

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).

The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer Democratic and Registration Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer Democratic and Registration Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

To accept the receipt of a grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for the sum of £180,000 to support better co-ordination of existing English Language provision in Bedford Borough.

2. Date of decision

25 April 2019

3. Reasons for decision

To enable the English language co-ordination project to be undertaken.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

The alternative of not accepting was considered but rejected.

5. How decision is to be funded

The project will be supported by the grant in the sum of £180,000 from MHCLG.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

NA

Signed DAVE HODGSON Date 25/4/2019 Name of Decision Taker MAYOR DAVE HODGSON

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer Democratic and Registration Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: 25.4.19

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: 8.5.19

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....~~YES~~ or NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Report to the Mayor

Date - April 2019

Report by - Chief Officer Analytics, Insight & Performance

Subject - Acceptance of a grant funding from the Integrated Communities English Language Coordination Fund

1. Executive Summary

This report recommends that the Council accepts a grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in the sum of £180,000 to support better co-ordination of existing English Language provision in Bedford Borough.

2. Recommendations

The Mayor is requested to approve the acceptance of a grant from MHCLG from the Integrated Communities English Language Co-ordination Fund.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

To receive funding into the Council to support a project for better co-ordination of existing English Language provision in Bedford Borough.

4. Key Implications

(a) Policy

The Government published the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper for public consultation in March 2018. It sets out the Government's vision of integration whereby 'communities live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities'. Enhancing English language skills is an important theme in the Green Paper. The Government has only just responded to the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper consultation; consequently, wider national policy implications are still being determined.

The funding and project will support the Council's Corporate Plan goal (EC2) namely to 'support people to learn and realise their potential in life'

(b) Legal Issues

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

(c) Resource Implications

As the grant will be utilised over multiple financial years, and is provided to support partnership working and community development, it is proposed that the grant is kept within the existing Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) reserve.

The grant is to co-ordinate existing provision rather than supporting additional services. It is anticipated that the proposed English language partnership will develop a sustainable funding model therefore there is no expectation of Council funding following the end of the grant period. There are no direct additional resource requirements arising from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

(e) Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

(f) Equalities Impact

In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

A relevance test for equality has been completed. The equality test determined that an equality analysis will be required in developing the project. The equality analysis findings will be reported to the Mayor in due course.

5. Details

- 5.1 In March 2018, the Government published the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper for consultation. It sets out the Government's vision for 'building integrated communities' with a key theme of enhancing English language skills. In response to the Green Paper, the Government launched the Integrated Communities English Language Co-ordination Fund as a new funding programme to help support activities that improve the co-ordination of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision.
- 5.2 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) adopted a targeted approach to the funding and Bedford Borough Council was shortlisted as eligible to make an application. An application was submitted by Analytics, Insight and Performance supported by Children's Services (Early Help and Intervention) in October 2018. The application is attached at **Appendix A**. The proposal, which was to co-ordinate existing provision rather than developing and supporting additional services, set out our vision for the development of an effective local English language partnership to establish a Central Hub that will co-ordinate English language provision across the Borough.
- 5.3 £1m was available in each of 2018/19 and 2019/20 to fund up to 10 proposals. Following a rigorous assessment process, the Council has been awarded a grant from MHCLG in the sum of £180,000. The expectation of MHCLG is that funding will be paid in two tranches over a 13-month period until March 2020, with delivery of the project taking place over 18 months. As the Council's original bid was for £240,000 officers have discussed with officials from MHCLG what can be achieved from the allocated funding.
- 5.4 As this juncture it is envisaged that the grant will enable a two-phased project, supported by fixed-term staffing. It is intended that the first phase – the development of the English language partnership, will lead to more collaborative working by partners; the second phase – the development of a Central Hub allowing shared assessments of ESOL learners, will result in increased ESOL participation figures and increased confidence in English skills. Project staff will be responsible for developing a sustainable funding model for the Central Hub.
- 5.5 Improved ESOL co-ordination and provision were recommendations noted in the IPPR report '*Come Together: Lessons from Bedford on Reaching out to Britain's Most Isolated Minorities*' (2017) <https://www.ippr.org/publications/come-together-lessons-from-bedford> . The need for improved ESOL provision also formed part of the discussion when the Council met with the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee Immigration Inquiry on their visit to Bedford in February 2017.

6. **Summary of Consultations and Outcome**

The following Council units or Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

Management Team
Director of Children's Services
Manager for Early Help & Intervention

7. **Ward Councillor Views**

Not applicable for this report.

