

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
All in Preston

Grant Support to Sahara Project (Preston) – Moving On Project

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing has been approached by the Sahara Project (Preston) Ltd. requesting grant support of £50,000, to supplement Big Lottery funding, for delivery of the 'Moving On' project. The project will involve working with women from BME communities to build their self-confidence and improve financial independence by:

- providing front line support for women to address their immediate needs;
- undertaking follow up work to support women to play a greater role in society by providing advocacy and support in accessing employment, mental health services, domestic abuse support, housing, child and welfare benefit, and on other issues;
- initiating delivery of services in other geographical areas to support BME women.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing is asked to approve grant funding of £50,000 and up to the equivalent value in officer support for delivery of the "Moving On" project, on the basis set out in the report, subject to an appropriate grant funding agreement being agreed by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services.

Background

The Move On project involves working with women from BME communities to build their self-confidence and lead to their financial independence by:

- providing front line support for women to address their immediate needs;
- undertaking follow up work to support women to play a greater role in society by providing advocacy and support in accessing employment, mental health services, domestic abuse support, housing, child and welfare benefit, and on other issues;
- initiating delivery of services in other geographical areas to support BME women.

The project provides an advocacy service so that women:

- receive the services they need to address their issues and concerns;
- have their voice heard on issues that are important to them;
- have their rights defended and safeguarded;
- have their views genuinely considered by service providers when decisions are made about their lives.

The project focuses on an asset based community development approach and supports women to identify and recognise their skills and talents and enable them to use these for the benefit of self and others. This includes:

- drop-in facility;
- one to one case work support;
- group work where women share their common issues and determine positive outcomes;
- workshops and learning and training events on health, welfare reform, immigration, women's rights, financial matters, employability and other topics relevant to women's needs and concerns
- working with partner organisations to ensure services are seamless and easy to access

Unlike the processes applied to other established grants, such as local member grants, there has been no appraisal of the organisation or project proposed.

The terms of the grant funding agreement would require the applicant to deliver the outcomes required by Big Lottery and reasonable monitoring requirements to ensure that the grant funding is properly spent and the objectives met. The applicant would also be required to submit a report upon completion of the project outlining what the project has achieved to enable the Director of Public Health to evaluate its impact to help in the development of any future similar projects.

Consultations

N/A

Implications

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

The Move On project is supported in the main by The Big Lottery Fund, to a value £452,512 over four years. The request to Lancashire County Council is for £50,000 grant support to supplement the Big Lottery monies along with officer support to a similar value.

Should the request be approved it would be funded on a one off basis from the 2016/17 Public Health and Wellbeing budget.

Legal

Consideration must be given as to whether the funding contravenes the state aid rules. The de minimis exemption allows grants of €200,000 in any three year period to be given to an organisation.

However, in calculating whether the €200,000 ceiling has been reached *all* funding from public bodies to that organisation must be taken into account. Contravention of state aid rules can lead to action against the Council as well as the recipient. In making grants to organisations, the Council should also notify recipients as to the need to include this funding in any future state aid de minimis calculation.

Should any of the proposals amount to the de minimis threshold being exceeded, it is possible that other state aid exemptions could apply. However, these must be formally assessed and recorded as all state aid other than that which is classed as de minimis must be reported to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

If state aid rules are breached action may be taken against the public authority granting the aid and other organisations who consider they may have suffered a competitive disadvantage. Organisations may therefore be required to provide further details of the initiatives including a breakdown of how the grant funding is to be used. All grant funding made available by the Council will be subject to the recipient agreeing to binding terms as to its use. This will also include clawback provisions to address misuse of the funding or breaches of legal requirements including state aid rules.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A