

Notice of KEY Executive Decision containing exempt information

This Executive Decision Report is part exempt and Appendix A, is not available for public inspection as it contains or relates to exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. It is exempt because it refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

Subject Heading:	<i>Acceptance of a grant to deliver employment support - Connect to Work</i>
Decision Maker:	Barbara Nicholls Strategic Director of People
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Graham Williamson, Cabinet Member for Development and Regeneration
ELT Lead:	Barbara Nicholls Strategic Director of People
Report Author and contact details:	Amanda Montague 01708433394 Amanda.montague@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	Havering Corporate Plan
Financial summary:	<p>The total funding that will be allocated to Havering through Connect to Work will be £760,000 per annum (potentially circa £3.8m over 5 years), there will be a 6% management fee levied by Local London for the management and support that will be delivered both prior to contract start and throughout the period of the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA).</p> <p>The funding is allocated for staff costs, management and overhead</p>

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	costs and participant support where identified. LBH must comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement, and meet performance outputs to ensure that the full grant is received.
Reason decision is Key	Expenditure or saving (including anticipated income) of £500,000 or more
Date notice given of intended decision:	20/11/2024
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee:	Place OSSC
Is it an urgent decision?	No
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	No

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well **X**

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

For the reasons detailed in this report and its appendices, the **Strategic Director of People** is recommended to approve:

accepting and entering into a grant funding agreement (GFA) with Local London to deliver an employment support project, Connect to Work, funded through DWP at a cost of £760,000 per annum. The contract is for a total of 3 year from April 2025 with the possibility of a 2 year extension resulting in potential grant income of circa £3.8m.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

PART 3.3 SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS FUNCTIONS DELEGATED TO OFFICERS

Scheme 3.3.3 Powers common to all Strategic Directors

5.1 To apply for, accept and thereafter spend / allocate any grant funding connected with their directorate provided that any match funding or residual liabilities can be met from the existing budget of the directorate. For the avoidance of doubt this delegation shall allow the acceptance of any grant offered / allocated to the Council without any application.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Connect to Work programme is a supported employment programme is part of the Get Britain working Strategy and is intended to transform DWP relationship with local areas and ensure a strong foundation with which to work in partnership to support people into good, sustainable work.

The DWP is passporting the funding for the Connect to Work programme to Accountable Bodies across England to manage, this is Local London for Havering. Local London (LL) have been invited to submit a delivery plan on behalf of the sub-region to DWP.

The LL delivery plan will be an aggregated version of the member boroughs' delivery plans. The value of the grant agreement for LBH is £760,000 per annum over 3 years with a possibility of an extension of 2 years' subject to performance and the funding being available to DWP.

LL will levy a management fee of 6% for the provision of contract management and monitoring, staff training and development to meet common needs, quality assurance and other functions that would be best met through a central team.

The supported employment programme will primarily provide support for people who are economically inactive within priority groups and want to work. It will also provide support to some people to retain work who are at risk of losing employment (and if they lose their job would be unlikely to get back to work without support). Individuals participating in the supported employment programme do so on a voluntary basis.

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The supported employment programme will be expected to deliver two models, a complying with two standards - the IPS and Supported Employment Quality Framework Fidelity Scales, the implementation of these standards will be supported by DWP and LL. It is expected that the majority of participants will be supported under the IPS Fidelity scale.

The delivery plan will cover the activities to be undertaken to support residents, the targets for the funding are: -

600 participants to start on the programme over the three years and 200 participants to be on programme at peak time, the expectation is 75% will be from the wider disadvantaged group and 25% from individuals with higher level additional needs.

This estimated proportion may vary from the 75% /25% split reflecting local needs.

Up to 15% of participants can be individuals who are in work but at substantial risk of losing their current employment, and those who require support to retain existing employment, or to move to new employment.

Outputs and Outcomes

50% of all out of work participants to achieve first earnings within 456 days of start on the programme.

80% of those who are receiving retention support will achieve the higher earnings threshold (DWP definition:18hours over 26 weeks at National Living Wage).

The service should be delivered by Employment Specialists adhering to the Supported Employment fidelity models.

The Employment Specialists will actively provide support to an average caseload maximum of 25 participants

Caseload averages form a key element of demonstrating fidelity to the IPS and SEQF models. These caseload parameters are in place to ensure Employment Specialists can dedicate the appropriate level of support for each Participant's needs.

Wherever possible, each Participant should work with the same Employment Specialist for the duration of the supported employment programme.

The programme will be delivered by the Havering Works team and Supported employment adviser within the Adult Disability Team, these posts are currently funded by a grant through the UKSPF which comes to an end in March 2025.

The Employment and Skills team comprises an Employment and Skills Manager, a Monitoring and Data Officer, a Havering Works Team Leader, 3.5 Havering Works Case Advisers and one Supported Employment Adviser.

Of these posts 4 are fixed term contracts and one is agency staff, the 0.5 post is a part time secondment.

The UKSPF grant currently contributes to the salary costs of the entire Employment and Skills and Havering Works team and one post in the Adult Disability Team. It is proposed that the Connect to Work programme funding will continue to contribute to these posts.

The majority of the Havering Works team are on short term contracts with end dates coinciding with the end of the current UKSPF grant in March 2025. The post within the Adult Disability team is funded to November 2025. The proposal is to extend fixed

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term contracts to staff already delivering the UKSPF contract (i.e. those staff within the Employment and Skills team and attached to the Adult Disability Team) to coincide with the end of the Connect to Work grant period (March 2028) which will enable continuity of the service to residents with experienced staff.

