

Report of Programme Manager, Stronger Families

Report to Director of Children’s Services

Date: March 2017

Subject: European Structural and Investment Funds Programme & Big Lottery Funded Building Better Opportunities: Approval to enter the grant agreement and accept funding of £3.5m



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| Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-In? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Summary of main issues

- As set out in the 2016/17 Best Council Plan Update, the council has an ambition for Leeds to have a strong economy and to be a compassionate city, tackling poverty and inequalities. In 2015/16, activities contributing to these aims included helping more than 4,600 people make the transition from benefits into work and improving employment outcomes for individuals with complex needs.
- Following a successful two stage bid the Council received notification of the award of £3.5m to deliver a project known as Stronger Families from the Building Better Opportunities (BBO) fund over two years. The BBO programme is match funded by both the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) and Big Lottery but managed by the Big Lottery, this injection of funds creates an opportunity for Leeds and Bradford to deliver preventative early intervention support to families to address barriers to employment and support them in their journey back to work at a faster rate than would otherwise be possible in the current financial climate.
- This project will be implemented across Leeds and Bradford over the next two years to support a minimum of 1081 unemployed individuals within family settings across the two cities. The project is targeted at families who without intervention may become troubled families but currently do not meet the criteria for support under the national Troubled Families Programme. It aims to help those with multiple barriers move closer to the job market and into sustainable employment.

4. This project is to be led by Leeds City Council but delivered in partnership with the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 24 third sector delivery partners and three non-delivering strategic partners across Leeds and Bradford.
5. BBO require Leeds City Council, as lead partner for the project, to enter into the grant agreement by 22nd March 2017. Entering into the grant agreement confirms acceptance of the grant of £3.5m for delivery of the Stronger Families project; part of the BBO programme.
6. Due to the timescales imposed by BBO; there is insufficient time to gain Executive Board approval to enter into grant agreement with BBO. The Director of Children's Services is therefore requested to approve the decision in line with the council's special urgency procedures.
7. BBO have placed an embargo on sharing news of the funding award until 24th March when a formal announcement will be published by BBO.

Recommendations

8. The Director of Children's Services is recommended to:
 - Provide approval to enter into the grant agreement with Building Better Opportunities for Leeds Children's Services.
 - Provide approval to accept the grant of £3.5m of European Structural and Investment Funds & Big Lottery funds as part of the Building Better Opportunities programme.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Director of Children's Services to enter into a grant agreement with Building Better Opportunities (BBO) and to accept the grant of £3.5m of European Structural and Investment funds & Big Lottery funds as part of the BBO programme.

2 Background information

- 2.1 In late 2015 Leeds City Council submitted a stage one bid for the BBO fund which is made up of match funding from the Big Lottery and European Social Fund but is managed by Big Lottery. The bid was submitted on behalf of a partnership including City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and a number of third sector partners who expressed an interest and ability to deliver the outcomes of the programme. The project title was *'Early Intervention for families at risk of becoming troubled families – Bradford and Leeds.'*
- 2.2 In late spring 2016 the project team were informed that the bid was successful at stage one and were invited to submit a stage two bid being the only partnership from the Leeds and Bradford locality successfully invited to submit a stage two bid. The deadline for the stage two bid was 7th November 2016 and required considerable development work with potential providers, key stakeholders and families. The project team received confirmation that the stage two bid has been accepted and the programme has been allocated £3.5m to deliver the programme across Leeds and Bradford over two years. BBO has placed an embargo on sharing news of the funding award until 24th March when a formal announcement will be published by BBO.
- 2.3 The project title was *'Early Intervention for families at risk of becoming troubled families – Bradford and Leeds.'* However it is now known as the 'Stronger Families' project.
- 2.4 The project is based on 3 key principles identified in the project brief from Big Lottery as prevention, early intervention and early remedial treatment. The aim of the project is to reach those families who do not yet meet the threshold for more intensive services, such as the Troubled Families Programme known in Leeds as Families First.
- 2.5 Leeds has successfully delivered its Families First programme in partnership with third sector providers and the BBO funding allows us to build upon these strong partnerships to deliver the project with a strong whole family approach which will enhance the early help offer to children and families across Leeds and Bradford. The Stronger Families partnership consists of Leeds City Council, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 24 third sector delivery partners and 3 strategic partners who will not deliver but support the partnership.
- 2.6 A competitive exercise to identify delivery partners was undertaken using the Yortender system and with the support of procurement colleagues to ensure a clear, fair and transparent process.
- 2.7 All participants on the project must be unemployed or economically inactive with a particular focus on those who are most at risk of social exclusion. The project is

aimed at families who require early intervention and preventative support to remove or reduce barriers to employment and progress their journey towards the job market. Barriers can include but are not limited to parents and children involved in anti-social behaviour or criminal activity, children who do not attend school regularly and parents and children with mental health issues.

