

Report of: Commissioning and Market Management

Report to: The Director of Children and Families

Date: June 2019

**Subject: European and Big Lottery funded Building Better Opportunities
- approval of the Leeds and Bradford Stronger Families Programme
extension**



Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. In late spring 2016 Leeds city Council was informed that our Building Better Opportunities Fund bid was successful at Stage 1 and we were invited to submit a Stage 2 bid. 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.
2. Following a considerable period of development work with potential providers, key stakeholders and families, we received confirmation in February 2017 that our Stage two bid had been accepted. We were allocated a total of approximately £3.5m to deliver the programme across Leeds and Bradford over two years 2017 to Sept 2019.
3. The funders monitor the programme against the following 4 key measures
 - The number of participants who start the programme,
 - The number of participants who move into education or training,
 - The number of participants who move into employment,
 - The number of economically inactive participants who start job searching

After 18 months of delivery the “number of participants who move into employment” is on-track to exceed the target, and the “number of participants who move into education/training” has already exceeded the target.

4. As a result of this achievement, Leeds City Council (LCC) has received confirmation from the Big Lottery that the Stronger Families programme has been awarded an additional £3,501,200 to extend the service for the maximum period to Sept 2022

5. During the period of extension the project will deliver additional outcomes and indicators to those stated at 3.1.2. The nature and level of these outcomes and indicators will be agreed with the Funding Officer as part of the grant management process.

6. The maximum delivery period awarded by Big Lottery is until the end of September 2022. However with the programme’s current staffing levels it is anticipated that the programme will finish by the end of December 2021. Initially staff contracts will end at the end of September 2021 with the plan to extend following a budget review later this year.

Recommendations

The Director of Children & Families is asked:

1. To approve expenditure by the Council as Lead Partner for the Building Better Opportunities Programme totalling £3,501,200 for the maximum extended period Sept 2019 to 30 Sept 2022.

2. To agree to extend the existing partnership agreements with third sector organisations, funds totalling approximately £3,054,000 on a grants basis to deliver the programme, subject to satisfactory performance.

3. To note that the Head of Commissioning and Market Management is responsible for the implementation of these decisions within the timescales proposed by the Big Lottery.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The report sets out the background information and current delivery arrangements of a project known as *Early Intervention for Families at risk of becoming troubled families*. The project has been funded by the Building Better Opportunities Fund for the past two years across Leeds and Bradford and is being led by Leeds.
- 1.2 Authorisation is sought for the Council to extend this arrangement for an additional period from Sept 2019 to a maximum extended period of 30 Sept 2022 and to award funds totalling approximately £3,054,000 to 17 third sector partners.

2. Background information

- 2.1 In late spring 2016 Leeds city Council was informed that our Building Better Opportunities Fund bid was successful at Stage 1 and we were invited to submit a Stage 2 bid. 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.
- 2.2 Following a considerable period of development work with potential providers, key stakeholders and families, we received confirmation in February 2017 that our Stage two bid had been accepted. We were allocated a total of approximately £3.5m to deliver the programme across Leeds and Bradford over two years 2017 to Sept 2019.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 Leeds has successfully delivered its Families First programme in partnership with third sector providers for a number of years and this funding has allowed us to build upon these strong partnerships to deliver the project with a strong whole family approach which has enhanced the early help offer to children and families across Leeds and Bradford.
- 2.5 Although the project title is *Early Intervention for families at risk of becoming troubled families* we have called our partnership Stronger Families.
- 2.6 The funders monitor the programme against the following 4 key measures
 - The number of participants who start the programme,
 - The number of participants who move into education or training,
 - The number of participants who move into employment,
 - The number of economically inactive participants who start job searching

After 18 months of delivery the “number of participants who move into employment” is on-track to exceed the target, and the “number of participants who move into education/training” has already exceeded the target.

- 2.7 As a result of this achievement, Leeds City Council (LCC) has received confirmation from the Big Lottery that the Stronger Families programme has been awarded an additional £3,501,200 to extend the service for the maximum period to Sept 2022

3. Main issues

3.1 Project requirements

- 3.1.1 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.
- 3.1.2 Original targets for the project set by Big Lottery were to work with at least 865 people across Leeds and Bradford, however we committed to a stretch target of 25%. Therefore the target across the initial two years of the programme was to work with 1081 participants across the two local authority areas. We agreed that a notional split of 55% to 45% would be applied meaning over the two years a minimum of 595 people in Leeds and 487 in Bradford would be supported.
- 3.1.3 Targets set by Big Lottery are further broken down into the number of men and women, number of people unemployed and economically inactive, number of people with disabilities and number of people from ethnic minorities the project must work with.
- 3.1.4 During the period of extension the project will deliver additional outcomes and indicators to those stated at 3.1.2. The nature and level of these outcomes and indicators will be agreed with the Funding Officer as part of the grant management process.

