

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has been included in the relevant Forward Plan

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE TO CABINET ON 19 MAY 2021

The European Social Fund ADVANCE Project

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to enter into a service level agreement with the project lead partners, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council in response to a successful application for European Social Fund (ESF) and accept ESF grant for the programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **To agree to accept the ESF grant for the ADVANCE project.**
- 2.2 **To agree service level agreements with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, lead partner for ADVANCE to enable BMBC to deliver the project locally.**

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Barnsley's Employment and Skills Strategy "More and Better Jobs" is being refreshed considering the borough's 2030 Vision and emerging Inclusive Economy Strategy to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Its focus will remain to ensure Barnsley's workforce have the skills required by our employers and support entry and progression in employment and support for "Good Work" particularly for the most vulnerable individuals.
- 3.2 ADVANCE is part of a wider programme under that strategy umbrella strengthening the support for who are working and need to update their skills to adapt to new opportunities. Designed to fit within our existing employment and skills provision providing a seamless system of support for residents to find, keep and progress in work.
- 3.3 While great strides have been made, the level of skills in the borough continues to lag behind national and regional comparators. The impact of covid has been shown in the significant increases seen in benefit claimant numbers which have doubled over the last 12 months to 6.4% although lower than both the national average 6.5% and Yorkshire and the Humber average of 6.7% (Nomis, April 2021).
- 3.4 Positively, forecasts show that employment should return to pre-covid levels by 2022. This would make the post-covid labour market recovery one of the strongest since the recovery from the mid-1970's recession (SCR, April 2021).

3.5 At the same time analysts are warning that there is a real risk that the economic recovery will see the restoration of many insecure, low paid jobs, and will do little to address the concerns of job quality and insecurity that emerged in the decade after the 2009 recession (SCR, April 2021).

4. Proposals

4.1 ADVANCE builds on a tested model delivered successfully in Doncaster. Providing access to one to one support for employed people seeking advice and guidance to sustain and progress in their chosen careers. Partners have expanded on this model in response to a Sheffield City Region and DWP European Social Fund bidding opportunity call to support workforce development, particularly for those at greatest disadvantage in the labour market. An application was submitted as part of a partnership for the ADVANCE project with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council as the lead partner. The other partner is Sheffield City Council.

4.2 The project will fund additional careers, information, advice and guidance for employed people both to help them to navigate changes in the labour market, improve their adaptability and develop new skills to progress and/ or sustain their careers. This project provides “the glue” linking our support for unemployed people to access new employment and into work along to our employment progression support.

4.3 Up to date information on key economic sectors, including public sector careers, will be co-developed to strengthen careers information advice and guidance and to promote these sectors to career changers. This in turn will support recruitment to and progression in our own organization and contribute towards developing a more diverse local workforce.

4.4 The ADVANCE project has a clear focus on developing progression across key priority sectors:-

- Social Care
- Construction
- Engineering
- Manufacturing
- Hospitality and Leisure
- Public Sector

Digital skills are a pre-requisite of jobs across the economy and therefore ADVANCE will work closely with our emerging Digital Skills programme to address this need.

4.5 The original ADVANCE application valued the project in Barnsley at £1,371,738.93. This has subsequently been revised and reduced under a change control request as a result of a need to adapt to respond to the issues and opportunities that have arisen from the pandemic. The project is designed to fill a gap in current provision focusing as employees access the support as opposed to the employer as seen in the Skills Bank or Skills Support for the Workforce projects, it enhances and deepens the work already endorsed both for the wider economy and supporting our own workforce. Under the project change being submitted the project value in Barnsley will be **1,202,860.86**. Of this there is ESF grant of **£721,716.51** and a

match funding requirement of **£ 481,144.35**. The match funding will be delivered via staff wages of:

- Information Advice and Guidance Officer
- Future Carers Trainer
- Project Manager - Infrastructure (functions as Kickstart Coordinator)
- Lead Pastoral Mentor
- Organisation and Workforce Adviser

4.6 The ESF Grant funding provides the following additional resources:

- 2 Additional Information Advice and Guidance Officers
- A Projects and Contract Manager
- A Projects and Contracts Officer (working predominately on employer liaison and maximising social value from procurement)
- Participant Training budget
- Promotion and Events budgets for careers and progression fairs, Sector LMI and promotion and information, advice and guidance materials

5. CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

5.1 *Do Nothing*

5.1.1 Doing nothing removes the associated risks of managing and delivering ESF projects and it could be argued that the current Skills Bank Provision and Skills Support for the workforce provide routes through which workforce development can be promoted.

