

Report title	MiFriendly City Implementation update	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Peter Bilson City Assets and Housing	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Kate Martin, Service Director of Housing	
Originating service	City Housing	
Accountable employee	Anthony Walker	Homelessness Strategy Manager
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Report to be/has been considered by	Housing Leadership Team	19 February 2019
	Public Health Leadership Team	5 March 2019

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the acceptance of the grant of £388,000 awarded to the council from Urban Innovative Actions, a body of the European Regional Development Fund to deliver MiFriendly Cities activities in Wolverhampton.
2. Approve a budget of £388,000 within City Housing for the MiFriendly Cities project on the understanding that this is funded by the grant from the European Regional Development Fund.
3. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Service Director of Housing, to award a contract/individual contracts following a tender process for projects related to MiFriendly Cities.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the requirement for the Council to contribute twenty percent of the total project cost equal to £97,000 of match funding. This will be from existing approved budgets in the form of employee time.
2. Note the overall work undertaken in Wolverhampton in relation to new communities including work to date on the MiFriendly Cities project in Wolverhampton
3. Note the work on the development of an operational group to have oversight of new community projects.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Councillors on the projects and work undertaken in relation to new communities with a specific focus on the progress of the MiFriendly Cities Programme in Wolverhampton.
- 1.2 To give details of the next steps in relation to a variety of projects related to MiFriendly Cities and outline over the next year the expenditure that will be required to meet the commitments of the MiFriendly Cities.
- 1.3 Finally, to put this expenditure in context, namely in relation to staff time working on the project and the delivery of a Pop-up Furniture Factory

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Wolverhampton is one of the most diverse areas in England. According to Office for National Statistics data 2018 (ONS) 20% of residents are non-British nationals.
- 2.2 Wolverhampton is one of the four main dispersal areas in the Midlands for asylum seekers. In October 2018, 847 individuals living in the city were being supported by the Home Office.

	Overall No.s	No.s Of people on S95 & S4 support		
	Total Population (2014 Census – mid year estimate)	August 2018	September 2018	October 2018
Birmingham	1,073,000	1849	1811	1833
Coventry	318,600	530	527	534
Wolverhampton	249,500	833	835	847
Dudley	312,900	241	246	247
Sandwell	308,100	871	873	880
Walsall	269,300	411	406	409
Stoke-on-Trent	249,000	1001	979	969
Total	2,780,400	5736	5677	5710

- 2.3 There are, according to Gov UK data (Sept 2018), a further 3,763 non-UK nationals applying for national insurance numbers (Birmingham 14,050, Coventry 7,915, Dudley 973, Sandwell 3,235, Walsall 1,765 and Stoke 2,513).
- 2.4 This level of migration has meant that Wolverhampton is involved in several projects (Appendix 1) to facilitate community cohesion between new communities and the host community locally.
- 2.5 Projects such as funded through the Controlling Migration Fund aim to improve standards in private sector housing and education for all communities, not just those that have recently arrived.

- 2.6 MiFriendly Cities is another such project that aims to improve integration and improve community resources for all communities.
- 2.7 MiFriendly Cities (MiFC) is a European programme that looks to improve integration in cities with high levels of migration. This project sits under Urban Innovative Actions (UIA), an initiative of the European Union (EU) that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and innovative solutions to address urban challenges. The initiative takes its budget from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support urban authorities, or groupings of urban authorities, to experiment with innovative and creative solutions.
- 2.8 A consortium of eleven partners, led by Coventry City Council as the Accountable Body, was developed over 2 years ago. Members of the consortium are working together to introduce new initiatives to the region that will seek to address challenges such as language and cultural barriers, unemployment and public perceptions.
- 2.9 The MiFriendly Cities programme comprises several work packages (Appendix 2). Seven participating partners hold responsibility as leads of work packages, with all drawing on the expert knowledge and support of local partners to ensure effective implementation. The City of Wolverhampton Council does not hold responsibility for any work package but is responsible for implementing and supporting activities across six of them.
- 2.10 The eleven partners of MiFriendly Cities are:
- City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC)
 - Coventry City Council (CCC)
 - Birmingham City Council (BCC)
 - Interserve
 - The Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC)
 - Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC)
 - Migrant Voice (MV)
 - Central England Law Centre (CELC)
 - Migration Work (MW)
 - Coventry University (CU)
 - Coventry University Social Enterprise (CUSE)
- 2.11 The Accountable Body, Coventry City Council, perform the governance function of MiFriendly Cities (Appendix 2). They provide an overall project management function and process the financial claims by defrayal to project partners.

