

Cabinet

13th October 2020

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities - Councillor AS Khan
Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities - Councillor D Welsh

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Public Health and Well-Being

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

MyCoventry Project and Specialist Training and Employment Programme (STEP) - Successful Award of funds under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

Is this a key decision?

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

Executive Summary:

Following a bidding process, Coventry City Council has been successfully awarded £1.57m funding from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund towards delivering the £1.75m “MyCoventry” initiative. The Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) is a European Union (EU) funding stream that the UK Government joined in April 2012. The UK National Programme consists of 3 Specific Objectives consisting of Asylum (including Resettlement), Legal Migration and Integration; and Returns (voluntary, enforced and reintegration measures).

The funding secured will aim to meet the second objective (Legal Migration and Integration) of the fund supporting legal migration to the Member States in accordance with their economic and social needs, such as labour market needs, whilst reducing the abuse of legal migration, and to promote the effective integration of Third-Country Nationals.

The proposal (“MyCoventry”) has been developed by co-working with key partners including St. Francis Church of Assisi, Positive Youth Foundation, Ashley Community Housing, Coventry University’s Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations and the City Council’s Employment Team. The proposal hence includes a holistic offer of Integration, building on the key elements of Community and social links, Language/Learning as well as Employment skills and development. The City Council will be the Accountable Body for the full project.

The “MyCoventry” proposal will aim to engage and empower our existing migrant communities in the city to make them more independent and enable them to contribute to the cities social, economic and civic fabric.

Coventry City Council has also successfully been awarded AMIF funding as a partner on the STEP Employability programme with World Jewish Relief (WJR), who are leading this partnership. This funding brings targeted resources to support employment interventions for refugees resettled under the Syrian Resettlement Scheme and the Resettlement of Vulnerable Children Scheme who are already in the city.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Note the success of the partnership work between the City Council and the wider partnership in securing the funding to support our existing local migrant communities.
- 2) Authorise the City Council to receive the £1.79m grant funds for AMIF grant funded projects and act as accountable body for the MyCoventry initiative and guarantor for the available funds. This includes incurring expenditure of the £1.57m (MyCoventry) plus the match funding on the City Council projects within the initiative.
- 3) Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, following consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Law and Governance, to enter into the appropriate agreements:
 - i. The grant funding agreement for the receipt of the AMIF funding with the City Council acting as the accountable body for the funding.
 - ii. Back to back funding agreements with the identified project partners necessary to deliver the 'MyCoventry' proposal as set out in this report.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: MyCoventry Project Model

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?

No

Report title: MyCoventry Project and Specialist Training and Employment Programme (STEP)- Successful Award of funds under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. Coventry has a long tradition of welcoming people to the city from all over the world. The City Council's Migration Team's supports this tradition and aims to enable and empower all of those who have arrived in our welcoming city to thrive and prosper. The team also manages projects and partnerships locally and nationally through externally funded EU (Urban Innovative Actions) and Non-EU (Controlling Migration Fund, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government) projects. We have strategic responsibility for supporting newly arriving migrants and play a key part in supporting the city's Local Migration Network as well as grant funding for the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre to support newly arriving communities.
- 1.2. The Migration Team also directly delivers integration support to nearly 700 Resettled refugees including learning, advice, signposting, employment and skills under the VPRS and RVC schemes. Coventry City Council joined the Vulnerable People's Resettlement Scheme in July 2014 and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme in October 2016 and has since become one of the leading cities in the UK for resettlement of refugees.
- 1.2.1. In supporting Refugee Resettlement through these scheme, Coventry City Council's Migration Team have been able to build and grow the infrastructure and support that Coventry can offer to existing Refugee and Migrant communities through the expansion of projects and securing of funds. These projects/funds include (Building Bridges, Ignite, Connecting Communities, ESOL for Integration Fund) the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the EU Urban Innovative Actions fund (the MiFriendly Cities Project).

