

COMMITTEE: NORTH WEST REF NO: NWAC/18/07
DATE: THURSDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2019
SUBJECT: FUNDING REQUEST: LET'S TALK
READING LITERACY PROGRAMME
REPORT AUTHOR: SIMON LANNING
OPERATIONS MANAGER: TOM MINNICAN

Short description of report content and the decision requested:

This report requests that the North West Area Committee consider allocating £7,063.87 to Let's Talk Reading to enable the further development of its literacy programme in North West Ipswich. Let's Talk Reading works in partnership with other organisations to raise levels of reading ability for Ipswich residents of all ages.

The programme includes work with Suffolk Babies to promote reading with children to new and expectant parents, working with Read Easy Ipswich to support adult learners and medical screening of all ages to detect related conditions. The organisation continues to work with schools and nurseries in the area.

List of Appendices included in this report:

1. *Let's Talk Reading – NW Area Committee Bid*

This report has been prepared by Simon Lanning,

Tel: 01473 432226 Email: simon.lanning@ipswich.gov.uk

This report was prepared after consultation with:

Internal consultees

External consultees

John Helleur, Chair, Let's Talk Reading

The following policies form a context to this report:

(all relevant policies must also be referred to in the body of the report)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(papers relied on to write the report but which are not published and do not contain exempt information)

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OTHER HELPFUL PAPERS

(papers which the report author considers might be helpful – this might include published material)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report requests that the North West Area Committee consider allocating £7,063.87 to Let's Talk Reading to enable the further development of its literacy programme in North West Ipswich. Let's Talk Reading works in partnership with other organisations to raise levels of reading ability for Ipswich residents of all ages.
- 1.2 The programme includes work with Suffolk Babies to promote reading with children to new and expectant parents, with Read Easy Ipswich to support adult learners and with the Multi-Sensory Training Centre to medical screen children of all ages to detect reading impairing conditions. The organisation continues to work with schools and nurseries in the area.

2. Background

- 2.1 Let's Talk Reading was set up in response to continuing poor reading results in many local primary schools, reinforced by national statistics about the high percentage of adults in England that struggle with reading. It focuses on the more disadvantaged areas of Ipswich; primarily those parts of Ipswich that are within the 10% most deprived areas in England¹.
- 2.2 A 2011 government survey of adult literacy skills (16-65yrs) found that 14.9% (or 1 in 7) of adults in England have low literacy levels (at or below Entry Level 3) that can impact on every area of their life, could affect their ability to work or mean they are unable to support their child's learning².

2011 Skills for Life survey ^{2 3}	Whitehouse	Whitton	Castle Hill	Ipswich
Entry Level 1 and below Equivalent age 5-7yr old levels. Adults below Entry Level 1 may not be able to write short messages to family or read a road sign.	6.0%	6.5%	3.9%	5.2%
Entry Level 2 7-9yrs. Entry Level 2 adults may not be able to describe a child's symptoms to a doctor or read a label on a medicine bottle	2.7%	2.9%	1.9%	2.4%
Entry Level 3 9-11yrs. Adults with skills below may not be able to understand labels on pre-packaged food or household bills.	9.9%	10.5%	7.5%	8.9%
Level 1 GCSE grades D-G. Adults below Level 1 may not be able to read bus or train timetables or understand their pay slip.	32.5%	33.0%	29.3%	30.8%
Level 2 or Above GCSE grades A-C	48.8%	47.1%	57.4%	52.7%

¹ According to the Government Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 <http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html>

²What do adult literacy levels mean? <https://literacytrust.org.uk/parents-and-families/adult-literacy/what-do-adult-literacy-levels-mean/>

³ 2011 skills for life survey: small area estimation data <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/2011-skills-for-life-survey-small-area-estimation-data>

- 2.3 These levels were higher in Whitehouse (18.6%) & Whitton (19.9%) where deprivation is higher and in Ipswich overall (16.5%). Based on current population estimates, this level of low literacy equates to over 23,000 people in Ipswich struggling to read in everyday life.



Figure 1 - Primary school staff and pupils making their reading pledge

- 2.4 Let's Talk Reading views this an intergenerational problem requiring a response for all life stages and public attention. A detailed proposal is set out in Appendix 1 and is summarised here;

Early Years

- Work with [Suffolk Babies](#) to establish ante-natal & post-natal classes which support parents to read with children from a young age. These classes are subsidised to be accessible for parents in disadvantaged areas.
- Let's Talk Reading makes regular visits to 6 nurseries in North West Ipswich to engage parents & staff in reading, supported by a team of volunteers.
- Develop free book bags tailored to ages 0-4yrs and distributed 600 of them through nurseries and Suffolk Babies classes.

Schools

- Operate the 'Schools Literacy Forum' to share best practice and encourage schools to sign the 'Reading Pledge' and appoint a governor to drive literacy initiatives within school.
- Seek volunteers to read in primary schools.
- *If additional funding is secured to expand the program;* Offer medical screening for conditions such as Irlen's Syndrome and Dyslexia.

Adult

- Assist and fund [Read Easy](#) Ipswich to offer free, confidential 1:1 coaching offering and double number of trained coaches (to 60) across Ipswich.
- Distribute 80 Teach A Friend To Read manuals
- Offer medical screening for reading conditions

Project Co-ordinator support

- Delivery of Story Time sessions and community events
- Purchase & distribution of book bags
- Volunteer recruitment and training
- Promotion of initiatives & campaigns
- Liaison with libraries, schools, nurseries and partners
- Administration of charity and grant applications

2.5 Let's Talk Reading has scoped a programme against this proposal costed at £12,350 in the North West area. It has applied to several funds, some of which have been successful and others are yet to be decided. It has also scoped an expanded offer, with additional book bags and medical screening, if further sources are found. The costs for the essential and expanded programme are given in Section 9.

2.6 **The amount requested of the North West Area Committee budget is £7,063.87.**

3. Relevant Policies and Area Action considerations

3.1 To support the Building a Better Ipswich underlying principles:

- **Priority 1:** A Strong Ipswich Economy
- **Priority 3:** An Enjoyable Place to Live, Work and Study

3.2 To alleviate deprivation in the domain of:

- **Education, Skills & Training**, which is an Action Plan priority.

4. Options Considered / Under Consideration

4.1 **Option 1** – Approve allocation of funding of £7,063.87 to Let's Talk Reading to deliver the programme of literacy initiatives in North West Ipswich set out in sections 2 & 9.

4.2 **Option 2** – Approve allocation of less than £7,063.87 as contribution to the same, having specified the expected use of the varied amount.

4.3 **Option 3** – Do not fund.

5. Consultations

5.1 Let's Talk Reading has developed the proposed programme through consultation with partner organisations and professionals from education and social care settings. Public involvement has been through discussion with children, parents, adult learners and community groups.

6. Risk Management

6.1 The risks outlined that relate to Committee funding for Let's Talk Reading are owned by the Committee, the risks associated with the delivery of the programme belong to Let's Talk Reading.

Risk Description	Consequence of risk	Risk Controls	Probability of risk occurring taking account of controls (1: almost impossible - 6: very high)	Impact of risk, if it occurred taking account of actions (1: negligible - 4: catastrophic)
Safeguarding and vulnerability of children	Emotional or physical harm to children	Disclosure and Barring Checks Safeguarding training and reporting obligation	2	1
Actions to mitigate risk	<p>The staff of Suffolk Babies, Let's Talk Reading, the nurseries & schools have in place training, policy and reporting to protect the safety of children.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the 'Let's Talk Reading' project steering group to properly risk assess and safeguard community events.</p>			
Funds are not used as directed	Misuse of public funds Other deserving beneficiaries may not receive funding	Monitoring Reporting Bid Proposal & Business Plan	2	2
Actions to mitigate risk	<p>Let's Talk Reading is required to provide a short report to the committee on the elements costed within this request as it has done on previous awards.</p> <p>Let's Talk Reading has supplied a detailed Bid Proposal (Appendix 1) and business plan setting out the proposed delivery & use of funds with or without additional funding being awarded from other sources.</p>			

7. Environmental Impact Assessment

7.1 There is not assessed to be a significant negative impact on the environment from the activities planned with in the project.

- 7.2 There will be a demand on resources for the books, training documents and promotional materials. There are likely to be additional car journeys associated with the activities in particular the Suffolk Babies sessions, Read Easy sessions and Story Time visits.

8. Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.1 No person is expecting to be negatively affected in relation to a characteristic protected under the Equality Act by the award of funding or through the Let's Talk Reading programme itself.
- 8.2 All elements of the programme are open to residents from any background. The Suffolk Babies antenatal and postnatal courses are beneficial to pregnant women and mothers and are not expected to have any impact on others.
- 8.3 The venues selected for both the Read Easy and Suffolk Babies hubs will be accessible to people with a disability. The Read Easy mentoring sessions will be held at venues to suit the learner.

9. Financial Considerations

Item	Cost
Early Years	
Book bags	
675 books (priced £1-£5 each)	£2,500.00
625 book bags (priced £1.50-£3.50 depending on material)	£1,200.00
<i>To be distributed 250 to 2yr olds, 350 to other under 5yrs, 25 to families</i>	
Develop Suffolk Babies offer	
Antenatal courses - subsidy for free places to 90 families placed across 5 courses, £160 per course	£800.00
Postnatal courses - subsidy for free places to 90 families	£2,200.00
Story Time visits –at least 18 visits across 6 nurseries	£450.00
Training and best practice sharing to 60 staff	£600.00
Adults	
Materials to establish Read Easy Ipswich hub	
At least 10 'Turning Pages' manuals set (£80 each)	£800.00
80 Teach A Friend To Read manuals, £5 each	£400.00
Core & Promotion	
Right to Read campaign to reach non-readers, publicity materials	£400.00
Programme coordination, 25% of part-time 15hr per week Project Co-ordinator costs	£3,000.00
Total	£12,350.00

9.1 The programme in North West Ipswich is part of a town wide project. For the 2019-20 year the project cost is expected to be £53,570

- North West Ipswich £12,350
- South West Ipswich £11,850
- Central Ipswich £7,270
- South East Ipswich £12,550
- North East Ipswich £6,010
- Core cost £3,540

9.2 Let's Talk Reading has obtained grants toward the cost of the 2019/20 programme totalling £16,000 (£10,000 from the Mrs LD Rope Third Charitable Settlement and £6,000 from a private donor). The organisation also has a reserve of £9,100 to carry forward to the 2019/20 budget.

9.3 The organisation expects to receive a further £6,000 from a private donor and £1,200 in Gift Aid from HMRC. This would give a total available funds to the project of £32,300.

9.4 It is requesting a total of £23,400 from the Area Committee budgets across the town, according to the activities planned in each area.

- North West Ipswich £7,063.87
- South West Ipswich £6,777.88
- Central Ipswich £4,158.25
- South East Ipswich *not eligible for further funding at this time*
- North East Ipswich £5,400.00

9.5 In summary, if all requests are approved, there would be greater funding secured than activity planned.

- Delivery target £53,570 less
- Area Committee requests £23,400 &
- Other funds £32,300 provides
- Surplus £ 2,130

9.6 Let's Talk Reading aims to have a minimum of £5,000 carry forward at the end of the year in order to provide operational continuity and meet viability expectations as a charity. This leaves a modest minimum fundraising target for the year of £2,870. It also has plans for an extended programme of activity if additional funds are secured.

9.7 Let's Talk Reading has also applied to the Ipswich Opportunity Area (two bids of £5,000 across Ipswich) and is working on an application to the North West Ipswich Big Local Trust (£10,000) and the Gainsborough Community People's Forum (£9,884).

9.8 If these bids are successful, Let's Talk Reading has identified further provision for the North West Area, beyond that outlined above

- 750 additional book bags for under 5yr olds. £2,500
- Medical screening for approximately 100 school pupils. £5,500

- 9.9 The contribution from external funds already raised by Let's Talk Reading would be £6,350 in North West Ipswich and £30,170 across the town. On this basis, the Committee is asked that the release of funding not be conditional on any further external funding first being secured.
- 9.10 There is sufficient budgetary provision in 2019/20 to fund the £7,063.87 cost that is being requested from the North West Area Committee.

10. Legal Considerations

- 10.1 The Council has the power to make grants to community projects through the Area Committees. The Area Committees have delegated Executive powers and devolved budgets.
- 10.2 Area Committees have the power to award grants in accordance with part 3, section 2 of the Council's Constitution i.e. the Area Committee terms of reference.
- 10.3 The Area Committee Funding Guidelines set an expectation of 10% external funding being secured for bids over £5,000, which in this case is met by the funds described above (9.2, 9.3).
- 10.4 The Funding Guidelines expectation of the applicant being a constituted organisation, with named post holders was met by the Let's Talk Reading Charity Commission registration (Charity No [1180559](#)) and documents supplied; copy of the year-end accounts, constitution, business plan and Safeguarding Policy.

11. Performance Monitoring

- 11.1 Let's Talk Reading would be required to complete the Area Committee monitoring report as part of the standard funding agreement and may be invited to present to the North West Area Committee after a year.
- 11.2 The monitoring submitted should include
- Number of Story Time visits made
 - Number of reading mentors recruited
 - Numbers of reading learners recruited
 - Number of antenatal sessions delivered and attendances
 - Number of postnatal sessions delivered and attendances
 - Number of book bags delivered

12. Conclusions

- 12.1 The request before the Committee is to allocate funding to the Let's Talk Reading 2019/20 programme of activities for early years, schools and adult learners.
- 12.2 The education & skills level of Ipswich residents of all ages is well documented as a challenge to the local economy and to life chances for residents. Let's Talk Reading hope to improve literacy levels for the residents of North West Ipswich and the whole town through the activities set out in this report.
- 12.3 The committee is asked to determine the efficacy of the Let's Talk Reading programme and the merit of allocating funding to it.

13. Recommendation

- 13.1 **That the North West Area Committee considers the merit of the options for funding set out in section four and decides an option.**
- 13.2 Reason:
- To improve the life chances of residents of North West Ipswich.
 - To improve the education & skills levels in North West Ipswich
 - To support the economy in North West Ipswich