- 2.8 A target for the project was set by Big Lottery of working with at least 865 people across Leeds and Bradford however we have committed to a stretch target of 25%. Therefore the target across the two years is to work with 1081 participants across the two local authority areas. We have agreed that a notional split of 55% to 45% will be applied meaning over the two years a minimum of 595 people in Leeds and 487 in Bradford will be supported.
- 2.9 Outcomes measured by Big Lottery for the project include the number of people who move on to education and training, the number that move onto employment and the number who move onto job searching with targets set for each of these.
- 2.10 The delivery model agreed includes a range of key worker providers who will support participants through their journey to work and a range of specialist interventions which can be drawn upon as and when needed. These specialist interventions are varied but are broken down into the three broad categories of health and wellbeing (including mental health), financial inclusion and employability support. The model also includes two operational hubs, one in Leeds and one in Bradford. The operational hub will help co-ordinate referrals into each locality, support the interface between key working and specialist intervention and help share and implement good practice across both Leeds and Bradford.
- 2.11 In order to effectively manage the programme of work the bid has included provision of approximately £400k over two years to recruit a central team including a project manager, contract management resource, quality and evaluation, finance and audit and administrative support.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Leeds City Council have received confirmation that the stage two bid has been accepted and the Stronger families partnership has been allocated £3.5m to deliver the programme across Leeds and Bradford over two years.
- 3.2 BBO requires Leeds City Council, as lead partner for the project, to enter into the grant agreement by 22nd March 2017. Entering into the grant agreement confirms acceptance of the grant of £3.5m for delivery of the Stronger Families project; part of the BBO programme.
- 3.3 Due to the timescales imposed by BBO; there is insufficient time to gain Executive Board approval to enter into grant agreement with BBO. The Director of Children's Services is therefore requested to approve the decision in line with the council's special urgency procedures.
- 3.4 BBO has placed an embargo on sharing news of the funding award until 24th March when a formal announcement will be published by BBO.

3.2 Next Steps

- 3.2.1 If the decision is taken to enter into the grant agreement with BBO the next steps are as follows:
- 3.2.2 A Partnership Agreement will be put in place with all delivery partners that clearly sets out all roles and responsibilities, monitoring and financial arrangements to be signed by all partners.
- 3.2.3 Led by the Project Manager governance structures which were proposed in the stage two bid will be put in place. This includes a project board with representation from Leeds City Council, Bradford Metropolitan District Council, deliver partners, strategic partners and other key stakeholders including DWP.
- 3.2.4 The partnership aims to be a restorative partnership which facilitates a high support and high challenge approach and ensures the sharing of best practice from across the partnership in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 In order to inform the stage two bid significant consultation took place with a range of stakeholders including Housing Services, food banks, clusters and mental health professionals. Consultation was also undertaken directly with vulnerable families through an exercise managed by Voluntary Action Leeds who are one of the strategic partners on the bid
- 4.1.2 Briefings were held with the Executive Member for Children and Families and the Executive Member for Employment, Enterprise and Opportunity in January 2017 to update them on the bid.
- 4.1.3 Ongoing discussions throughout the process have taken place with organisations who are leading on other bids across the Leeds City Region to share best practice and with colleagues within Leeds City Council who have experience of delivering European funded projects.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 The stage two bid submitted was required to specifically address our approach to equalities in how the project is managed and run. There is also a specific target within the project outline as to the number of participants from ethnic minorities we are expected to work with over the two year period.
- 4.2.2 An equality impact screening has been completed. This assessment confirmed that due consideration has been given to all equality groups. This will continue to be monitored throughout the delivery period through ongoing contract management, quality assurance and the sharing of best practice across the partnership. In addition many of our delivery partners are community based organisations who work within diverse local communities.

4.2.3 The equality impact screening is attached as appendix 1

4.3 Council Policies and Best Council Plan

4.3.1 The proposals set out in the BBO bid complements the ambitions set out in the Best Council Plan 2015-20, specifically to 'promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth by improving the economic wellbeing of local people and businesses' with a specific focus on helping families address issues acting as a barrier to employment.

