

Achievements of the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative in Coventry – April 2006 to March 2009



Introduction and Overview

Between April 2006 and March 2009, Coventry City Council led the LEGI Partnership, a consortia of delivery partners and key stakeholders, in the deployment of £12,473,000 of national funding, allocated to Coventry to use in increasing levels of entrepreneurial activity.

Funding was deployed across two phases. In the first phase, a series of projects were commissioned around enterprise and employment activities; these ran from April 2006 to March 2007. The second phase, lasting until March 2009, saw the creation of a single integrated programme, designed to connect five key elements of economic regeneration:

- outreach and engagement of individuals looking to enter economic activity;
- supporting individuals into employment;
- supporting individuals into business;
- supporting existing businesses;
- attracting investment into the city to create new business opportunities.

This integrated programme was co-ordinated by Coventry City Council's Regeneration Services Team, and was delivered by the following partners:

- Amazon Initiatives
- Community Employment and Skills Team, Coventry City Council
- Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
- Heart of England Community Foundation
- Procurement Services, Coventry City Council
- Willenhall Education, Employment and Training Centre (WEETC)
- Women's Business Development Agency
- Client Support Unit, Coventry City Council
- Coventry Probation Service
- Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency
- Investment and Business Team, Coventry City Council
- Voluntary Action Coventry
- Working Actively to Change Hillfields (WATCH)

Programme Success

The LEGI Partnership has achieved considerable success, achieving more than 95% of 9 out of the 13 targets set as part of the original bid for LEGI funding, with the remaining targets under-achieved largely due to difficulties in gathering the necessary data to demonstrate achievement. While the impact of the current recession makes it difficult to see the impact of LEGI on increasing entrepreneurial activity, local research suggests that there has been some increase in attitudes and activities around enterprise in the priority areas of the city.

Output	3 year target	3 year achievement	% achievement
People engaged into the LEGI Programme	3,500	3,090	88%
New business start-ups	500	485	97%
New social enterprise starts	20	28	140%
% of new businesses still trading after 12 months	70%	68%	97%
Business assists	320	736	230%
Increase in new sales	£2.4m	£7m	292%
New jobs created	120	454	378%
Business safeguards	58	80	148%
New Business Opportunities created through new investments	150	23	15%
% of City Council spend to local SMEs	25%	Tbc	n/a
People assisted into employment	1,100	1,093	99%
% of people still in employment after 6 months	60%	43%	72%
People into jobs generated by new development (NB this is total number of jobs brought into Coventry through new development)	1,500	5,779	385%

City-wide Impact

The following map shows the distribution of outcomes achieved by the LEGI Programme across the city, with 'priority areas' highlighted.

LEGI Activity in grouped LEGI Areas

Apr 1st 2007 – Mar 31st 2009

<i>Rest of Coventry</i>	
Working Age Population	128,000
JSA Claimants	5,227
Individuals Engaged	747
Individuals Into Employment	204
Individuals into Business	171
Businesses Assisted	34
Businesses Safeguarded	3
New Jobs Created	4
Increase in Sales ('000s)	£2K

<i>Foleshill, Edgewick & Little Heath</i>	
Working Age Population	14,000
JSA Claimants	1,124
Individuals Engaged	318
Individuals Into Employment	143
Individuals into Business	44
Businesses Assisted	110
Businesses Safeguarded	13
New Jobs Created	21
Increase in Sales	£1.9M

<i>Bell Green, Henley Green & Wood End</i>	
Working Age Population	10,000
JSA Claimants	905
Individuals Engaged	208
Individuals Into Employment	107
Individuals into Business	38
Businesses Assisted	56
Businesses Safeguarded	8
New Jobs Created	23
Increase in Sales	£1.26M

<i>Hillfields & Stoke Heath</i>	
Working Age Population	12,000
JSA Claimants	1,030
Individuals Engaged	432
Individuals Into Employment	124
Individuals into Business	39
Businesses Assisted	53
Businesses Safeguarded	11
New Jobs Created	24
Increase in Sales ('000s)	£301K

<i>Canley & Tile Hill</i>	
Working Age Population	9,000
JSA Claimants	638
Individuals Engaged	166
Individuals Into Employment	84
Individuals into Business	24
Businesses Assisted	65
Businesses Safeguarded	4
New Jobs Created	33
Increase in Sales ('000s)	£822K

<i>Centre, Canal Basin, Charterhouse, Spon End & Lower Radford</i>	
Working Age Population	17,000
JSA Claimants	1,081
Individuals Engaged	324
Individuals Into Employment	94
Individuals into Business	45
Businesses Assisted	271
Businesses Safeguarded	35
New Jobs Created	67
Increase in Sales	£2.24M

<i>Binley, Willenhall & Stoke Aldemoor</i>	
Working Age Population	10,000
JSA Claimants	1,040
Individuals Engaged	533
Individuals Into Employment	154
Individuals into Business	42
Businesses Assisted	37
Businesses Safeguarded	6
New Jobs Created	3
Increase in Sales ('000s)	£273K