The Specialist Training and Employment Programme (STEP) is providing personalised support to recently arrived refugees in the UK enabling them to gain regular and sustainable employment. The bespoke programme is adapted to each individual's needs and helps refugees gain language skills, qualifications and training, as well as providing one-to-one assistance in CV writing, interview skills, finding work or setting up their own business.

Participants of the programme have found work in a range of sectors including retail, hair and beauty, engineering, education, pharmacy and construction. STEP is delivered in partnership with Horton Housing Association, The Refugee Council, Coventry City Council, Business in the Community, The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network and the Stand Up and Be Counted Theatre Company.

- 1.3. As some of these projects are ending, the Migration Team in partnership with key stakeholders applied for and have been successful in securing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Funding to deliver the "MyCoventry" initiative. The Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) is a European Union (EU) funding stream that the UK Government joined in April 2012. The funding secured will aim to meet the second objective (Legal Migration and Integration) of the funding supporting legal migration to the Member States in accordance with their economic and social needs, such as labour market needs, whilst reducing the abuse of legal migration, and to promote the effective integration of Third-Country Nationals.

- 1.4 The initiative (“MyCoventry”) has been developed by co-working with key partners including St Francis Church of Assisi, Positive Youth Foundation, Ashley Community Housing, Coventry University’s Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations and the City Council’s Employment Team. The proposal hence includes a holistic offer of Integration building on the key elements of community and social links, Language/Learning as well as Employment skills and development. The partnership will aim to engage and empower these communities to become more independent and enable them to contribute to the cities social, economic and civic fabric. The funding/initiative will be delivered between 01 Jan 2021 - 31 Dec 2022 offering capacity and resources to support our existing migrant communities.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. There remains an option to decline the offer of funding for the MyCoventry initiative. This has been discounted as accepting this option will mean that we have less resources available to support our existing legal migrants in the city. The ambition is to benefit both host and migrant communities as Coventry is 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 facilitating the contribution to the social, economic and civic fabric of our city.
- 2.2. The recommended option is for the Council to accept the funding and for the Council to act as accountable body for this funding to benefit our legally resident migrant communities and the wider community. The City has an excellent track record of managing projects of this type, using them to create positive outcomes for the City, supporting wider Council priorities around the growth of the City and economic prosperity. The acceptance of this funding will support us in ensuring that a particularly economically disadvantaged section of Coventry’s society (Third Country Nationals including refugees, newly arrived and established migrant communities) are supported comprehensively to maximise their contribution to society in the City’s growing economy.

Summary of the grant of the MyCoventry Partnership

2.3. Coventry City Council £390.8 (Migration Team) + £165.6k (Employment Team)

- 2.3.1. The Council will co-ordinate the work locally on the MyCoventry project including acting as the accountable body for the overall funding, provide employment support and project management delivery.
- 2.3.2. The Job Shop will establish better pathways for TCN clients into employment and employability training by embedding integration related learning into mainstream provision and local support networks. This will facilitate the integration of TCNs into the local labour market and joint support with the host community through employer events and training courses.
- 2.3.3. The Council will also ensure that learnings from various strands of the project are shared, culminating in the final evaluation and knowledge-share at the end of the project.
- 2.3.4. Local 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 through learning, understanding their rights as well as challenge prejudice and hostility that may come their way.

- 2.3.5. With integration being a two-way street, meaningful contact between TCNs and host society through community spaces and mixed community activities will develop strong social connections and friendships, building a sense of integration and belonging.

Other Key partners in delivery of MyCoventry will be:

2.4. St Francis Church of Assisi £361.9k

- 2.5. St Francis are a Church/Community Centre with strong community ties in Radford and across Coventry, promoting meaningful contact between host and migrant communities, offering services including specialist employment support, Job clubs, Volunteering, ESOL, Training, Food bank and destitution support alongside childcare facilities that reduce barriers for communities to engage.

