

Business Board		Agenda Item
4th September 2023		3.3
Title:	UK SPF – Skills Projects Mobilisation and Succession Planning for Skills Brokerage Services	
Report of:	Fliss Miller, Assistant Director Skills	
Lead Member:	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha Lead Member for Skills	
Public Report:	Yes (with an exempt appendix)	
Key Decision:	KD2023/033	
Voting Arrangements:	No vote required, recommendations were put to the Skills Committee and are for Business Board to note.	

Recommendations for Business Board to note:	
A	To recommend that the Combined Authority Board delegates authority to the Executive Director – Economy and Growth to proceed to implement plans to mobilise UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) People and Skills funded projects as outlined within this proposal
B	To recommend that the Combined Authority Board approves the proposal outlined within this paper to bring together the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) funded Careers Hub delivery and the UKSPF funded People and Skills projects to provide a successive service to the Growth Works with Skills Programme, and to delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Skills to proceed to engage in financial, legal and procurement activities as necessary to enact mobilisation plans.
C	To recommend that the Combined Authority Board approve the virements across the revenue budgets within the Medium-Term Finance Plan to create the appropriate delivery budgets set out in Appendix 1.

Strategic Objective(s):	
The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):	
x	Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities
x	Achieving good growth
	Increased connectivity
x	Enabling resilient communities
x	Achieving best value and high performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects outlined within this proposal will make significant contributions to all four of the strategic priorities set out within the Combined Authorities Employment and Skills Strategy, they are; Pre-work learning and formal education: ensuring all residents of the combined authority are able to access high quality careers information, raising awareness of training routes and pathways into sectors and occupations Life-wide learning and training: working with employers to create opportunities for employed residents to up skill and reskill, increasing work-based learning opportunities, particularly apprenticeships. 	

- **Employer access to talent:** Supporting employers to identify and enact skills solutions which will enable growth, driving up engagement within the local skills landscape.
- **Support into and between work:** supporting unemployed and NEETS to transition into training and employment, providing support for disadvantaged groups to access the labour market

1. Purpose

1.1	<p>To provide members with detailed proposals for the mobilisation of the three Combined Authority wide UK SPF funded people and skills projects as defined within the Combined Authority's UKSPF Investment and Implementation Plans;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Holistic Skills Brokerage and online skills support incorporating (incorporating Growth Works with Skills Service offering and Integrating the Region of Learning Project) 2. All Age Careers Service across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough 3. Supported Internships across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
1.2	<p>To provide members with an overview of how the UKSPF projects will align with CEC funded careers hub activities to form a future Skills brokerage offering, and successor to the current Growth Works with Skills Programme, which comes to an end on the 31 December 2023.</p>

2. Proposal

2.1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The Combined Authority's Skills Brokerage service, known as 'Growth Works with Skills' is a fundamental element of the Combined Authority's approach to implementing its Employment and Skills strategy; by providing a vehicle to create connectivity between local education, residential and business communities, enabling access to skills pathways, provision and careers. The service supports both individual skills and economic outcomes, enabling business growth and resilience through access to more highly skilled and ready workforce, as well as improving social and economic mobility outcomes for residents.</p> <p>The existing service, is delivered as the skills workstream within the Business Growth Service, known as Growthworks. The Contract for this service, along with the core funding stream for this activity (European Social Funding) both end on 31 December 2023.</p> <p>The Combined Authority is seeking to utilise ringfenced People and Skills UK SPF funding allocations to deliver three universal projects, that will form the core service of a revised skills brokerage service from 1 January 2024.</p> <p>This offering will bring together UK SPF projects with the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) funded Careers hub and the Region of Learning project into a succinct and value-added joint service, by working collaboratively across education, technical, vocational and adult education with links to the business community building and strengthening connections across all stages of life and education with the employment and wider skills landscape.</p>
2.2	<p>Service Delivery Outline</p> <p>Continuing with the broad format of the existing Growth Works with Skills service, the new service model will organise its services into two broad areas of activity;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work designed to improve outcomes for pre 18-year-olds, in education, led by the existing CEC funded Careers Hub team, supporting careers leaders and educators to build progressive and aspirational careers curriculums, and increasing linkages between education and the business community to inspire young people and help them to understand and navigate the career opportunities available to them. 2. Activities designed to create skills and employment opportunities for residents aged 19 plus. These activities will be led upon by the UKSPF funded staff delivery team. Outputs for residents will be achieved through a combination of working with the business community and with local statutory and community services to identify and facilitate the creation and take up of opportunities within the skills and labour market.