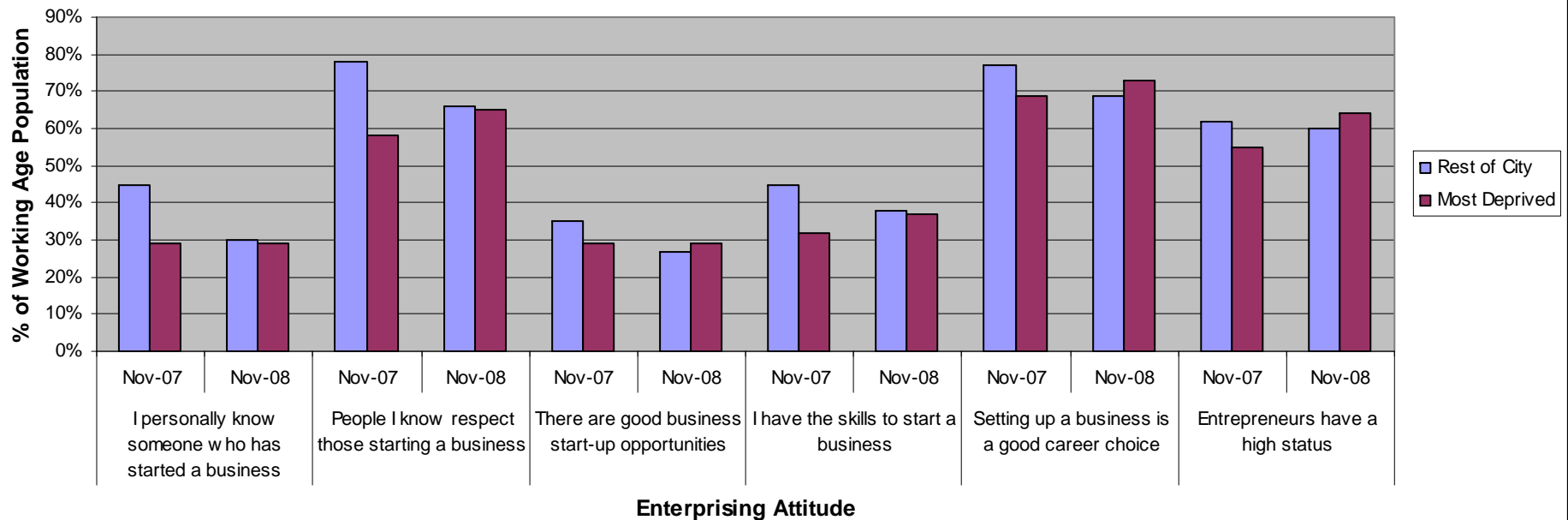


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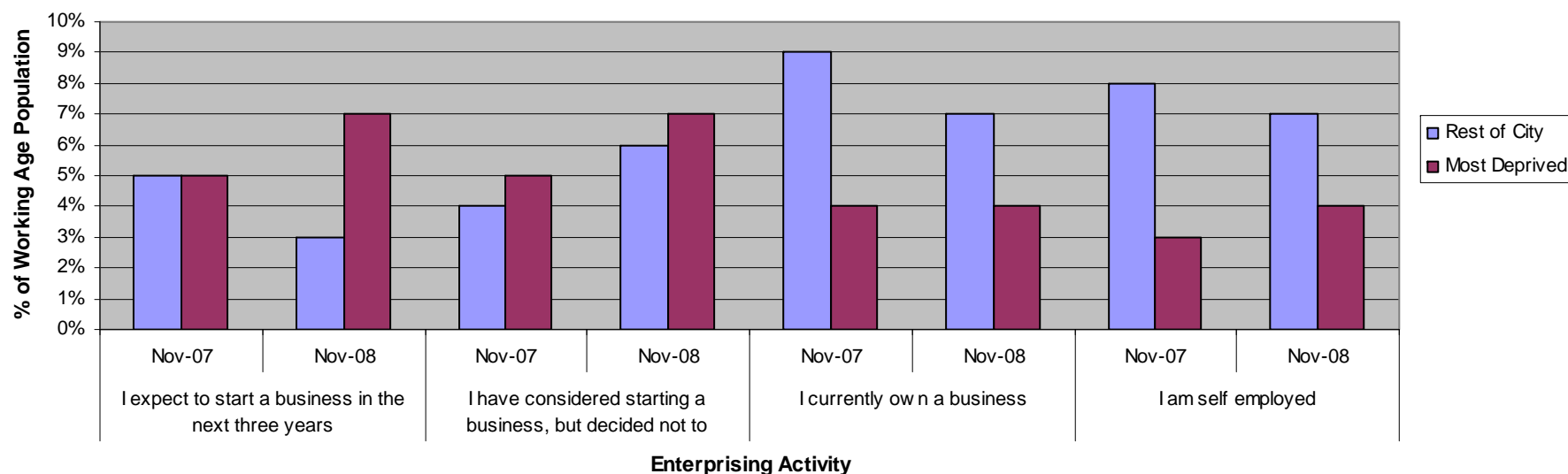
Narrowing the gap: Attitudes and Activities pertaining to Enterprise

