

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC REPORT

Report to:	AUDIT COMMITTEE
Report of:	Head of Service –Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit
Date of Meeting:	20th November 2018
Subject:	Local Innovation Fund – Interim External Evaluation
Wards Affected:	All

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an overview on the Interim External Evaluation of the Local Innovation Fund done in November 2019 - January 2019
- 1.2 To give a brief outline on the Final External Evaluation of the Local Innovation Fund October 2018- February 2019

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note this update report.

3. LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Business Plan and Budget 2016+ that was agreed by City Council on 1 March 2016 approved an annual budget of £2m to fund the Local Innovation Fund. The Cabinet Committee – Local Leadership were presented with regular financial performance reports on the progress of expenditure from its introduction in September 2016 until its final meeting in December 2017. The Cabinet Committee – Local Leadership operated within the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000.

4. EQUALITY ANALYSIS ISSUES

- 4.1 The development and implementation of the Local Innovation Fund was subject to the public sector Equality Duty and impact assessments were carried out as appropriate. A screening assessment indicated no issues

5. COMPLIANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 The Business Plan and Budget adopted by Full Council in March 2016 committed the Council to, “develop a new approach to devolution within the city, with a focus on empowering people and giving them influence over local services”. The development of the Local Innovation Fund (LIF) and its implementation, introduced in September 2016 and to be completed by March 2019 was an integral part of this commitment.

6. RELEVANT BACKGROUND TO LIF AND THE INTERIM EXTERNAL EVALUATION

- 6.1 LIF was launched in September 2016 with the ambition of transformative local innovation by introducing a new approach of investing in neighbourhoods using an asset based approach and supporting and strengthening local social capital that enabled citizens do different things in different ways to make better places to live rather than the continuation of a one-off grants based approach – **“Doing things differently in neighbourhoods to make better places to live”**. The key elements of LIF were Innovation, Place-based, Collaboration and Sustainability. The initial Cabinet Report and relevant supportive documents produced for members and community groups are attached as Appendix 2 for further background information.
- 6.2 The decision was made at Cabinet Committee – Local Leadership that every ward would receive the same allocation of LIF - £48k. The aim was for members to work in their local leadership role in conjunction with residents, community groups and other organisations that had an interest and stake in the local ward to prepare proposals that met key ward priorities as identified in the ward planning process. Ward proposals once developed would then be presented at and approved by Cabinet Committee – Local Leadership.
- 6.3 The Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit were responsible for the development of the scheme and subsequently to support, administration and monitoring of the process and successful proposals citywide.

- 6.4 159 LIF proposals were submitted from Wards citywide, with 119 finally taken to Cabinet Committee – Local Leadership for approval. The first proposal from Tyburn Ward was approved in December 2016 and then others throughout the next 12 months until the final committee approvals on December 20th 2017. It should be noted that a significant number of schemes, 50 out of the 119 (October -10, November -5 and December -35) were not presented and approved until very late in the process. All but £15k was allocated from the original £2m made available for LIF
- 6.5 Linxs Consultancy were commissioned by NDSU in October 2017 to carry out an external interim evaluation of LIF.

7. Interim Evaluation Report of LIF – February 2018

- 7.1 It should be noted that as many of the funded projects had either not commenced delivery, or were at a very early stage, having been formally approved in mid-late 2017, the interim evaluation should be considered a snapshot report with a final evaluation to follow in early 2019.
- 7.2 The interim report focussed on the following key elements
- Critique of the LIF model and the supporting role of the NDSU
 - Process analysis, getting the views of local councillors, identified proposal lead, and NDSU representatives on the proposal development and submission stages
 - Examination of the extent to which proposals and early delivery can be considered, “innovative”, assessed against multiple criteria
 - Identification of emerging good practice and areas which may be suitable for future replication
 - Summary of lessons learnt to date, both in terms of ongoing management of the LIF regime, and for the possible rollout of future ward based funding
- 7.3 To ensure the broadest possible consultation framework within a fairly limited timeframe, a multi-methodological approach was taken by Linxs comprising of the following:-
- Semi-structured interviews and group sessions with the NDSU team
 - Online survey open to all BCC Councillors, which received 21 responses (just in excess of one sixth of all elected members)
 - Supplementary drop in conversation session with Councillors in January 2018
 - Document review of hard copy successful LIF proposals
 - Online survey with project proposal leads (24 responses which represent 20% of successful proposals).
 - In depth assessment of 13 projects ensuring both a geographical spread across the city and range including 1:1 semi-structured interviews with project representatives.
- 7.4 The Interim Evaluation Report is attached in full at Appendix 1 with Section 6 outlining key findings in the following areas
- Outcomes
 - Ward Plans
 - External Scrutiny

- Role of NDSU
- Provision of Support and Guidance
- Process Issues
- Sharing of Emerging Practice
- Models of Funding and Scheme design
- Next Steps

7.5 The Interim Report was presented to the appropriate Cabinet Member in April 2018

7.6 A follow up Final Evaluation Report, focussing on impact and outcomes has now been commissioned by the NDSU, again with Linxs, to be carried out from November 2018 and be ready for February 2019. Any comments from Audit Committee on how to shape the Final Evaluation Report would be very welcome.

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