

Individual Executive Decision Notice

Report title	Wolves at Work 18-24 - Youth Employment Programme	
Decision designation	GREEN	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Ian Brookfield Leader of the Council	
Wards affected	(All Wards);	
Accountable Director	Mark Taylor, Deputy Chief Executive	
Originating service	Chief Executive	
Accountable employee	Maria Smith Tel Email	Project Manager 01902 551030 Maria.smith@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Regeneration Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board Leader's Briefing	26 October 2021 27 October 2021 1 November 2021

Summary

To seek approval from the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Director of Finance to approve the broad principles of the £100,000 City Ideas Fund and related approval mechanism, as well as the allocation of budgets for staffing to support the programme and a budget to fund the Wolves at Work 18-24 City Summit Event.

Delegated authority for these decisions was granted at Cabinet on 20 October 2021.

Recommendations for decision:

That the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Director of Finance:

1. Approve the broad principles of the £100,000 City Ideas Fund, as set out sections 3-6.
2. Approve the proposed evaluation principles and related approval process of the £100,000 City Ideas Fund, as set out in section 7, noting that the final detail of the related processes to be referred to the Leader for final consideration before being implemented.
3. Approve a budget of £121,000 (from the total approved budget of £3 million), to fund an initial staffing resource of three posts to support the Wolves at Work 18-24 programme.

4. Approve a budget of £15,000 (from the total approved budget of £3 million) for the Wolves at Work 18-24 City Summit event.
5. Approve that the Deputy Chief Executive can have delegated authority to approve revenue budget spend (from within the £3 million approved budget) to fund further general staffing and other related general expenditure, required to support the Wolves at Work 18-24 Programme.

Signature
Councillor Ian Brookfield
Name of Cabinet Member

Date: 12/11/2021

Signature
Tim Johnson
Name of Director

Date: 12/11/2021

Signature
Claire Nye
Director of Finance

Date: 12/11/2021

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Following the submission of the 'Wolves at Work 18–24 Programme' – Youth Employment' Cabinet report on 20 October 2021, approval was granted to establish a £100,000 'City Ideas Fund', (funded from the £3 million available from a combination of the Council's Recovery Reserve and Covid Emergency Grant), for City employers, partners, voluntary organisations, community groups and individuals to bid for and put forward ideas that will get more young people into sustained employment, apprenticeships, education or training.
- 1.2 Furthermore, as part of the Cabinet report delegated authority was granted to develop the scope and the governance arrangements for the City Ideas Fund.
- 1.3 This initiative requires a 'One City' whole system approach, aiming to reduce the high levels of youth unemployment that the City is currently experiencing with 2,660 young people currently claiming benefits (NOMIS- Official Labour Market Statistics September 2021).
- 1.4 The City Ideas Fund is set to be launched at the Youth Employment City Summit on 18 November 2021 and will support new and innovative activities and projects which will connect young people to job and learning opportunities.
- 1.5 Based on activity to date three new posts will be established initially to provide support for the Wolves at Work 18-24 – Youth Employment Programme to ensure it is managed efficiently and effectively.
- 1.6 At Cabinet on 20 October 2021, it was noted that the Council is committed to holding a Wolves at Work 18-24 City Summit to bring together a range of key partners (local, regional and national) and employers to forge a 'One City' approach to tackling the underlying issues which transcend organisational boundaries. Approval of a budget, of £15,000, to deliver that summit, is sought within this report.

2.0 Progress

- 2.1 The aim of the City Ideas Fund is to engage with key stakeholders who understand the challenges and barriers to youth unemployment and provide funding to stimulate new ideas and potential solutions to support the objectives of the programme. The principles of the fund are based on inclusion and accessibility and shared ownership of the challenge, in order to create opportunities for City employers, partners, voluntary organisations, community groups and individuals to have a voice and propose creative and innovative ideas to support young people into job and learning opportunities.

3.0 Criteria

- 3.1 The City Ideas Fund criteria will link directly to 'Wolves at Work 18-24 – Youth Employment' programme outcomes. The ideas generated through the fund will need to demonstrate that they will support more Wolverhampton young people into sustained employment, apprenticeships, education or training.