The LEGI Programme in Coventry aimed to encourage people to consider and take steps towards starting their own business. To measure this, a research study was commissioned – the Coventry Entrepreneurship Monitor – which tracked Coventry residents' views and interactions with enterprise, over a 15 month period. Residents were classified as living in either the areas of Coventry which are amongst the 20% most deprived nationally, or in the rest of the city. The following graphs show levels of enterprising attitudes and actions in November 2007 and November 2008, with the red bars showing data for the most deprived areas of Coventry, and the blue bars showing data for the rest of the city. It is encouraging to see that over this period, the more deprived areas have either narrowed the gap, or have become more enterprising in their attitudes and actions when compared to the rest of the city.

Enterprising Attitudes: Comparing the Most Deprived areas of Coventry and the Rest of the City



Enterprising Actions: Comparing the Most Deprived areas of Coventry and the Rest of the City



Project Details

The following pages provide an overview of each project, covering what the project was aiming to do, how it went about this, and how much funding it received. The achievements of the project, and the profile of the individuals who benefited from the project are covered. Finally, these overviews provide information on how the project links into Enterprising Coventry, the umbrella service for a range of employment and enterprise services to be delivered across Coventry.

It should be noted that these provide a 'snapshot' of each project; for a more detailed understanding of what each project achieved, please refer to the Interim Evaluation, available from the following url: <http://www.legicoventry.co.uk/programme/19957.html>

Inspire & Engage: The Workmates Project

What was the project trying to achieve?

The Workmates project aimed to promote awareness of LEGI, inspire and motivate people to consider enterprise or employment, and then register individuals into the LEGI Programme if there were interested in exploring starting a business or starting work.

As well as outreach and engagement, the Workmates provided personalised one-to-one support to help clients overcome personal barriers that prevent them from progressing to employment or self-employment.

Finally, the Workmates project was designed to progress clients into the Employment and Business Start-up elements of the LEGI Programme, to allow individuals to realise their goal of starting work, or becoming their own boss.

How did the project go about achieving its aims?

A range of activities were undertaken to engage with individuals. These included attending coffee mornings, floorwalking at Job Centre Plus, and generally being present in the local community (for example in cafes and coffee shops).

The one-to-one support provided by Workmates took on a 'befriending role', drawing on support from the Barrier Breaking project where necessary – for example, childcare, confidence workshops, debt advice – to help clients become ready for work at a personal level

To get the process right when referring people to other parts of the LEGI Programme, the Workmates used a bespoke client assessment tool to help identify when an individual was ready to transition to the support of a Business Mentor or Jobs Broker.

Recognising the unusual nature of this project, innovative training in community engagement was delivered by ADEPT Community Development Agency for the Workmates.



Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2009, the LEGI Programme spent £742,212 on this project.

The project was managed and delivered by Voluntary Action Coventry (formerly Coventry Voluntary Skills Council).

1 Project Manager, 1 Project Assistant, and between 5 and 7 Workmates were employed on this project over the two year period.

What did the project achieve?

The Workmates project engaged with many individuals across Coventry, promoting the LEGI Programme and its message of becoming more enterprising.

A total of 611 individuals were registered onto the LEGI Programme through this project, and were then able to access the intensive support of a Workmate in overcoming personal barriers they had to employment or enterprise. Of those, 116 decided to pursue employment – and were referred to the Local Employment Opportunities project, and 82 people wanted to explore self-employment, and were referred to the Business Mentors. These individuals were then able to access expert advice and guidance in their journey towards business or employment.

A Social Return on Investment assessment identified a range of improvements to their wellbeing for individuals who accessed this project. Benefits included increased confidence, improved mental and physical health, and reduced social isolation. A report on this Social Return on Investment assessment can be found at the following url: <http://www.legicoventry.co.uk/programme/19957.html>

Who benefited from the project?

The LEGI Programme identified a series of 'target groups', which served as a proxy measure for supporting individuals who were likely to be economically disadvantaged.

The spread of clients across these target groups was as follows:

317 were unemployed	215 were BME
36 were refugees	100 were lone parents
46 were disabled	41 were ex-offenders
162 were young people (<30 years old)	

And whilst not a 'target group', 248 (41%) of Workmate clients were women, a group who are under-represented in both employment and business ownership.

What happens next?

Going forward, the decision was taken by the LEGI Partnership Board not to continue this project. In a changing economic climate, and with fewer resources available, it was decided to embed the lessons learned through this project into engagement and outreach activities conducted by the Business Start-up and Employment Support elements of Enterprising Coventry.

