



Skills & Employment Committee		Agenda Item
5 June 2023		7
Title:	UK SPF – Skills Projects and Succession Planning for Skills Brokerage Service	
Report of:	Alexis McLeod – Senior Programme Manager	
Lead Member:	Cllr Lucy Nethsingha	
Public Report:	Yes	
Key Decision:	No	
Voting Arrangements:	A simple majority of voting Members	

Recommendations:	
A	To receive further detail in relation to three Combined Authority wide UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) projects as identified within the published UKSPF Investment and Implementation plans.
B	To endorse the outlined approach to developing a suitable vehicle for the collective delivery of the three projects.
C	To note that the Assistant Director - Skills in consultation with the Lead member for Skills will identify and implement a best value delivery model in respect to the projects outlined within the proposal. This will include: Identification of the preferred delivery mechanism Development of strategic commissioning if appropriate

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
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;	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 workbased 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 information in relation to the three Combined Authority wide skills projects as identified within the Combined Authority's UKSPF Investment and Implementation plans;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Holistic Online skills support incorporating (incorporating Growthworks with Skills Service offering and Integrating the Region of Learning Platform) 2. All Age Careers Service across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough 3. Supported Internships across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
1.2	<p>To invite members to provide feedback to in relation to the outline projects and mobilisation considerations as outlined within the proposal</p>
1.3	<p>To note that the Assistant Director – Skills (In consultation with the Lead Member for Skills) will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek appropriate engagement and advice in specific regards to mobilisation of the projects • Subsequently return to Skills Committee and Combined Authority Board members in September with a report outlining solutions identified and any financial or legal implications associated

2. Proposal

2.1	<p>The UK Shared Prosperity fund (UKSPF), was launched by the UK Government in April 2022, The fund and was designed to provide a central pillar to the Governments Levelling up Agenda and a practical replacement for European Structural Investment Funding after the UK had withdrawn from the EU.</p> <p>Combined Authorities (and Local Authorities where Combined Authorities don't exist) have been given the responsibly through their UKSPF Local Investment Plan to design packages of provision and interventions to meet localised need. The Combined Authority has the responsibility for implementing this plan with Constituent Authority members as both key stakeholders and delivery partners.</p> <p>Funding for the majority of projects identified within the Cambridge and Peterborough UKSPF Implementation plan (approved by the Combined Authority Board in March 2023) has been passed down to Constituent Authorities to deliver localised projects, with the exception £1,347,850 which is to be retained by the Combined Authority to deliver three strategic skills projects, that will deliver outcomes across the area that will contribute directly to the priorities laid out within the Employment and Skills Strategy .</p> <p>These three projects will provide a universal skills offering; delivering data driven interventions which target areas of greatest social and economic need. For example, current labour market information suggests that 51% of economically active residents living in the Fenland District and 46% of those living in Peterborough do not hold a qualification above a level 2, compared to a Combined Authority average of around 30%. This data can be overlaid with sectoral needs analysis, and used to shape and adapt the delivery of interventions in a way that increases the likelihood of uptake within businesses most likely to employ those residents without creating exclusivity that would hinder uptake from other areas.</p>
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OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS

- **Holistic Online skills support (incorporating Growthworks with Skills Service offering and Integrating the Region of Learning Platform)**

This project would offer a refined and refocused successor to the current skills brokerage provision delivered through Growthworks with Skills, the current funding and contract for which is due to end on the 31st December 2023.

Key features of the proposed framework for this revised service model are as follows;

Retaining the existing the Combined Authority owned Digital Talent Platform (DTP) as the central resource of the skills brokerage function; providing a 'one stop shop' for both employers and residents to be able to access up to date and locally driven skills content. Additional development of the site funded by the project will improve functionality and expand the breath of the mapped provision, enhancing local skills and employment support pathways, creating more points of access for a wider demographic, as well as improving the breath and quality of content for our local businesses.

The proposed project has a built-in, ringfenced budget, which will be used to support the ongoing roll out and embedding into the local landscape of the of the existing Cambridge City led 'Region of Learning' digital platform. Additionally, functionality will be developed to enable digital integration between the two web platforms.

