



Skills & Employment Committee		Agenda Item
5 June 2023		9
Title:	Proposals for External Funding	
Report of:	Parminder Singh Garcha & Alexis McLeod	
Lead Member:	Cllr Lucy Nethsingha	
Public Report:	Yes	
Key Decision:	No	
Voting Arrangements:	A simple majority of voting Members	

Recommendations:	
A	To endorse the policy intent to widen the participation of adults in learning and skills and deepen our reach into communities.
B	To support applications for external funding that target disadvantaged communities and individuals, particularly activities to engage economically inactive residents.
C	To invite members to make comments and feedback on the proposals.
D	To recommend to the Combined Authority to allocate £300,000 from the Local Innovation Fund from the 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Plan to be used as potential 'match-funding' for proposals.

Strategic Objective(s):	
The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):	
✓	Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities
✓	Achieving good growth
	Increased connectivity
✓	Enabling resilient communities
The proposals support the above objectives through accessing external funding that will deliver additional learning activities in the community; that encourage and support residents who are economically inactive, to access support, develop their confidence and skills to get closer to work.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reducing inequalities – by reaching residents furthest from the labour-market• Achieving good growth - through ensuring access to good jobs• Enabling resilient communities - capacity building to develop a volunteering portal and the infrastructure to re-engage residents to participate in volunteering which enables resilient communities to flourish.• Contributing to the Mayoral Pledge to improve public health and wellbeing	

1. Purpose

1.1	<p>Employment and Skills Committee are requested to note and support the proposal outlined in this report to make applications for external funding to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Lottery Connecting Communities fund• DWP Flexible Support Fund• Youth Futures Foundation
1.2	<p>Members are invited to provide feedback and comments to help shape the proposals to external funders. The focus of the external funding is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide additionality to mainstream programmes funded by the Adult Education Budget, Free Courses for Jobs, Multiply and Skills Bootcamps• provide funding for 'wrap-around support', engagement and in-work coaching• funding for informal and non-accredited learning activities and tasters in community settings• test new approaches which cannot be funded through mainstream funding
1.3	<p>Members are requested to approve the allocation of £300,000 from the AEB Local Innovation Fund for 2023/24 to be used as 'match-funding', shared between the three proposals.</p>

2. Proposal

2.1	<p>Members of the Employment and Skills Committee are invited to support proposals to pursue external grant-based funding for the delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• community led engagement, for economically inactive residents, particularly those who are furthest from the labour market• informal approaches and settings to tackle barriers to engagement within socially and economically disadvantaged communities across the combined authority• increasing access and participation to mainstream skills programmes and reducing economic inactivity, reducing social immobility, and increasing the number of work ready, upskilled people available within the local labour market• Improved health and wellbeing outcomes for residents, as economically inactive residents with health conditions are supported into employment or volunteering. <p>The Combined Authority is well-placed to co-ordinate sub-regional proposals that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide the appropriate scale and impact for funders• capacity, oversight, and strategic partnerships in place to coordinate an organised and informed approach to mobilising community partners• ensure complementarity and additionally to existing area provision, and alignment to feed into formalised and well-established programmes and routeways into skills and employment.• build capacity within the local provider-base to effectively work with economically inactive and/or deprived communities• Leave a legacy of improved outcomes, building operational relationships across the system and volunteering infrastructure.• Provide match-funding from the Local Innovation Fund annual allocation as required.
2.2	<p>Alignment to the Employment and Skills Strategy</p> <p>The proposals will contribute to the following pillars within the Combined Authority's Employment and Skills Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life-wide learning and training - providing informal learning activities to engage residents who are economically inactive• Support into and between work – provide informal and person-centred support to enable residents to access work-experience, employment, self-employment, or volunteering.
2.3	<p>Match Funding</p>

It is proposed to allocate match funding from the Local Innovation Fund towards these proposals. A report was presented and approved by Skills Committee (Nov 2022) that proposed to allocate £1,001,000 to proposals. This included £406,000 remaining to be allocated. This report recommends that the Combined Authority Board approves £300,000 to be used as match for these proposals. At the July Board.

3. Background

3.1 Economic Inactivity

The term 'Economic Inactivity' describes those not in employment who have not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next two weeks.

Whilst reasons for economic inactivity can be benign such as being a student, reasons such as being long-term sick or disabled can provide barriers to employment. This is a particular focus following the pandemic when record numbers of people are out of work due to long-term sickness.

According to Census 2021, 37.2% of the 16+ Cambridgeshire and Peterborough population were economically inactive. This is a lower proportion than seen nationally (39.1%) but is an increase of +3.1pp from Census 2011. When comparing the six local authorities Fenland (41.8%) and Cambridge (40.5%) have the highest proportions of residents who are economically inactive whilst South Cambridgeshire (34.8%) and East Cambridgeshire (35.3%) have the lowest. In Cambridge this will be driven by the large student population with the presence of University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University. All local authorities saw increases in economic inactivity from Census 2011.

The table below outlines the proportion of the population who were recorded as economically inactive for Census 2021 and Census 2011 split by 16+ and 50+ populations.