Recognising the need to work alongside community organisations, the Employment service will focus on building relationships with third sector organisations, as well as linking in with statutory services such as Job Centre Plus. Drawing on the Business Support Simplification Programme, engaging individuals towards business start up will be done through Enterprise Coaches – individuals with the expertise both to engage and support people into business.

Inspire & Engage: Barrier Breaking

What was the project trying to achieve?

The Barrier Breaking service provided support for LEGI Clients in the form of goods, services or training, to help them overcome barriers in their progression towards enterprise or employment.

The service was responsible for sourcing these interventions, through the identification of existing support services across Coventry, and where necessary by commissioning new services where there were gaps in service provision.

How did the project go about achieving its aims?

When a Workmate, Business Mentor or Jobs Broker identified and referred a client's barrier or need to the Barrier Breaking team, a 'Link Worker' identified and sourced the most appropriate intervention to overcome the barrier and therefore meet the need. With this the Barrier Breaking team supported LEGI Practitioners as they worked with clients; it was a responsive service that is driven by client need.

Wherever possible, existing services across the city are used to meet a client's needs. However, the Barrier Breaking team included a Welfare Rights advisor and Health advisor to provide expert advice and guidance on issues of welfare rights and health. This reflected the demand for these areas of service.



Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2009, the LEGI Programme spent £652,482 on this project.

The project was co-ordinated by the Client Support Unit, a team within Coventry City Council. Barrier Breaking services were brokered in from a range of providers across the city.

1 Project Manager, 1 Partnership Development Officer, 2 Link Workers, and 2 specialist advisors were employed through this project.

What did the project achieve?

A total of 736 individuals received support through this project, with a total of 967 interventions made.

The Barrier Breaking service was designed to remove barriers people faced towards enterprise or employment. As such, clients using the service faced barriers which reduced their chances of starting a business or entering employment. To see the impact of Barrier Breaking, we compared a cohort of 68 Business Mentor clients who had received Barrier Breaking support against the full complement of Business Mentor clients, and examined their success rate in starting trading. The results were very encouraging, with 28% of clients from both groups entering business. While not conclusive, this suggests that the Barrier Breaking interventions had provided disadvantaged clients with the same chance of starting a business as individuals who did not need to access the Barrier Breaking service.

There was a high demand on the Welfare Rights service; this comprised 36% of all interventions. It proved to be particularly effective in supporting clients who wish to move into self-employment.

Who benefited from the project?

The Barrier Breaking service was used across by clients across the Programme. On average, for every 10 Workmate clients there were 4 Barrier Breaking interventions; for every 10 Employment Strand clients there were 3 interventions, and for Business Mentor clients there were 2 interventions.

By its very nature, the service was used by individuals facing barriers towards enterprise or employment. However, a detailed analysis of clients found that the service was used especially by individuals who were unemployed, lone parents, ex-offenders, or disabled. The service was under-used by individuals from BME communities.

What happens next?

The client base for Enterprising Coventry will continue to have barriers, for which they will need support in overcoming. Thus, a Barrier Breaking service will continue to be delivered as part of Enterprising Coventry.

Moving forward, a key adaptation to the service model will be a shift from client-led to employer-led, through greater linkage with labour market intelligence via Employer Engagement activities undertaken by the delivery partnership of Enterprising Coventry.

Inspire & Engage: Engaging with Enterprise and Employment Fund

What was the project trying to achieve?

This project aimed to encourage people to think about either entering employment or starting their own business, through funding activities in the voluntary and community sector which would achieve this goal.

How did the project go about achieving its aims?

This project funded other activities which themselves achieved the goal of encouraging people to consider entering employment or starting their own business. As a result, the activities of this project were around promoting awareness of LEGI and this Fund, and then supporting voluntary and community organisations through the process of applying for funding.

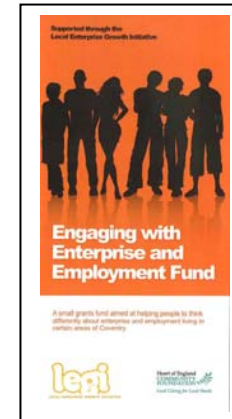
The actual projects were varied in their nature – some were vocational (including upskilling in carpentry and driving), some focusing on personal issues such as confidence and self-esteem, and others promoting volunteering and social enterprise as routes to economic activity.

What did the project achieve?

While the Fund was aimed explicitly at raising awareness of employment and enterprise, an implicit aim for the Fund was to engage people into the wider LEGI Programme. Analysis of available data suggests that around 9% of individuals participating in activities funded through this project went on to join the LEGI Programme – through joining the Workmates, Jobs Brokers or Business Mentors.

What happens next?

Going forward, the decision was taken by the LEGI Partnership Board not to continue this project. In a changing economic climate, and with fewer resources available, it was decided to use other approaches to engagement, particularly as this project proved an expensive referral route into the LEGI Programme.



Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2009, the LEGI Programme spent £231,387 on this project.

The fund was administered by the Heart of England Community Foundation; 69% of funds went to the voluntary and community organisations which were successful in applying for funding.

Who benefited from the project?

Activities funded by this project supported a range of disadvantaged beneficiaries. These included the following:

- People with learning difficulties
- People with mental health issues
- Lone parents
- Unemployed
- Ex-offenders

Inspire & Engage: Probation Employment Team

What was the project trying to achieve?

The over-arching objective of this project was to support individuals who are on the caseload of Coventry Probation Service toward and into sustainable employment, thus reducing unemployment among this target group and reducing re-offending rates.

How did the project go about achieving its aims?

Strong links were established with the Probation Service, who referred clients through a case-conferencing process into the Probation Employment Team (PET) project.

Once a client registered with the PET project, they were supported on a journey towards employment. For some clients, this included overcoming barriers, such as housing – for which there is a dedicated Housing Resettlement Officer based with Whitefriars Ltd. The project built close working links with the Progress to Work project, which supported clients with drug or alcohol misuse issues

If a client required additional support, they could be referred to the Local Employment Opportunities project where they would receive the support of a Jobs Broker as well as access to a wider range of Barrier Breaking services, provided by the Client Support Unit and other agencies.

What did the project achieve?

The project built a strong partnership between Coventry City Council, Coventry Probation Service, and Whitefriars Housing Ltd, with an excellent flow of clients from Probation Service to the PET project.

A total of 83 clients have been supported through the project, of whom 20 have entered employment.

Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2008 and 31st March 2009, the LEGI Programme spent £88,723 on this project.

In addition to the funding provided by LEGI, Coventry Probation Service has provided funding for three additional posts within the project.

The project has been managed by the Client Support Unit of Coventry City Council, and has been delivered in partnership with Coventry Probation Service and Whitefriars' Housing.

Who benefited from the project?

The project worked exclusively with offenders who are currently on orders with the Probation Service.

What happens next?

Going forward, offenders have been identified as a target group for Enterprising Coventry. The work done to support this client group into economic activity will build upon the learning and successes of this project.

Inspire & Engage: Community Engagement Points

What was the project trying to achieve?

In order to capitalise on the links that many community and voluntary organisations have with individuals who may benefit from engaging with the LEGI Programme, a one year pilot was run with 18 local voluntary and community organisations, whereby they would act as 'Community Engagement Points'.

The overarching purpose of the project was to increase the number of referrals of individuals into the LEGI Programme. In particular, this aimed to increase the flow of individuals from the 'hardest to reach' client groups, as these Community Engagement points would have a footfall of existing clients already utilising their local services and venues.

How did the project go about achieving its aims?

Organisations which were contracted as Community Engagement Points were tasked with increasing awareness of the LEGI Programme amongst individuals who accessed the venue and the local community. This was achieved through displaying marketing materials, and through Community Engagement Point staff attending LEGI citywide update meetings in order to stay up to date with the LEGI Programme – and thus explain the offer to individuals accessing their venues.

Where an individual was interested in accessing the LEGI Programme, they would be referred to the Workmates or to the LEGI Helpline.



Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2008, the LEGI Programme spent £90,000 on this project.

Funding was provided to 18 different voluntary and community organisations across Coventry.

What did the project achieve?

As a pilot project this was successful, in terms of the lessons learned relating to how to work with voluntary and community organisations as referral routes into the LEGI Programme.

The project also provided a significant number of referrals - with the details of a total of 161 individuals and 20 businesses passed on to either the LEGI Helpline or the Workmates project.

Who benefited from the project?

The organisations contracted as Community Engagement Points were chosen as their customer base included individuals who matched the specific disadvantaged groups that the LEGI Programme was looking to support. The proportion of Community Engagement Points working with each 'target group' is as follows:

- 67% of CEPs worked with unemployed people
- 67% of CEPs worked with individuals from a BME background
- 59% of CEPs worked with refugees
- 50% of CEPs worked with young people
- 39% of CEPs worked with lone parents
- 28% of CEPs worked with disabled people
- 28% of CEPs worked with ex-offenders

What happens next?

This project achieved its goals of raising awareness of LEGI across Coventry, and as a pilot project it succeeded in identifying lessons around how to engage with and utilise existing voluntary and communication organisations.

However, the LEGI Partnership Board decided not to renew this project after the one year pilot, particularly based on its value for money as a referral route.

Going forward, these lessons will be embedded into the Employment Service, through dedicating resource to engaging with third sector and statutory organisations in a more pro-active manner, and ensuring that we have a clear offer for the customers of those organisations.

Employment: The Local Employment Opportunities Project

What was the project trying to achieve?

The overarching aim of this project is to assist individuals into employment, and then to support people in staying in their new job for at least 26 weeks. Through this, the Local Employment Opportunities project will increase economic activity in the more disadvantaged areas of Coventry through increasing levels of sustained employment.

