

Cabinet
Council

28 November 2017
05 December 2017

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities - Councillor Khan
Cabinet Member for Community Development - Councillor Bigham

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

MiFriendly Cities - Successful Award of funds under EU Urban Innovative Actions Fund

Is this a key decision?

Yes as it has the potential to impact on all wards within the City and expenditure is in excess of £1m.

Executive Summary:

A partnership led by the City Council and Coventry University has been successfully awarded €4.28m (£ 3.8m) in funding to deliver the innovative MiFriendly Cities initiative in Coventry and across the West Midlands.

The MiFriendly Cities project aims to facilitate and recognise the positive contribution of refugees and migrant's to the cities civic, economic and social fabric. Refugees and migrants are key factors in deciding what makes a "migrant friendly city" and driving the change on job creation, social entrepreneurship & innovation, active citizenship and communication.

The City Council will work in a regional partnership with Birmingham and Wolverhampton local authorities, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) as well as Coventry University (including its social enterprise hub), Interserve, Migrant Voice, Migrant Work, Refugee and Migrant Centre for Birmingham and the Black Country. Locally the Council will work closely with Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, Coventry Law Centre and the wider Coventry Migration Network of voluntary and community sector partners.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet are requested to:

- 1) Note the success of the partnership work between the City Council and Coventry University and other West Midlands partners in developing the MiFriendly Cities initiative.

- 2) Recommend that Council approve acceptance of a grant in excess of £2.5m in relation to the Urban Innovation Actions fund, authorise the City Council to act as accountable body and guarantor for the available funds and delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (People) to enter into the appropriate grant aid agreements with project partners.

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- 1) Approve acceptance of a grant in excess of £2.5m in relation to the Urban Innovation Actions fund, authorise the City Council to act as accountable body and guarantor for the available funds and delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (People) to enter into the appropriate grant aid agreements with project partners.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 5 December 2017

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. A partnership led by the City Council and Coventry University has been successfully awarded €4.28m (£3.8m) in EU funding to better facilitate the integration and engagement of refugees and migrants in the City and across the West Midlands. The funding will support a series of projects improving skills, raising awareness of rights and responsibilities and providing volunteering opportunities. Refugees and migrants will be supported to create social enterprises and the City will gain additional physical capacity for Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre to provide services and host community events.
- 1.2. In 2015 the EU identified the Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) fund of €371m to facilitate experimentation and innovation in creating potential solutions for the problems experienced by cities managing increased expectations with reduced funding. The fund describes itself as “the urban lab of Europe”.
- 1.3. MiFriendly Cities has been successful as part of the second wave of approved projects. Bids were invited across a range of topics with a specific request for proposals which related to the integration of migrants and refugees into local communities. 16 projects in total are included in the second wave with MiFriendly Cities being one of only 3 successful projects focusing on the integration of refugees and migrants. The fund will run until 2020.
- 1.4. A particular emphasis of the UIA is the measurability and transferability of the learning from different projects and a key component is the requirement for strong partnerships with an emphasis on collaboration between local authorities, universities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- 1.5. Participation in this programme presents an opportunity to further enhance the City’s reputation as an International City of Peace and Reconciliation and to contribute to the City’s priorities in particular work to create active communities and empowering citizens, protecting the most vulnerable residents in the City and reducing the impact of poverty. Additionally this work will contribute to the Council meeting its statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity to employment and to promote community cohesion.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. There remains an option to decline the offer of funding for the MiFriendly Cities project. This has been discounted primarily as a result of the proud record Coventry has as an International City of Peace and Reconciliation, promoting peace and dialogue, acting as a place of safety and City of Sanctuary for people arriving into the city. The MiFriendly Cities bid references work the City has done collectively to support the most vulnerable refugees from the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East and will offer opportunities to continue work to improve community cohesion in the City. The ambition is to benefit both host and migrant communities continuing efforts to make Coventry a vibrant city where people choose to live and work.
- 2.2. The option remains for the City to request either one of the other local authority partners to act as lead for the project or the West Midlands Regional Authority to take this role. This would likely lead to a reduction in the funding allocated to the City and a dilution of the Coventry focus of much of the work contained in the successful bid. One of the bids

key strengths is the strong partnership work between Coventry University and the City Council with a number of work streams requiring continued joint work in the City. On this basis this option has not been included in the recommendations.

- 2.3. The recommended option is for the Council to act as lead applicant for this UIA project, and to act as accountable body for programme funding. This maximises the European grant available allowing the Council to take a leadership role, working with key partners, locally and across the region in the delivery of MiFriendly Cities. The City has an excellent track record of managing projects of this type and using them to create positive outcomes for the City, supporting wider Council priorities around the growth of the City and economic prosperity. This project will assist in ensuring that a particularly economically disadvantaged section of Coventry society (refugees and newly arrived communities) are supported to maximise their contribution to society in the City's growing economy.