- 2.6. Since 2015 St Francis Church of Assisi has supported migrants with specialist ESOL and employment support and worked with resettled refugees with civic orientation, ESOL, literacy support and employability. Since 2018, they have supported wider migrant populations through the Building Bridges project where learning will be applied on this project.

2.7. Coventry University £268.5k

- 2.8. Coventry University's – Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (CTPSR) have been working with the Council to bring research into developing interventions with other voluntary and community sector partners in Coventry to inform service gaps and delivery. This centre runs the FabLab and the Furniture Factory, both based in the heart of the city, with open doors for people to come and learn new skills. These facilities bring the university to people and offers a neutral space for different communities to get together, offering meaningful contact and the opportunity to learn new skills.

- 2.9. The Council and its Migration Team has worked with Coventry University on various initiatives the Fab Lab, the Age friendly initiative and Horizon 2020. Further partnerships have been developed through projects like Building Bridges and MiFriendly Cities to ensure the interventions delivered are informed/supported by research and evidence.

2.10. Ashley Community Housing £215.4k

- 2.11. Ashley Community Housing (ACH) supports refugees and migrants with specialised training, employment and housing support. Since 2018 we have worked with ACH to establish an evidence-based toolkit named 'Integrass' to inform future service delivery and funding proposals such as through the Ignite for Integration project. It has already identified training gaps for migrants including IT and mental health across the city. This tool and learning will allow the city to effectively support and identify support that will integrate migrants into the city.

- 2.12. Ashley Community Housing's involvement in the MyCoventry project, utilising the Integrass toolkit to inform tailored approaches will allow the project to understand the holistic integration needs of migrants through specialist confidence building, mental health and specialist employment skills development support.

2.13. Positive Youth Foundation £172.2k

- 2.14. Positive Youth Foundation (PYF) engages with host and migrant young people by working in partnership with Schools and City Council teams including UASC, PREVENT Team

and Ethnic Minority Achievement Service. PYF’s specialist support services includes youth clubs, Community Aid hubs, Sports opportunities and employability support.

- 2.15. Since 2011 Positive Youth Foundation have been addressing social issues affecting young people. Additionally, they have been supporting newly arrived young people on the Resettlement Programme since 2017 in deprived wards across Coventry. PYF work with young people, including TCN young people, from different communities which will allow the MyCoventry project to support adults and young people through specialist and holistic young people-focused support in Coventry.

| Organisation | Grant | Total incl. match funding |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| CCC Migration Team | £390,848.14 | £434,275.72 |
| CCC Employment Team | £165,614.90 | £184,016.56 |
| St Francis Church of Assisi | £361,950.07 | £402,166.74 |
| Coventry University | £268,513.66 | £298,348.51 |
| Ashley Community Housing | £215,381.25 | £239,312.50 |
| Positive Youth Foundation | £172,190.34 | £191,322.60 |
| Total | £1,574,498.36 | £1,749,442.63 |

2.16 Project Governance

A “Theory of Change” will be developed to create a shared vision between the partnership, with governance structures enabling fulfilment of shared goals and outcomes. The governance structure will include a quarterly Steering Group with accountability from senior management across all delivery partners. The Group will ensure that project performance adheres to required outcomes and targets as well as linking the project to other citywide initiatives strategically. The Steering Group will be able to make decisions where appropriate however will not be reporting to anywhere else, such as a separate Project Board. A performance management framework will be developed so that all partners (Project Managers) will report on with key outputs, targets, outcomes and progress updated via bi-monthly management meetings.

All delivery partners will attend regular 1-2-1 meetings to ensure that performance of the partner and the progress of the participant is monitored and supported effectively.

We will strengthen the development and dissemination of performance and financial management systems with partners in line with the funder’s requirements. Toolkits will capture and monitor performance, triggering the release of payments to partners. Monitoring information will be based upon outputs, outcomes and activities agreed in the bid and in line with the “Theory of Change”. Targets will be allocated, agreed and monitored on a quarterly basis with baseline data agreed at the beginning of the project to ensure that the data captured and monitored, supports effective evaluation activities as well as ensure the effectiveness of the provisions delivered by partners through MyCoventry.

