

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

Report of the Executive  
Director Place

### URBACT: TechRevolution

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek approval to enter into a funding agreement with the URBACT Secretariat and to partner with 6 cities across Europe to share Barnsley's recognised and accredited 'Good Practice' of Enterprising Barnsley and the Digital Media Centre and undertake transnational learning and improvement planning to support and grow digital businesses and jobs.

#### 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Cabinet agrees that approval is given for the Executive Director Place to authorise the contracts on behalf of the Council.
- 2.2 Cabinet agrees that approval is given for the Director of Finance, Assets and Information Services to amend revenue budgets in accordance with the financial implications and Appendix A of this report.
- 2.3 Cabinet agrees that approval is given for the Executive Director Place in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance to contract with the programme partners: Pardubice, Czechia; Vilanova I la Geltru, Spain; Schiedam, Netherlands; Piraeus, Greece; Bacau, Romania; Nyíregyháza, Hungary
- 2.4 Cabinet agrees that approval is given for The Council to act as Accountable body for the TechRevolution programme.

#### 3. Introduction

- 3.1 URBACT is an EU exchange and learning programme that promotes exchange and learning between cities. It uses European Structural Funds to achieve its goals, helping to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges, by networking, learning from one another's experiences, drawing lessons and identifying good practices to improve urban policies.

- 3.2 The main mechanism that URBACT uses to achieve its objectives is through co-financing exchange and learning networks that typically run for 30 months (until December 2020) and involve six to twelve cities, depending on the type of network. Each network focuses on a specific theme or challenge.
- 3.3 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBBC), during 2018 made the successful application to URBACT to deliver the TechRevolution Transfer Network project that allows 6 cities (Pardubice, Czechia; Vilanova I la Geltru, Spain; Schiedam, Netherlands; Piraeus, Greece; Bacau, Romania; Nyíregyháza, Hungary) to transfer Barnsley's accredited 'Good Practice' of Enterprising Barnsley and the Digital Media Centre.
- 3.4 TechRevolution will also provide an opportunity for Barnsley to further develop our Enterprising Barnsley and Digital Media Centre work through the production of an Improvement Plan.
- 3.5 The total value of the proposed programme contract is €599,993 (€478,569 grant) and the budget allocated to Barnsley is €235,273. Barnsley claims the whole grant on behalf of the partners and defrays funds to them on receipt of monies. The balance of funding is to be provided in the form of in-kind match funding from the Council and the partners at the relevant intervention level for each city. Barnsley is required to provide match funding of 15% so €35,291 which is a mixture of staff time and cash match and contained within existing Enterprising Barnsley budgets.
- 3.6 This report seeks approval for the Executive Director Place to authorise the funding agreement for the second phase of the programme with URBACT on behalf of the Council and to enter into legal agreements with the six programme partners.

#### **4. Consideration of alternative approaches**

- 4.1 Barnsley MBC have authorised Barnsley's commitment as lead partner for phase 1 of the project and are committed for to continue as lead partner for the second phase of the project. De-commitment now from the project would have reputational damaged and could impact on BMBBC's credibility should future European Funding applications be submitted.

#### **5. Proposal and justification**

- 5.1 The proposal is that Barnsley MBC contracts with URBACT to deliver phase 2 of the TechRevolution programme. Committing to the second phase of the programme will showcase and promote Barnsley and its achievements (Enterprising Barnsley support, Digital Media Centre) on a European Scale. The project will also enable Barnsley MBC to continue to learn from other partners in the exploration of how small and medium sized cities across the EU can maximise the job creation potential of the digital economy.

- 5.2 Ongoing engagement in the URBACT project will help to ensure the legacy and achievements of phase 1 is continued, including the further development of Barnsley's TechTown stakeholder group which will segue into the TechRevolution stakeholder group. This group have been at the centre of plans for Digital Campus and expanded Digital Media Centre facilities. The stakeholder group is essential for Barnsley to continue to tackle some of the identified barriers to growth in digital jobs and businesses shown in the TechTown Action Plan and contribute to growth as identified in the Barnsley Jobs and Business Plan.
- 5.3 Barnsley MBC's involvement in phase 2 of TechRevolution project will help to cement the development of the Digital Media Centre portfolio as a physical and virtual digital hub at the heart of a new Digital Campus, where tenants, users and stakeholders can come together to share, collaborate and build digital assets, business and knowledge for the benefit of all residents in Barnsley. This integrated approach will harness support for the development of new business starts and digital transformation of traditional industries.
- 5.4 A key aim of the TechTown project is to address what cities can do to support businesses to access the digital skills and innovations they need in order to start, grow and compete. Ongoing engagement through phase 2 of the project will allow the Barnsley stakeholder group to develop strategies to connect digital skills and services across industry sectors. Thereby helping to develop a stronger digital economy with higher skills levels that is essential in helping to find, grow, retain and return talent within the local economy.
- 5.5 Barnsley MBC's engagement within the project will allow for connections and continual learning from previous URBACT/transnational projects to be implemented, that will including working across teams to help enable Barnsley MBC to make progress with growing the local economy and achieve the maximum benefit of service delivery for residents and businesses.
- 5.6 Partnership governance arrangements for this project will include establishment of a programme management board with the monitoring, evaluation and auditing of the programme being led by the Enterprising Barnsley team. Barnsley MBC will contract with each partner detailing what financial and output performance is expected with the requirements from URBACT contained in the main contracts with BMBC will be passed on to each partner.