Summary of the MiFriendly Cities Partnership

2.4. Coventry City Council €720k

- 2.4.1. The Council will co-ordinate the work locally and across the region on the MiFriendly Cities project including acting as the accountable body for the overall funding. The Council will also ensure that learning from various strands of the project are shared regionally and wider, culminating in the final evaluation and knowledge-sharing for the project in 2020.
- 2.4.2. Locally work will focus on supporting, enhancing and recognising the contribution of migrant and refugee communities to social, economic and public life. The project will build capacity within these communities to feel empowered to understand their rights and challenge prejudice and hostility that may come their way.
- 2.4.3. The project will adapt the global network of My "friendly cities" where the refugees and migrants themselves have a voice, and will offer support to a number of themes including: jobs, social enterprise, innovation, active citizenship and communication. This will include creating new job opportunities for migrants, developing and matching their skills with employers as well as preparing employers to work well with refugees. Also up to 50 social enterprises will be supported in establishing themselves (including financial support).

More work will be done in engaging communities using a bottom up approach with over 100 refugees and migrants being trained as citizen journalists to engage with mainstream media.

- 2.4.4. Subject to formal approval a delivery plan will be developed for the project elements led by Coventry City Council. This will include liaising with key internal stakeholders including the Job Shop and the employment team to ensure that a co-ordinated programme of activities is delivered to maximise the benefits of this funding.

Key partners in delivery of MiFriendly Cities in Coventry will be:

2.5. Coventry Law Centre €148k

- 2.5.1. The Law Centre will assist in work on rights and advocacy for refugees and migrants, building on their earlier work with unaccompanied minors to assist those without documentation to secure status.

2.6. Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre €511k

- 2.6.1. The Refugee and Migrant Centre will be supporting the range of projects going on across the City including recruiting volunteers and delivering more ESOL support. They will also receive funds to assist in the refurbishment of Hope House which will be a resource for refugee and migrant communities.

2.7. Coventry University FAB LAB €750k

- 2.7.1. The University and City Council have opened an exciting new FAB LAB in the City to improve access to important new technologies and particularly to help children explore opportunities to learn new digital skills. Participation in MiFriendly Cities will enable two mobile FAB LABS to be purchased which will enable this technology and resources to be accessed across the City, including in libraries and other community settings. Training will be provided to enable refugees to gain confidence and digital skills being then able to volunteer, assisting both refugee groups but also for the wider Coventry community.

2.8. Coventry University – Social Enterprises €168k

- 2.8.1. Up to 50 social enterprises will be created by the provision of training, workshops and coaching and mentoring programmes. Also 16 social enterprises will be financially supported to make their ideas a reality and contribute towards the city's economy.

Across the region a number of other partners will play a role in the project:

2.9. Birmingham City Council €388k

- 2.9.1. There will be a number of projects in Birmingham including home make-overs and work to improve the DIY skills of migrants and refugees. This will also include 30 homes identified in Coventry that will be given a makeover under this project.

2.10. Interserve (working with WMCA) €307k

- 2.10.1. Interserve will provide a regional focus for work with employers around social mobilisation and promoting volunteering by employees as well providing training and briefings for employers on issues related to employing refugees and migrants.

2.11. Migrant Voice €237k

- 2.11.1. Training will be provided for refugees and migrants in Coventry and other localities to assist refugees to tell their stories and engage with host communities. Photography, film-making and writing will be included as well as support for community dialogue.

2.12. Migrant Work €314k

- 2.12.1. Migrant Work have significant experience of producing migration related policy briefings and practitioner toolkits. They will support the knowledge transfer and produce a number of resources to support policy development and communications regarding issues affected by migrants in UK cities.

2.13. Refugee and Migrant Centre €290k

2.13.1. This centre based in Wolverhampton will recruit refugee health champions to disseminate public health messages to refugee communities along with establishing employment brokers to assist refugees accessing sustainable employment.

2.14. Wolverhampton City Council €442k

2.14.1. Wolverhampton will be setting up a pop-up furniture factory as a social enterprise to up-cycle unwanted furniture and assist in its distribution to those across the City in need. Discussions are already underway for a similar initiative to be tried in Coventry alongside the FAB LAB.

2.15 Project governance

2.15.1 The project will be governed by a 3-tier governance structure to ensure that appropriate advice, guidance and leadership is provided and for any risks being identified and addressed in a pro-active and appropriate way.

2.15.2 A “Project Steering” group will be setup that will include political membership from the 3 cities of Coventry, Wolverhampton and Birmingham and will be supported by senior management from these respective authorities. This will also include programme leads from other partner organisations, 3 migrants, external experts as needed and the allocated UIA expert when possible. This group will ensure that they are directing the partnership and providing strategic advice and guidance for the project.

