Leicester City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Schools Forum **September 21st 2017**

Bookstart – funding support 2018/17

Report of the Library Development Manager: Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. To request that School Forum continue their funding support to the Bookstart Project for a further year 2018/19. Outline the case for the continued funding support to Bookstart project in 2018/19. At a previous meeting of Schools Forum 03/11/16 funding of between £78,000 and £23,000 was agreed to offset the impact of the ending of the project's core funding resulting from the Early Help Review

2. Recommendations

2.1. That School Forum considers funding the total amount £65,000 to enable the continued delivery of the Bookstart project out of the Early Year's block of the DSG until March 31st 2019.

3. Summary

3.1. It is well recognised the importance and impact of Bookstart in family development. Bookstart aims to promote and encourage the sharing of books in the home. The scheme provides high quality resources, including activities and guidance for parents/carers on the benefits of sharing books from an early age. Bookstart staff in partnership with Children's Centres have developed targeted programmes for disadvantaged families - identified through Vulnerable Children List - to offer intervention and support. Research is positive indicating that those attending the Book Corner programmes are more likely to be engaged with books, stories and rhymes and engaged in their child's learning. The funding requested will enable effective delivery of Bookstart across the 6 cluster network of Children's Centres, Bookstart has been recognised as an effective programme in the Under Fives Strategy.

4. Report

4.1. Bookstart is an evidence-based, primary preventative, early intervention programme that improves outcomes for early child development through the shared experience of using books for pleasure together with a parent/carer or other family member e.g. grandparents. Families having fun sharing books together, the importance of the home learning environment, and recognizing parents/carers as their children's first and most enduring teacher are the key elements of Bookstart.

4.2. Disadvantaged parents/carers can be unaware of the benefits of sharing books with their child or lack confidence to do so. Many will not have experienced this as a child. Bookstart provides them with books and guidance and support from specifically trained staff to help them engage with their child's emotional, communication and language development by regularly sharing books/stories/rhymes. Simply providing families with access to books without support does not necessarily change attitudes to reading.

4.3. Evidence has shown that parent/carer attachment is supported by positive sharing of books/stories. It can be a significant key in encouraging and supporting active engagement by fathers. The Fatherhood Institute's research found that for 64% of babies aged 6 months the Bookstart pack was the first book to enter the family's home and the first encouragement for the parent/carer to share books with their child. The Executive Summary of Findings for a report on Family reading habits and the impact of Bookstart highlight key recommendations that recognise the importance of active promotion and intervention has on the effectiveness of the resources.

4.4. Bookstart contributes to the key priorities the Under Fives Strategy and Children's Services Early Help strategy – health and wellbeing, achievement and aspiration (narrowing the gap), family poverty – the Leicester Child Poverty Commission (2013) recommendation 6 library membership. Leicester City receives free Bookstart resources worth £200,000 from the Book Trust. The Bookstart 2017/18 Partnership Agreement is attached to this report which includes a commitment to: Appoint or retain a dedicated Bookstart partnership coordinator or designate staff time to this programme. Sufficient hours are needed for coordination, partnership working, development and reporting to Book Trust.

4.5. Bookstart delivery –from 2016-17 - 5625 Bookstart Baby packs (0-12 months) , 4789 Bookstart Treasure Gift (36-48 months) and have been gifted to Leicester families. The effective impact of these resources depends on the active promotion by the Bookstart staff team which gives parents/carers the essential awareness and confidence to support their child's development through regular sharing of books, stories and rhymes.

4.6. Bookstart interventions. Bookstart Book Corner-from April 2016 to June 2017 - 61programmes have run in Children Centres/Early Years Settings/Individual homes. Totalling 264 individual sessions attended by 528 families. . Family evaluation focuses on 4 key areas – "Understand the importance of sharing books." "Now more confident to share books and stories". "Children enjoy sharing books" "Children join in when we share books". The average improvement in these key indicators of parent/carer engagement with child was a 62% increase in awareness and confidence in participation in story and language based activities at home. As well as the targeted Book Corner intervention 12 training sessions on storytelling and the promotion of early years book use have been provided for staff/parents/carers. Bookstart staff have supported 40 book focussed events .

4.7. Bookstart staffing structure: one co-ordinator 22.5 hours, one admin support 9 hours, 3 Bookstart development workers 18.5 hours –this is a reduction from 4 reflecting the new

financial circumstances and the reduction in the number of Children Centres in Leicester following the Early Help Review. Previous uncertainty over funding has seen staffing departures that has impacted on the delivery of the project in some Clusters, largely due to difficulties in retention and recruitment. The Bookstart staff team is now complete with an experienced and balanced profile covering teaching, early years and parenting. Funding till 2019 would allow targeted consistent delivery of the project. A new Service Level Agreement for 17/18(attached) has been agreed and discussions are being had with Cluster Managers to identify effective new monitoring to measure the effectiveness of the Bookstart Project.

4.8. Summary of impact of funding reduction. Reduction in ability to delivery awareness to families of using books. Reduced capacity to maximise the delivery/promotion of Bookstart resources. Reduced support/co-ordination of the programme leading to a reduction in positive impact. Fewer disadvantaged children will be school-ready and will be developmentally behind peers. If funding is not continued for the Bookstart Project this would put at risk the continued participation of Leicester City in the Bookstart Partnership and the loss of £200,000 resources for the support of children's language and early literacy development and school readiness.

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

[Click here to type financial implications]

5.2. Legal Implications

[Click here to type legal implications]

5.3. Climate Change Implications (Contact Climate Change Environment team on 29-6776 for guidance)

[Click here to type legal implications]

6. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/ NO	Paragraph/References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities		
Policy		
Sustainable and Environmental		
Crime and Disorder		
Human Rights Act		
Elderly/People on Low Income		

Corporate Parenting		
Health Inequalities Impact		

7. Risk Assessment Matrix

Delete if not required. This only needs to be included if appropriate with regard to the Council's Risk Management Strategy

Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/appropriate)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6 etc			

8. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

8.1. [Click here to type background papers]

9. Consultations

9.1. [Click here to type consultations]

10. Report Author

10.1. Paul Gobey