

BRIEFING NOTE FOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

5 NOVEMBER 2024

PURPOSE OF THE BRIEFING NOTE

Following a successful application to deliver a DWP Flexible Support Fund (FSF) partnership in the Essex District, by Tendring District Council, the sum of £91,383,32 was awarded in 2023 to fund the employment of two Community Support Employment Officers (CSEO) for the period of 12 months. This partnership commenced in December 2023. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) have recently offered to extend this partnership for an extra period of 24 months. This Briefing Note is to gain Management Team's support in respect of potentially accepting the funding and the continuation with this arrangement for a further two years.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The funding provided was used for the engagement of two Community Support Employment Officers, managed by TDC, who are located in Job Centres in Clacton and Harwich, and whose remit is to engage with claimants, with the aim of encouraging them to liaise and work with the CSEO's, with the purpose of moving them closer to the labour market by providing localised bespoke support.

This would serve to improve employment outcomes or prospects for long-term unemployed individuals and groups facing the most complex and intractable barriers to work.

The partnership has a number of minimum requirements which were set out in a grant agreement and included for example engaging with 500 claimants with interventions with 300 of these, moving those individuals closer to the labour market by providing localised support tailored to the customer's particular needs and developing an action plan for each of these participants

The partnership noted the primary indicators of success were:

- 90% social justice outcomes which include but are not limited to:
- confidence building,
- engaging with debt and money management advice services,
- engaging with housing services,
- engaging with partners and stakeholders who are providing specialised assistance to remove barriers to work,
- moving into training or education,
- moving into work experience, training, apprenticeships or volunteering
- moving into employment.

Overall, the partnership has been successful with the targets met, and the DWP are eager to continue this work and have emailed expressing their thanks to the officers who have been working hard to support some of our most vulnerable service users / customers.

It was also added within the email from DWP that they are delighted to see that many people in Tendring have had the quality of their lives greatly improved. Building trust and encouraging participants to access available support services and helping to remove barriers such as unstable housing and debt, has resulted in them feeling more equipped to look for employment

and in some cases have now joined the world of work.

During this year the officers have provided a wide range of support to residents to help them with the wide variety of challenges they are facing and crucially have supported 17 people back into work which DWP view as a very strong outcome.

As part of the decision making process for accepting the funding for this previous year the agreement of the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships was obtained and an officer decision published. The grant agreement was raised with the Monitoring Officer and as the provision of this type of funding had been provided previously (in 2018), that the agreement did not appear to have any adverse clauses and was effectively not negotiable with the DWP it was acceptable to sign it.

CURRENT POSITION

The current agreement ceases on the 31st November 2024.

The project's success has been noted resulting in the DWP putting a business case together for a further 2-year funding extension.

To progress the business case DWP now require the following

- Confirmation in writing that Tendring District Council (TDC) is willing to commit to the 2 years proposal,
- Confirmation if match funding will be offered for the same categories and be for the same level as for the previous bid and if there are an additional elements of match funding which will be included in the new bid.

The match funding within the previous bid is set out below

Training	£1000 – TDC Contribution
Safeguarding protections (lone worker adherence e.g. Skyguard)	£500 – TDC Contribution
Outreach office space rental	£3,000 - TDC contribution
Partnership office space for CSEO post holders and co-located DWP staff	£10,000 – TDC contribution
Line Management – monitoring and supervision TDC officer time pro rata	£24,000 - TDC

In particular DWP wish to confirm that contributions as to outreach office space rental and partnership office space will be an element of match funding moving forward for the 2024-26 period.

Outreach office space refers to accessing community space on an ad hoc basis whereas partnership office space would provide a more permanent base for CSEO's and DWP staff

such as work coaches to work in a collaborative way. Up until now the majority of work undertaken by the CSEO's has been within the DWP offices both in Harwich and in Clacton with some work undertake in TDC offices

In addition there is a request if TDC have any initiatives which directly benefit the customers engaging with the CSEO's that can form an element of the match funding too. Currently no further offer of match funding is being envisaged

It is currently proposed to agree the same match funding as previously which has worked well during the existing partnership period. For example office space is provided for the CSEO's within the Council offices who are based in the offices occasionally although spend the majority of their time at the DWP offices and effective line management monitoring and supervision has been undertaken by the Council's Community Development Manager.

Currently the two CSEO's work full time however there is a request by one of them to work part time hours if the agreement is extended and DWP are supportive of this approach as they see the officer as a great asset to the team and wish to retain their experience going forwards and are happy to reduce the funding and outcomes accordingly.

If the extension for a further two years is supported contact will be made with DWP so that they can progress the business case.

The case for continuation

Although funding is being offered for this role it is worthwhile highlighting the reasons for potentially continuing these roles

- Funding – the salary costs are covered by external funding provided by a DWP grant. Although there are match funding costs associated with the giving of the grant these can be covered for example there is already ongoing management of the staff by the Council's Community Development Manager which can be delivered within that existing role.
- As there are two existing staff already in place there are no recruitment costs and having worked in this role for a year they have demonstrated they can meet the outcomes required by the agreement but also they have developed experience and connections to deliver this role effectively
- Supporting people into employment and especially those furthest from the employment market who face the most complex and intractable barriers aligns with the Corporate Priorities around raising aspiration and creating opportunity and also has the wider benefit of supporting health and wellbeing. In addition the roles meet objectives within the Economic Development Strategy.
- The CSEO's have delivered a wide variety of support to a large number of individuals in the current year long project and from this 17 people have also achieved employment
- DWP are satisfied with the work undertaken by the CSEO's and have therefore offered to undertake a business case to obtain funding for a further two years

PROPOSAL

Management Team are asked;

- a) to note the contents of this report,
- b) endorse the proposals to deliver a 2024-2026 programme
- c) to support the acceptance of any funding grant offered by the DWP for this proposal which will be subject to an Executive Decision by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships in agreement with the Assistant Director Economy, Culture and Leisure.

