

REPORT OF: FINANCIAL SERVICES MANAGER

TO: EXECUTIVE

DATES: 28TH MAY 2015

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MATTERS REQUIRING FINANCIAL APPROVAL

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This regular report summarises issues requiring consideration by the Executive under the Council's Financial and Contract Procedure Rules.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Executive:
 - a) give authority for the Council to act as Accountable Body for the Bradley Big Local scheme under which grant funding of £1m has been allocated over a 10 year period;
 - b) agrees to write-off the payment of the outstanding amounts as referred to in paragraph 10 below.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. To seek approval from the Executive for specific matters that have financial implications for the Council.

ISSUE

Bradley Big Local

4. To-date the Council has acted as the Accountable Body for the Bradley Big Local. Approval was given for this, under officer delegation, in relation to an initial start-up grant of £20,000. In November 2014, the Executive received an update report on the project which outlined current developments at that time. This included reference to the development and submission of an action plan which was required in order to access further grant funding of £1m over a ten year period.

5. The plan has now been formally endorsed by the Big Local Trust, initially covering the period 2015 - 2019. The first tranche of grant has been confirmed at £108k inclusive of 5% for partnership and grant administration.
6. The Council, through its Localities team, has been reappointed as the Locally Trusted Organisation for at least the first twelve months of the next phase of Bradley Big Local. In support of this, and following approval of the action plan, the Executive is asked to approve the Council acting as the Accountable Body for the grant funding.
7. The Localities team will continue to provide progress reports to the Executive as the project develops.

Unity Hall, Nelson

8. At the meeting of the Executive in January a report was submitted on a proposal to transfer Unity Hall to Nelson Town Council so that the Town Council in conjunction with the current lessees, ITHAAD Community Development Trust Limited, could develop it as a community asset with financial assistance from the County Council. The report also suggested writing off the outstanding arrears of rent of £9,365.76 because of the financial position of the lessee and in recognition of the difficulties the building presented in keeping it in good condition. The Executive requested the Leader to meet with ITHAAD to discuss this further.
9. The Leader and the Corporate Director met with ITHAAD representatives on 3rd March. The representatives presented details of the Trust's financial position and gave examples of expenditure they had incurred on the building to comply with the lease covenants. At the conclusion of the meeting the Leader informed the ITHAAD representatives that in the light of the information now provided he would ask the Executive to look favourably on writing off the rent arrears.
10. To facilitate the transfer of the building to the Town Council the Executive is requested to approve that the debt outstanding as at 31st March 2015 of £9,365.76 be written off. It will be necessary to consider the rent treatment for the current year in due course and this will be addressed once there is greater certainty regarding the date of transfer.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy

11. There are no policy implications arising from the contents of this report.

Financial

12. The financial implications are generally as provided in the report. If approval is given to the debt write-off requested above, this will be charged against the accumulated Provision for Bad Debts which currently stands at £194k.

Legal

13. There are no legal implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

Risk Management

14. With any external grant funding there is the potential risk for grant conditions to be breached leading to repayment obligations. The Localities team will work closely with the local partnership to mitigate this risk.

Health and Safety

15. There are no health and safety implications arising from the contents of this report.

Climate Change

16. There are no climate change implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

Community Safety

17. There are no community safety issues arising from the contents of this report.

Equality and Diversity

18. There are no equality and diversity issues arising from the contents of this report.

APPENDICES

None

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None