Report Contact Officer: Mark Minion, Chief Officer Analytics, Insight and Performance, email: mark.minion@bedford.gov.uk
Joella Hazel, Manager for Strategy and Policy, email: joella.hazel@bedford.gov.uk

File Reference:

Previous Relevant Minutes: None


Background Papers: None

Appendices: A: Integrated Communities English Language Co-ordination Fund Application (October 2018)_



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Appendix A



Integrated Communities English Language Co- ordination Fund

Application Form

About this form

This form should be used to submit an expression of interest for funding from the new English Language Co-ordination Fund. You must submit your expression of interest by **23:45 Wednesday 31 October** using this form.

Please use this form and email the completed version to EnglishLanguage@communities.gsi.gov.uk, with the subject line '*English Language Co-ordination Fund*'.

The form is made up of three sections and allows you to provide information about your organisation(s) and the project for which you are seeking funding.

Section 1 - requires some basic contact information so that we can get in touch with you about your application.

Section 2 – this is where you should provide information on your organisation, and any other partner organisations involved in the project.

Please note that if you are applying for funding as a consortium of local authorities the lead Local Authority should submit an expression of interest as the lead applicant; including details of partner organisations, where requested.

Section 3 - in this section we ask you to give a description of the proposal for which you are seeking funding.

Please **do not** exceed the word limits for each question where specified.

Section 1 – Contact information

Applicant contact name

Joella Hazel

Ben Scott

Applicant contact e-mail

joella.hazel@bedford.gov.uk

ben.scott@bedford.gov.uk

Applicant contact phone number

Joella Hazel - 01234 718365

Ben Scott - 07468472560

Lead organisation address

Bedford Borough Council, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP

Section 2 – Your organisation(s)

- 1. Please provide the name of the lead authority and any partner authorities or organisations** *Please provide registered company and/or charity numbers where applicable.*

Bedford Borough Council

- 2. Please specify the names of any organisations outside the local authority which have been consulted on this proposal (for example, local providers, including colleges and the voluntary and community sector and referral organisations such as JobCentre plus).**

ACCM (UK)

Bedford College

Bedford Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support (BRASS)

Central Bedfordshire Council (Bedfordshire Employment Skills Service)

Equalities and New Migration Partnership

Friends of Refugees

Kings Arms Project

NOAH Enterprise

Polish British Integration Centre (PBIC)

Project 229

Strategic Migration Partnership (Regional ESOL Co-ordinator - Syrian Resettlement Programme)

The Jobs Hub

- 3. Please use this space to highlight any examples of existing partnership and or co-ordination activity by your or other organisations which have sought to address some of the issues identified in the Guidance document for applicants and how your proposal will build on them.**

There is currently some limited co-ordination between Bedford Borough Council (BBC) and Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC). ESOL provision through Adult Learning is a shared local authority service for Bedfordshire (excluding Luton) led by CBC who applies and administers funding for the two local authorities. Our proposal includes CBC as a partner with the view to exploring if and how, the benefits of our proposal could be extended to Central Bedfordshire.

There is currently some strategic co-ordination between ESOL providers and stakeholders involved in wider integration activities. BBC facilitates the Equalities and New Migration Partnership (ENMP). The ENMP has operated in its current form since 2010. It provides a regular forum to discuss the needs of new and more established migrant communities in Bedfordshire, share information and good practice and identify solutions to common problems. Meetings focus on: safer, cohesive and integrated communities; health and wellbeing; growth and skills; and equalities. Member organisations include local third sector organisations and community groups, the local authorities, regional organisations, health bodies and adult educational services. ENMP members offer support, advice or delivery of services to new and established migrants and migrant communities.

ENMP does not have capacity to focus in depth and develop programmes of specific work on issues such as ESOL support and provision. Our proposal to develop a partnership will build on the ENMP model in the following ways:

- Membership - ENMP members include some of the key partners and stakeholders involved in ESOL provision.
- Established community engagement – BBC has established community engagement practices and principles that have underpinned the development of ENMP and other Council led partnerships, particularly partnerships that aim to involve, support and inform third sector organisations. These principles, which include governance and identifying joint/shared objectives and values that support and deliver community-led initiatives, are critical to successful partnership development and will be used to develop a successful partnership.

- Wider integration issues – the proposed partnership will be able to feed specific ESOL issues to the ENMP building a wider picture of integration issues.
- Website – the ENMP ‘hold’ the ‘Welcome to Bedfordshire’ website hosted on the Bedford Borough Strategic Partnership website. ‘Welcome to Bedfordshire’ is an online central resource hosting local information that aims to support the integration of new migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. It includes information on ESOL classes. Although it is currently not actively promoted or managed, our proposal will consider how best to develop and use this website as an online resource listing up-to-date ESOL information.

There is some partnership activity supporting projects for specific targeted learners. BBC is already working effectively with local providers in the education and voluntary sector to successfully deliver the ESOL commitments associated with the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS). For example, BBC is working in partnership with Bedford College to deliver bespoke ESOL classes for Syrian adults in a streamlined process that eases their progression onto mainstream college education. Whilst the SVPRS will continue to provide a foundation year of bespoke ESOL classes for the Syrian refugee families participating in the scheme, our proposal will allow us to better integrate those families in wider ESOL services from their second year onwards.