Please note that any steer given at Management Team must be followed with the appropriate governance process for the matter being presented.

DELIVERING CORPORATE PRIORITIES

CORPORATE VISION –Raising aspirations and creating opportunity.

The employment of the CSEO's supports residents to reach their potential and realise their opportunity and in particular for those who are furthest from the employment market by providing them with holistic support. The officers support the access to skills, learning and training and are helping residents into work.

Working with partners to improve quality of life.

Employment is a key attribute in maintaining health and wellbeing providing purpose, combating social isolation and in particular providing income so individuals can access the resources they need to and therefore maintain good health and wellbeing such as around diet, housing and activity. Working with DWP as partners allows the Council to meet the needs of the community and promote a healthier community.

RELEVANT STRATEGY – This work meets key objectives in the Corporate Plan and aligns with the Economic Development Strategy and the objectives within the Strategy which is therefore a key driver for continuation of these roles and includes;

- Supporting Tendring's Growth Locations – these include Clacton and Harwich and the CSEO's currently undertake the majority of their work in these areas
- Ensuring residents have the skills and information to participate – the CSEO's directly support residents to access opportunities and help to remove barriers which make it more difficult to access employment

ANY PREVIOUS DECISIONS – This is an extension of work already existing which was undertaken following agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships and an officer decision.

KEY GOVERNANCE ISSUES AND/OR DIRECT LINKS TO OTHER MATTERS

This is an extension of an existing project but will now also meet the External Funding Review checklist for the acceptance of funding (Appendix A)

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This is an extension of an existing project which was agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships.

FINANCE, RESOURCES & CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

Finance: The funding for this work for the previous year has been provided by DWP and they are now proposing to provide a business case which will, if approved, deliver funding to continue this work for an extra two years which will be for one full time and one part time post. The grant agreement for this will be the same as the existing grant and DWP are satisfied that the current agreed outcomes are being delivered. TDC match funding is included in the previous grant agreement and these are currently being delivered and this can continue.

Other resources (e.g. external parties): TDC is the Leading Accountable Body as highlighted within the existing grant agreement and this will continue to be the case if a new agreement is entered into. The officers are funded externally from DWP and the existing match funding provided by TDC can continue to be delivered

TDC Capacity: The CSEO's are managed by the Community Development Manager within TDC and this is delivered through existing resources.

LEGAL DUTIES, POWERS & RESTRICTIONS (EXISTING, NEW RESPONSIBILITIES OR EMERGING)

This work is delivered through partnership with DWP.

The power to do this is under the general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011 which give local authorities powers to do anything that individuals can generally do.

In addition, this is an extension of an existing project and so does not necessarily involve emerging new responsibilities.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Financial – Funding for this work is provided by DWP and although there is some match funding from TDC this is managed through existing resources.

Service Delivery (inc. any existing projects at risk)? – there is a risk that the outcomes within the grant agreement will not be achieved. However, there are two existing staff who have effectively delivered against the existing grant agreement and if approved will use their experience and knowledge to continue to do so.

Safety – No significant issues as CSEO's regularly work with other staff in the CSEO offices.

Reputation – This is the extension of an existing successful project which helps deliver outcomes in relation to employment which aligns with the Corporate Plan so no significant reputation risks have currently been identified.

NEXT STEPS & MILESTONES

Following responding to DWP who will then seek to get the business case approved if supported by TDC, then ongoing project management is provided by the Community Development Manager to ensure the two CSEO's are effectively managed but also to ensure

that reporting is provided back to DWP and invoices submitted on time.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Completed External Funding Review Receipt of Funding Checklist

REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Name

John Fox

Job Title

Head of Health and Partnerships

Appendix A

Receipt of Funding

Prior to accepting any funding from an external partner the following checklist should be appropriately completed prior to considering acceptance of funding.

Checklist	Yes/No	Comments
Have conditions for allocating the funding been identified (grant conditions, assurance framework, MOU etc?)	Yes	Existing grant agreement provided and previously agreed which will be used again if funding is provided
Will the funding align with the Corporate Plan Themes and Priorities and state which one and why? What are the outcomes expected.	Yes	1. Raising Aspiration and creating opportunity – as it helps residents to reach their potential and realise their opportunity 2. Working with partners to improve quality of life – supporting people to access employment and addressing the challenges people face will improve health and wellbeing. Outcomes are set out within the grant agreement to deliver social justice outcomes around addressing debt, housing, barriers to work etc. Existing work has also seen 17 people access work.
Is there organisational capacity for using the funding within the timescales expected? - Governance - Delivery Have you consulted the relevant services where support is required?	Yes	This is an existing project and is currently delivered through existing resources for example management of the project, which can continue
Does the receipt of the external funding place additional financial and resource commitments on the Council?	No	As this is a successful existing project delivered through existing resources for example management of the CSEO's there will be no

(For example play equipment requiring maintenance)		additional commitments.
Which legal powers are being relied upon to support the use of the funding		The power to do this is under the general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011 which give local authorities powers to do anything that individuals can generally do.
Have you undertaken a Subsidy Control assessment? If so, what was the outcome?	Yes	This funding is provided by DWP to the Council who is not acting as an enterprise providing services on the market and therefore is not subject to the Subsidy Control Act 2023
Is the Council best placed to allocate the funding (should it be allocated by the funder direct?)	Yes	DWP provide this funding so that residents who are furthest from the job market can have a different offer of support than that provided by DWP which means they can increase access to services
Has a formal decision been taken to accept the funding at Cabinet or Portfolio Holder level?	No	If supported by Management Team and the DWP business case is successful then an Executive Decision will be undertaken by the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships