

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	Monday 18 th March 2024
Subject:	Individual Placement and Support Grants
Lead Member:	Cllr Bedi - Lead Member for Education, Children's Services and Lifelong Learning
Chief Officer:	Sue Butcher – Executive Director for People – Children
Contact Officer:	Neil Hoskinson – Associate Director of Education
Ward(s):	All
Key Decision:	YES
Exempt:	NO
Decision Subject To Call In	YES
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – IPSPC Ability Slough

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report sets out how a new Supported Employment Programme (“Ability Slough”) grant will help residents with a disability access and/or remain in employment. Ability Slough is funded from a Department of Work and Pensions “Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care” (IPSPC) grant until March 2025.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1.2 Accept the Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care grant from Department of Work and Pensions. The total grant award is £4,585,252.31 (for the two financial years of the grant, with delivery period July 2023 to March 2025).
- 1.3 Agree to the delivery of the Supported Employment Programme (Ability Slough) funded by the Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care grant (Department of Work and Pensions) as outlined in Appendix 1.
- 1.4 Delegate authority to the Executive Director Children's Services, in consultation with the Executive Director Adult Services and the Lead Member (Education and Children's Services), to procure a provider for delivery of the programme and award a contract to the successful bidder.

- 1.5 Accept the Individual Placement and Support (Substance Use) (IPSSU) grant from the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) of £805,834 for a delivery period of 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 across all six Berkshire local authorities. (Figures exclude an uplift for 2025/26 to be advised by OHID)
- 1.6 Agree that Slough Borough Council should be the lead authority for the IPSSU grant and delegate authority to the Executive Director Children's Services, in consultation with the Lead Member (Education and Children's), to enter into an inter authority agreement with the other Berkshire local authorities.

Reason:

- 1.7 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for getting people into work. DWP's aim is to support everyone who can work to be able to find a job, progress in work, and thrive in the labour market, wherever they are and wherever they live. To do this the Department delivers comprehensive employment support to help people start, stay and succeed in work, including through face-to-face time with work coaches in Jobcentres and via contracted employment support programmes such as IPSPC.
- 1.8 Slough Borough Council is one of only 41 upper-tier local authorities in England to have received IPSPC grant from DWP.
- 1.9 The programme will provide bespoke guidance and support to adult residents who have a formal or informal/self-diagnosis of a disability including mental illness and/or physical disability. The support will include skills training, work coaching and help to stay in work (including working directly with local employers).

DLUHC Commissioner Review

This report has been reviewed by Commissioners and there are no specific comments to add.

2. Report

Introduction

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan (A Fresh Start 2023 – 27) includes 3 strategic priorities, one of which is *A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives*. The local IPSPC programme (called "Ability Slough") will focus resources on supporting vulnerable residents who need help to enter employment or to stay in employment which will help them lead independent lives.
- 2.2. Approximately 11% of Slough residents define themselves as having a disability that affects their day-to-day life and 3% of adult residents in the borough are economically inactive due to disability or long-term sickness. The 2021 Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework figures show that only 1.6% of Slough residents with learning disabilities are employed (compared to a national average of 5.1%). Only 10% of adult residents with mental health issues were in employment.
- 2.3. The IPSPC programme will deliver improved employment outcomes for residents who are currently economically inactive due to disability in addition to working with employers to help disabled residents stay and thrive in employment.

Options considered:

Option A: Not to accept the IPSPC grant.

- 2.4. Between 2018 and 2023 Slough was the lead authority for an East Berkshire supported employment programme funded by a grant from European Social Fund and Community Lottery (Building Better Opportunities [BBO] project). In Slough this programme offered one-to-one and small group support to residents who were unemployed and unlikely to gain employment without support. This programme ended in early 2023 (grant ended) and there was no alternative support available for Slough residents who would have benefitted from this type of support.
- 2.5. If Slough does not accept the IPSPC grant there would be no service available to continue to support residents who were still engaged with BBO and no specialist, bespoke support would be available for disabled residents to gain and remain in employment. Generalist support would be available from Work Coaches based at Job Centres and Skills Hub at The Curve, but DWP pilot schemes identified that this generalist approach was not as successful at delivering positive outcomes for disabled residents.
- 2.6. Due to the speed at which DWP wanted this grant taken up to continue to support existing BBO clients some grant spend has already taken place and is expected to be broadly in line with profile to the year end. This spend has retained the small programme management team and allowed a short-term variation to the existing BBO contract with a local service provider to continue offering employment and skills support to a small cohort of eligible residents. If the council does not accept this grant the remainder of the sum will need to be returned to DWP and the balance repaid from General Fund.