BBC has also partnered with local charity, Project 229, to deliver ESOL classes to Syrian teenagers during the school holidays to help them succeed in GCSEs; this programme has been highly successful with teachers observing increased confidence in the classroom, with pupils more willing to participate and engage in lesson discussion.

Section 3 – Your proposal

- 4. Please explain the nature of local co-ordination challenge(s) from the perspective of learners, providers and strategic partners that your proposal seeks to address. Please provide detail of how this challenge affects the areas reached by your project (max. 300 words).**

Learners

- Learners navigate a complicated landscape of ESOL provision run by a number of local organisations.
- Factors such as childcare, IT skills, first language literacy skills and September only start dates, create barriers for learners or make it difficult to navigate advice without support.
- Opportunities to practice English within trusted community settings is an important next step for learners, particularly those at basic/pre-entry level. However, there is lack of awareness and provision of 'conversation hubs' in localised 'grassroots' settings.
- Courses are often tied to employment skills support. Some learners, particularly some groups of women with caring responsibilities, do not want to access work, instead requiring provision that facilitate 'life skills' with childcare support.

Providers

- Funding arrangements inadvertently encourage silo working. Consequently, providers act as 'custodians of clients', constraining effective signposting and referral that best meet the needs of learners.
- Providers have a 'silo understanding' of factors affecting learners, limiting the ability to develop service provision based on Borough-wide learning and effective evaluation.
- There is no central resource of up-to-date providers, courses and learning opportunities; consequently, organisations are not able to effectively signpost.
- Access to learning for those with "no recourse to public funds" or awaiting refugee status is challenging with signposting routes less clear.

Strategic partners

- Partners do not have robust evidence base of local English language needs, which are complex with:
 - A high percentage of households where no householders speak English as a main language - 6.5% of households in Bedford Borough, compared to 4.4% in England. In some wards this rises: 22.3% (Queens Park), 17.2% (Caudwell) and 16.2% (Castle).
 - Over 140 different first languages spoken in the Borough, with 2.5% of residents speaking Polish as their first language (compared to 1% nationally) and 1.6% speaking Punjabi (0.5% nationally).

(Source: Census 2011 and Bedford Borough School Census 2018)

5. Please provide a summary of your proposal. Please include the planned approach to be taken, and the logic behind this and anticipated results, outcomes and measures you will take to evaluate success (max. 500 words).

The long term vision is to establish a Central Hub for learners. The Hub, which will be developed by a local partnership, will co-ordinate: shared learner assessment to identify skills level; an online resource listing current ESOL provision to facilitate signposting; and the collection and analysis of information and data for use by partners. We envisage the Hub will be supported by multi-lingual assessors; this will provide learners the opportunity to complete the shared assessment and access signposting and referral advice in their first language.

BBC will lead on the delivery of the proposal. The logic is effective local partnership development that leads ESOL co-ordination and builds on good practice established in other authorities e.g. Nottingham, Cardiff and Glasgow, which have already achieved success with this model of working.

The planned approach to achieving our vision involves two key phases.

Phase 1: Partnership development, shared assessment pilot and information collection

1. Development of an English language partnership to inform and establish the Central Hub model. The partnership will include local providers, including those operating in formal education-based settings and in community settings, and those providing free and fee based provision; third sector organisations and community groups offering informal 'conversation club' opportunities and/or working with migrant communities; and relevant statutory partners. The partnership will:
 - Identify local challenges experienced by people with ESOL needs and providers (in addition to those already outlined).
 - Contribute to mapping ESOL provision and informal 'conversation club' settings, helping to identify potential gaps and duplication; for example, it may be that there are already two classes running on a Thursday evening, but no provision on Saturdays.
 - Provide a system and protocol for data collection and sharing information.
 - Provide a space for capacity building of partners and collaborative working by sharing skills, knowledge and relevant resources.
2. Development of a single shared learner assessment informed and piloted by ESOL providers.
3. Data collection from the shared learner assessments to help build a picture of local learner needs.

Phase 2: Development of Central Hub

1. Analysis and dissemination of information collected from the shared learner assessment pilot to help develop a Central Hub model. Data analysis, which will be disseminated to the partnership, will report on skills levels, courses accessed by learners, numbers registered and completion rates.
2. Development of the Central Hub to address the issues identified through building a local picture of learner needs. It is expected the Hub will be operating by June 2019 to allow assessments to be carried out during summer 2019 for courses starting in September 2019.

3. Development of a sustainable funding model, including identifying additional funding sources.

We anticipate the partnership will lead to more collaborative working, improved working practices between partners whilst recognising the distinct needs of partner organisations, a Borough wide understanding of learner needs and improved signposting. Once established, the Hub will lead to increased ESOL participation figures, lower rates of drop out, greater numbers progressing into further education and/or employment and increased confidence in English skills.

6. Please provide a summary of the anticipated outcomes of your proposal and measures you will take to evaluate success (max. 500 words).

As an independent partner, it is anticipated that BBC will lead on the proposal, including employment of staff and ensuring delivery of outcomes and successes.

Main measures of evaluation:

- Levels of participation – providers to submit regular attendance registers to the Central Hub.
- Learner skills progression – providers to submit termly assessment data.
- Learner well-being, community integration and progression – questionnaire to be completed at assessment and once more during 9-month follow-up.

Phase 1

We anticipate the partnership will lead to more collaborative working, a Borough wide understanding of learner needs and improved signposting. All relevant partners will be asked to submit quarterly information allowing us to measure:

- The numbers of learners reached
- The number of learners assessed using the shared learner assessment
- The numbers of learners starting and completing courses

We will evaluate the success of collaborative working and the shared learner assessment through a focus group for partners to provide feedback.

Phase 2

We anticipate the Hub will lead to increased ESOL participation figures, lower rates of drop out, greater numbers progressing into further education and/or employment and increased confidence in English skills. In addition to the measures outlined in Phase 1, we will follow up with learners at 9 months from initial assessment to ascertain progression outcomes, e.g. into further education or employment, and for those not wanting to progress to education and employment we will ascertain increase in English skills.

During Phase 2, sustainability of the Hub will be worked towards, with alternative funding sources identified and/or a funding model developed.

Learner outcomes

- Greater levels of empowerment for learners - created by the increased choice resulting from improved, more accurate and up to date information regarding local ESOL provision and learning opportunities.
- A clear and consistent progression route, including opportunities to practice language skills outside of formal classroom settings.
- Increased levels of participation and engagement in ESOL courses and increased civic participation and integration.
- Higher percentage of learners progressing onto further education and/or employment.
- Improved emotional well-being of learners.

Provider and statutory partner outcomes

- Better use of resources, including a reduction in the duplication of learner assessments and registrations following completion of the pilot.
- A greater understanding of learners' needs and the development of a more robust evidence base enhancing ability to apply and secure wider funding.
- Increased opportunities for sharing good practice, staff training and networking between providers/stakeholders resulting in higher quality of ESOL provision.

- Development of a wider, more holistic ESOL offer – supported by up to date information on local third sector/faith organisation skills practice provisions e.g. BRASS's 'Conversation Hub' or All Nations' 'Language Café'.
- Experiences of learners, providers and partners used to identify wider issues that affect integration and access to services, with this used to inform the vision of integration for Bedford Borough, and potentially an integration strategy for the Borough.

7. How many participants do you expect your proposal will benefit during the course of funding (until the end of 2019/20)? Please include learners, referral organisations and providers.

Learners

According to Census 2011, 88.9% of Bedford Borough residents (aged over 3 years old) speak English as their main language. Of the remaining population of people aged 3 years and over, whose main language is not English (11.1%), Census 2011 data indicated that 3.1% cannot speak English or cannot speak English well. The current population of Bedford Borough is estimated to be 169,912 (ONS 2017 Mid Year Population Estimates). Based on this, we estimate there could be 18,370 people aged 3 years and over, whose main language is not English, with 5,130 people who cannot speak English or cannot speak English well.

Referral organisations and providers

We are aware of at least ten referral organisations that will benefit from this proposal including: Bedford Borough Council; The Jobs Hub; Citizens Advice Bureau; Job Centre Plus; Bedford Pilgrims Housing Association (BPHA); Migrant Help UK; and a number of third sector organisations and community groups offering support and working with migrant communities, such as PBIC, Kings Arms, BRASS, Friends of Refugees and ACCM (UK).

We are aware of ten main local providers (some of which also refer and are listed above).

8. Please state the amount of funding you wish to apply for – providing a detailed breakdown of amounts for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

A total of £220,000 is being applied for: £110,000 for Phase 1 - 2018/19 to June 2019, and £110,000 for Phase 2 - 2019/20.

Phase 1 - 2018/19 running up to June 2019 - £110,000:

- £65,000 for salaries: manager and administrator.
- £20,000 for website and database development costs.
- £20,000 for capacity building/hardware/infrastructure improvements e.g. on-site tablet devices for use in community settings.
- £5,000 for advertising and co-ordination work.

Phase 2 - 2019/20 - £110,000:

- £85,000 for salaries: manager, administrator and payment of initial assessment staff.
- £10,000 for website and database maintenance e.g. data cleansing.
- £10,000 capacity building/hardware/infrastructure maintenance.
- £5,000 for advertising and co-ordination work.