

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 23 October 2019

Title: Disability Inclusion Fund

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning

Cabinet Member: Councillor Rebecca Whippy, Cabinet Member for Disability and Community Safety

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To establish a fund to improve disability inclusion in the borough.

Officer recommendation(s): That Cabinet:

- i) Approve an allocation of £20k in 2019/20 for a Disability Inclusion Fund to be distributed as set out in the report;
- ii) Approve the establishment of a Disability Inclusion Task Group to consider applications for payments from the Fund.
- iii) Grant delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to decide, in consultation with the other members of the Disability Inclusion Task Group, on individual allocations from the Fund.

Reasons for recommendations: A Disability Inclusion Fund could support and kick-start interventions to help tackle the barriers experienced by disabled children and adults in actively participating in all aspects of life.

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1 Introduction

1.1 The council recognises that some groups experience stereotyping and unfair discrimination in society, and some people are, or become, isolated through a number of barriers such as physical and mental disability, culture and language, deprivation and a lack of knowledge. The council is committed to challenging all

forms of inequality and takes its obligations to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations very seriously (part of its public sector equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This commitment is emphasised in the council's Equality and Fairness Policy.

- 1.2 For disabled people, the environment in which they live can create barriers which limit their lives, in terms of not being able to access facilities and services. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on providers of goods, services and facilities to make reasonable adjustments in order to avoid a disabled person being placed at a "substantial disadvantage" compared with non-disabled people when accessing services and facilities.
- 1.3 When considering the ways in which disabled people may experience discrimination, the council is mindful of the range of types of disability which can impact on people's lives, and that the nature of the disability is not always visible. Physical disability, visual impairment, being deaf or hard of hearing, having mental health conditions, a learning disability, an acquired brain injury or autism spectrum disorder are all forms of disability which may be covered by the Equality Act 2010.

2 Disability Inclusion Fund

- 2.1 With the establishment of a new Cabinet Portfolio position focused on disability, the council wants to make a strong statement about its commitment to supporting people with disabilities in the borough. To support this commitment it is proposed to establish a fund of £20k per annum to kick-start interventions to help tackle the barriers experienced by children and adults with disabilities in actively participating in all aspects of life.
- 2.2 The document at appendix 1 provides details of the scheme and sets out how it is proposed that it will operate. It is intended to be a responsive fund which is quick and easy for organisations to apply to. Decisions on the allocation of funds will be made by a Disability Inclusion Task Group which will be established for this purpose.
- 2.3 The proposed criteria for the allocation of funds are;
 - Interventions which aim to improve the experience of people with disabilities in the borough
 - Interventions which enable children with disabilities to be more fully included in mainstream activities, events or services
 - Interventions which, in particular, aid the inclusion of those with a hidden disability
- 2.4 Awards of up to £1,000 will generally be made to any single organisation, although higher awards may be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.5 It is proposed that a Disability Inclusion Task Group be established, comprising the Deputy Chief Executive or an officer authorised by him, the Cabinet Member for Disability and Community Safety and two other councillors appointed by the

Cabinet Member.

- 2.6 It is proposed that Cabinet grant delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to decide, in consultation with the other members of the Disability Inclusion Task Group, on individual allocations from the Fund. Where a Member has a personal and prejudicial interest in any proposal, he or she may not take part in any assessment or recommendation regarding that proposal.

3 Financial appraisal

- 3.1 There are no additional monies available to offset the cost of this fund either in full or in part. Therefore, the Council will have to reallocate the budget from other EBC services to create this fund, which may mean reducing or ceasing the provision of those services.

4 Legal implications

- 4.1 Under the Council's constitution, the Cabinet is permitted to delegate an executive function (such as making payments out of a disability fund) to an officer but not to a Cabinet member or a group of Cabinet members. The officer to whom the delegation is granted may, if he or she considers it appropriate, refer any decision regarding that function back to the Cabinet.
- 4.2 The council's legal duties as regards equality are set out in the body of the report.

Lawyer consulted 19.09.19

Legal ref: 008570-EBC-OD

5 Risk management implications

- 5.1 The proposals set out in this report, if implemented, will reduce the risk of the council not fulfilling its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

6 Equality analysis

- 6.1 An Equality analysis has been undertaken on these proposals. This has concluded that;

- **Negative impacts** – None identified
- **Positive impacts** – Age, disability and pregnancy/ maternity

The proposals have the potential to increase accessibility and work towards eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and foster good relations – disabled people will be able to access the same services and work in the same environments as non-disabled people.

Funding available specifically for projects and initiatives which support people with disabilities may increase empowerment and promote community resilience.

7 Environmental impact analysis

- 7.1 The proposals in this report, if implemented, are unlikely to result in a significant

adverse impact on carbon emissions.

8 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Disability Inclusion Fund – draft scheme for consideration

9 Background papers

None