- 2.12 Delegated Directors and Councillors elected from each local authority provide overall direction and strategy to MiFriendly Cities in the region. The MiFriendly Cities representatives for Wolverhampton include the Service Director of Housing and the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing.
- 2.13 The MiFriendly Cities project is the first of its kind, co-producing and co-financing a range of deliverables across a region. It brings new challenges as well as risk to the Councils involved. Risks will be minimised to CWC by ensuring agreements are in place with partners to achieve good outcomes in the city. Financial risks to CWC will be monitored and expenditure will follow stringent ERDF guidelines to ensure the Council is able to recover all costs as outputs are achieved.
- 2.14 In addition, CWC will work with stakeholders across the city to ensure that as many of our migrant populations as possible are able to access new services and opportunities afforded by MiFriendly Cities. Partnership working is key to implementing this project and collaborating with external stakeholders will ensure that the risk of not meeting output targets is mitigated.
- 2.15 Internally, MiFriendly Cities will build on the work of the Public Health department's Health Champions, the Skills Team's apprenticeship and employment offer and Wolverhampton Homes' experience with home-makeovers and vulnerability assessments. There are further links in Education, Children's Services and Enterprise which will aid the project to meet regional objectives such as to improve awareness of immigration status amongst school children and 16 new migrant-run social enterprises.
- 2.16 MiFriendly Cities is able to build on the success of projects and funding for new communities in Wolverhampton, such as Controlling Migration Funds and the Syrian Resettlement Programme. A project team has been formed to share learning from these initiatives and aim to support not duplicate any existing provision in the city.

3.0 Update

- 3.1 MiFriendly Cities was formally launched by Coventry City Council in March 2018, Birmingham City Council will launch later this year. The project commenced in Wolverhampton in July with allocated employees as described in 6.3 and a Project Manager. It formally launched in the city on 3 October 2018. The event invited stakeholders to hear about the new project and activities to come over the next three years in Wolverhampton and beyond.
- 3.2 The launch event was well attended with attendance from the Leader, Mayor, community groups and clients / residents of the City of Wolverhampton.
- 3.3 The project has now reached a stage of implementation work to be undertaken with community groups in Wolverhampton in relation to the development of a pop-up furniture project by utilising existing community resources.

- 3.4 The furniture project will work to renovate restore and recycle donated items and offer a sustainable option to the public.
- 3.5 The project is the key deliverable for CWC with the main outcomes being that of the upskilling of migrants and undertaking 100 home makeovers for vulnerable households across the City.
- 3.6 Given the specialist nature of furniture recycling projects it is proposed that we undertake a procurement process to secure a provider to deliver this project, under the guidance of Procurement.

Further activities to be delivered in Wolverhampton as part of the MiFriendly Cities project

Activity	Description	Estimated delivery date
Pop up furniture factory	Workshops and equipment to upskill or teach new wood working or practical skills	May 2019
Home makeovers	Furniture makeover to homes occupied by vulnerable residents	December 2020
Health champions	Trained migrants delivering health messages in new communities	Throughout 2019 and 2020
Social enterprise start ups	Support for migrant owned social enterprises to flourish	December 2020
Share my language	Community based classes to share international languages	Throughout 2019 and 2020
Know your rights	Legal health checks in places of work and schools	Throughout 2019 and 2020

- 3.7 The project will commission and partner with a variety of community organisations to assist in first engaging with migrants, secondly delivering the furniture project and finally administering the home makeovers.
- 3.8 The project has already created networks and partnerships both locally and regionally to facilitate work on this and associated projects as well as highlighting some of the excellent work that is undertaken by community and voluntary groups in relation to integration, with a motto of, "it's all about the positive impact that you can make in the City".

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.1 Alternative option 1 : Do not approve expenditure to enable the MiFC programme to progress. This would have an adverse impact to the Council and local voluntary sector partners.
- 4.2 To decline to participate in the project would lose the Council the opportunity to gain £388,000 of grant funding. Implications of this option on the city would be to miss out on a large amount of grant funding that would be used to improve integration in the ethnically diverse city. There are several projects in the city that are aimed at the same demographic with similar objectives. MiFriendly Cities will build on this and offer an additional range of support to new communities in Wolverhampton; thereby providing a holistic package of support beyond existing council services. Furthermore, MiFriendly Cities offers opportunities to trial innovative projects that may not otherwise be tested within the scope of council provision.

