

# Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**

Reference Number:

2811

Author:

Sarah Coulson

Department:

Communities

Contact:

Sarah Coulson

(Job Title: Library Lead Commercial, Email: sarah.coulson@nottinghamcity.gov.uk, Phone: 0115 8761939)

Subject:

'storysmash' Reading, literacy and games development project for young people 11-24 in libraries

Total Value:

£226,235 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

1. To accept a grant from Arts Council England (ACE) to the value of £226,235 awarded to Nottingham City Libraries to deliver the 'storysmash' project in partnership with National Videogame Foundation (NVF), UNESCO and Nottingham University.
2. To approve dispensation from Contract Procedure Rule 5.1.2 in accordance with Financial Regulation (3.29)(operational issues) to allow for the award of contracts to a) NVF for £74,300 for delivery of services under the project; b) NVF for securing and installing specialist IT equipment for the gaming hotspots identified within the project; and c) UNESCO for £12,400.
3. To establish, advertise and appoint a 12 month fixed term project manager post for 'Storysmash' as outlined in the ACE bid. (This latter decision is a non-executive decision to be taken by the Corporate Director for Commercial and Operations in accordance with Scheme of Delegation Number 16.)

**Reasons for the Decision(s)**

Nottingham City Council Library Service led on a bid developed with NVF and submitted to ACE with partners NVF and UNESCO for the value of £226,235 to deliver the 'Storysmash' project. The aim of the project is to deliver a 12 month programme of activities using the close connection between reading, creative writing and creative gaming to develop confidence in reading, writing and digital skills in people who are disadvantaged in Nottingham. The project aims to address low literacy skills primarily amongst people aged 11-25 years.

As part of the submission to ACE a budget breakdown was drawn up and agreed by each partner, UNESCO and NVF to determine the expenditure that would be managed by each organisation in order to manage the spend of the grant. Each partner was chosen for their ability to deliver the objectives and outcomes of the project. The partners all offer a locally based unique service, that cannot be delivered internally. They offer value for money and all have previously been procured to work with Nottingham City Council to achieve strategic objectives. As a requirement of ACE funding, partners need to be secured to apply for funding and to provide supporting documentation.

The decision also seeks to additionally contract with NVF for specialist IT equipment for gaming hotspots in the City. The Council's internal IT department has confirmed it is unable to provide the required equipment and given the limited timeframes for the project require work to begin immediately a standard tendering process would delay the project and we would not be able to achieve the timeline and outcomes within the ACE project plan which needs to be completed in 12 months.

Part of the funding received from ACE will fund the creation and establishment of a 12 month fixed term Project Manager Post within the Council to support the deliverables of the Project in accordance with the Partners and to ensure compliance of the ACE funding conditions.

**Other Options Considered:**

**Do nothing:** Not accepting the grant/funding award would result in not being able to deliver the literacy, library and partnership outcomes or benefiting from the good reputation and profiling generated from receiving Arts Council England Funding.

**Follow a standard procurement process to deliver the key elements of the project:** The funding bid process required the need to identify and work with established partners as part of the submission. NVF is uniquely qualified to deliver the bespoke gaming aspects. UNESCO city of Literature is key to supporting the reading, literacy and national profiling outcomes for the project. The University of Nottingham provides a robust evaluation of the project and outcomes. Following standard procurement processes would not deliver the requirements of the bid submission and partnership approach required.

For all aspects of the project where Internal resources can be utilised within the project timeframe, Internal stakeholders have been secured.

**Background Papers:**

**Published Works:**

**Affected Wards:** Citywide

**Colleague / Councillor Interests:** N/A

**Dispensation from Financial Regulations:** Yes

**Consultations:** Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

**Crime and Disorder Implications:** The aims and objectives of this project are to work disadvantaged young people 11-25 with the benefits being increased confidence, reading, literacy and digital skills and provide positive activities. In particular there is target work over the lifetime of the project with HMP Nottingham which will help to support the prevention of re-offending.

