

Decision Pathway Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 05 November 2019

TITLE	Supporting Adults with Learning Difficulties into Employment		
Ward(s)	City Wide		
Author: Jane Taylor	Job title: Head of Service (Employment, Skills and Learning)		
Cabinet lead: Councillor Helen Holland	Executive Director lead: Jacqui Jensen		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member			
Decision forum: Cabinet			
<p>Purpose of Report: To obtain Cabinet approval to hold detailed bid negotiations for our ESF / WECA funded programme to improve employment outcomes for people with learning difficulties across the West of England. This will enable the implementation of the Bristol employment support pathway for people with learning difficulties that fulfils Mayoral commitments to inclusive growth and also secures potential savings through future reductions in care service costs.</p>			
<p>Evidence Base: The local authority has to submit an annual report to government and quarterly corporate reports of the number of adults with learning difficulties known to social care who are in employment. There are also new government requirements on the local authority as an employer in relation to our employment of people with learning difficulties. In 16/17, out of 947 adults aged 18-64 with learning difficulties receiving support from social care, 49 (5.2%) were reported to be in employment. Through undertaking our early development work, this has now risen to 7.3% as of Q3 18-19. This compares to North Somerset 10.5%; BANES 9.7%; South Gloucestershire 4.5%. In Bristol, investment and activity in this thematic area used to be managed across Community Links, Employment Support, Adult Commissioning, SEN Inclusion and HR Policy and Engagement (through Project Search). Since July 2017, following a cross Directorate Hot House and business planning process, People EDM agreed to bring employment support functions together to improve service outcomes and also secure potential savings. Significant progress has been made through the development and implementation of a pathway to paid employment which starts in schools at the age of 14 and continues to retirement. ESF and WECA investment in this area will enable us to fully implement the pathway and further develop our innovative model.</p> <p>The BCC Employment Skills and Learning Team has taken a strong lead and gained written commitments from key strategic stakeholder to a collaborative programme designed to transform employment outcomes for people with learning difficulties. In April 2019 we obtained Cabinet approval to submit a full £2.2m ESF bid (Appendix 1). Since July we have been in communication with a nominated DWP/ESF bid assessor, responding to a number of clarification questions and updating our application accordingly. We also submitted a £1.3 match funding full business case to WECA which was approved by the WECA Committee in October 2019 (Appendix 2). Both bids have been fully reviewed by the Finance Team and signed off by the S151 Officer. We are now awaiting final notification that our ESF bid has been successful. In anticipation of a successful outcome, we are seeking approval to take up the ESF and WECA funding and to move to project implementation.</p>			
<p>Officer Recommendations:</p> <p>That Cabinet authorises the Executive Director of People to negotiate with ESF/DWP and, if successful, to accept the funding offer and lead on the regional implementation and delivery of the We Work for Everyone programme.</p>			

Corporate Strategy alignment: Improving the employment of people with learning difficulties contributes to the Mayor's commitment to inclusive economic growth and social mobility. It also helps reduce the reliance of people with learning difficulties on public services and promotes their economic and social independence, health and wellbeing.

City Benefits: By implementing these recommendations, Bristol City Council can lead the way in relation to our employment practices – we can demonstrate proactively how we are taking positive action and **not** discriminating against Disabled people, and how our workforce is reflective of the communities we serve. We can also work with other employers to improve their access to specialist support and resources so that their workforce and business can benefit from the employment of people with learning difficulties.

Consultation Details: The initial proposal to use West of England ESF funds for this proposal was discussed and agreed with WECA and neighbouring authorities over 18 months ago. This proposal has also been discussed and developed with lead managers and budget holders in the City Council who are currently responsible for services to improve employment outcomes for people with learning difficulties. It has been discussed with external bid partners: Bath & North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire & North Somerset Councils; FE colleges; DWP; VCS providers, including specialist agencies with expertise in providing employment support to people with learning difficulties. The Council's International Team and Finance Team have also been involved in initial scoping discussions.

Revenue Cost	For Y1/Y2/Yr3/Yr4 (2020 – 2024) the Council will contribute match funding on an annual basis of: £67.5K £125K £67K £105K	Source of Revenue Funding	Community Links Employment Support Team SEN Inclusion (Supported Internships) SEN High Needs Block (Supported Internships)
Capital Cost	Not applicable	Source of Capital Funding	Not applicable
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing cost <input checked="" 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:

Finance Advice:
Bristol City Council continues to wait on the outcome of the bid for ESF funding and WECA matched funding to deliver a £4.4m programme over the next three years. The funding if secured would comprise £2.2m from European Social Funding matched by £1.3m from WECA together with internal financial resources.
There are a number of financial considerations to need to be accounted for should the funding be approved:

- The grant conditions for funding from ESF and WECA with implications of deliverables and milestones will need to be fully understood with risks identified and mitigated
- As BCC will be in direct receipt of grant funding from ESF and WECA, grant conditions will have to be conferred to partners in WECA
- Holding the grant funding and disbursement of funding will require controls developed.

Finance Business Partner: Neil Sinclair, Interim Finance Business Partner, 30/09/19

2. Legal Advice:

In the event of a successful bid, consideration will need to be given to any conditions attached to the grant/funding, and Legal Services will need to review the Cabinet Report in November 2019 and comment in respect of the taking the project forward, including, for example, in relation to any joint working and/or commissioning arrangements, and any procurement and state aid issues.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones Solicitor, 13/09/19

3. Implications on ICT:

“Whilst this initiative is welcomed, we will need to consider the most sustainable and safe method to enable partnership working and the Digital Profile. IT Services and Information Assurance colleagues will need to be consulted to ensure the future solution is appropriate and aligned to strategy.”

ICT Team Leader: Simon Oliver, Director Digital Transformation, 23/09/19

4. HR Advice:

“As the current proposal is presented there are no internal HR issues, however if there is agreement to the proposal and the funding is granted then there may be an HR impact then. If this was the case a full report with proposals to take the project forward would be presented and would need further HR input at that point”.

HR Partner: Lorna Laing, HR Business Partner (People), 30/09/19

EDM Sign-off	Jacqui Jensen, People Director	18 th Sept 2019
Cabinet Member sign-off	Councillor Helen Holland	3 rd Oct 2019
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	7 th Oct 2019

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	YES
Appendix 1: – ESF Call Specification Access to Employment	
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	NO
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	N/A
Appendix J – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix K – HR advice	NO
Appendix L – ICT	NO