

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 11 April, 2016

Report of the Leader

External Funding: Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2Work ESF Grants

Purpose of the Report

1. To enable the Council to access additional funding to increase the number of young people who are engaged in education, employment or training.

Recommendations

1. To approve the work being undertaken and accept the grants and associated conditions.
2. To delegate authority to enter into contracts/SLAs and/or relationship agreement for the delivery of both the Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2Work grants to the Head of Legal Services in consultation with the Director of Learning and Skills, the Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools.
3. To approve the establishment of new posts in the Youth Service Team to be established by the Learning and Skills Directorate.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To maximise the European Structural Funding (ESF) to be granted to support the delivery of two projects that complement existing provisions to support young people delivered as part of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.
2. To gain Cabinet approval for entry into contractual arrangements to support the proposed developments taking account of ESF funded services and to authorise the Head of Legal Services to execute the contractual documentation.
3. To enable staff to be recruited to deliver both the Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2Work grants programmes.

Background

2. Following the External Funding Group, in May 2015, receiving a proforma seeking authorisation to progress, Cabinet, on 29th June 2015, was informed and subsequently approved (Cabinet Minute C2823) that European Structural Funded

projects were being progressed, and approval was being sought in relation to the work being undertaken and in acceptance of the grants and associated conditions.

3. Both the Inspire2Achieve and the Inspire2Work projects are seeking European Structural Funding (ESF) as part of a Competitiveness Regional bid for South East Wales. The projects will reflect both Strategic Objective 1, to reduce the number of 16-24 year olds who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and Strategic Objective 2, to reduce the number of those at risk of becoming NEET amongst 11-24 year olds; under Priority Axis 3 Youth Employment, of the ESF East Wales Operational Programme. Following acceptance of the Operation Logic Tables which outlined both projects initial plans, business plans have been drafted and submitted to the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) in order to proceed to a full proposal. Similar projects will be operated by the six authorities in the South East Wales Convergence Region in relation to both grants and will be led by Newport City Council, who will provide a central team to work across beneficiaries and with WEFO. Partners in the project will include the City of Cardiff Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Cardiff and Vale College, Coleg Gwent and Llamau Housing Limited. It is intended that these partners and this Council enter into the agreement referred to at recommendation 2 above.

Relevant Issues and Options

Inspire2Achieve

4. The total funding sought (estimated figures shared with the lead partner Newport Council in January 2016) for the Inspire2Achieve project is £697,700 over a 3 year period, made up from £313,965 in European Structural Funding, with £383,735 match funding. An element of redundancy costs has been built in to these figures to ensure that funding is available if, at the end of the project, there is a need to make posts redundant. ESF match funding is sourced from similar projects to reflect the contribution of an applying beneficiary. For the purpose of these projects, match funding is sourced from the Youth Service Strategy Grant, an annual grant that is targeted at specific priorities directed by Welsh Government and focussed by the Youth Service in response to local need and from existing youth service revenue funding. Services currently being funded from these sources will continue to be provided. Figures remain fluid whilst negotiation between the lead partner and Welsh European Funding Office continue.
5. The project will be a school based intervention focused on reducing and supporting those at risk of disengagement under the age of 16. It aims to provide a structured alternative learning environment in schools, where young people can engage in life style activities that aim to improve simple skills such as time keeping, literacy, revision techniques and providing specialist support such as language or mental health assistance. The intention of the project is that these skills will support young people to re-engage with educational activities and maintain their learning through Key Stage 4 into Key Stage 5. The current participant outcomes for Inspire2Achieve being negotiated with WEFO are; 60 young people per worker receiving an intervention, 180 young people per year receiving an intervention and 540 young people receiving an intervention during the life of the project. These interventions will impact key risk indicators such as attendance, achievement and behaviour; contributing to a reduction in numbers identified as high risk through the Local Authorities' Vulnerable Assessment Profile of NEETs under the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

