



Plymouth Employment and Skills Board

For immediate issue

21 December 2010

Skills Board welcomes committee report

Plymouth Employment and Skills Board (ESB) has welcomed the recommendations of the Work and Pensions Committee report on Youth Unemployment and the Future Jobs Fund published today.

The Future Jobs Fund (FJF) in Plymouth was set up by the ESB and co-ordinated by the Wolseley Trust in partnership with Plymouth City Council and voluntary organisations across the city. The programme started employing young people from September 2009 and will continue to do so until March 2011.

The report has examined the cost effectiveness of the FJF programme and the potential impact of its closure on youth unemployment. It has found that the scheme may provide better outcomes for those who left school with few qualifications or training than proposed less intense schemes.

Graham Morris, Plymouth ESB's Project Director said: "We were disappointed when the coalition government decided to end the Future Jobs Fund. In Plymouth, it has been a highly successful programme helping many young people gain the skills and experience they need to find work. We welcome the Work and Pensions Committee report.

"The experience gained by those administering the scheme is invaluable and should be incorporated into any future programme aiming to support 18 -24 year olds. One size does not fit all when it comes to work-related training.

“There should always be a route into employment for young people who haven't missed out on qualifications and training, or for any other reason have been unable to climb on to the employment ladder. FJF has shown that with the right approach, so-called ‘hard to reach’ young people can prove themselves to be dedicated and extremely employable.”

The Committee has expressed concern that the new Work Programme to be introduced by the government will not launch until June 2011, or later in some areas, leaving young people without training provision or guidance. It has called for transitional support to be put in place to cover this interim period.

The report has recommended that the government undertake a full evaluation of the FJF scheme and its benefits and makes the results public. The Committee wants to see the government look at how the programme developed the means to support hard to reach young people and incorporate these findings into the new programme.

Additionally, the government should draw on the skills and experience gained by the partnerships which delivered the Fund and include small and specialist providers, so that unskilled young people are not left behind.

The report acknowledges that although more funding is being made available to create more apprentices, some young people are not ready to move directly into apprenticeships. It is keen to ensure that the appropriate support is available to help them become ready for employment.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

For more information, please contact Julie Everett at Coast Communications and Marketing on 01752 847135/07866 002625 or email Julie@coastmarcoms.co.uk

The Plymouth ESB website, www.plymouthesb.co.uk provides more information on the work of the ESB as well as reports, statistics and information available for download. ‘Work in Plymouth’ www.workinplymouth.com has been set up to provide a portal for online advice and information to individuals and businesses in Plymouth affected by the recession.

The Plymouth Employment Skills Board is responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the progress of the Plymouth Plan for World Class Skills and Employment, working within the Plymouth Local Economic Strategy (LES) and ensuring that delivery targets set for 2011, 2016 and 2020 are achieved. The Plan for World Class Skills has been drawn up by Plymouth 2020, which includes Plymouth City Council and other partners from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

Membership of the Plymouth Employment and Skills Board is drawn from the private and public

sectors under the Chairmanship of Dr Graham Stirling, Managing Director of the Barden Corporation. Its remit is to identify roles and responsibilities across the six priority sectors identified by the LES - marine, advanced engineering, tourism, medical, creative and business services - ensuring that employers, training providers and funders work together with the same goals.