How did the project go about achieving its aims?

In order to support individuals into employment, this project deployed a team of Jobs Brokers across priority areas in Coventry. These practitioners provided a range of employment support services, such as one-on-one employment guidance, job search and match, and CV preparation.

Where barriers to employability existed, the Jobs Brokers were able to draw on interventions from the Barrier Breaking team. This included soft skill and vocational training, and the purchase of items such as clothing for interview, as well as initial travel money.

Once an individual entered employment, their Jobs Broker would keep in touch with the client and their employer, in order to provide support in addressing any issues that either party may be experiencing. This comprised a 'post employment support' role, designed to ensure that the client sustained their new job.

To capitalise on large-scale investments into the city, a dedicated employment Officer co-ordinated large scale recruitment activities.



Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2009, the LEGI Programme spent £689,806 on this project.

The project was co-ordinated and partly delivered by Coventry City Council; two other delivery partners were contracted – Working Actively To Change Hillfields (WATCH) and Willenhall Education Employment and Training Centre (WEETC)

Nine 'Jobs Broker' posts were deployed through this project, along with the management and administrative support provided by Coventry City Council.

What did the project achieve?

Between April 1st 2007 and March 31st 2009, this project supported a total of 914 individuals into employment.

The project has kept in touch with many of the people it supported into work, and found that 43% of them were still in employment after 6 months.

As well as supporting unemployed people into work, this project provided assistance to individuals facing labour market difficulty (i.e. people with few skills, in and out of low paid/ temporary work), helping them move into more secure and rewarding employment.

Finally, this project has provided support to 75 businesses with their recruitment needs, providing a critical link between employers and employees.

Who benefited from the project?

This project has delivered a service that has seen a significant uptake by women; 52% of clients supported were female – which is a high proportion when compared to either the number of women in work, or looking for work.

It is also a service that is accessed by a high proportion of individuals from BME communities – with some 39% of clients supported into employment coming from this group.

What happens next?

In order to streamline service delivery and minimise handovers between projects, a role, termed 'Employment Advisor', will be implemented. This role builds on the previous roles of Jobs Brokers, Post Employment Support Work, and elements of the Workmate role, by incorporating the responsibility for providing support in overcoming personal barriers alongside the existing requirement to assist individuals in entering and staying in employment.

The success of the Employment Officer in supporting significant numbers of individuals into employment through working with employers will be embedded through greater focus on employer engagement activities.

As we head into a period of rising unemployment, it is more important than ever that assistance is provided to the most disadvantaged individuals of Coventry, supporting them into sustainable employment.

Business Start-up: The Business Mentors Project

What was the project trying to achieve?

The role of Business Mentors was to help individuals to explore a business idea and see if they may want to consider starting trading. If an individual decided to take their idea forward, then the Mentor would provide the support and assistance to help them start their own business.

Thus, the project aimed to support and enable people from under represented groups to start-up sustainable businesses.

The project also aimed to complement the wider LEGI Programme by offering a route into self-employment for individuals accessing other elements of the Programme such as the Workmates or the Local Employment Opportunities project.

How did the project go about achieving its aims?

The primary way in which the Business Mentors achieved their aims was through the provision of expert one-to-one pre-start business advice and support to clients, including assistance to assess the commercial viability of a business idea, guidance on formulating a business plan and case flow forecasting, help to understand the legal and financial requirements for the business, and direction on how to market and sell their product or service.

Where appropriate, clients were provided with access to IT facilities through three 'Community Enterprise Pods'. In addition, clients could make use of Microsoft Office software and start-up templates through a 'Virtual Incubator'

Finally, the Business Mentors were able to offer small-scale grants for clients close to the time they commenced trading.

Once a client started trading, they received ongoing support for up to 12 months, at which point they would transition to the Business Support element of the LEGI Programme, delivered by the Business Coaches.



Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2009, the LEGI Programme spent £1,088,515 on this project.

The project was co-ordinated and also partly delivered by Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce; three other delivery partners were contracted – Amazon Initiatives, Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency, and the Women's Business Development Agency.

Ten 'Business Mentor' posts were deployed through this project, along with the management and administrative support provided by Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce.

What did the project achieve?

Between April 1st 2007 and March 31st 2009, this project supported 403 individuals into business, leading to the creation of 311 new businesses, of which 25 were social enterprises.

The project has kept in touch with many of the businesses it helped to start, and found that 68% were still trading after 12 months.

As well as helping a substantial number of individuals into business, the Business Mentors have helped over 1,700 people explore a business idea – some of whom went on to start a business, others of whom decided business was not for them.

Who benefited from the project?

This project has delivered a service that has seen a significant uptake by women; 40% of clients supported were female – which is a high proportion, when compared to either the number of women in business, or looking to start their own business.

It is also a service that is accessed by a high proportion of individuals from BME communities – with one in three clients coming from this group.