	<p>Alignment of these services will allow for stakeholders to engage with one harmonised service that delivers across the skills landscape, providing clear and joined up messages in regard to education and skills.</p> <p>The service will work in partnership with the 'Regions of Learning', which is a Cambridge City Council led project launched in 2021, offering employers, individuals and skills providers the tools to connect, plan and develop career pathways via the use of badging platforms to accelerate upskilling and to improve social mobility by offering routes into formal qualifications and improve productivity by enabling employer responsive training provision in a dynamic job market.</p>
2.3	<p>Service Features</p> <p>The revised service model will differentiate from the existing model in that;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UK SPF outputs and outcomes focus on deliverables that benefit individuals, the service will continue to work proactively with the business community to identify skills development opportunities and support instigation, however the measure of success will be the number of individuals that upskill and benefit as a result of the activity, rather than the activity itself. 2. Delivery has previously been commissioned as part of a wider business growth service, which had strategic benefits to the services visibility, positioning and access to the local business community. A comprehensive external review of the former service model in Spring 2023 suggested that the external commissioning of the service had not had a significant impact on success or failure against the services Lead indicators. <p>Considering the findings of the review, combined with reduction in the overall level of funding and contracting period, it is proposed that the new service will be delivered within the Combined Authority to ensure continuity and to minimise service disruption. This will provide greater controls and ensure continuity of service is maintained. Since no long-term funding has yet been identified to secure this service beyond March 2025, in-housing the service offers the most cost-effective solution in the short term, whilst a longer terms sustainability strategy can be developed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The revised model of implementation and governance will ensure greater local ownership and control, and subsequently greater alignment to Combined Authority Strategies. <p>The new service model will aspire to retain:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognition and identity through the retention of the 'Growth Works with Skills' branding. 2. Stakeholder access to skills information and opportunities through the retention of the 'Digital Talent Platform' online skills portal which was developed through ESF funding. 3. Continuation of core services for local businesses, including a revised skills diagnostics and the continued facilitation of activities and opportunities to engage with local education, including technical and vocational pathways.
2.4	<p>Service Delivery Focus and Intent</p> <p>The funding streams that will enable the service have predefined priorities that will be reflected in the service delivery models interventions and will form the services Lead Indicators.</p> <p>CEC funded activities, focusing on improving outcomes into post-16 pathways and increased alignment of careers provision to the needs of industry will focus on the five following core priorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the Quality of Careers Provision against the Gatsby Benchmarks • Provide More High-Quality Experiences with Employers • Amplify Apprenticeships, Technical and Vocational Routes • Target Interventions for Economically Disadvantaged Young People (Free School Meals (FSM) and those who face Barriers • Connect Careers Provision in Schools and Colleges to the Needs of Local Economies <p>The focus of activities funded by UKSPF, targeting residents aged 19 plus will focus on engagement and progression for those not currently engaged within or able to access the local adult education offer;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase uptake of Basic Skills and reduce Structural Barriers for those furthest from the labor market. • Engage economically inactive residents into job searching activities, 45% progression into paid work.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tailored support for those in work to gain qualifications. <p>Additional KPIs aligned to the Combined Authorities Employment and Skills Strategy will be defined and woven into service delivery strategy. These will be shared across all aspects of delivery and align to cross cutting priorities for example awareness and engagement within technical and vocational pathways.</p>
2.5	<p>Closedown of the existing service delivery model</p> <p>The Senior Responsible Officer will work closely the Project Management Office (PMO) of the existing delivery contractor Growthworks to develop and implement an exit strategy which provides a seamless transition of services.</p> <p>Exit planning discussion are underway and will focus on four key areas. A developed plan will be formalised by October 2023 in line with the terms of the current contracting arrangements.</p> <p>Areas of focus will include people, data, technology and assets, and communications.</p> <p>Legal, Finance, and Human Resources teams within the Combined Authority are being engaged with to support the identification and implementation of necessary steps, taking particular ownership of activities as identified.</p>
2.6	<p>Mobilisation of the new service delivery model</p> <p>Local development and Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A working group comprising of Economic development team representatives from each Constituent Authority has been formed and is meeting on a 6-weekly basis to ensure localised alignment is built into operational planning. • The group will be responsible for supporting baseline activities during ongoing planning phases and defining localised measures and data reporting requirements. • Ongoing oversight of Service and its deliverables will be reported via the Combined Authorities 'Economic Development Officer Group'. <p>Branding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of a strategy to maintain continuity and accessibility for service users, the 'Growth Works with Skills' brand will be retained and further developed. • The creation of a dedicated marketing lead within the revised service model will ensure consistency of tone and cohesion to local and service initiatives and activities. <p>Staffing and Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to Appendices one and two which outline the proposed budget and staffing structure for the new service.
2.7	<p>Significant Implications</p> <p>TUPE</p> <p>The current service is delivered through a contracting arrangement to Growthworks via Growth Co.</p> <p>The future service model has identified the need to continue functions of some staff already employed within those organisations and therefore it is likely that Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) will apply to some roles.</p> <p>TUPE is expected to affect employees in both Growth Co and the delivery partner. Work is currently being undertaken to ensure that all TUPE requirements are met.</p> <p>Subject to Authorisation to proceed to mobilise the outlined service, a formalised process between the Combined Authority's HR and legal teams and the current delivery partner will be established (in line with ACAS best practice and supported by external legal experts) and communicated to those employed and effected by the service model changes.</p>