4.0 Governance

- 4.1 A project group will be established with key representatives from Legal, Finance, Insight and Performance and Assurance to scope the City Ideas Fund and set out governance arrangements. The group will be responsible for driving and delivering the City Ideas Fund, setting up key processes and procedures in order to 'go live' and moving forward will monitor impact and performance, linking into the wider programme governance.
- 4.2 The progress and impact of the City Ideas Fund will be incorporated into the wider update to Cabinet on the Youth Employment Programme in March 2022.
- 4.3 Successful applicants will need to demonstrate the impact and outcomes of the grants awarded, with regard to supporting more Wolverhampton young people into sustained employment, apprenticeships, education or training.

5.0 Application and scoring process

- 5.1 Crucial to this process is ensuring that the projects and ideas that arise from the City Ideas Fund actually target and impact the 2,660 young people (18-24) that are currently claiming benefits in the City (NOMIS September 2021) and support them into sustainable employment, apprenticeships, education or training.
- 5.2 There will be a clear evaluation process developed to ensure transparency and fairness. This will be based on the principles of a simple application process to ensure it is accessible for all, decision making is co-produced with key stakeholders whilst enabling a short-time frame to award funds. It is proposed that the applications will be broadly scored on impact, potential for sustainability, geography and value for money. The process will welcome opportunities to pilot new ideas and activities using the 'test and learn' process.
- 5.3 Applicants will need to submit a mini business case of the new project, detailing the total cost, overview of outcomes and intended impact to their community and detail resources they need to build capacity to ensure their ideas come to life. These could be in the form of a written or video submission and the requirements, in terms of detail, will be proportionate and reflect the level of grant being request.
- 5.4 The evaluation process will be transparent, and funds will be allocated as grant funding. All successful applicants that have been awarded grant funding will be published to ensure transparency.

6.0 Financial award options

- 6.1 There are several options to administer and award the £100,000 City Ideas Fund, based on work to date it is likely that grants from £500 to £10,000 will be made available. Subject to approval via an IEDN, further tranches of funding will be allocated from the budget if the Fund is successful and/or is oversubscribed with exciting ideas.

7.0 Evaluation and moderation panel

- 7.1 It is crucial that our young people are key to making decisions on where funding is awarded and it is recommended that the evaluation panel is made up of a selection of stakeholders such as school students, college and university students, those recently who have been appointed in a role following long periods out of work, education or training, voluntary organisations and City employers within the City. The evaluation panel will be facilitated by the Council.
- 7.2 It is recommended that a blind evaluation method is used which allows participants to make democratic decisions as a group as opposed to any one individual (the 'bandwagon effect'). The process neutralises any dominating personalities or opinions in the decision-making process. This will ensure decisions are made that are reflective of the majority of the group's views.
- 7.3 The decisions of the evaluation panel will be reviewed by a 'Moderation Panel' to ensure the correct processes and procedures have been followed and to complete any due diligence on those that are successful. The final detail of the processes will be referred to the Leader for final consideration.
- 7.4 The recommendations of the Moderation Panel will be referred to the Director of Finance to approve before the award is made.

8.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 8.1 There is only one real option to deliver and implementing the City Ideas Fund - adopting a 'One-City' approach with the Council taking on a City and system leadership role to develop the City Ideas Fund.
- 8.2 The other option is to do nothing. This would lead to potentially not identifying a key strategy to address this significant challenge for the city. This approach also supports 'co-production' and inclusion principles.

9.0 Reasons for decision

- 9.1 To deliver against the commitment of Cabinet and Full Council, to reduce Youth Unemployment in the City, by providing financial and human resources to support the Wolves at Work 18-24 Programme.

10.0 Financial implications

- 10.1 On the 3 November 2021, Full Council approved a budget of £3 million for Wolves at Work 18–24 Youth Programme, funded from a combination of the Council's Recovery Reserve and Covid Emergency Grant. The initial allocation of £100,000 for the City Ideas Fund will be met from this budget. Subject to approval via an IEDN, further tranches of funding will be allocated from the budget if the Fund is successful and/or is oversubscribed with exciting ideas.