Option B: To accept IPSPC grant. **Recommended option.**

- 2.7. Accepting the full IPSPC grant would allow bespoke training, skills and employment support to be offered to Slough residents who were part of at least one of these categories at no additional cost to the council:
 - A resident with a formal diagnosis of any disability (physical, learning and mental) who is either economically inactive, or needs additional support to remain in employment.
 - A resident who has self-diagnosed any disability (physical, learning and mental) who is either economically inactive, or needs additional support to remain in employment.
 - This grant would allow continuity of support for residents who were still receiving advice and guidance from BBO but would also allow this support to continue for a further 2 years (to March 2025).

3. Background

- 3.1. From 2017 to 2023 Slough Borough Council was the Lead Authority for an East Berkshire Supported Employment Programme funded from Building Better Opportunities (BBO) grant (European Social Fund [ESF] and Community Lottery Fund [CLF]).

- 3.2. Over this 6-year period BBO supported over 550 clients (those with chronic health conditions, refugees and disabled residents) through an intensive programme of support sometimes lasting 18 months. 60% of these clients were Slough residents. Over 70% of participants moved from being unemployed to being in sustained employment. Of the remaining 30% some participants entered training and education and the remainder left the scheme. The East Berkshire BBO programme was one of the highest performing programmes across the UK and consistently exceeded the targets set by the ESF.
- 3.3. Bespoke skills, training and employment support for residents who struggle to access paid work is beneficial and can deliver positive outcomes. To test this, DWP initially launched a small scheme in England in late 2022. This scheme funded 6 local authorities to deliver specialist supported employment programmes to adults with disabilities to help them both access work and to help disabled people remain and thrive in employment. Slough applied to be part of the original scheme but was unsuccessful.
- 3.4. Although Slough's application for the initial scheme was not successful, DWP then approached several councils whose applications were very strong (including Slough) to ask them if they were still interested in receiving monies from the grant fund. Slough confirmed its interest and ability to deliver and was awarded £4,585,252.31 in a grant letter dated 28th April 2023. The grant agreement was signed-off by Executive Director Finance & Commercial on 24th May 2023.
- 3.5. The grant sum included management costs (employment of 2 members of staff dedicated to the management, promotion, quality assurance and data return to DWP) and procurement of a specialist delivery partner to work with approximately 2,000 Slough residents who have a disability to help them access work or remain in work. The Supported Employment Model for IPSPC requires a lighter level of support to clients compared to the intensive model required by BBO and also allows the programme to support residents who are already in work, this is why the IPSPC programme can work with more clients.

Background - IPSSU

- 3.6. Due to similarities in the nature of the service provision and the market, it is recommended that the service is procured in a combined tender, with two lots, with the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), Individual Placement and Support Programme. The roll out of this is now being offered to the Berkshire wide local authorities as part of its final implementation phase. This process will be subject to formal documentation and confirmations on grant from OHID which are currently being chased.
- 3.7. The aim is to have all areas within England activity engaged with the programme by the end of 2024/25. IPS is a manualised and highly personalised approach to employment support currently being delivered within drug and alcohol treatment services in approximately half of English local authorities. The Berkshire grant will be £402,917 per year for two years until 31st March 2026 (with an uplift in the second year, the amount yet to be confirmed) and this will fund a team of seven made up of one employment specialist per substance use treatment service and a single team leader. The grant will include some support costs and overheads that Slough expends as part of the contract. It aims to support people rapidly into paid work, and into jobs that match client preferences. It involves seamless integration between employment

support and clinical services/treatment and involves IPS employment specialists generating links with local employers and using these links to create openings for their clients.

Background – Both grants

- 3.8. Potential suppliers have indicated that both services will be of interest to them, and economies of scale maybe achieved through this approach. The separation into two lots will allow potential contactors to compete for one lot or both. Note, that the funding periods differ for the two grants, with the funding for the OHID programme running for two years until March 2026, and the DWP grant due to end in 2025. A combined tender may make the one-year contract more attractive.
- 3.9. A full procurement process will go live in early 2024 to secure a specialist delivery partner. However, to continue supporting Slough residents who were part of the BBO programme and not to have a gap in support for Slough residents who would benefit from bespoke support the contract with the specialist BBO service provider was varied to allow them to remain operational while a procurement exercise was undertaken.
- 3.10. DWP requested that all councils who received IPSPC grant re-named local service provision. In Slough this programme will be called “Ability Slough”.
- 3.11. Both the local name and details of the service specification have been consulted on with Slough Borough Council’s Staff Disability Forum. Additional local stakeholder engagement with health partners, local employers and disabled residents has taken place.

4. Implications of the Recommendation

4.1. Financial implications

- 4.1.1. The IPSPC grant funded by the DWP is relatively self-contained including project management support and some central costs being recoverable. Grant cannot be carried forward is the current DWP advice and as there are regulatory challenges in getting providers onboarded at short notice, this has been the principal reason for slippage in the current year. The DWP is closely involved with the programme and aware of the challenges. The total grant amount is advised above and the table below confirms the current forecasted spend and the split of grant between the years.

IPSPC Grant profile and Slippage

	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	Total £
Contract cost	780,000.00	2,375,292.13	3,155,292.13
Slough Project costs	187,706.66	149,920.00	337,626.66
Total	967,706.66	2,525,212.13	3,492,918.79
Grant	(2,010,626.08)	(2,525,212.13)	(4,535,838.21)
First Year Slippage	(1,042,919.42)	0.00	(1,042,919.42)

- 4.1.2. Initially there has been a temporary provider to get the project off the ground however due to an initial challenge in recruiting staffing this has led to significant underspend in year one. A permanent provider is soon to be appointed and anticipated that this will improve delivery and full use of grant in the second year.
- 4.1.3. The IPSSU grant funded by OHID and also included in this report is a very similar programme and both will be managed from Children's services in the new structure. Given the close synergies this will have benefits in regard to costs and ensure the programmes dovetail operationally and providers are managed centrally. The IPSSU is going out to tender as detailed above and is due to start in April 2024. The grant figure of £402,917 is provided from OHID in emails. We are still awaiting the grant confirmation letter. Procurement activity will need to be pending and subject to such formal notifications.
- 4.1.4. Due to this being grant funded it is recommended that these projects are externally resourced to resource flexibility and ability to exit programmes smoothly if no further funding extensions.

4.2. *Legal implications*

- 4.2.1. The Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care (IPSPC) Grant is made pursuant to section 2 of the Employment and Training Act 1973.
- 4.2.2. The initiative is aimed at helping adults who have a physical or mental health condition, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, move into competitive employment and providing the support they need to maintain that employment. Accepting the grant and implementing the scheme under the grant will contribute to the achievement of the council's equality outcomes in relation to disabled persons.
- 4.2.3. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) ran a competition to provide Grant Funding for approximately 6 Upper Tier Local Authorities (LAs) in England, to take part in the Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care initiative. It is evident, therefore, that the IPSPC Grant sits within a valid legal framework and that the Council was awarded the Grant following a competition or due process.
- 4.2.4. Accepting the grants will also enable the council to deliver priorities that are set out in its corporate plan, the Council's Corporate Plan (A Fresh Start 2023 – 27) which has three strategic priorities, one of which is to work to "*A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives*". The implementation of the grant will be in line with and will promote this strategic priority in relation to the disabled persons.
- 4.2.5. The total grant award for IPSPC is £4,585,252.31 and therefore it requires Cabinet acceptance. Further, under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, Cabinet can delegate the decision to procure and award the contract for delivery to the successful bidder, to an executive director following appropriate consultation with specified officers and elected members.

4.3. Risk management implications

Risk	Mitigations	Residual risk assessment
<p>Service specification does not adequately address challenges faced by disabled residents accessing and remaining in employment.</p> <p>Medium risk</p>	<p>Service specification will use BBO client feedback, specialist advice from DWP and consultation with local specialist community and voluntary groups to ensure the new service adequately addresses challenges faced by disabled residents.</p>	<p>Low risk</p>
<p>Lack of specialist service provider to deliver services to disabled residents.</p> <p>Medium risk</p>	<p>Officers have been carrying out soft market-testing with potential specialist providers and have received very positive feedback from local, regional and national organisations to deliver a programme in Slough.</p>	<p>Low risk</p>
<p>Lack of delivery by specialist delivery partner resulting in grant clawback.</p> <p>High risk</p>	<p>DWP accepted that the delivery timetable for IPSPC was challenging. Lack of delivery has already been mitigated by varying the BBO contract to allow a local specialist provider to deliver some outcomes during the procurement process. Officers will review the ambitious delivery targets with DWP and successful service provider to minimise risk of grant clawback.</p>	<p>Medium risk</p>
<p>Lack of appropriate management of service leading to poor quality assurance and potential grant clawback.</p> <p>Low risk</p>	<p>Slough has a strong and successful track record of managing grant-funded skills programmes (including BBO and Multiply). Experience, processes and procedures from these similar programmes will be used to ensure high standards of delivery which fully comply with grant conditions.</p>	<p>Low risk</p>
<p>Ability Slough operates in isolation from other skills and employment services delivered locally.</p> <p>Medium risk</p>	<p>One of the lessons learnt from the delivery of BBO is the need to integrate this project into the wider Learning and Skills Service. Slough Ability will be managed as part of the Community Learning & Skills Service and will be based at the multi-agency Skills Hub at The Curve. IPS SU will be a LOT 2 to the</p>	<p>Low risk</p>

	Ability Slough thus the two provisions will be aligned	
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4.4. Environmental implications

4.4.1. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

4.5. Equality implications

4.5.1. The nature of this new programme will be similar to the Building Better Opportunities project and equalities information from BBO will be used to ensure fair access to the programme for all residents.

4.5.2. Approximately 65% of Slough’s residents are of working age (16 – 64 years old) and 10.3% of this group are disabled. The definition of “disability” under the Equality Act 2010 is the presence of a condition which limits day-to-day activities to some extent. An additional 4.6% of residents say they have a long-term health condition but do not consider it limits their day-to-day activity¹. 3% of working age residents are economically inactive due to disability or long-term sickness and it is likely that the official 3% figure does not include residents with conditions which are self-diagnosed, are transitory or relatively lower impact on day-to-day activities. This could include, for example, residents who feel stress and anxiety at work.

4.5.3. BBO data suggests that service users will have these broad categories of disability:

Disability category	% of service users
Learning Disability	29%
Autistic Spectrum Conditions	27%
Mental Health Conditions	27%
Physical Disability	11%
Sensory Disability	4%
Other	2%

4.5.4. Disability increases as resident’s become older. The table below highlights the percentage of each age-group of Slough residents who are disabled:

Age group	% of age group disabled
16 to 24 years old	7.2%
25 to 34 years old	6.9%
35 to 44 years old	7.7%
45 to 54 years old	13%
55 to 64 years old	20.7%

4.5.5. The table below describes the percentage of all working age disabled Slough residents within each age group, e.g., 11.2% of all disabled (working age) residents in Slough are aged 16-24 (ONS Census 2021):

Age group	% of disabled working age residents in each age group
16 to 24 years old	11.2%
25 to 34 years old	15.1%

¹ ONS Census 2021 (Slough Borough Council Insight Team)

<i>35 to 44 years old</i>	<i>20.3%</i>
<i>45 to 54 years old</i>	<i>25.2%</i>
<i>55 to 64 years old</i>	<i>28.2%</i>

4.5.6. The two main ethnic groups in Slough's working age population are Asian and White. People of Asian ethnicity make up 46.7% of Slough's working age population and those of White ethnicity account for 37.2% of working age adults:

Broad ethnic group	% of working age population in Slough
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	46.7%
White	37.2%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	7.7%
Other ethnicity	5.7%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2.7%

4.5.7. The table below describes the percentage of all working age disabled Slough residents within each ethnic group, e.g., 11.2% of all disabled (working age) residents in Slough are aged 16-24:

Broad ethnic group	% of working age population who are disabled in Slough
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	8.2%
White	13.4%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	8.5%
Other ethnicity	7.9%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	14.2%

4.5.8. This demographic information will be shared as part of the service specification and organisations which bid for the contract will be expected to show how they will target specific groups to ensure support offered is equitable.

4.6. *Procurement implications*

4.6.1. The estimated contract value is above the financial threshold for public service contracts, so the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 apply to this procurement. The procurement will follow public procurement principles of value for money, equality of treatment, transparency and proportionality.

4.7. *Workforce implications*

4.7.1. The IPSPC grant can be used to support disabled people who are already in employment. At least 6% of the council's workforce have a disability as declared on the council's HR management system (Agresso). This information will be shared as part of the service specification and organisations which bid for the contract will be expected to show how they will offer support to disabled officers and volunteers in Slough Borough Council.

4.8. *Property implications*

4.8.1. No direct property implications arising from this report.

5. Background Papers

None