Finally, this project has proved an excellent way of supporting individuals who were previously economically inactive, with 38% of individuals supported into business being unemployed.

What happens next?

Business start-up support will continue to be provided, with the emphasis changing from supporting an individual who is ready to start a business, to a position where practitioners are helping people become ready for enterprise. This will align with the Government's Business Support Simplification Programme, with activity engaging individuals towards business start up being managed through Enterprise Coaches – individuals with the expertise both to engage and support people into business.

Business Support: The Business Coaches Project

What was the project trying to achieve?

The role of the Business Coaches project was to provide support and advice to small businesses in the most deprived areas of Coventry.

Support and advice was aimed at enabling businesses to grow (through new sales or additional staff) or become safeguarded against decline or closure.



How did the project go about achieving its aims?

The primary way in which this project achieved its goal of supporting businesses was through the provision of expert one-to-one business assistance, including advice on business planning, accessing finance, marketing and sales and product development.

Where appropriate, funding was provided to connect a business to professional services, training and consultancy.

Finally, there were some small-scale grants available for businesses to help promote through a business development project connection with external support available provided through the private sector.

Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2009, the LEGI Programme spent £1,068,371 on this project.

The project was co-ordinated and also partly delivered by Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce; four other delivery partners were contracted – Amazon Initiatives, Coventry City Council, Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency, and the Women's Business Development Agency.

Ten 'Business Coach' posts were deployed through this project, along with the management and administrative support provided by Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce.

What did the project achieve?

This project provided assistance to 626 businesses. As a result of this assistance, some 175 new jobs were created, and businesses saw their sales increase by a total of just over £7,000,000. In addition to these significant levels of growth, the interventions of Business Coaches led to the safeguarding of 80 businesses.

Who benefited from the project?

30% of businesses assisted through LEGI were owned by women, and one in three businesses assisted were owned by BME individuals.

What happens next?

Support for existing business will continue but the emphasis will shift from geographic eligibility to helping businesses in defined sectors that are seen as important to growth within the city, this includes manufacturing, design, retail, Women Owned and BME business. This will align with the Government's Business Support Simplification Programme and businesses will be guided towards the mainstream support presently provided through Business Link. There will also be an emphasis on providing quick response support to businesses affected by the present recession.

Business Support: The Relationship Managers Project

What was the project trying to achieve?

The role of Relationship Managers was to develop and maintain strong relationships with senior directors and managers of medium and large businesses and employers (including larger public sector organisations) in Coventry, which allowed the following objectives to be met:

- Gather strategic business intelligence
- Promote elements of the 'LEGI Agenda' – such as employing people from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Support these organisations to retain and grow investment in Coventry
- Develop and promote the LEGI brand across employers in the city.

How did the project go about achieving its aims?

Through the relationships formed with employers, Relationship Managers were able to discuss and promote elements of the LEGI Agenda, such as willingness to recruit from deprived areas of Coventry. Intelligence was gathered around the growth intentions of the employer. This intelligence was then disseminated to other LEGI projects, in addition to City Council teams and local, regional and national strategic bodies through reports, presentations, meetings and discussions.

In the course of interacting with employers, Relationship Managers were able to identify areas of support they could provide. This included provision of advice and guidance on business issues, connecting vacancies to the Local Employment Opportunities project, raising planning concerns with the City Council team, and facilitating networking of organisations across Coventry. This strategic support also helped to maintain the presence of the business in Coventry.



Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2009, the LEGI Programme spent £229,298 on this project.

The project was delivered by Coventry City Council and Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, each of which employed one Relationship manager.

What did the project achieve?

Between April 1st 2007 and March 31st 2009, the Relationship Managers met with a total of 256 of Coventry's larger employers. They provided business assistance to 93 of these organisations. Networking was facilitated between 77 of the Relationship Manager clients and other organisations.

During the course of interacting with employers, Relationship Managers identified organisations looking to recruit. Their details were passed on the Local Employment Opportunities project, which was then able to link up vacancies with individuals looking to enter work.

The project has also identified a pool of goodwill amongst company executives who are keen to support the agenda of supporting disadvantaged individuals into employment.

Who benefited from the project?

Just over half (50.4%) of the businesses which Relationship Managers met with were based in the more deprived areas of Coventry, meaning that the support provided through this project went mostly to supporting economic activity in the areas which needed it most – with well over half of the 93 specific instances of assistance being delivered to employers based in the more deprived areas (58%).

Relationship Managers established connections with organisations across all sectors. Most significant were manufacturing (22% of visits), professional services (22% of visits), and retail (12%).

What happens next?

The project will continue to meet the need for engaging with large employers and linking them into the 'LEGI Agenda' of supporting people from the most disadvantaged into employment. However, the current economic downturn has created a special additional responsibility for the Relationship Managers. Being well placed to gain and share information on effected businesses, this project will work with colleagues and partners to help businesses avoid redundancies. This will be done under the umbrella of the Coventry and Warwickshire Economic Recovery Partnership.

