

Inclusive Employment Funding Priority Group Intro Meeting

Time and Place: 14:30-16:00, Friday 2nd November, 1P08 City Hall College Green Bristol BS1 5TR

Present: Kevin Slocombe, Ed Rowberry, Taylor Meagher, Ryan Munn, Nishan Canagarajah, Anya Mulcahy-Bowman, Anna Dent, Hannah Young, David Jepson, Dirk Rohwedder, Nick Flaherty, Poku Osei, David Barclay, Samantha Lee, Sue Turner, Chris Hackett

1. Welcome & introductions

Everyone introduced themselves, stated their current job role, and explained why they are interested in being on the group.

2. Background to City Funds www.bristolcityfunds.co.uk

The One City Approach is a city wide collaboration to ensure priorities are met by following a clear long term plan until 2050 (One City Plan). The City Funds loosely takes its priorities from the City Plan to ensure strategic alignment with the city's priorities. City Funds is not a legal entity, but is a governed collaboration between the Mayor's Office, Quartet Community Foundation, and Bristol and Bath Regional Capital. The Governing Board oversees clear and distinct Funding Priority Groups that actively search for funds and projects, taking into account the needs of the city.

3. Background and updates on other Funding Priority Groups

We currently have 4 Funding Priority Groups all at various stages;

- No Child Goes Hungry (ToR agreed, scoping group has met 3 times, PhD candidate has started a research project, and they have £180K in the pot)
- Community Initiatives (ToR drafted, advert to be created soon for scoping group)
- Inclusive Employment (ToR drafted and under consultation, scoping group meeting now)
- Low Carbon Environment (ToR in progress)

Action 1: Taylor to distribute the collaboration agreement.

4. Terms of Reference and name change

- Closing the skills gap is a vital issue, but are we the right people for it? It seems to be a learning culture issue. Should we leave it to the educational sector to increase the skills of its students? Argued that closing the skills gap isn't just for schools to support but is an ongoing requirement.
- General consensus is that we need a very clear evidence base; there is so much expertise in the room we need to hone this and use evidence to be as transparent as possible.

- Discussion and general agreement on a 3rd strand regarding economic barriers; unaffordable childcare, people out of work or not in gainful employment, employer attitudes, household debts etc.
- If we increase the skills of workers it only displaces the problem, people will still have to fill the low wage roles and 0 hour contracts unless we change the service.
- If there is more democratic engagement and social enterprise we could try to have more equity in the city by changing how companies deliver services and promote fairness in the workplace.
- If a system works for some people but not others, is it really a system failure? Or can we try to figure out why it isn't working for some people and alter that part?
- Research is valuable in tackling the challenges we face, but it shouldn't prevent us from taking action.

Kevin made it clear that the priorities of the City Funds were set by the outcomes of the Mayor's City Gatherings including consultation with key city partners at City Funds Breakfast meetings over the last 18 months. The attendees were from a variety of sectors and industries within Bristol, so brought a lot of city wide knowledge and expertise. This group should of course have a strong evidence base, and we have already started to accrue this. We currently have 4 documents: Bristol City Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy, Centre for Cities' report on employment trends, Centre for Progressive Policy report, and a research grant request to Comic Relief. There is also a very strong evidence base that was used for the Inclusive Growth Strategy which can be shared and a report from Good Cities was also suggested.

Action 2: Taylor to circulate all papers related to the evidence base and gather comments from the group on what they feel is missing.

- Is there an evidence based reason why we would fund 1 project and not another?
- What are the features of the initiatives this money should fund, should they be challenging the system, scalable, innovative etc. what's the criteria?
- No clear decision on the name being changed to Economic Inclusion, some comments were that the name is better as Inclusive Employment can be misconstrued as only focusing on employers.
- The approval of the Terms of Reference needs to happen in parallel with gathering the evidence base; we can't fall behind 6 months.

We are using a blended finance tool agreed by the Mayor's Office, Quartet, and BBRC. It might therefore exclude lots of projects that can be funded elsewhere by just grants or investment.

Action 3: All comments regarding the Terms of Reference to be sent to Taylor before the next meeting who can collate them and feedback.

5. Current work pipelines

The current research work has already been mentioned, Taylor will circulate all the documents for people to view and they can feedback at the next meeting what they feel is missing.

6. Potential projects and work avenues for the group

The Terms of Reference needs to be a priority for the group to approve and sign off. At the next meeting we should be able to look at the amended ToR and agree it as a group to go to the Board. After this we can identify a project plan and pipeline. As we're developing the governance and operational structure it's about finding those projects that are ready to go and have their own metrics and theory of change.

Comic Relief has set up a social investment arm focussing on issues around refugees and migrants. They approached City Funds after hearing about its strategic link to the One City Plan. We have asked for resource to do scoping research, looking at models that could be investable and helping to develop a pipeline. We can continue to do this with other funders and scope out the funds before agreeing the Terms of Reference. Funders want a well formed project, if we have evidence, clear outcomes, impact measurement etc. then getting money won't be a problem.

Hannah offered to contact funders that she has worked with to have them involved in critiquing and consulting in the early stages. The City Funds is unique and progressive and a new way of attracting money, we don't want to be chasing after it.

Action 4: Hannah to contact funders to get them involved in critiquing the early stages of our work.

We don't want the same people getting funds; it needs to be diverse and accessible for people who otherwise wouldn't be able to fund their projects, organisations that have real potential but have struggled to get through. We don't want a competitive market where people fight for money; we want to change the method and subsequent market.

Action 5: Ed and Sue to meet and decide ideas on how we can test the market, fundability and investable ideas

7. AOB

Everyone should think about actual projects that people can bring to the table and brainstorm. We want to show for the whole fund that there is a potential demand for this.

Action 6: Taylor to add an item to the next meeting agenda to discuss potential projects we can work with.

8. Next meeting

Scheduled for Thursday 6th December, time and location TBC