The Connect to Work grant will necessitate the expansion of the team to create 4 additional posts comprising advisers and an additional Employer Engagement Officer to meet the requirements of the quality standards set out in the grant funding guidance. Management and support costs which are directly attributable to the programme would also be eligible under the grant.

There is a possibility that UKSPF Grant Funding will also be awarded for 2025/2026 to continue the support offered through the Employment and Skills and Havering Works team, however this is still uncertain and may not be known until mid to end of December. Even if the UKSPF funding does not materialise we are confident that the Connect to Work funding will be secured.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The programme will be delivered to Havering residents, if the Council does not deliver directly through an internal team, the expectation is that the service will be contracted to another body to deliver the programme in the borough. LL as the accountable body has the role of determining, alongside constituent upper tier authorities, whether they deliver the supported employment programme in house, via contracts, or a mixture of the two, and whether this is applied across the whole area or in parts.

Contracting out the programme would result in reducing internal capacity and capability as there is no other grant funding route at present to fund the Havering Works team.

LL presumed that direct delivery would be the preferred option building on the expertise that exists in the Havering Works team with the support of the integration team at LL.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

Meetings and workshops with Local London and member boroughs inform local authorities of the delivery plan Local London should submit to the DWP that would meet governmental outputs as stipulated through the Supported Employment Guidance. The DWP have delegated the Connect to Work programme to the sub- regional partnerships to manage, setting out the range of targets and activities the fund must deliver whilst meeting the priorities of the locality and complimenting other programmes of support.

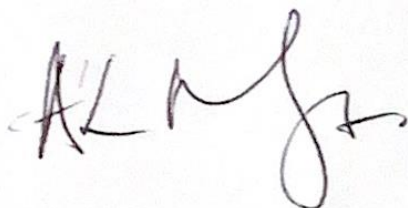
Connect to Work has been discussed as part of a series of internal departmental meetings with Education and Adults Disability and SEND teams.

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NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Amanda Montague

Designation: Employment and Skills Manager



Signature:

Date: 20/11/2024

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has the power to accept the grant under s111 of the Local Government Act 1972 which permits the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

The Council also has a general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual can do, subject to any statutory constraints on the Council's powers. None of the constraints on the Council's s.1 power are engaged by this decision.

The grant agreement will set out certain conditions which officers will ensure to adhere to in order to achieve full utilisation of the funding arrangements and prevent claw back by the grant giver. Subject to the officers having an understanding the terms and conditions of the grant funding, the Council may accept the grant funding and enter into the grant agreement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The programme will run for 3 years with a potential extension of a further 2 years. The annual value of the programme is £760,000, and grant funding is based on 200 participants per year, at a rate of £3,800 per participant.

A 6% charge will be levied by Local London for programme management costs, leaving the remaining grant of £714,400 to cover the costs of delivering employment support to residents.

The grant funding meets the cost of salaries for full and part time staff (up to an estimated maximum of £662,000 in 25/26) plus participant costs and overheads.

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The planned staffing will consist of 6.5 fte salaried staff and 1 Agency worker, who are currently funded from UKSPF grant, along with an additional 4.5 fte. LBH staff funded from the Connect to Work grant will be recruited on fixed term contracts that expire at the end of the grant funding period. There will also be a contribution to senior management costs currently met by LBH.

The funding will be drawn down quarterly based on evidence of defrayed expenditure by LBH. Project spend will be profiled and split over the life of the grant agreement (3 years). The delivery plan will need to allow for cost inflation over the funding period, as the annual grant is expected to remain fixed at £760,000.

The programme will be fully funded through Connect to Work and will not require Council funding, provided that the terms of the funding agreement are adhered to and the required outputs are achieved. If the council does not deliver the required outputs, there is a risk that the funding could be withdrawn or reduced. The grant agreement with Local London stipulates that Local London would have the authority to suspend payments, claw back funding or reduce the level of funding if the council defaults on the contract. This risk will be mitigated by regular monitoring meetings with Local London, and if necessary, the implementation of a performance improvement plan.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

If the proposed funding is not obtained and no other source of funding is achieved the 5 posts that are currently dependent upon grant funding may need to be deleted and the relevant employees placed at risk of redundancy. The 4 new posts proposed will require a restructure process to formally create those posts.

All of the above and recruitment into the newly created posts will be managed in accordance with the Council's HR policies and procedures.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

An EHIA was produced for the ESF project in 2022 and being kept under review and maintained with respect to the delivery of the Connect to Work programme. The new programme is aimed at a similar client group and subject to the eligibility criteria is open to residents who are disadvantaged and some distance from the workplace needing additional support to secure employment.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The project will have a positive impact on participants lives in that moving toward employment through upskilling and support to find work can improve:-

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Access to and quality of education or other training opportunities
- Employment, income, opportunities for economic development
- Opportunity to interact socially with other people, social isolation, community support networks and being able to live independently

In turn once people are working they are able to participate in other aspects of society

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The project has no additional impact on carbon emissions.

It does not offer the opportunity for Offsetting carbon emissions.

It could provide opportunities to support residents to secure roles in the green skills sector and in this way, would support preparation for the impacts of climate change.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

Appendix A Supported Employment Guidance Draft *Exempt*

Appendix B EQHIA

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Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Delete as applicable

Proposal NOT agreed because

Details of decision maker

Signed

Name:

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date:

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Committee Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____