5.2 *The Preferred Option*

5.2.1 ADVANCE was piloted successfully in Doncaster and fills a gap in the provision of careers information, advice and guidance for working people. It focuses on creating skills progression facilitated by impartial guidance focused on the individual worker, rather than a company business case.

5.2.2 The project also enables access from working people whose employers don't support their skills development and progression, which is not the case for either The Skills Bank or Skills Support for the Workforce, both of which work through engagement with the employer. The project also provides an opportunity to influence our supply chains and give the support for their workforces to progress.

5.3 *Delivery through a Different Model*

5.3.1 The National Careers Service has the responsibility for providing careers information, advice and guidance for working people. Despite plans to increase funding for working people, its one to one support remains chiefly focused on unemployed people rather than the working population and working people are service mainly through web-based services. With lower digital skills overall and especially in the context of a rapidly changing economy many people will need one to one support to navigate an increasingly complex labour market.

5.3.2 The model in ADVANCE enables the partners to provide this one to one support enhanced with local labour market intelligence. It also provides for seamless progression journeys by tying the advice into learning and development opportunities aligned to local priority sectors.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE/SERVICE USERS

6.1 The projects support progression in the labour market contributing towards economic sustainability for local people and enhancing their opportunities in the labour market. In designing the project the partners identified those who are most at risk of falling behind and have included specific support to engage those individuals and address their barriers to progression; be it the need for intensive support or the ability to access training when and where they need it.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer).

7.2 The financial implications are laid out in Appendix A.

8. EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The project as laid out will enhance our support for more vulnerable employees. Appendix B details new grant funded posts and those earmarked to contribute match funding.

9. COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Employment and Skills have several communication outlets including corporate webpages, websites and social media. Work is ongoing to deliver a coherent approach.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 Throughout the development period the following partnerships have been consulted:

- More and Better Jobs Taskforce
- South Yorkshire Local Authorities
- Internal colleagues, HR, Finance, Enterprising Barnsley

11. THE CORPORATE PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

11.1 The project supports Outcomes 1 and 2

12. PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

- 12.1 The project proposed aims to address challenges and promote equality, diversity and social inclusion. It will have its own Equality and Diversity Plan which will be monitored on a quarterly basis.

13. TACKLING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY

- 13.1 The project will contribute to poverty reduction by enabling people to progress in the labour market, increasing their skills, adaptability and ability to secure sustained quality employment.

14. TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

- 14.1 Although the project does not have a specific health element, it does include targets for people with a disability or health issue alongside appropriate support.

15. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 15.1 Risks for the project have been assessed and the Risk Register is appended in Appendix 3.

16. GLOSSARY

- ESF – European Social Fund
- ASCL – Adult Skills and Community Learning

18. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A – Financial Implications

Appendix B – HR Implications

Appendix C – Risk Register

19. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Call Specification
- Project Application
- ESF Standard Contract Template
- More and Better Jobs Plan

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

Officer: Eleanor Dearle

APPENDIX A – FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

APPENDIX A				
Report of the Executive Director Place				
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS				
ADVANCE				
Capital	<u>2021/2</u>	<u>2022/2</u>	<u>2023/2</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	
	£	£	£	£
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
To be financed from:				
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
Revenue	<u>2021/2</u>	<u>2022/2</u>	<u>2023/2</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Expenditure				
Direct Staffing	305,235	350,730	140,432	796,397
15% Direct Staff Overheads	45,785	52,610	21,065	119,460
Participant Training	40,000	40,000	20,000	100,000
Doncaster MBC Management Costs	48,800	48,800	24,404	122,004
Other Direct Costs (Progression fairs & Marketing)	20,000	22,500	22,500	65,000
	459,820	514,640	228,401	1,202,861
To be financed from:				
ESF Grants	275,892	308,784	137,041	721,717
BMBC Match Funding - Existing Staffing resources	183,928	205,856	91,360	481,144

	459,820	514,640	228,401	1,202,861		
	0	0	0	0		
There is no impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Costs to be contained within the grant funding & existing matched resources available.						
<u>Impact on Medium Term Financial Strategy</u>						
This report has no impact on the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy.						
	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>		
	£m	£m	£m			
Current forecast budget gap	0	0	0	0		
Requested approval	0	0	0	0		
Revised forecast budget gap	0	0	0	0		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Agreed by:  On behalf of the Service Director - Finance, Section 151 Officer</p> </div>						