2.15.3 The partnership will also have a “Project Committee” that will include the Project co-ordinator from Coventry City Council, Project Managers from respective partners as well as Work Package leads. These meetings will be held monthly ensuring:

- partners respect the work plan deadlines and intermediate/final results
- preparing, executing and post processing of partner meetings and EC reviews;
- ensuring the proper function of the steering group and project coordination committee
- partners are supported to deliver the project successfully.

2.15.4 To deliver various work-packages successfully, various work package groups will be created to deliver each strand of the project and these meetings will be organised as per the demand of these work streams.

2.15.5 Reporting mechanisms including risk registers and exception reporting will be put in place to monitor and manage risks and seek appropriate advice and guidance from the governance structures.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1. In preparation for this proposal, face to face meetings were held with organisations over 6 months, running co-creation workshops and consultations including both proposed beneficiaries as well as wider stakeholders, supported through the local and regional migration partnerships. This work included representation from 60 or more organisations.

3.2. At a more local level, the funding application was pulled together based on work that the Council's migration team have been undertaking over the last 2 years to bring together

“Coventry’s Local Migration Network”. This network includes voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations working together to support refugees and newly arrived communities integrate into the city. The findings from these meetings has been the basis for submitting an application that has demonstrated a bottom up approach which is believed to be a key factor in funds being awarded for the project. The participation of refugee and migrant communities and those who work hard to support them in developing this proposal has been critical.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. Subject to the successful completion of agreements with UIA the project will run for three years concluding in 2020 with the final closure and knowledge transfer completed in late 2020. Once final agreement has been reached each of the delivery partners will be given a Grant Aid Agreement that sets out their contribution to the project in terms of match funding and outputs, and sets out how much UIA / EDRF funding will be available to them. This process is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.
- 4.2. The projects will run until 2020. It is not anticipated that it will be necessary for extensions to this timetable although other EU projects have successfully negotiated extensions in the past.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1. Financial implications

- 5.1.1 The total grant award is €4,280,640 (£3.8m) of ERDF funding with the Council proposing to be the accountable body for the project. The Council will receive €720,660 (£634k) of the funding as described above in paragraph 2.4.
- 5.1.2 As Accountable Body, Council officers will ensure effective governance arrangements are in place to facilitate appropriate control over the allocation of resources and spend against the approved programmer outlined above.
- 5.1.3 The rules require participating organisations to match fund or provide in kind 20% of expenditure with the grant covering 80%. The City Council will be required to match fund €180,150 (£158k) from existing Council expenditure.
- 5.1.4 The payment profile for the project is as follows:
 - 50% advance payment within 90 days of final agreement of participation including €16,000, for bid preparation (to be shared with Coventry University).
 - 30% payment within 90 days after submission and approval of an interim progress report and verification of project expenditure (payment will be granted provided the reported expenditure has reached 70% of the first instalment).
 - 20% payment within 90 days (minus a lump sum of €12,000 dedicated for the project closure and transfer of knowledge) after submission and approval of the final progress report. This payment is based on the principle of reimbursement of incurred and paid costs.
 - €12,000 after submission and approval of the final qualitative report.

5.2. Legal implications

The Council has the power to enter into this arrangement under the powers contained in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011

The Council will act as the accountable body for this UIA/ERDF project. The Council will be issued with a grant agreement from the administrators containing terms and conditions. The terms and conditions will be devolved to any partners within the overall project. These will ensure that appropriate conditions and obligations which are imposed upon the Council are passed on to the grant recipients who receive the funding for delivering projects.

6. Other implications

Any other specific implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

Coventry is a growing City with advanced planning in place for further economic development and investment. Inwards migration into the City has been a significant factor in population growth in recent years and MiFriendly Cities will support the wider delivery of the Council’s key objectives by supporting community cohesion and ensuring that newly arrived communities contribute to the City’s economic prosperity and cultural diversity. Additionally the following specific issues will be addressed:

- **Active communities and empowering citizens** – Having awareness of civic, political and legal rights is a cornerstone for active citizenship and a fully functioning regional democracy, as is feeling empowered sufficiently to access these rights. Refugees and migrants in Coventry and the W M and have low levels of awareness of rights and often struggle to access them. The project will address this.
- **Protecting our most vulnerable** – The programme is aimed at a vulnerable group of our society ie refugees- a section of our population who seek asylum after having fled their home countries due to threats and fear of their life. The project will also engage individuals who have retired and hence involve some of our older population as well.
- **Reducing the impact of poverty** – 30 homes will be given ‘makeovers’ by volunteers learning new skills using ‘up-cycled’ furniture and other materials, benefitting the volunteers and the vulnerable older and younger people’s homes. The creation of linking of migrants and refugees to job markets and volunteering and training will assist a number of people to become economically active.
- **Improving health and wellbeing** – the recruitment and training of Health Champions will assist in priority communities supporting their own health and well-being and reducing health inequalities.
- **Making the most of our assets** – utilisation of EU funding maximises the effectiveness of City Council resources and enables the City to innovate and develop effective interventions
- **Make communities safer** - Addressing hostility towards newcomers, recognising the positive contribution that refugees and migrants make and building solidarity between migrant and non-migrant communities is a core objective of the MiFriendly Cities project.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

The following key risks have been identified across the programme that can have an impact on the success of the Project and for us as the accountable body and hence will need monitoring and managing:

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Likelihood</i>	<i>Proposed actions</i>
Partner withdraws from the	<i>Minor</i>	<i>Possible</i>	In each city we have a local migration network, each with at least 20 member organisations. Therefore we have a pool of between 60+

project			additional organisations who could fulfil the role of the withdrawing partner.
Project unable to meet expenditure targets	Serious	Improbable	Project expenditure against financial targets will be monitored at Project Board meetings held at a Work Package level. Delivery Partners' contracts/Service Agreements will all clearly stipulate their expenditure schedules. If the risk materialised, the steering group would provide recommendations on if and where to vary budgets. Partners have confirmed that they have necessary match funding in place, and the 80% ERDF intervention rate means there is low risk of match funding not materialising.
Project unable to achieve output targets, which may or may not be related to Issues with the performance of project Delivery Partners.	Serious	<i>Remote</i>	Project delivery against outcome targets will be monitored at Project Board meetings at a Work Package level. Delivery Partners' contracts/Service Agreements will all clearly stipulate their output schedules. If the risks were to materialise, the steering group would provide recommendations on potential solutions. All Delivery Partners will also be required to report on their performance in respect of outputs, a core responsibility of the Project Management Team.
Project records irregularities for ineligible expenditure or outputs not evidenced adequately.	Serious	<i>Remote</i>	The project management team will visit all Delivery Partners prior to the submission of the first claim to ensure that their supporting evidence for expenditure and outputs claimed meets ERDF requirements. Throughout the delivery of the project, the project management team will deliver "Monitoring Visits" to Delivery Partners whereby supporting evidence of expenditure and outputs claimed will be checked.
Key delivery or project management staff leave their posts.	Serious	Possible	For project management staff, the Urban Authorities have a large team of staff with experience of managing and delivering ERDF projects and a replacement will be appointed. For any delivery staff leaving post, they will be replaced through the vacancy being publicly advertised.
Impact of Brexit on grant resources	Serious	Possible	Whilst uncertainty remains regarding the post-Brexit period the Government announced in August 2016 – "where UK organisations bid directly to the European Commission on a competitive basis for EU funding projects while we are still a member of the EU, for example universities participating in Horizon 2020, the Treasury will underwrite the payments of such awards even when specific projects continue

			<i>beyond the UK's departure from the EU." This provides some assurance to resources being available for the lifetime of the project.</i>
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6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

HR Implications

To ensure the successful delivery of this project and the Council's ability to provide an adequate accountable body function, additional staff resources may be required. Some staff are already in place for aspects of the City Council and other planned activities. Any new staff will be recruited on a temporary fixed-terms basis.

6.4. Equalities / EIA

Coventry becoming a MiFriendly City is likely to have a positive impact on equalities in the City. Many of the elements of this programme are designed to assist and support some of the most economically disadvantaged communities in the City.

Residents from ethnic minorities and who are newly arrived will make up a significant proportion of those taking part in the various elements of the programme with work focusing on skills development, employment and training support, and social enterprise creation. It will demonstrate that the Council is meeting its statutory duty in promoting equality of opportunity to employment and in promoting community cohesion, through enabling migrants and residents from well-established communities to live and work together.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) the environment

MiFriendly Cities includes work to improve the DIY skills of migrants and newly arrived communities and includes the setting up of community repair cafes and furniture "up-cycling" which will lead to less furniture and electrical equipment being disposed of and increased re-use and re-cycling.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

The funding will have a positive implication for the voluntary sector by bringing in additional resources, capacity and infrastructure into the city. The funding also aims to further promote community cohesion and enhance the contribution residents are making towards the economy and more importantly the social fabric of the city.

It will also boost partnership work of the Social Enterprise City initiative, which is led by Coventry University and is growing a network of sustainable social enterprises. It will support Coventry University to demonstrate how it is operating as an anchor institution by making a valuable contribution to quality of life and a strategic contribution to the local economy.

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