Obligations of each respective partners will be captured in a partnership agreement aligning to funders requirements. A project SharePoint site will be developed so that all partners can collaborate as well as share necessary data and information with the partnership securely.

Our Data Sharing agreement, using AMIF’s Data Sharing template, will cover data capture storage, handling and processing for the partnership. This will include establishing data controllers, processors of data and what data can be captured in line with funder

requirements without breaching privacy and confidentiality of individuals. We will seek input from the Council's Information and Governance teams to establish processes and systems that are compliant with DPA 2018 and GDPR.

Once agreed by the partnership, a privacy notice will explain how client information will be stored, used and why it is being captured. All forms that capture client information will ensure that explicit consent is obtained from clients and that data sharing statements are displayed on all paperwork. Our project SharePoint will ensure shared data will use secure systems and protect data from misuse. Authorised individuals will have password protected access to project data.

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 (pre Covid-19) and remote Microsoft Teams meetings (during Covid-19 national lockdown) were held with organisations over 4 months, including consultations with wider (external) stakeholders and internal Council teams.
- 3.2. The funding application was pulled together based on work that the Council's Migration Team have been undertaking over the last 6 years to identify local needs and address local, social and economic inequalities that hinder integration. Learnings were taken from previous, successfully delivered projects, including findings from the local Coventry Migration Network that includes voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations working together to support refugees and newly arrived communities to integrate into the city. Knowledge from previous projects and local intelligence have been the basis for submitting an application that has demonstrated 3 key areas as gaps in existing service provisions, namely community and social links, language and learning as well as employment skills and development.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. Subject to the successful completion of agreements with AMIF the project will run for two years concluding in 2022. Once final agreement has been reached each delivery partner will be given a partnership Agreement that sets out their contribution to projects in terms of match funding and outputs and sets out how much AMIF funding will be available to them. This process is expected to be completed by the end of 2020. The fund will run from Jan 2021 until Dec 2022.
- 4.2. The projects will run until 2022. 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 the Director of Law and Governance

5.1. Financial implications

The total grant awarded for the MyCoventry initiative is a maximum of £1,574,498.36. Grant will be paid at 90% of project costs up to this maximum amount. The maximum total cost of the initiative will therefore be £1,749,442.63. Each partner must provide the match funding of 10% of their total project costs.

The total grant awarded for the STEP programme is £218,598.18.

The Council is proposing to be the accountable body for the MyCoventry initiative. Whilst this arrangement carries some financial risk for the Council (for instance if grant repayment is required), risk mitigation and management will be put in place and this is covered in more detail in Sections 5.2 and 6.2 below.

The various elements of the project will bring considerable benefits to the City. Grant payments to partners will be made in arrears following receipt of all of the spend & output data etc.

As described above the City Council will receive £556.46k (MyCoventry) in EU funding towards City Council projects within the initiative, which represents 90% of the expenditure on these projects. The remaining 10% of the funding for the project will be provided by matched allocation of existing Council expenditure. A declaration has been signed by all partners to cover their element of the match funding.

AMIF funding for the duration of the project is valued at a maximum of £1,574,498.36. The grant awarded will be 90% of the total eligible project costs of £1,749,442.63.

For the STEP programme, the City Council will receive £218.59k, with no match funding obligations.

5.2. Legal implications

The Council will act as the accountable body for this AMIF 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. The council has the power to act under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

6. Other implications

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

Inwards migration into the City has been a significant factor in population growth in recent years and MyCoventry will support the wider delivery of the Council's key objectives by supporting community cohesion and ensuring that TCNs contribute to the City's economic prosperity and cultural diversity. Additionally, the following specific issues will be addressed:

- **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 who have low levels of awareness of rights 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 including a section of our population who seek asylum after having to flee their home countries due to threats and fear of their life.
- **Fostering community and social links** - MyCoventry provisions will mostly be delivered in key community-based settings such as libraries with the involvement of local communities to build a sense of belonging as well as develop beneficiaries' own

skills. This approach builds connections between communities to improve people's lives and foster integration.