## **6. Implications for local people / service users**

- 6.1 The programme will encourage and support investment, business growth and skills development through creation of new businesses, additional jobs and supply chain development, all of which will have a positive impact for local people.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director Finance (S151 Officer).
- 7.2 The financial implications to this report are summarised in the attached Appendix A.
- 7.3 BMBC will be the accountable body for the URBACT TechTown programme. The total cost of the programme will be €599,933. This will be financed by URBACT €478,569 and €121,363 match funding from the 6 partners.
- 7.4 The in-kind match funding required from the Council will be €35k over the contract period, a mixture of cash and staff time. Funds are contained within Enterprising Barnsley's existing budgets.
- 7.5 The programme will be managed by the Enterprising Barnsley Team with support from BMBC Financial Services.
- 7.6 Actual monies received will be subject to the applicable exchange rates between € and £ at the point claims are made.

## **8. Employee implications**

- 8.1 The programme activities will be covered by existing posts and one new temporary post including:

<b>Post</b>	<b>Service</b>
Business Centres Incubation Manager	Economic Regeneration
Business Investment Coordinator	Economic Regeneration
Group Leader - Enterprising Barnsley	Economic Regeneration
Assistant Strategic Finance Manager	Finance
Internal Auditor	Finance
Policy & Programmes Officer	Economic Regeneration
Group Leader – Regeneration	Economic Regeneration
Risk and Governance Manager	Finance
Head of Service – Economic Development	Economic Regeneration
Business Investment Manager	Economic Regeneration
Account Manager	Economic Regeneration
Head of Service - Skills	Economic Regeneration
Communications Officer (temporary FTE post)	Comms/Economic Regen

- 8.2 To ensure business continuity and limit the impact on existing BMBC staffing resources, it is proposed that a Barnsley stakeholder group coordinator role will be procured externally under the project with all costs covered by URBACT.

- 8.3 It is envisaged that the Barnsley coordinator will provide ongoing support and be responsible for the delivery and coordination of the Barnsley URBACT Local Support Group, the development of an Improvement Plan and attendance and representation of Barnsley on transnational visits.
- 8.4 To support Barnsley as Lead Partner a lead expert will also be provided and funded by URBACT provide expertise and support.
- 8.5 The lead expert will assist the partnership with the design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities, drawing lessons out of these activities, and supporting partners to deliver activities at a local level.
- 8.6 Phase 2 of the programme will require transnational travel by members of the Barnsley URBACT Local Support Group to engage in transnational learning events and workshops.
- 8.7 All transnational travel will be reviewed, prior to travel, individual travel plans will be produced and reviewed in accordance with BMBC Health and Safety and the UK's Foreign Office advice before travel.
- 8.8 BMBC officer travel will be kept to a minimum level sufficient to successfully meet contractual and operational requirements, with the commissioned Barnsley coordinator and non BMBC members of the Local Support Group undertaking travel and disseminating knowledge to the Local Support Group.
- 8.9 Travel plans will be reviewed, after every visit and a debrief will be held with the TechRevolution Project management team.

## **9. Communications implications**

- 9.1 Marketing and publicity will be undertaken to promote the benefits of the programme. This will included a series of press releases. The proposed temporary Communications post will be part of the core Communications team and so will be able to ensure connection and collaboration with wider agenda.

## **10. Consultations**

- 10.1 Consultation has taken place with representatives from the Director of Finance, Assets and Information Services regarding the financial implications and Risk Management implications.
- 10.2 Consultation has taken place with the Director of Human Resources and the Trade Unions regarding staffing implications.
- 10.3 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Director of Legal and Governance regarding the legal implications of contracting with funders and partners plus any future procurement process.

## **11. The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework**

- 11.1 The proposals align with the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-18 and contribute towards the aspiration of delivering a thriving and vibrant economy. A specific outcome of this objective is to increase the stock of businesses and jobs.
- 11.2 The corporate performance framework monitors the vibrancy and health of the Barnsley economy. This programme will contribute towards the number of new business starts and the number of new jobs created.

## **12. Risk Management issues**

- 12.1 There is a comprehensive risk registers for this programme which will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The risk register is split into two discrete areas:
- Risks relating to BMBC as a project partner; and,
  - Risks relating to BMBC as the lead Authority.
- 12.2 Risk Registers for both elements of the scheme have been developed and are reviewed on a regular basis by the TechRevolution Project management team
- 12.3 The significant risk(s) associated with BMBC acting as a project partner and lead authority are:

Risk	Current Score	Mitigations	Target Score
Failure to communicate effectively with URBACT and BMBC on programme performance	2 (Red)	Develop project communication plan so all partners are aware of URBACT project communication guidelines - in development	4 (Amber)

- 12.4 The risk relates to the need to effectively communicate with the URBACT secretariat, and the mitigation action relates to the development of a communications strategy to control this activity.
- 12.5 The risk registers for the programme are attached at Appendix C

## **13. Promoting equality, diversity, and social inclusion**

- 13.1 There will be direct implications in the Social Inclusion Agenda. The creation of more companies, more jobs and increase skills across a range of activities will assist efforts to reduce social exclusion.

## **14. Reduction of crime and disorder**

- 14.1 The programme aims to encourage and support creation of new businesses and new jobs in Barnsley that may have benefits in terms of reducing levels of crime and disorder.

**15. Glossary**

- 15.1 URBACT –is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes.

**16. List of appendices**

Appendix A – Financial Implications

Appendix B – Staffing Structure

Appendix C – Risk Registers: Lead Partner & Project Partner

Appendix D – Lead Partner Letter

**17. Background papers**

Files located at Westgate Plaza One.

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email [governance@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:governance@barnsley.gov.uk) so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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