

Award of cooperation agreements to Area Inclusion Partnerships: April 2022- Mar 2023 with 4 x 12 months options to extend

Date: 13th December 2021

Report of: Commissioning & Market Management Team

Report to: Director of Children & Families

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report seeks permission to award new cooperation agreements to the Area Inclusion Partnerships to commence on 1st April 2022. The existing agreements expire on 31st March 2022 and it's important that we have agreements in place for this provision.
- There are five Area Inclusion Partnerships in Leeds (AIPs). The AIP's bring schools together in a recognised & equitable partnership to deliver & coordinate services to keep children and young people in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of exclusion from education, included in high quality learning. The AIP's have an important role in supporting and challenging schools in their partnership.
- The AIP's support the city & council ambitions of:
 - Improving educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes
 - Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
 - Helping young people into adulthood, to develop life skills and be ready for work

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Children & Families is recommended to approve the award of new cooperation agreements to Area Inclusion Partnerships to commence on 1st April 2022 for a period of 12 months with the option to extend for 4 x 12 months.
- b) The total value of the agreements is determined annually and is approximately £5.06m per annum. The budget for this year (2021/22) is £5,056,000.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The existing agreements with AIP's are due to expire on 31st March 2022. It is important that we have ongoing agreements in place with the AIP's so can make the expectations of the partnership and the accountability of the funding clear.
- 2 All Leeds schools are encouraged to be members of their local AIP and at 2021, virtually all Leeds schools are members and contribute to their AIP financially in order to maximise the AIP's available funding and achieve positive economies of scale by combining resource.
- 3 The Local Authority devolves funding from the High Needs Block to the AIP's. The agreements set out the expectations of the partnership and ensures accountability for the high needs block funding that is devolved to the AIP's.
- 4 Funding has been devolved to AIP's for a number of years. This approach is innovative and unique to Leeds and has enabled Leeds to achieve some of the lowest numbers of permanent exclusions in the country in recent years.
- 5 Agreements have been in place with AIP's since 2017. The agreements are refreshed each time we issue a new agreement to ensure the expectations of the partnership are clear and represent latest guidance, legislation and strategy. The new agreements to be issued from April 2022 will be refreshed and will include more clarity on the requirements with regards to:
 - a) Quality assurance requirements of the AIP.
 - b) The leadership/staffing requirements of the AIP.
 - c) AIP Reporting requirements to the Local Authority.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 6 Establishing cooperation agreements with AIP's ensures the partnership is clear on their responsibilities for the funding they receive. The AIP's have a crucial role to effectively support and challenge schools in their area to ensure children and young people in vulnerable circumstances, and at risk of exclusion from education, included in high quality learning. Ultimately this impacts on the outcomes we can achieve for children and young people and our ability as a city to ensure they have access to high quality mainstream education.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 7 Consultation will take place with AIP Leads/Chairs alongside Learning Inclusion colleagues prior to the new agreements being issued.
- 8 Legal colleagues in Procurement & Commercial Services will be consulted on the content of the cooperation agreement.

What are the resource implications?

- 9 The total value of the agreements is determined annually and is approximately £5.06m per annum. The budget for this year (2021/22) is £5,056,000.

- 10 The funding for AIP's is from the High Needs Block and includes a sum of 'base' funding for promotion of inclusion in schools, and further funding to deliver intensive support interventions to individual learners in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of exclusion from school. Individual schools/members of each AIP, also make financial contributions to their AIP in order that they can enhance their offer of support to these vulnerable learners.

What are the legal implications?

- 11 The decision to award these cooperation agreements falls within Clause 1.5.2 of the Contract Procedure Rules as it is a cooperation between public bodies and falls outside of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 pursuant to Regulation 12(7). Therefore it is not a procurement for the purpose of the Contract Procedure Rules or Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 12 Any extensions taken up will be taken as a significant operational delegated decision as a consequence of this key decision.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 13 If this decision is not approved, we will continue to fund the AIPs for this activity but we will not have legally binding agreements in place by which we can properly hold the AIPs to account in order to effectively support and challenge schools in their area. Ultimately this will impact on the outcomes we can achieve for children and young people and our ability as a city to ensure they have access to high quality mainstream education.
- 14 The risk of challenge of awarding these agreements is minimal given that these are co-operations between public bodies and fall outside of the Public Contract Regulations pursuant to Regulation 12(7), and are therefore not a procurement for the purpose of the Contract Procedure Rules.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

- Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 15 This proposal supports the council's health & wellbeing pillar and the commitments city & council ambitions of:
- Improving educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes
 - Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
 - Helping young people into adulthood, to develop life skills and be ready for work
- 16 The proposal also supports the Children & Young People's Plan commitment of:
- Ensuring all children & young people do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 17 No other options were considered at this time.

How will success be measured?

- 18 The Learning Inclusion service within Children & Families are responsible for monitoring the success of the AIP and the funding devolved to them as part of the cooperation agreement.

19 AIP's are required to submit termly returns and a clear process for scrutiny of the returns and feedback to each AIP has been established. This includes feedback to schools and governing bodies on the progress made.

What is the timetable for implementation?

20 New cooperation agreements will be issued to AIP's in January/February 2022 for consultation.

21 All schools that form part of the AIP will be asked to sign up to the agreement in March 2022.

22 New agreements will commence on 1st April 2022.

Appendices

23 N/A

Background papers

24 N/A