Inspire2Work

6. The total funding sought (estimated figures shared with the lead partner Newport Council in January 2016) for the Inspire2Work project is £263,462 over a 3 year period, made up of £118,562 European Structural Funding, with £144,900 sought in match funding. ESF match funding is sourced from similar projects to reflect the contribution of an applying beneficiary, for the purpose of this project, match funding is sourced from existing Youth Service Revenue Funds.
7. Inspire2Work will focus on post 16 NEETs, with the Vale of Glamorgan plan concentrating on 18-24 year olds who are deemed the biggest area of concern given limited local provision. The scheme is a person centred project that aims to engage, support and enable young people who are NEET to gain a range of skills, qualifications and meaningful work placements, and to feel confident and motivated to enter into sustainable employment or further learning. The project seeks to provide the flexibility necessary for NEET young people to overcome the barriers preventing them from entering employment or further learning. It is possible that the Inspire2Work project could work in tandem with Inspire2Achieve to provide a progression route to those pre 16 year olds who become NEET and require further interventions. The current participant outcomes for Inspire2Work being negotiated with WEFO are; 60 young people per year receiving an intervention, 180 young people receiving an intervention during the life of the project with 20% of NEET participants gaining a qualification upon leaving, 17% in education or training upon leaving and 28% entering employment upon leaving.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

8. External funding is required to supplement youth support provision to better address the needs of those who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET. The total funding for both projects will be in the region of £961,162 over the 3 years, 2016/17 to 2018/19; this includes ESF grant funding and match funding. Budget figures have been supplied to Newport City Council as lead organisation and the WEFO have received the business plan based on these figures but have yet to issue a confirmation letter confirming the budget.
9. It is proposed that the Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2Work projects will fund 4 project posts and a part time administration role at an estimated cost of £308,828. These will mirror existing posts employed through the Vale of Glamorgan and which will be used as the match funding requirement estimated to be in the region of £377,719. All posts will go through the job evaluation process.
10. Should the grant not be awarded the Vale of Glamorgan would be the only region in the South East Convergence Region not in receipt of European Structural funding in the multi-authority initiative to address NEETs.
11. The project and its associated costs will cease at the end of the grant (3 years after inception) in April 2019. It is possible that an extension to the grant will be possible through WEFO until 2022, although it would be unlikely that any other alternative funding arrangements could be made to support the project. Claw back of funds would only be sought by WEFO should the grant not be administered in line with the grant conditions.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

12. The Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2Work projects through working with, targeting and improving opportunities for NEETs will positively impact upon community wellbeing and resilience.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

13. It will be necessary for the contractual agreement to be finalised and subsequently executed by the Head of Legal Services.

Crime and Disorder Implications

14. The Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2 Work projects work to reduce crime and disorder by tackling the underlying causes of deprivation; targeting young people most at risk of becoming NEET and providing opportunities to stay in education and training.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

15. The work of the Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2Work project will ensure that those young people who are NEET, or who are most at risk of becoming NEET are given an opportunity to remain in education, training or progress to employment.

Corporate/Service Objectives

16. Both the Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2Work projects will work to support the Corporate Plan, Well-being Outcome 3: An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale. Secure improved outcomes for groups of learners at risk of underachievement, such as those entitled to free school meals. Increase the learning opportunities for disadvantaged individuals and vulnerable families. Reduce the number of young people not in education, employment and training.
17. Both projects will work in tandem to tackle child poverty, support children in need and their families to engage positively with schools and to encourage partners to develop appropriate strategies for engaging with young people and reducing NEETs. Further, both Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2Work will underline several actions in the LSB's Delivery Plan aimed at reducing young people who are NEET, progressed through the 'Helping People into Work' work stream.

Policy Framework and Budget

18. This is a matter for Executive decision.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

19. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools has been consulted on Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2Work funding. Both the Director for Learning and Skills and Economic Regeneration have been consulted and the Engagement and Progression Framework (NEETs) Strategic Group are aware, and are supportive of the bid going forward.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

20. Corporate Resources

Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer

Mark Davies, Children and Young People's Partnership Manager

Officers Consulted

External Funding Steering Group

Corporate Management Team

Andy Borsden, Lead Officer Youth & Community Learning

Wendy Bell, Finance Officer

Responsible Officer:

Jennifer Hill, Director of Learning and Skills