Economic inactivity				
Geography	Census 2011		Census 2021	
	16+ Population	50+ Population	16+ Population	50+ Population
Cambridge	40.3%	52.8%	40.5%	50.9%
East Cambridgeshire	31.5%	53.7%	35.3%	54.3%
Fenland	38.7%	61.4%	41.8%	60.5%
Huntingdonshire	31.5%	52.7%	36.0%	55.5%
Peterborough	33.5%	57.6%	36.1%	56.1%
South Cambridgeshire	30.8%	51.0%	34.8%	53.4%
CPCA	34.1%	54.7%	37.2%	55.2%
England	36.4%	58.4%	39.1%	57.5%
Source: ONS				

When looking at the 50+ Population a lower proportion of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 50+ residents are economically inactive (55.2%) compared to nationally (57.5%), with this proportion increasing by +0.5pp from Census 2011. Fenland has the highest proportion of economically inactive 50+ year olds (60.5%) whilst Cambridge has the lowest (50.9%).

The table below outlines the proportion of the population who were recorded as economically inactive due to long term sickness/disability for Census 2021 and 2011 split by 16+ and 50+ populations.

Economic inactivity reason: Long-term sick or disabled				
Geography	Census 2011		Census 2021	
	16+ Population	50+ Population	16+ Population	50+ Population
Cambridge	6.0%	7.0%	6.2%	8.6%

East Cambridgeshire	7.1%	5.0%	7.4%	5.6%
Fenland	10.6%	7.1%	11.1%	8.5%
Huntingdonshire	7.5%	4.8%	7.7%	5.5%
Peterborough	11.6%	8.3%	12.3%	10.9%
South Cambridgeshire	6.1%	3.7%	6.3%	4.5%
CPCA	8.3%	6.0%	8.6%	7.2%
England	10.5%	7.8%	10.4%	8.9%
Source: ONS				

When looking at Long-term sick or disabled prevalence for the 16+ population across the region Peterborough (12.3%) and Fenland (11.1%) stand out as local authorities with higher proportions of residents citing this as a reason for economic inactivity.

When looking at the 50+ population all local authorities have seen an increase in the proportion of residents citing long-term sickness or disability as a reason for economic inactivity. This proportion has increased by +1.2pp between Census 2011 and Census 2021 when looking at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as a whole.

3.2

To deliver the following external funders are being scoped:

a. The National Lottery:

The National Lottery provides grants for initiatives focusing on community development, education, skills development, and employment. The Combined Authority could develop proposals targeting these areas, emphasizing measures to reduce economic inactivity and promote social inclusion. Examples include funding schemes for community-based training programs, outreach and support for entrepreneurship in deprived areas.

The 'Reaching Communities' fund has no upper limit to funding, and does not require match funding; however, investments need to show value for money and alignment to the fund's overall purposes. Outline proposals are assessed locally for impact and fit generally with 3 months, subject to agreement in principle, full proposals take an average of 6 – 9 months. Potential projects could incorporate;

- Working with community-based partners to deliver early engagement, non-accredited learning, for those furthest from the labour market with low aspiration/confidence to engage in mainstream learning.
- Increasing the availability, and accessibility of structured volunteering as a routeway into the workplace (This could dovetail with ROL platform and other existing local projects).
- 'In work support' for those with multiple and complex barriers to maintain employment or education.
- Investments into local community infrastructure to better support those with challenges in maintaining employment such as those suffering with poor mental health
- Supporting the creation of a volunteering platform and co-ordinators within the CVSs to facilitate and broker opportunities for residents to build their skills and confidence through volunteering.

b. Youth Futures Foundation:

The Youth Futures Foundation supports projects that tackle youth unemployment and economic inactivity. The Combined Authority plans to propose initiatives that specifically target young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Such projects may include mentorship programs, vocational training, job placement schemes, and outreach initiatives to engage young people. Specific groups of focus could include Care experienced, young offenders and carers. The Police and Crime Commissioner could be approached to partner and provide 'match' funding to strengthen the proposal and align with crime reduction among young people. The fund is not currently receiving applications; however, it would be sensible to start scoping proposals. Further information had been requested to confirm when the next application round will open and guidance in relation to the process. In readiness

c. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP):

The DWP offers various national programmes of funding and support for projects aimed at increasing employment rates, improving employability skills, and reducing worklessness. For

	example, the provision of Job Coaches. There is also the DWP Flexible Support Fund which is a potential source of funding to test different approaches to supporting unemployed residents. For example, bespoke support for 50+, in-work support and work-place mentoring. It is proposed to co-design a bespoke programme for DWP clients
3.3	Members are requested to support the external funding proposals as added value to the courses and mainstream programmes funded by the Adult Education Budget, Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps. These externally funded grant funded programmes will provide more flexible approaches including non-accredited and informal opportunities and outreach. It will allow new and innovative methods of engagement to be trialled and progression into employment or formal training courses. Further work to develop the detailed proposals will be undertaken with consultancy support and involve our constituent councils as well as the Councils for Voluntary Service.

4. Appendices

4.1	None
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5. Implications

Financial Implications	
5.1	As these programmes will provide a 'pipeline' of learners into AEB, funding from the AEB Programme Management Budget will be utilised to commission a local bid-writing consultant to work alongside officers and partners to develop the proposals.
Legal Implications	
6.1	Grant funding conditions will need to be reviewed by Legal Services, if the proposals are successful.
Public Health Implications	
7.1	The proposals will have positive impact on public health as learning and employment contributes to better health outcomes. There will also be support for people with health conditions to access and sustain employment.
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
8.1	The proposals have positive impact for the environment as carbon literacy training will be embedded into the programme design and careers guidance into 'green' pathways and re-training opportunities will be promoted.
Other Significant Implications	
9.1	The proposals have due regard for the Combined Authorities' duties under the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure reasonable adjustments are in place for members of groups with protected characteristics. The activities that will be funded will support equity and inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the labour market.
Background Papers	
10.1	None