- 10.2 In order to support the Wolves at Work 18-24 Programme initial staffing costs estimated at a total of £121,000 are required, this cost will be funded from the £3 million budget for the Wolves at Work 18–24 Programme for an initial 12 month period. The breakdown of staffing costs is detailed in section 13 of the report.
- 10.3 Following this initial 12 month period, the financial costs linked to the staffing of this initiative will be reviewed as part of the Council's budget setting process and Medium Term Financial Strategy, taking into account any remaining budget available as part of the £3 million allocated to this project.
- 10.4 The Wolves at Work 18-24 City Summit requires a budget of £15,000 to bring together a range of key partners to help tackle youth unemployment in the City, this budget will be funded from the £3 million allocation for the Wolves at Work 18–24 Youth Programme.
- 10.5 In order to ensure that the programme can operate in an agile and effective way, approval is sought for the Deputy Chief Executive to have delegated authority to approve revenue budget spend (from within the £3 million approved budget) to fund further general staffing and other related general expenditure, required to support the Wolves at Work 18-24 Programme. It is however important to note that any new initiatives to support the programme will still be reported to the Leader, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Director of Finance, for consideration and approval.

[VS/29102021/Q]

11.0 Legal implications

- 11.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Local Authority a general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do. In addition, S111 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Council to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 11.2 Use of all personal data must be in accordance with data protection legislation.
- 11.3 In any circumstances where the Council is making payments to third parties it needs to consider the post Brexit subsidy control rules.
- 11.4 As the Council is subject to the Freedom of information Act and its decisions are open to judicial review, all its actions must lawful and transparent to reduce the potential risk of financial and reputational damage.
- 11.5 That approvals are in place to ensure that appropriate officers can enter into all necessary legal transactions to give full effect to the Council's intention and ensure its interests are properly protected.

- 11.6 Once the Council has made decisions about payments to be made from the funds, further legal assistance will be required to document the terms and conditions for which the funds are given to ensure the Council's rights to enforce for breach are preserved.
- 11.7 If funding is not used for the purpose for which it was given it must be clawed back therefore the Council will need to ensure that provisions are in place to monitor the use of the funds and that objectives are met. Similarly, any un-spent funding must be returned to the Council.

[LMC/021121/S]

12.0 Equalities implications

- 12.1 The City Ideas Fund will aim to tackle inequalities in the City given big disparities between different wards - the highest rates of unemployment are in Bushbury South and Low Hill (18.7%), East Park (18%) and Fallings Park (16.9%) (NOMIS September 2021).
- 12.2 Applicants will be required to evidence the geographical areas in the city which will benefit from their project/ idea, if these are in wards with high rates of youth unemployment or are in the hardest to reach areas it is proposed that it will be scored highly in this area.
- 12.3 The process of the City Ideas Fund will be user-friendly and made accessible to everyone. This will be achieved through having a clear and fair application process that will be easy to understand. Applicants will also be provided with support through the process.
- 12.4 In addition, an equality analysis will be undertaken for the City Ideas Fund.

13.0 Human Resources implications

- 13.1 Three posts outlined below need to be established to provide overall support for the Wolves at Work 18-24 – Youth Employment Programme and to administer the City Ideas Fund.
- 13.2 The posts will be funded for an initial 12-month period from the £3 million budget, with an option to extend should funds allow.
- 13.3 It is proposed that the Youth Employment Support Manager will report into the Head of Skills and the other two posts will report into the Youth Employment Support Manager. Every opportunity will be explored to ensure these roles are made accessible for locally unemployed people.

Role	Staffing costs (including on costs)
Youth Employment Support Manager – Grade 8 (SCP 29)	£60,848
Youth Employment Support Officer - Grade	£36,192

Role	Staffing costs (including on costs)
5 (SCP 16)	
Youth Employment Apprentice - L3 (SCP 03)	£23,417
Total	£120,457

14.0 All other Implications

- 14.1 The 'City Ideas Fund' will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the City's residents as it will support for young people into sustainable employment, apprenticeships, education or training.
- 14.2 There is a risk that the City will go into another lockdown, this may impact the delivery of the 'City Ideas Fund'. If this was the case, the Council would work with the successful applicants to agree alternative delivery model or extending the timescales.

15.0 Schedule of background papers

- 15.1 Cabinet Report – 20 October 2021 - [Wolves at Work 18-24 - Youth Employment](#)