APPENDIX B – HR IMPLICATIONS

CABINET REPORT - ESF ADVANCE programme - Cabinet May 2021													
Approval to set up the posts as detailed in the ESF ADVANCE and Digital Boost Projects Cabinet report													
Comments – HR Business Partner: Comments – Pay and Reward:													
<i>Chloe Uddan</i>													
Date: 9 April 2021		Date:											
Authorisation by the Service Director of Performance Improvement, Human Resources & Communications:													
Date:													
Post Number (if new position write 'new position')	Current Directorate and Service Area	Proposed Directorate and Service Area (if applicable)	Current Post Title	Current Grade	Current Hours	Current Reporting Line Manager	Deletion y/n	Fixed Term y/n	Proposed Post Title	Proposed Grade	Proposed Hours	Job Profile Number	Proposed Reporting Line Manager
New Position		Place, Employment and Skills						YES	Projects and Contracts Manager	10	37	119513	Group Leader Employment and Skills 50122416
New Position		Place, Employment and Skills						YES	Projects and Contracts Officer	7	37	97203	Projects and Contracts Manager new post above
New Position		Place, Employment and Skills						YES	IAG Advisor	6	37	50663	Project & Contracts Manager 50127951
New Position		Place, Employment and Skills						YES	IAG Advisor	6	37	50663	Project & Contracts Manager 50127951
Implementation date:													
21.06.21													

APPENDIX C – RISK REGISTER



**ESF ADVANCE Project Risk Register
as at 30/03/2021**

Risk No	Risk Title	Risk Consequences	Risk Owner	Existing Control Measures	Current Score	Current Probability	Current Impact	Target Score	Target Probability	Target Impact	Risk Mitigation Action	Owner	% comp	Review Date	Recovery Plan
1	Delays governance agreement and contracting with lead partner	Unable to recruit new staff or incur any grant expenditure leading to project underperformance	Head of Service	Cabinet report pre-drafted and revised, entered in forward plan. Project model revised and variation profile submitted to lead partner	1	H	H	5	L	L	Prompt response to requests for information from lead partner	Group Leader Strategy and Policy		29.04.21	
2	Delayed recruitment of new staff	Reduces project activity and hachement of spend, output and results profile	Head of Service	All job profiles developed.	2	H	M	3	M	M	Fully prepare recruitment documentation to reduce delays once posts established.	Group Leaders		29.04.21	
3	Project underspend - staff	Reduction in staff capacity to undertake project activity and meet output and results targets. Inability to draw down full grant	Project Manager	Monitor recruitment and staff budget monthly	2	H	M	3	M	M	Recycle grant for staff into participant support budget	Project Manager		31.06.21	
4	Project underspend - direct costs	Promotional activity is not undertaken. Capacity to support participants is impaired	Project Manager	Monitor Direct budget monthly	5	L	L	6	VL	VL	Develop and implement clear marketing plan	Communication and marketing officer		31.06.21	
5	Under performance in recruiting participants	Project does not meet its output and result targets	Project Manager	Advancing Barnsley website already established. Proactive marketing to public and business intermediaries	3	M	M	5	L	L	Proactive marketing to public, business intermediaries and local businesses	Communication and marketing officer		30.09.21	
6	Underperformance in engaging SMEs	Reduced numbers of participants with subsequent underachievement of project performance and risk to grant draw down	Project Manager	Project integrated with business support activities	3	M	M	5	M	L	Reduce impact by maximising internal activities. Strengthen referral processes	Project and Contracts Manager		30.09.21	
7	Failure of internal partners to collaborate. Fragmentation of project elements	Project underperformance and creation of confusion in the market	Head of Service	Monitor relations and referrals monthly. Develop project induction for project staff, managers and internal partners	3	M	M	5	L	L	Establish internal project liaison board.	Project Manager		30.06.21	
8	Inability to provide robust audit trail	Inability to draw down grant and / or grant clawback. Reputational tarnished	Group Leader Compliance funding and performance	Quarterly monitoring. Established processes and standards for recording and retaining project expenditure data and claims checking and submission	2	L	VH	6	VL	L	Development and delivery of project staff induction	Project Manager		29.04.21	
9	Failure to evidence and record SME state aid	Grant clawback	Group Leader Compliance funding and performance	Quarterly monitoring of businesses supports, and state aid provided. Use of De Minimis. Standard documentation and systems to record state aid. Recording and retention of state aid declarations	2	M	H	5	L	M	Utilisation of Evolutive to record BMBC supported state aid across projects. Review systems after project implementation visit from DWP	Project Manager		29.04.21	
10	GDPR breach	Breach of participant GDPR rights, financial fine, reputational damage and potential imprisonment	Head of Service	Participant personal details to be restricted on data schema and identified by project reference code Computer access to be protected by secure passwords Hard copies of data with sensitive information to be secured in locked storage Sensitive identification details (passports etc) to be ticked as being seen and only reference recorded	4	L	H	5	VL	M	GDPR and Information Governance training to all project staff on induction and annual refreshers	Project Manager		29.04.21	
					6	VL	VL	6	VL	VL					