

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 10 April 2019
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Report title	Education Grants	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Lynne Moran Education	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Meredith Teasdale, Director of Education	
Originating service	School Improvement	
Accountable employee	Amanda Newbold	Head of School Improvement
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Report to be/has been considered by	Education Leadership Team	8 April 2019

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Education, in consultation with the Director of Education and the Director of Finance, to accept the grant of £516,000 as outlined in the report and to spend against the grant monies received
2. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Education, in consultation with the Director of Education and the Director of Finance, to accept the grant of £272,000 as outlined in the report, awarded from the Early Years Professional Development Fund, and to spend against the grant monies received.
3. Approve the establishment of budgets to allow expenditure, as set out in the report, and the grants to be spent.

Recommendation for noting:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note that announcements on successful bids are embargoed until the week of 15 April 2019.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report seeks the approval to establish associated budgets and seek delegation of authority to the Cabinet Member for Education, in consultation with the Director of Education and Director of Finance, to accept the Early Outcomes Fund and Early Years Professional Development Fund grants on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC).

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In July 2017, the Secretary of State for Education set an ambition to halve the number of children who do not achieve at least expected levels across all Early Learning Goals relating to 'communication and language' and 'literacy' at the end of reception year by 2028. In April 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) announced it would be designing and delivering a peer review model to review and develop local early years systems to make them more effective. Both initiatives are supported by funding opportunities, two of which are detailed here.

Early Outcomes Fund

- 2.2 In November 2018, the DfE established an Early Outcomes Fund worth approximately £6.5 million. The overall ambition of this fund is to increase the number of local authorities (LAs) starting a transformation journey to improve the collective operation of local services in securing good early language outcomes for children.
- 2.3 The fund aims to achieve three key areas:
- a. To increase leadership focus at local authority level on the key issue of early language.
 - b. To enable LAs to undertake work to improve their services and how they are delivered.
 - c. To resource evaluation and partnership working amongst LAs that will spread innovations around the wider system.
- 2.4 A specific intention of the fund is to support activities which will kick-off, or progress, system change that addresses leadership, funding, commissioning, workforces, data, accountability and evaluation, with the purpose of improving good early language outcomes in a local area.
- 2.5 The DfE encouraged LAs to submit joint-bids working in partnership with each other. The hope is that this allows strong ideas to benefit multiple LAs whilst supporting innovation and the spread of learning and best practice.
- 2.6 The DfE made the Early Outcomes Fund available via a bid round in January 2019. The City of Wolverhampton Council submitted an application on behalf of the four Black Country local authorities and in partnership with local health professionals.

Early Years Professional Development Fund (PDF)

2.7 This fund is a £20 million investment from the DfE designed to improve children's early language, literacy and numeracy through high quality, evidence-based professional training for the pre-reception early years workforce, to raise quality in settings, and it is targeted to benefit disadvantaged children.

3.0 Progress

3.1 CWC has been awarded money from both funds. Although the aims and delivery of each project are different, it is hoped that both will contribute positively to improved early learning outcomes for children in the City.

3.2 The Early Outcomes Fund of £516,000 has been awarded to CWC, as one of only eight successful bids. It is to be issued in two instalments, over two financial years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.

a. The first tranche of £234,000 was issued on 29 March 2019.

b. The second tranche of £282,000 is due to be issued in October 2019.

3.3 The bid stated three priorities: firstly, to eradicate siloed working by developing common Speaking, Listening and Communication vision, strategy and pathways across the four local authorities; secondly, to promote early identification of speech, language and communication needs and ensure access to services is maximised; and thirdly to improve school readiness through improved parental and community engagement.

3.4 The Professional Development Fund of £272,000 exists over 2018-2019 to the financial year 2021-2022.

a. The first tranche of £20,000, made on 29 March 2019, will support the council to build up our programme delivery capacity within the organisation, which will help to identify existing and establish new partnerships comprising of schools with early years provision and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nursery and childminder settings.

b. The second tranche of payment of £30,000, to be made in March 2020. This will enable the council to support CPD Champions, by funding backfill costs of staff to enable them to receive DfE-funded training from the National Delivery Partner.

c. The third (March 2021) and fourth (July 2021) tranches of payment, each amounting to £111,000, will enable the council to support schools and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) nursery and childminder settings, by funding backfill costs of PVI staff and any logistical costs to enable them to receive DfE-funded professional development.

3.5 Each fund is subject to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which formalises the working relationship and expectations relating to the grant funding payments.

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.1 The only alternative option available would be to not accept the grants and to return them to source. This option has been discounted as the City would miss out on a valuable opportunity to improve outcomes for its children and young people.

5.0 Reasons for decisions

- 5.1 The decision for delegated authority will ensure actions and expenditure are timely and are in line with the requirements for each of the funds. The Director of Education, acting as the grant recipient, will assume responsibility and will meet the requirements of the DfE, specifically:
- a. Information sharing for the purpose of the funding.
 - b. Record keeping and accounting of expenditure for the grants.
 - c. Liaison with the DfE and its partners, including quarterly reporting.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 Both grants are being offered under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and are subject to Memorandum of Understandings that clearly lay out how the purpose of the grants and how the grant can be utilised.
- 6.2 If an authority fails to comply with the requirements of the grant then it may have to repay some or all of the grant.
- 6.3 Approval is required to establish budgets of £516,000 and £272,000 and accept the grant in order to deliver the requirements of the ministerial decision.
- 6.4 If there is a change in policy (either due to a change in government or due to a change in Minister), or such that a decision is reached to abandon the delivery of the projects due to the DfE's Spending Review settlement post-March 2020, the DfE may terminate the payment of grant funding (or any part of it) to local authorities.

[DB/02042019/V]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 This report has no direct legal implications.

[TS/02042019/Q]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 The two grants aim to improve outcomes for the most disadvantaged groups of children in the City. The objective is to increase the proportion of children who attain age related expectations at the end of the reception year. Achieving the early learning goals is a factor in reducing inequality for children as they progress through school.

9.0 Environmental implications

9.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

10.0 Human resources implications

10.1 Both grants will provide professional development opportunities for Early Years colleagues in the Council workforce and across the City and the Black Country. There are a number of temporary positions or secondments attached to the Early Outcomes Fund project and these posts will be offered and recruited from across the four LAs. Recruitment and backfilling processes are required to commence as soon as possible.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

11.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

12.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

12.1 This report has no direct Health and Wellbeing implications. However, both grants are aimed at making a positive impact on young learners which may have longer term positive impacts on their health and wellbeing.

13.0 Schedule of background papers

13.1 Department for Education, November 2019 - [Early Outcomes Fund Guidance](#)