

Decision Pathway Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 05 June 2018

TITLE	DfE Flexible Learning Funding Grant	
Ward(s)	City Wide – primarily affecting those wards with low income households	
Author: Jane Taylor	Job title: Head of Service (Employment, Skills & Learning)	
Cabinet lead: Cllr Anna Keen	Executive Director lead: Dr Jacqui Jensen	
Proposal origin: BCC Staff		
Decision maker: Cabinet Member		
Decision forum: Cabinet		
Purpose of Report: To outline details of our application to the DfE Flexible Learning Fund and to request Cabinet approval to accept the grant and deliver the project.		
<p>Evidence Base: Bristol City Council has submitted a successful application to the DfE Flexible Learning Fund on behalf of the Community Learning West Consortium with neighbouring authorities and delivery partners (link to bid guidance here). In March 2018 the DfE selected 32 out of 170 applications (full details can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-pound-fund-for-adult-learning-announced). Bristol City Council is being offered £633K, subject to the terms of a grant agreement being agreed, to be spent by the end of March 2019. Our Proposal Plan covers 15 month delivery and expenditure, to be started once Cabinet approval has been received and our grant agreement is signed. A copy of the proposal is attached in Appendix 1. We intend to focus our project on adults living in the West of England aged 19+ who do not have a full level 3 qualification and who have i) low skills in English and maths ii) low digital skills iii) restricted access to adult learning provision, employment support and/or career progression support iv) are either in work or aiming to return to work. We want to target resources at 450 social housing tenants in work and 300 parents/carers who wish to return to work. We are proposing to use the Flexible Learning Fund to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> develop and provide accessible online learning programmes, virtual classroom experiences, and virtual learning materials, combined with some intensive classroom based sessions, that will enable new learners to develop their skills and gain a recognised qualification; draw on expert suppliers to find new and different ways to meet their learning and career progression needs – for example, Career Profile will use their web based platform to support learners to create an online CV/portfolio, access job vacancies and courses based on gaps in their skill set and their career aspirations; organise classroom based sessions in accessible venues, at convenient times (including outside the conventional working day), with childcare, transport and other access support for those that need it; carry out project monitoring, including commissioned external evaluation, to obtain robust evidence on project outcomes and impacts 		
<p>Recommendations: That Cabinet agree to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> accept and spend the DfE Flexible Learning Fund grant as set out in this report delegate authority to the Executive Director for Adults, Children and Education in consultation with the Cabinet member for Education and Skills to enter into a grant agreement with the DfE in relation to the Flexible Learning Fund; and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Adults, Children and Education to enter into a partnership agreement in consultation with the Cabinet member for Education and Skills with the West of England Community Learning Consortium in relation to the grant from the Flexible Learning Fund 		

Corporate Strategy alignment: The FLF resources will directly support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy themes and commitments: Fair and Inclusive – by improving educational outcomes and reducing educational inequality experienced by adults who have few or no formal qualifications. Well Connected – by reducing social and economic isolation and helping connect people to people, people to jobs and people to opportunity through high quality, community based and online community learning programmes.

City Benefits: It is intended that this proposal will benefit the city by providing targeted employability and skills support to people who are experience in work poverty or who are unemployed so they can progress into more sustainable careers that will enhance household earnings. We anticipate that many of our learners will be from groups with protected characteristics and those who face barriers to adult education and skills development, including BAME communities, Disabled people, NEET young people. By helping address in work poverty, it is expected that this programme will also have a positive impact on health inequalities.

Consultation Details: In its development, the FLF proposal has been discussed with South Gloucestershire, North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset Skills Teams, the Council’s Employment, Skills and Learning Team, Boomsatsuma, Digital Profile, local FE colleges, a number of local employers, the DWP and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

Revenue Cost	£633,000	Source of Revenue Funding	DfE Flexible Learning Fund Grant
Capital Cost	£0	Source of Capital Funding	Grant
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>		Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> Income generation proposal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: This report is seeking permission to accept and use £0.633m from the Department for Education’s Flexible Learning Fund. Bristol City Council will co-ordinate the expenditure and accounting of this grant on behalf of partners. Appendix liii sets out that this grant would be spent on the management, set-up, development and delivery of the courses, with £0.527m expected to be incurred in 2018/19 financial year and £0.106m expected to be incurred in 2019/20 financial year. The Authority’s submission refers to other funding which would be combined with these grant monies to help deliver the project and it also indicates that the expected number of participant students was 750. The DfE terms and conditions of grant have not yet been received but nothing in the correspondence indicates any potentially onerous conditions for this funding.

Finance Business Partner: David Tully, Finance Business Partner, 16th April 2018

2. Legal Advice: The grant agreement with the DfE for funds from the Flexible Learning Fund (FLF) is not yet available and so we cannot comment on its content. The terms will need to be reviewed to ensure they are acceptable to the Council as soon as the grant agreement becomes available. The FLF grant will be given to Bristol City Council who will receive it on behalf of the West of England Community Learning Consortium, and so the Council will need to enter into a partnership agreement with the consortium prior to spending the grant. If the Council as part of this project procures goods or services where the value is over £15k, then it must comply with either the Council’s Procurement Rules or the Public Contracts Regulations when procuring the goods or services. When entering into any arrangements with any delivery partners, the officers will need to ensure these obligations are met.

Equalities: The decision maker must comply with the Public Sector Equality duty to consider the need to promote equality for persons with “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and have due regard to the need to i) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; ii) advance equality of opportunity iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. In order to do this the board will need to have sufficient information about the effects of the proposals set out in this report on the aims of the Equality Duty.

Legal Team Leader: Sinead Willis, Commercial and Governance Team Leader, 19th April 2018

3. Implications on ICT: The delivery of this initiative is assumed to be via third party providers and partners. The direct IT implications are therefore limited. However, if this should change or more direct involvement be required, then early engagement with IT via Change Services would help ensure timely delivery. In either event, any data

sharing with partner organisations must comply with Council policies and relevant legislation, particularly GDPR.

ICT Team Leader: Ian Gale, Head of IT, 15th April 2018

4. HR Advice: There will be HR implications with this proposal as it contains the recruitment of some key roles, this could mean progression opportunities for some employees or the new roles could be used for redeployment purposes. We would work with the redeployment team to ascertain whether there was anyone at risk of redundancy within the redeployment pool who had the relevant skills. It is always our aim to retain our highly skilled, experienced and well trained workforce wherever possible or to provide progression on career pathways within the organisation.

HR Partner: Lorna Laing, HR Business Partner, 17th April 2018

EDM Sign-off	Dr Jacqui Jensen	18 th April 2018
Cabinet Member sign-off	Cllr Anna Keen	17 th April 2018
SPB Sign-off	Cllr Craig Cheney	25 th April 2018
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	1 st May 2018

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	NO
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	NO
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Combined Background papers li Bristol/Community Learning West Flexible Learning Fund Proposal (Let's get Ahead!)	YES
Appendix J – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix K – HR advice	NO
Appendix L – ICT	NO