3.2 Leeds / Bradford Delivery Model

- 3.2.1 This partnership currently consists of Leeds City Council, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 17 third sector delivery partners (keyworker and specialist) and 3 strategic partners who do not deliver but support the partnership.
- 3.2.2 In order to inform the Stage 2 bid a wide range of stakeholders were consulted and a Project Board established including representation from both Leeds City Council and the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, delivery partners, independent strategic partners and key stakeholders.
- 3.2.3 The delivery model includes a range of key worker providers who support participants through their journey to work and a range of specialist interventions which are 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.
- 3.2.4 In addition to key working and specialist intervention services two key worker organisations lead operational hubs, one in Leeds and one in Bradford. The

operational hub helps co-ordinate referrals into each locality, supports the interface between key working and specialist intervention and helps share and implement good practice across both Leeds and Bradford.

- 3.2.5 In order to effectively manage this programme of work the bid 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, administrative support and a parent support worker. The services of this central team will be reviewed and extended in line with the proposed extended period

3.3 Delivery Partners

- 3.3.1 The bid is very much delivered as a partnership which is being led by Leeds City Council. Prior to the bid submission a competitive exercise was undertaken with support from procurement colleagues to identify organisations who demonstrated the skills, knowledge and experience required to support a bid of this kind.
- 3.3.2 This exercise led to the identification of 22 delivery partners and 3 strategic partners who supported Leeds City Council and Bradford Metropolitan District Council in then developing and delivering the programme.
- 3.3.3 A further competitive exercise was then undertaken to identify specific roles within the partnership including the role of hub co-ordination, one in Leeds and one in Bradford, key working and specialist interventions.
- 3.3.4 Support was also sought from colleagues in legal services in drafting an appropriate Partnership Agreement which includes relevant terms and conditions and sets out the roles and responsibilities of each delivery partner as required by Big Lottery.
- 3.3.5 17 of the original 22 delivery partners will receive a formal variation to their partnership agreement so that they can extend their staff contracts in order to continue delivery of the programme for an extended period.
- 3.3.6 Four of the original partners are not included in the extended period. Two partnership agreements were already terminated earlier in the programme due to the service offer not aligning to the Stronger Families programme requirements. Another partnership agreement was mutually terminated as a restructure affected the capacity of the partner to continue delivery. A fourth partner will continue to deliver their service until the end of the current period, but their partnership agreement will not be extended due to the service offer not aligning to the Stronger Families programme requirements
- 3.3.7 The maximum delivery period awarded by Big Lottery is until the end of September 2022. However with the programme's current staffing levels it is anticipated that the programme will finish by the end of December 2021. Initially staff contracts will end at the end of September 2021 with the plan to extend following a budget review later this year.

3.4 Next Steps

- 3.4.1 Once approval to spend has been obtained all partners will be formally notified so they can begin the process of extending staff contracts

- 3.4.2 Partnership Agreement variation letters will be drafted with support from legal services, detailing revised funding values and targets
- 3.4.3 The partnership has adopted a restorative partnership which has facilitated a high support and high challenge approach to ensure the sharing of best practice from across the partnership in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families. A review of the central team will take place to ensure the roles continue to meet the needs of the programme
- 3.4.4 The programme will be further integrated into the Family Hub model in Bradford as a referral pathway, and do the same in Leeds when the Family Hub model goes live later this year.
- 3.4.5 To focus on workforce development to continue to improve consistency of practice across the 11 Key Worker organisations (31 Key Workers), in terms of recording in case files, use of SMART actions, use of outcome-focused supervision and managing risk.
- 3.4.6 Ensure connectivity with other ESF funded, or similar programmes, to complement and not duplicate services for families.
- 3.4.7 Explore how the programme captures soft outcomes to provide evidence of the impact of the programme as a preventative service.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 In order to inform the initial 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 Discussions took place throughout the bidding process with organisations who are leading on other bids across the Leeds City Region and with colleagues within Leeds City Council who have experience of delivering European funded projects. These discussions have continued throughout the delivery phase to share best practice.
- 4.1.3 The Big Lottery and LEP have been part of the approval process for the extension and providers
- 4.1.4 Key stakeholders have been consulted throughout the programme, including about the extension, via the Stronger Families Project Board

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The original bid 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 delivery period.

- 4.2.2 An equality impact screening was completed in February 2017. This assessment confirmed that due consideration had been given to all equality groups. This will continue to be monitored throughout the extended 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.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1 The proposals set out in this report 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 2018-2023. 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 outcomes, priorities and obsessions 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 programme is a significant source of external funding which is supporting the authorities early help offer.
- 4.4.2 By utilising a whole family approach and focus on early intervention and prevention the service will continue to support families to address issues before they require more intensive and costly intervention.
- 4.4.3 The programme funding profile 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.
- 4.4.4 Due to the funding arrangements imposed by BBO and the manner in which funding must be drawn down the exact amounts to be paid to each partner are subject to an element of change, however the figure within this report represents the estimated total amount to be paid to delivery partners.
- 4.4.5 As noted at 3.3.7, the maximum delivery period awarded by Big Lottery is until the end of September 2022. However, with the programme's current staffing levels it is anticipated that the programme will finish by the end of December 2021. Initially staff contracts will end at the end of September 2021 with the plan to extend following a budget review later this year

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 There are no significant legal issues relating to the contents of this report, which is subject to Call-In.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 The risks identified at the start of this programme still apply, specifically for the Council as the Lead Partner, these being potential reputational and contractual risks. As the Lead Partner we are required to meet the funding requirements which are complex and resource intensive. However, these risks are partially mitigated for the extended period as the partnership now has two years' experience in delivering the programme and meeting the funding requirements. 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 Evidence based claims must be made to draw down funding from Big Lottery on a quarterly basis, therefore it is important that the Project Manager and those functions providing project support including contract management and finance are able to clearly monitor performance and progress against targets on a regular basis. This is reported to the project board, which includes delivery partners and key stakeholders.
- 4.6.3 Close working with colleagues in legal services will ensure that the Partnership Agreement variations and any other contractual documentation are appropriately drafted to ensure any risks are minimised.

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 Building Better Opportunities Programme jointly funded by the European Structural & Investment Fund and Big Lottery created an opportunity for Leeds to deliver against local priorities at a much faster rate in the current financial climate, which can be maximised even further through the programme extension period
- 5.2 A key feature of this delivery model is the number of providers forming the partnership who have a range of experience, skills and specialist expertise. This has allowed us to address a wide range of barriers to employment in a flexible and responsive manner. The range of third sector providers across the two cities including national, regional and local providers re-enforces the strength of the partnership and providers have clearly stated an ongoing commitment to sharing best practice across the partnership, which will further enhance the support offer to children and families across Leeds and Bradford.

6 Recommendations

The Director of Children & Families is asked:

- 6.1 To approve expenditure by the Council as Lead Partner for the Building Better Opportunities Programme totalling £3,501,200 for the maximum extended period Sept 2019 to 30 Sept 2022.
- 6.2 To agree to extend the existing partnership agreements with third sector organisations, funds totalling approximately £3,054,000 on a grants basis to deliver the programme, subject to satisfactory performance.
- 6.3 To note that the Head of Commissioning and Market Management is responsible for the implementation of these decisions within the timescales proposed by the Big Lottery.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

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.

Appendix 1

Stronger Families Extension Budget Allocation

Organisation	Budget
Barca	£600,000
Barnardo's - Leeds and Bradford	£510,000
Better Leeds Communities	£62,000
Brathay	£175,000
Community Links	£150,000
EASA	£140,000
Health for All	£210,000
Himmat	£185,000
Home-Start Bradford	£20,000
Humankind	£210,000
James	£125,000
Karmand	£61,000
Learning Partnerships	£271,000
Prospects	£70,000
The Bridge	£135,000
Touchstone	£130,000
Total	£3,054,000

The Council shall pay the funding to the organisation as a payment every quarter based on the correct financial monitoring, expenses and defrayal evidence being submitted at the end of every month. If the actual costs are lower than the forecasted costs, the Council will reduce the value of the next payment to reflect the difference between the forecast and the actually spend. All the finance expense evidence will be scrutinised by the Council's Finance Manager. The Council will also apply other adjustments where costs are found to be ineligible.