New Business Opportunities: Inward Investment

What was the project trying to achieve?

The purpose of the Inward Investment project was to encourage companies to invest in and locate within the more deprived areas of Coventry, thus creating employment and new business opportunities within these areas.

The project also intended to influence the culture of Coventry City Council Inward Investment staff, in order to create a sustainable approach to attracting investors into the more deprived areas of Coventry.

How did the project go about achieving its aims?

Activities were broadly divided into two areas;

Firstly, the more deprived areas of Coventry were promoted as an investment location. This was approached directly through attendance at national and regional business shows and exhibitions in order to actively promote this area to new start up and existing businesses which are looking to relocate, expand or open new branches. This was also approached indirectly; the project funded a single Inward Investment Officer who was part of a wider Inward Investment team. The role of the wider team is to attract investment into Coventry; the role of the LEGI funded officer was to promote investment into the specific areas of deprivation.

The second area of activity was the provision and development of a property search facility for LEGI clients, and businesses interested in relocating, providing a tailored service to the businesses to maximise their opportunities.



Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2009, the LEGI Programme spent £229,298 on this project.

The project was managed and delivered under contract by the Investment and Business Team of Coventry City Council.

What did the project achieve?

Through the investment which this project has brought into Coventry, a total of 281 new jobs have been created.

As well as jobs, the project has brought in new opportunities for businesses in Coventry. A total of 23 businesses either started trading, or diversified into a new product or service market, as a result of investment brought into Coventry by this project.

The project has also safeguarded businesses within the LEGI areas where the business has been under threat of forced relocation. Three companies were safeguarded in this way, keeping 20 jobs in Coventry.

When an organisation looking to invest in Coventry contacts the Inward Investment team, the team runs a search on suitable properties in the city and returns this 'property offering' to the potential investor. Since this project has been launched, the proportion of 'property offerings' which include a property in the more deprived areas of Coventry has increased, indicating that this project has succeeded in influencing the wider Inward Investment team to promote the more deprived areas of Coventry as investment locations.

What happens next?

The project will continue to promote the less affluent areas of Coventry to organisations looking to invest in the city. It will be broadened out to include a service focused on supporting public sector relocations, primarily from London, into Coventry. This relocation service builds on the considerable success Coventry has enjoyed so far in attracting such organisations as the QCA and Severn Trent to invest in our city.

New Business Opportunities: Supply2Cov

What was the project trying to achieve?

The purpose of the Supply2Cov project was to increase the proportion of Coventry City Council's spend with local small and medium enterprises – i.e. to redirect Council spend into the local economy, thus encouraging the growth of local businesses.

How did the project go about achieving its aims?

There were three main threads to the activities of this project.

The first was to establish the current picture of procurement activities within the Council. This required identifying all Council staff involved in procurement activities (not just those who are full time procurement professionals); it also involved financial analysis of annual Council spend, which allowed the project to identify whether changes in spend were taking place.

The second thread was the provision of support to businesses in tendering with Coventry City Council; this was achieved through an 'Understanding Public Procurement Programme' which included tendering workshops, and two 'Meet the Buyer' networking events attended by major public sector procurers in the West Midlands and local businesses looking to supply goods and services.

The final thread built upon the second, by supporting Council staff involved in procurement activities to 'think local' when putting goods and services out to tender. This involved running seminars and workshops to promote the 'think local' agenda, and the development of an eTendering system which makes it easier for local suppliers to access tendering opportunities.



Funding and Delivery Partners

Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2009, the LEGI Programme spent £193,754 on this project.

The project was managed and delivered under contract by the Procurement Services department of Coventry City Council.

What did the project achieve?

This project is designed to increase the potential for local businesses to supply goods and services to Coventry City Council, with the expectation that this will result in an actual increase in local procurement by the Council.

The successful launch of the eTendering system was a major achievement for the Supply2Cov project towards this aim. The system has been promoted to local businesses who, once registered, will receive automatic notification of procurement opportunities which match their business.

Through internal awareness events, 20% of Council staff have been exposed to the 'Think Local' agenda. Close to four in five attendees of the 'Meet the buyer' programme, had never tendered with the Council before, a fact that demonstrates the success of the programme in raising awareness amongst the local private sector of the potential for winning public sector contracts.

In terms of actual business won, the Meet the Buyer event led to £24,600 of actual business and £184,000 anticipated new business over the coming 12 months.

What happens next?

Going forward, the LEGI Partnership Board took the decision not to continue this project. Instead, the lessons learned from Supply2Cov will be embedded within the wider Procurement Services of Coventry City Council. The establishment of the eTendering system provides local businesses with the ongoing opportunity to access tendering opportunities with the Council, and the awareness raising events with Council staff mean that the 'Think Local' agenda has been disseminated across much of the staff responsible for procurement within Coventry City Council.