4.3.2 The project will also support the outcomes contained within the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2015-2019 – from good to great. The project will support the development of a restorative city by working with whole families to address barriers to employment such as child attendance at school or anti-social behaviour therefore contributing to the obsessions, outcomes and priorities set out within the plan.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 In the current financial climate of reduced resources to deliver key priorities the ESIF & Big Lottery is a significant source of external funding which can support the authorities early help offer.

4.4.2 By utilising a whole family approach and focus on early intervention and prevention the service will aim to support families to address issues before they require more intensive and costly intervention.

4.4.3 Competitive exercises were undertaken to establish the final lists of delivery partners and financial submissions from partners scrutinised and benchmarked to maximum outputs for the funds available.

4.4.4 The bid includes dedicated finance, contract management and quality assurance resource to ensure outcomes and expenditure are monitored throughout the life of the project to ensure value for money.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 Owing to the timing of the formal notification that Children's Services have been successful in being awarded big lottery and ESIF funding as part of the BBO programme funding of £3.5 million, the service could not meet the 28 day notice period required to publish this matter on the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions. BBO requires the Local Authority to sign and return the grant acceptance form by 22nd March 2017. The funding requires immediate approval by the Local Authority to allow implementation of the plans submitted to the European Union and The National Lottery, therefore, the proposed decisions set out in the recommendations of this report could not be deferred. As such, given that this matter is a Key Decision, could not be published on the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions for the required 28 days and has not been published for 5 clear working days prior to the decision being taken, it is proposed that the recommendations detailed within this report are considered by the Director of Children's Services, in

line with the Council's 'Special Urgency' procedures, as detailed at Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 2.6.

- 4.5.2 As required by this rule, the Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) has been notified and has confirmed her agreement that the matter is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.
- 4.5.3 Additionally, given that the decision to award the funding agreement is embargoed until the 24th March but the agreement has to be signed by 22nd March, the documentation is being published at the earliest opportunity, following the lifting of the embargo.
- 4.5.4 The notification of the Key decision was published on the 13th March 2017 on the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions.
- 4.5.5 In addition it is recommended that this decision be exempted from call-in on the basis that the decision is urgent i.e. that any delay would seriously prejudice the Council's and the public's interests. Given the limited timescales (as detailed above), the 5 clear day Call In period and/or any invoking of the Call In process could jeopardise the Council's ability to be in a position to commence delivery in line with the Funding Agreement. This decision could not have been taken earlier, given that the awarding of the contract is embargoed until 24th March 2017.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 There are risks involved in taking part in this programme and, specifically for the Council as the Lead Partner. There are potential reputational and contractual risks to the Council, as the Lead Partner we are required to meet the funding requirements which are complex and resource intensive. However, the partnership includes a wide range of organisations that are experienced in meeting a variety of funding requirements and close contact has been maintained with other organisations leading bids across the Leeds City Region and colleagues within the authority who are delivering European funding to share experiences and best practice. Support is also available from a Big Lottery funding advisor when required.
- 4.6.2 The project team have sought advice from colleagues in procurement and legal services to ensure a robust Partnership Agreement is drafted and signed by all partners to the programme. The Partnership Agreement makes the expectations of each partner very clear.
- 4.6.3. The programme has clear Governance structures that are set out in the bid. Analysis and mitigation of risk will be key responsibility of the project lead who will escalate risks as appropriate to the programme board.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Council has ambitious plans to promote sustainable economic growth and improve the wellbeing of local residents which includes helping more people into work and reduce reliance on benefits. The Council is also committed to working restoratively with families to ensure children and young people live in safe family

environments wherever possible and to improve outcomes for all children and families. The BBO programme, jointly funded by the European Structural & Investment Fund and Big Lottery, creates an opportunity for Leeds to delivery against local priorities at a much faster rate in the current financial climate.

- 5.2 The Director of Children's is recommended to note the contents of this report and is recommended to enter into the grant agreement with Building Better Opportunities and to accept the grant of £3.5m.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Director of Children's Services is recommended to:

- Provide approval to enter into the grant agreement with Building Better Opportunities for Leeds Children's Services.
- Provide approval to accept the grant of £3.5m of European Structural and Investment Funds & Big Lottery funds as part of the Building Better Opportunities programme.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 There are no background documents.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.