environmental or community safety implications arising from this report.

### **9. Equalities Impact**

- 9.1 The Client Based Approach will strengthen the Council's commitment to enabling people from a disadvantaged background and people who are from a background of deprivation and a low income to access skills and employment opportunities.

## 10. Risk Management

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Low/Medium/High</b>	<b>Mitigating Action</b>
Benchmarks are set at too high a level and act as a disincentive to development	Low	The benchmarks proposed by ConstructionSkills have been drawn up after close consultation with construction employers. If the CBA does act as a disincentive the Council will be able to disengage from the programme.

## 11. Partnership Implications

11.1 In addition to Taunton Deane Borough, this will also support the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and the Somerset Employment and Skills Board to achieve their priorities for job creation, economic inclusion and skills, as well as providing opportunities to develop local supply-chains.

## 12. Recommendation

12.1 **That the Council adopts the Client-based approach to strongly encourage delivery of employment and skills opportunities in all major construction projects in which it is the Planning Authority, and authorises Officers to progress an application for National Skills Academy status.**

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