

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

18 JUNE 2019

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

WELSH GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY COHESION GRANT REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on a regional application for funding to Welsh Government in relation to EU Brexit Community Cohesion and to seek Cabinet approval to enter into a partnership agreement with the Council of the City and County of Swansea (Swansea Council) and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) in relation to that grant funding.

2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority/priorities:

- Supporting a successful economy – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
- Helping people to be more self-reliant – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.

3. Background

3.1 In December 2018 Welsh Government issued their 'intention to fund' email to all Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinators in Wales. Welsh Government indicated that each region would be allocated £140,000 to:

- 'Identify and mitigate community tensions (hate crime, extremism, anxiety, anti social behaviour) relating to Brexit;
- Improve community cohesion communications;
- Organise events/activities to promote social inclusion; and
- Deliver non Brexit activities as outlined in the Nation Community Cohesion Plan (2019).

3.2 Bridgend County Borough Council, (BCBC) Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot Council make up the Western Bay Community Cohesion Region, which is led by a Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator based in Swansea Council.

3.3 Welsh Government requested the funding proposal be submitted by the host local authority for the region i.e. Swansea Council.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 The proposal submitted for the region was successful and the region has been awarded £140,000 for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. This must be claimed in full by 16 April 2020. This is for year 1 of a proposed 2 year funding agreement.

4.2 Working closely with communities and stakeholders, in particular Bridgend Community Safety Partnership, a range of activities will be delivered to understand and mitigate community tensions. These will include:

- Regular engagement with groups vulnerable to harassment / experiencing community tensions in relation to Brexit (EU citizens, BAME communities, other protected characteristic groups), gathering intelligence on community tensions as they emerge.
- Monitoring community tensions, and providing regular tension monitoring reports through agreed channels, including regular summaries to the Welsh Government.
- Work with Local Authority communications teams and equalities officers to engage with the Welsh Government Equality and Inclusion Communications Network, around specific calendar events, also cascading information in the event of an incident.
- Events to promote social contact and integration (e.g. people from different backgrounds cooking together, community music groups for young people from different nationalities, community arts based projects, active citizenship awards, interfaith events, welcoming newcomer initiatives).
- A mapping exercise to include consultation to better understand the impacts of Brexit on communities.

4.3 BCBC costs for Year 1 are set out below and will be funded in full from the Welsh Government Community Cohesion Grant:

Community Cohesion Officer (new Post)	25 hours per week at Grade 8	£21,408
Travel Expenses		£1,000
ICT bundle		£1,336
Community Projects		£6,420
Total		£30,164

4.4 There is no additional financial contribution from BCBC.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There is no negative equality impact resulting from this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The implications of the five ways of working in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are summarized below:

- Long term – Identifying and mitigating community tensions through engagement and other activities will foster better relations in communities now and in the future.
- Prevention – Regular engagement with groups vulnerable to harassment / experiencing community tensions in relation to Brexit (EU citizens, BAME communities, other protected characteristic groups), will help prevent tension escalating into hate crime and anti-social behaviour. The project will engage with relevant networks including the Police to identify tensions / hot spots and plan and implement multi-agency response to reduce tensions and/or undertake preventative work.
- Integration – The project will achieve this way of working by supporting the following objectives in the Wellbeing Plan for Bridgend: Supporting communities in Bridgend to be safe and cohesive and Reducing Social and Economic Inequalities
- Collaboration – this project has been developed through collaboration with Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. It will be delivered through their respective Community Safety Partnerships
- Involvement – This project is based on the involvement of communities and stakeholders. It aims to identify areas of tensions and to provide the evidence base for cohesion support for socially or economically marginalised groups or communities that are identified as priorities at a Local Authority or PSB level due to low, or risk of low inclusion or cohesion.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The costs outlined in 4.3 above will be funded in full from the Welsh Government Community Cohesion Grant. Invoices for costs incurred will be submitted to Swansea Council six monthly i.e. 30th September 2019 and by 31st March 2020.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 Cabinet is recommended to

- Note the approval of Welsh Government regional funding in relation to the Community Cohesion Grant 2019 – 2020; and
- delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Head of Legal and Regulatory Services, to negotiate and enter into a partnership agreement in relation to the Community Cohesion Grant funding with Swansea Council and NPTCBC and any ancillary documents relating to that partnership arrangement.

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Background documents: None