

Extension of Cluster cooperation agreements

Date: 14 March 2023

Report of: Children and Families Commissioning

Report to: Director – Children and Families

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

- This report seeks a significant operational decision to extend the Cluster cooperation agreements for a period of 12 months from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024.
- Permission was granted in February 2021 via key decision (D52724) to establish cooperation agreements with clusters in respect of the council funding for clusters. The agreements were initially established for 12 months (1st April 2021 -31st March 2022) with two options to extend of 12 months.
- The funding for clusters (issued as part of the cooperation agreement) will continue to be funded utilising the funding formula that was approved as part of the key decision (D52724) referenced above.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Children and Families is asked to provide permission to extend cooperation agreements with Clusters. The extensions will commence on 1st April 2023 and expire on 31st March 2024.
- b) The funding for clusters (issued as part of the cooperation agreements) will continue to be funded utilising the funding formula that was approved as part of the key decision (D52724) referenced above. The total LCC cluster funding pot to be applied to the formula for 2023/24 is £780,830.

What is this report about?

- 1 The current cluster cooperation agreements will expire on 31st March 2023. Options to extend were agreed as part of the key decision permission to establish the cooperation agreements. There is one 12 month extension still available.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 2 Clusters are central to the local authority's Early Help Strategy and Early Help approach and to achieving the city's ambition as set out within the Children and Young People's Plan. There are significant benefits in the Cluster model. Schools' investment in early help via the Cluster model, is unique to Leeds. Clusters were founded in local school partnership arrangements around the Extended Services agenda and have evolved over the last ten+ years to become the infrastructure to deliver early help services.
- 3 There are no implications for equality, diversity, cohesion and integration because this decision seeks to extend existing arrangements. See Appendix 1 for screening form.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

- 4 The Clusters are a fundamental part of the Early Help strategy, Children & Young People's Plan and the Best Council Plan and support the health & wellbeing pillar. Clusters support the best council plan outcomes of:
 - Be safe and feel safe
 - Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives
 - Live in good quality, affordable homes in clean and well cared for places
 - Do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life
 - Earn enough to support themselves and their families

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: City-wide

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 5 Consultation has taken place with the Head of Early Help to confirm that this is the correct approach and in line with the evolving work of the Early Help Review.
- 6 Finance have also been consulted and the proposal is affordable within the current budget envelope.

What are the resource implications?

- 7 The budget for LCC funding for clusters sits within the Early Help Service. Funding is allocated to clusters utilising the formula that was approved as part of the key decision (D52724) in February 2021. The total value of these 12 month extensions is £780,830.

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

- 8 Clusters are a fundamental part of the LCCs Early Help Strategy. Whilst the LCC funding only represents a proportion of the overall funding for clusters (majority is funded via schools) they are reliant on the LCC funding to maintain their offer to children and families

- 9 The risk of not confirming this funding, and extension to the cooperation agreement, in a timely manner to clusters creates budgetary risks for the clusters and a potential instability in planning of resource/staffing for clusters.

What are the legal implications?

- 10 As detailed in the key decision report (D52724): the decision to establish cooperation agreements falls within Clause 1.5.2 of the Contract Procedure Rules as it is a funding agreement 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

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 11 No other options have been considered at this time. The majority of funding for the cluster cooperation agreements comes from schools.

How will success be measured?

- 12 As part of the cooperation agreement: clusters are required to submit annual reports that evidences work undertaken and the impact of this work.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 13 The cooperation agreements will be extended by 31st March 2023: to commence on 1st April 2023. Clusters have been informed of our intention to extend the cooperation agreements and it is now urgent that the agreements are awarded prior to end of March 2023.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening form

Background papers

- None.