

Delegated Cabinet Member Decision Report

Decision Maker and Portfolio area: Rebekah Sutcliffe, Executive Director of Communities and Reforms

Date of Decision: 02.09.2021

Subject: Opportunity Area – Home Start Making it REAL project

Report Author: Laura Williams

Ward(s) Affected: Is Ward Member consultation required? No

Reason for the decision:

National and local evidence shows that COVID has had a significant impact on the young children and their families in Oldham and urgent intervention is needed, specifically in early language and literacy.

Therefore, the Early Years' Service is seeking authority to commission Home Start Oldham¹ to deliver Making it REAL programme through their current Play, Grow and Learn initiative.

The Opportunity Area (OA) Partnership Board has approved investment of £22k, as part of the Year 5 of the OA programme, to extend the delivery of the successful Making it REAL programme through a partnership with Home Start. This partnership arrangement will build on the current Play, Grow and Learn programme delivered by Home Start and will contribute to securing sustainability of previous investment in MIR by the OA programme.

This partnership approach is in line with Oldham's Social Value Charter² and the principles set out in the Charter to:

- Build capacity and sustainability of the voluntary and community sector to enable them to compete for and deliver contracts / services
- Provide access to local jobs and employment opportunities for Oldham residents

¹ <https://www.home-start.org.uk/home-start-oldham-stockport-tameside>

² <http://www.oldhampartnership.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Oldham-Social-Value-Charter-and-Framework-2016.pdf>

- Actively seek community participation and engagement by enabling and equipping communities and individuals with the skills and resources to play an active role in service design, decision making and delivery

The REAL approach and more specifically the National Children's Bureau's (NCB) Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy)³ programme has been selected as the preferred early literacy intervention for investment through Opportunity Area (OA) funding.

The Making it REAL programme helps practitioners to build parents' knowledge and confidence so that they can help their children with reading and writing and create an early home learning environment. It is a long-duration programme designed for families with children aged between two and five years living in disadvantaged communities

Oldham Home Start Team will be required to lead the delivery of Making it REAL sessions to families who have been identified to take part in Play, Grow and Learn pathway.

Home Start is a preferred provider of the Making it REAL programme for the following reasons.

- a strong history of supporting Oldham's young children and families
- comprehensive understanding of the contextual challenges facing children under 5 in Oldham, particularly around language acquisition and early literacy
- a proven track record of delivered high quality support to children and families in Oldham, including support around SLC i.e. the LENA project
- they are a well establish and highly regarded member of the VCFS sector in Oldham
- they would recruit a local volunteer/practitioner to lead on the project which has an impact on social value
- the MIR project has similar values to their current play, grow and learn offer and this will enhance delivery and support a greater number of children and families.
- It will enable Oldham to target vulnerable children and families who have been referred by professionals to their service

³ <https://www.ncb.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities/early-years/projects-programmes/making-it-real>

If approved the proposal is to deliver the programme over the academic year October 2021 to August 2022

Summary:

This report seeks exemption from Contract Procedure Rules under 21.3e in order to make a direct award through grant funding to Home Start Oldham for the specialised expertise and intellectual property for the Making it REAL (Play, Grow and Learn) programme

What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):

Option 1: Do not approve the direct award outlined above. This option presents the following risks:

- Unable to respond swiftly to the early needs identified in young children and families after the impact of COVID.
- Children may make limited progress in their development and gaps widen before entry to school.
- children will potentially fall further behind and are likely to underachieve and not meet the expected standard in the EYFSP due to not receiving the appropriate early intervention

Option 2: Engage with the market by seeking quotes via the chest. - This Option would pose a risk in the following areas:

- Capacity & expertise in delivery of Making it REAL is not available across the market
- This approach doesn't reflect the principles in the Social Value Charter as small charities are unable to compete with larger organisations
- Will not build capacity and partnerships across the Oldham services
- A new provider would not be able to deliver the current programme to the vulnerable children and families that we are trying to target as the families are referred through the Home Start pathway (unique audience)
- Time to go through a competitive commissioning process will negatively impact on timeliness of delivery and ability to meet OA

Recommendation(s):

That authority is given to make a direct award through OA grant funding to Home Start Oldham to deliver a MIR programme to vulnerable families.

Implications:

*What are the **financial** implications?*

This report seeks to approve a direct award to Home Start Oldham for the specialised expertise and intellectual property for the Making it REAL (Play, Grow and Learn) programme.

The total value of this commission is £22,000 and will be wholly funded from the Council's Opportunity Area Year 5 Grant.

The contract will run across the academic year 2021-22 which encompasses two financial years (2021/22 and 2022/23) as presented in the table below:

	Financial Year		Total
	2021-22	2022-23	
Contract (Oct21 - Aug22)	12,000	10,000	22,000

Therefore, it is expected that £12,000 will be spent in 2021/22 with the balance remaining of £10,000 carried forward as an earmarked reserve into the financial year 2022-23 to finance the expenditure from 1 April to 31 August 2022.

Oldham's Year 5 Grant allocation is **£1.639m**.

Vicki Hayes – Senior Accountant

*What are the **procurement** implications?* There is provision in the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to grant an exemption from the Rules Where an extension for a particular period can be justified, for example where a service is proposed to be purchased which are of a specialist or unique nature (Rule 21.3 E). this will ensure that the Homestart to deliver a unique and bespoke programme of Play, Grow and Learn pathway, which is not available across the market. On this basis, Commercial Procurement Unit acknowledges the requirement. (Mohammad Sharif) 21/09/2021.

*What are the **legal** implications?*

Legal Services supports the recommendation based on the comments provided by procurement. The award is in compliance with the Council's CPR's. Sukie Kaur - Solicitor

What are the **Human Resources** implications? None

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason) None

What are the **property** implications None

Risks:

Risk

Risk to delivery timescales due to the commissioning process or inability to recruit a suitable organisation

Commissioning does not represent value for money

Proposed implementation costs for the evaluation may be inaccurate as mainly based on assumptions /estimates

Mitigation

Seek approval to make a direct award to Home Start Oldham

Commissioning a third party could have substantial cost implications

We will utilise a robust commissioning methodology and will specify output and outcomes desired from the grant
We will work with procurement, finance and legal services to develop robust monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

Detailed review and monitoring of proposed implementation costs to ensure they are robust

Co-operative agenda

The proposal seeks to build capacity, jobs and skills within the Oldham system and as such is in line with the Co-operative Agenda. It builds capacity and sustainability of the voluntary and community sector to enable them to compete for and deliver contracts / services

This contract is an award to an Oldham based organisation who provide a specialist and bespoke service to our residents and communities

Sarah Whittle (Policy Manager)

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? No

Reason(s) for exemption from publication:

List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:
(These must be Council documents and remain available for inspection for 4 years after the report is produced).

Title	Available from
Opportunity Area 2017-2021 Plan	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/675046/Social_Mobility_Delivery_Plan-Oldham.PDF

Report Author Sign-off:	
Laura Williams	<i>LAWilliams</i>
Date: 4th October 2021	

In consultation with

(Relevant Executive Director/Director
Rebekah Sutcliffe
Strategic Director of Communities and Reform



Date: 27th Sept 2021