**Equality:** Please login to the system to view the EIA document: EIA draft For DDM Storysmash.doc

**Relates to staffing:** Yes

**Decision Type:** Portfolio Holder

**Subject to Call In:** Yes

**Call In Expiry date:** 20/04/2017

**Advice Sought:** Legal, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, Equality and Diversity

**Legal Advice:**

The proposals in this report raise no significant legal issues and are supported.

The Council's library services submitted a bid to ACE to enable it to deliver the 'Storysmash' Project in the City and it has been successfully awarded the funding. The Council was required to identify supplier partners to assist in delivering the Project and the associated Partners were chosen as detailed in the report, on the their experience, previous engagement and ability to deliver this type of Project in the City. A tender process was not deemed viable or efficient in the short timescales provided in terms of both applying for the bid and implementing the Project in accordance with the conditions of the grant. Without receipt of his funding, the Council would be unable to deliver the Project.

The award by ACE is subject to an award letter and terms and conditions. The Council must ensure its own compliance with the conditions of award and must ensure that the partners engaged in delivering the project, should do the same in order to project the Council's position and prevent any possibility of claw-back from ACE.

For the reasons detailed within the report, the proposal to dispense with Contract Procedure Rule 5.1.2 in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.29 is supported.

Under s.7 of the Local Government Act 1989, any appointment to the proposed post established under this decision must be made on merit.

Advice provided by Dionne Claire Screatton (Solicitor) on 29/03/2017.

**Finance Advice:**

The Council has received formal notification of the grant award from Arts Council England (ACE) totalling £226,235, to deliver the 'Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund" in accordance with the bid spending plan included in the submission. The spending plan included the costs of a Project Manager. As the post will be temporary, at the end of the project there may be employee exit costs unless the officer can be redeployed within the Council, and if applicable these costs will be chargeable against the grant or the Library Service.

The expenditure will need to be incurred in accordance with the ACE grant conditions and therefore the Head of Culture and Libraries will need to put in place the appropriate measure to ensure compliance and to avoid clawback of funding.

Dispensation from contract procedure rule 5.1.1 is required under financial regulation 3.29 to engage National Videogame Foundation (NVF) and UNESCO to deliver work / services totalling £94,300 and £12,400 respectively. This is required to make full use of the grant awarded and to achieve the best possible outcomes during the ACE funding period which ends in March 2018.

Advice provided by Maria Balchin (Finance Analyst) on 28/03/2017.

**Procurement Advice:**

So long as the approval to dispense with Contract Procedure Rules is given then Procurement have no objections to the recommendations of this report. Advice provided by Paul Ritchie (Lead Procurement Officer) on 27/03/2017.

**HR Advice:**

The Arts Council funding includes a proposal to create a new 12 month fixed term post within the Library service to manage the project.

The Job description for this post has been created and has been assessed at Grade H. It is proposed that the terms of the post will include the role being established as a fixed term post/contract for 1 year, as the funding is time limited over 12 months. The service should therefore budget for any potential liabilities that may result from the end of fixed term contract, including pay protection and potential redundancy payments.

The service will also need to consider an appropriate recruitment strategy that includes colleagues already at risk of redundancy within the council, as well as any posts and employees within the Library service. Advice provided by Nicola Gell (Commercial and Operations HR Business Partner) on 30th March 2017

Advice provided by Nicola Gell (HR Business Partner - Community Services) on 30/03/2017.

**Equality and Diversity Advice:**

It will be important that the process and the outcomes of the work are representative of the communities within the city. As stated in the EIA any recruitment activities must be in accordance with our wider attraction agenda to meet a key strand of NCC's Equality objectives.

Advice provided by Adisa Djan (Equalities and Diversity Consultant) on 31/03/2017.

**Signatures**

<b>David Trimble (Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture)</b>
<b>SIGNED and Dated: 11/04/2017</b>
<b>Andrew Vaughan (Corporate Director Commercial and Operations)</b>
<b>SIGNED and Dated: 11/04/2017</b>
<b>Geoff Walker (Strategic Director Finance/CFO) - Dispensation from Financial Regulations</b>
<b>SIGNED and Dated: 10/04/2017</b>
<b>Chief Finance Officer's Comments: Supported due to the operational reasons contained within the report</b>