- **Improving Language and Learning** - To encourage empowerment and participation in community settings, MyCoventry will deliver specialist ESOL support alongside volunteering to facilitate community cohesion, engagement and skills development by unlocking the cities wide ranging assets, which ultimately will lead to overcoming integration challenges. This will respond to needs and help motivate different parts of the city to participate in the wider community.
- **Investing in employment skills and development** – MyCoventry provisions are based upon identified local best practice, and will deliver specialist employment support, provide skills-based learning, courses with accreditation and career mentoring to support migrants to get into median level employment. Consequently, hundreds more individuals will gain qualifications, supporting the fostering of new friendships, talent, creativity, education and skills.
- **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 MyCoventry 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:

| <i>Risk</i> | <i>Impact</i> | <i>Likelihood</i> | <i>Proposed actions</i> |
|--|---------------|-------------------|--|
| Partner withdraws from the project | <i>Minor</i> | <i>Possible</i> | We are part of the local migration network and have strong relationships with external organisations and are very well connected throughout the city. We have a pool of additional organisations who could fulfil the role of the withdrawing partner. |
| Project unable to meet expenditure targets | Serious | Improbable | Project expenditure against contracted targets will be discussed at Project Steering Group meetings. Delivery Partners' contracts/Service Agreements will all clearly stipulate their expenditure schedules. If the risk materialised, the steering group would provide recommendations solutions including if and where to veer budgets. Partners have confirmed that they have necessary match funding in place, and the 90% rate means there is low risk of match funding not materialising. Payments to partners will be in arrears following receipt of expenditure and output returns and verification correct completion by Migration Team. |
| Project unable to achieve output targets, which may or may not be related to | Serious | <i>Remote</i> | Project outputs against contracted targets will be discussed at Project Board meetings. Delivery Partners' contracts/Service Agreements will all clearly stipulate their expenditure and output schedules. If the risks were to materialise, the steering group would provide recommendations |

| | | | |
|--|---------|---------------|--|
| Issues with the performance of project Delivery Partners. | | | 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. We will have a clawback provision in the partnership agreement to minimise financial risk for the Council. |
| 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 AMIF requirements. This will be done in line with government advice to adhere to strict social distancing and protective face covering until the guidance changes. Throughout the delivery of the project, the project management team will deliver "Monitoring Visits" (Covid-19 permitted) 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 AMIF Authorities have a large team of staff with experience of managing and delivering EU funded projects and a replacement will be appointed. For any delivery staff leaving post, they will be replaced through the vacancy being publicly advertised. |
| Clawback of grant by grant awarding body | Serious | Unlikely | The Migration Team is very experienced in project management both for internal projects and those run by partners. The measures put in place above will minimise any risk of grant clawback. In addition, grant clawback requirements will be passed on to the individual partners, reducing the risk to the Council. In the event that a partner is unable to repay grant clawed back for some other reason, the City Council will be responsible for grant repayment as the guarantor. However, the risk of this is low. |

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 Marmot City means the aims of the MyCoventry project 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. Ethnic minorities and 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 connections to address local, social and economic inequalities that hinder integration. BAME and newly arrived communities are those who are likely to be impacted more significantly by COVID-19, therefore the extra resource and the aims of the project will help to address the imbalance.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

MyCoventry includes work to improve the DIY skills of migrants and newly arrived communities and includes furniture “up-cycling” which will lead to less furniture and electrical equipment being disposed of and increased re-use and re-cycling, hence having a positive impact in the environment

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

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

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Appendix 1:

