

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 for Legal, Performance and Democratic 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 for Legal, Performance and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

- (1) To support acceptance of the receipt of the DfE Change Partnership Programme grant totalling £6,399,806.22 over the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 financial years on behalf of the Eastern Region Change Partnership Programme.**
- (2) To refer the decision to Full Council on 11 October 2023 for approval.**

2. Date of decision

27 September 2023

3. Reasons for decision

This funding will support Bedford Borough Council to test and refine recommendations within the Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities system that are likely to come into legislation in 2025. Through accepting the grant, the Local Authority will be able to have additional time to implement these reforms alongside the resources to enact them without negatively impacting on the day-to-day services within SEND.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

Declining the opportunity to be part of the Change Partnership Programme

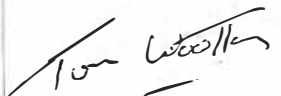
5. How decision is to be funded

DfE Grant Funding

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:


27 September 2023

Signe^d:


Date: 27 September 2023

Name of Decision Taker: Cllr. Jane Walker

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

Date decision published: ..28September2023.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in:9 October 2023.....

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....No

Agenda Item

For publication

Bedford Borough Council – Mayoral Decision report to refer on to Full Council

Date of Meeting: 11 October 2023

Report by: Cabinet member for Families, Education and Children’s Services and Chief Officer for Education, SEND and Schools Infrastructure

Subject: Grant acceptance of Department for Education (DfE) SEND & AP Change Partnership Programme

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Change Programme referenced in both [The SEND and AP Green Paper \(March 2022\)](#) and The SEND and [Alternative Provision Improvement Plan \(March 2023\)](#), is designed to test and refine significant system-level SEND and AP reforms.
- 1.2 The change programme will establish regional Change Programme Partnerships (CPPs) to test and refine SEND and AP reforms, building the necessary evidence base to inform future decisions on embedding those changes across the system via legislation and/or funding. It is not a series of pilots or interventions, but a way of testing whole system change in an area.
- 1.3 In the Eastern Region, Bedford Borough Council has been appointed as the Lead for the CPP partnering with , Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council
- 1.4 As the Lead Authority, Bedford Borough Council will act as the Accountable Body for the CPP, and will be responsible for reporting to the DfE and distributing the funding to the partners in line with the agreed activity.
- 1.5 The total grant allocation in 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial year is **£6,399,806.22 to be allocated across all the partners.**

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 For the Council to accept receipt of the DfE Change Partnership Programme grant totalling £6,399,806.22 over the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 financial years on behalf of the Eastern Region Change Partnership Programme

2.2 To refer decision to Full Council on 11 October 2023 for approval.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

3.1 This funding will support Bedford Borough Council (and its partners) to test and refine recommendations within the Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities system that are likely to come into legislation in 2025. Through accepting the grant the Local Authority will be well prepared to implement these reforms without negatively impacting on the day to day services within SEND.

4. THE CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The DfE will officially launch the CPP at an event on the 19th September 2023, after which each Change Partnership Programme will commence the mobilisation of the governance required to test and refine the recommendations.

4.2 Support is being offered to the CPP by the Council for Disabled Children, Impower Consultancy and AP consultancy, alongside Olive Academies on the Alternative Provision reforms

4.3 Luton Borough Council has been identified by NHS England as the LA within the CPP to deliver the Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) programme, therefore all funding for the ELSEC programme will be passported straight to Luton Borough Council.

4.4 Bedford Borough Council has, and always will be working in coproduction with Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum throughout every step of this programme

5. DETAILS

- 5.1 The Change Partnership Programme aims to demonstrate whether proposed system reforms will collectively drive the much-needed improvements in outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND or in AP and their families, whilst delivering a financially stable SEND and AP system, avoiding unintended consequences
- 5.2 The change programme will test reforms that fall broadly into the following four policy areas:
- 5.2.1 National Standards;
 - 5.2.2 Partnership, Plans and Dashboards;
 - 5.2.3 Alternative Provision (AP) Service; and
 - 5.2.4 Commissioning Reform
- 5.3 The DfE will also jointly fund with National Health Service England (NHSE), the (ELSEC) Pathfinders. The ELSEC Pathfinders will test new models of working to meet the speech and communication needs of children and young people in education settings, by giving them swifter access to specialist support. One LA in each CPP will run the ELSEC Pathfinder in partnership with the Integrated Care Board (ICB). In our Change Partnership this will be run in Luton Borough Council.
- 5.4 See below tables outlining the anticipated funding delivery:

Table 1 Funding amounts per CPP

Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Total
CPP Testing of reforms and Taskforce activities	£1,986,666.67	£3,909,833.33	£5,896,500.00
For ELSEC Pathfinder LA (one LA only)	£251,653.11	£251,653.11	£503,306.22
Total	£2,238,319.78	£4,161,486.44	£6,399,806.22

- 5.5 The programme will be overseen by the SEND Improvement Board which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Families, Education and Children's Services.

6. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 6.1 Bedford Borough Council could have declined the opportunity to be part of the CPP, however it would have lost the opportunity to access the funding described in this report and the additional time to implement potential reforms within this programme.

7. KEY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Legal Issues	A signed Memorandum of Understanding will need to be signed between Bedford Borough Council and the DfE outlining the requirements of the Grant award
7.2 Policy Issues	Being part of the CPP must not distract away from the key priorities set out within the Joint Area SEND Strategy 2022 – 27 and the action plan that underpins it
7.3 Resource Issues	Being part of the CPP enables Bedford Borough to access significant resources to support with the testing and refining of the reforms. By being 'Lead' LA there will be additional resource implications resulting from the allocation of funding to each LA and the liaison with the DfE; this will be factored into the use of the Grant allocation.
7.4 Risks	None identified
7.5 Environmental Implications	<i>None identified</i>
7.6 Equalities Impact	The acceptance of this grant has no relevance to Bedford Borough Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, promote good relations, promote positive attitudes and eliminate unlawful discrimination. An equality impact assessment is not needed as there are no changes to existing legislation under the childrens and families act 2014 and equality act 2010.
7.7 Impact on Families	Families within the SEND system will have the opportunity to 'opt in' or 'opt out' of any reforms that are being tested out. Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum will be part of the oversight and governance of this programme, representing the voice of the parent carer community within Bedford

7.8 Community Safety and Resilience	<i>None identified</i>
7.9 Impact on Health and Wellbeing	<i>None identified</i>

8. **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME**

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

Cllr Jane Walker: Portfolio Holder

Management Team

Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum

BLMK Integrated Care Board

8.2 No adverse comments have been received.

9. **CONTACTS AND REFERENCES**

Report Contact Officer	Chris Morris, Chief Officer for Education, SEND and Schools Infrastructure
File Reference	CPP Grant Acceptance
Previous Relevant Minutes	
Background Papers	
Appendices	