5.0 Reasons for decisions

- 5.1 Approval for the implementation of the project will allow Wolverhampton to have the status of one of Europe's few migrant friendly cities as well as resource to deliver innovative projects.
- 5.2 As this is a European funded project, a budget is required to enable expenditure to be incurred prior to being reimbursed from grant funding.
- 5.3 Participants supported as a result of this project will be assisted to make a positive contribution to the city via the range of new services, qualifications and experiences available.
- 5.4 Currently there are steering groups for the projects (Appendix 1) which have formed at different times for different purposes. It is suggested that a strategic, multi-agency forum be established to have oversight of the various strands of work that are all connected to migrant populations.
- 5.5 This will help to ensure a coordinated response across the different workstreams and in doing so, enable stakeholders who are involved in this agenda be fully sighted and up to date on what is happening. Cabinet is asked to recommend that this arrangement is explored, including terms of reference for such a forum including governance structures.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 The total grant awarded to the consortium from the ERDF is over five million euros, of which the CWC element is £388,000 using the current project exchange rate. Therefore approval to establish a budget of £388,000 for MiFriendly Cities as part of the City

Housing Service is required, to be split equally over financial years 2019-20 and 2020-2021.

- 6.2 Match funding equivalent to 20 percent of total project expenditure is required to support the project which consists of officer time costed at £97,000 as detailed in table 6.3. This match funding is from existing staffing budgets since expertise and guidance from existing departments will be key to the project's success.

Financial Profile of MiFriendly Cities

Financial Year	Match funding £000	Grant contribution £000	Total £000)
2018-2019	21	-	21
2019-2020	42	194	236
2020-2021	34	194	228
Total	97	388	485

- 6.3 The eighty percent grant funded element of the project will be reclaimed via the Accountable Body, Coventry City Council. All claims must be submitted in line with ERDF legislation and at specified periods to ensure that the Council is reimbursed for the grant element of the expenditure.
- 6.4 CWC are responsible for meeting specific outputs and some outputs will be shared with the other City Councils or partners in the project. From initial conversations with the Accountable Body it is felt that there should not be a risk to the Council in the event that partners in the project delivering in other authority areas do not deliver their outputs.
- 6.5 The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union will not affect the terms of the grant and all claims will be honoured to the end of the project in February 2021.

[JM/26022019/M]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 The project partners are working under a signed and completed collaboration agreement.
- 7.2 The Accountable Body, Coventry City Council have confirmed the United Kingdom leaving the European Union will have no impact on the funding allocation in the bid. The Government has confirmed that UK organisations that secure funding through EU programmes, from now until the end of 2020, will be guaranteed by the UK Government even in a "no deal" Brexit scenario.
- 7.3 Legal support will be provided in relation to the completion of contractual documentation.

[DC/13032019/K]

8.0 Equalities implications

8.1 A full Equality Impact assessment has been undertaken with consideration given to the project targeting migrants and new communities, however the project also has positive contributions to the host community. Some projects may be unsuitable for people with disabilities, pregnant women or people with any conditions that prevent them from participating in the pop-up furniture factory and abiding by health and safety practises. Solutions have been identified, such as directing affected participants to other activities on offer through MiFriendly Cities.

9.0 Environmental implications

9.1 The environmental implications of MiFriendly Cities will be the waste produce of wood working in the Pop-up Furniture Factory. To counteract this, the project will take donated wood and furniture no longer needed to upcycle into new furniture and for workshop participants to practice on, thereby reducing waste and encouraging recycling amongst migrants and newly arrived communities in Wolverhampton.

10.0 Human resources implications

10.1 Employee time is an essential component to the co-financing arrangement of MiFriendly Cities. The Human Resources department will provide guidance in project team recruitment, some of which will be recruited and paid for by the project including the Project Manager.

10.2 Recruitment to new posts and any revisions to existing posts will adhere to the Council's job evaluation process. The nature of the changes will determine whether the Council's restructure policy with consultation with employees and recognised unions or the use of Human Resources recruitment policy and procedure.

[HR/BB/AW/072]

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

11.1 There are corporate landlord implications contained within the report.

12.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

12.1 Improved health and wellbeing through a range of additional services available to residents.

12.2 For example, recruitment to the Health Champions programme within MiFriendly Cities will equip local people with health knowledge and awareness of local provision to communicate to their communities.

12.3 The Know Your Rights project will distribute information in schools and workplaces about relevant legislation and there are a range of skills training programmes on offer for migrants to develop their skillsets.

13.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of New Communities Projects

Appendix 2: Programme Governance Structure