3. Background

3.1	<p>'Growth Works with Skills' was commissioned in 2021 as part of the Combined Authority's wider business growth service. The service combined European Social Fund and Careers and Enterprise Company funding to create a Skills Brokerage for the area, increasing connectivity between education, residents, business and skills provision. The contracted end date for this service is 31 December 2023.</p>
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	Due to the United Kingdom exiting the European Union, this funding stream is no longer available. The UK Government has introduced a replacement scheme known as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
3.2	This paper follows the 'UKSPF – Skills Projects and Succession Planning for Skills Brokerage Service' paper submitted to this Committee on 3 July 2023 (See 5.6)

4. Appendices

4.1	Appendix 1: Budget
4.2	Appendix 2: Staffing Structure [EXEMPT]

5. Implications

Financial Implications

5.1	<p>Subject to the Combined Authority Board's approval, budgets will be vired from the subject to approval 'UK Shared Prosperity Revenue' budget to new approved budget lines so that the delivery of these services can be easily tracked and reported on as set out in Appendix 1.</p> <p>The proposed budgets are funded from the CPCA's UK SPF allocation so delivery funding will not have a wider impact on the Combined Authority's finances.</p>
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Legal Implications

5.2	<p>Subject to approval of the proposal outlined in this report, there are potential TUPE implications for the Combined Authority.</p> <p>TUPE stands for 'Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006' and its amendment in 2014.</p> <p>The Combined Authority will undertake all the obligations, rights, powers, duties and liabilities of the outgoing employer with regards to the employee contracts. The employees have the legal right to transfer their contracts to the Combined Authority with all their existing employment rights and liabilities which will include their pension rights.</p> <p>It is expected that the outgoing employer will undertake appropriate steps to inform and consult the employees affected by TUPE.</p>
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Public Health Implications

5.3	No public health implications
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Environmental & Climate Change Implications

5.4	No environmental or climate change implications
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Other Significant Implications

5.5	No other implications
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Background Papers

5.6	<p>Expansion of the Careers Hub (March 2023)</p> <p>UK SPF – Skills Projects and Succession Planning for Skills Brokerage Service (July 2023)</p>
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