'Skills brokers' will continue to be a strong feature of the skills brokerage model, developing skills based dialogues and relationships with our businesses, to increase the availability of skills opportunities within the local economy. Skills brokers will target employers based on priority sectors and scope for growth, to ensure efforts are focused on producing high quality opportunities at scale. Working closely with newly established Combined Authority Partnership Manager roles, Skills Brokers will ensure businesses are aware of, and able to access and inform the Combined Authority skills offer (AEB, Multiply, Bootcamps etc) as well as navigate the wider skills offer across the area.

The project will work in partnership with expert providers to introduce a series of in person and web-based events to raise awareness of skills and employment marketplace for SMEs

- **Age Careers Service across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough**

This project will seek to provide greater local join-up between existing national funded programmes and local intelligence and networks to ensure residents of all ages can access high quality, relevant careers information. The service will enhance the support to employers and educators already working in the careers education space to improve the provision, information and access. This service will broaden the reach of established national programmes with a focus on local employer engagement

In addition to the invaluable coordination and strategic oversight of careers in the region, this service will provide, operationally, the project will deliver:

Facilitation of employer engagement– identification of employers to support wider careers-based activities. This is an expansion of Talent Pledge, and will include; identification of employers to support our wider Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) activity with offers including, but not limited to industrial placements, T level placements, curriculum development, teacher encounters, experiences of the workplace, supported internships, Enterprise Advisor activities and wider school specific activities to ensure Provider Access compliance.

Further development of digital tools – Expansion of careers Hub website to include a collaboration space for primary, secondary and FE. A resource repository for employers, cross referencing the local and national NCS offer. This tool is essential in underpinning the all-age offer, the portal will act as the window to the service and provide a mechanism of sustainability post project funding. It will support the harmonisation and development of age appropriate LMI resources that will allow individuals to make decisions based on local intelligence and allow educators to provided regionally relevant careers information as a part of the wider curriculum offer.

Careers fairs – working with partners and industry to increase funding and opportunity – Careers Fairs to be facilitated by Local Authority area. We envisage using the existing infrastructure to enhance the availability and profile of events where in existence and where a careers fair is not in existence, we will work to deliver this opportunity. The ambition is to hold events suitable for schools which will offer PAL compliant events and where teachers can access CPD as “Sector Spotlights”, a series of workshops are delivered to allow teachers to understand key sectors in the region that they can embed within their teaching. The events will also be for residents who may be seeking work or looking to understand local opportunities.

- **Supported Internships across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough**

Based on lessons learnt from the evaluation of the successful Community Renewal Fund (CRF) Funded ‘Turning Point’ Internship programme, this project will directly generate opportunities for long term NEETS to access fully paid, meaningful and structured experiences of workplaces.

Personal Skills Analysis to guide individuals in understanding and identifying opportunities for re-skilling, up-skilling and re-training. This will involve working directly with individuals to identify opportunities to transition into or back into work following an extended period of economic inactivity; into new roles with their existing skills, or to identify training that will support them in transitioning to a new role.

Training Needs Analysis to identify re-skilling, up-skilling and inclusive recruitment practices within a business. This will include working with (1) businesses to identify skills development opportunities and inclusive recruitment practices to meet skills shortages, and (2) businesses looking to develop or expand into key areas such as Net-zero or Digital by training their current staff.

Delivering real-world experiences of work through funded internship placements. Funding will be provided to employers to provide new work opportunities. To support these internships activities will include Workshops and webinars on a 1-to-many basis to highlight the benefits of, and ways to implement, internships; 1-to-1 meetings for companies to explore the opportunities for and benefits of internships; securing and matching 3 month paid internships; and ‘Learning Mentor Training’ for the host organisation.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Collectively the three projects have been designed to achieve the following UK SPF Defined interventions and Outputs;

UK SPF Desired Output/Outcome		Combined Target
E34: Courses including basic, life & career skills	Number of people supported to engage in life skills	2100
	Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	1110
	Number of people experiencing reduced structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	2125
E33: Employment support for economically inactive people	People engaged in job searching following support	1700
	People in employment, inc self employment following support	770
E37: Tailored support for the employed to access courses	People gaining qualification, licences and skills	160

DESIGN AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

In order to ensure project design continues to be informed by localised intelligence, the project lead will engage with constituent authority economic development teams on a 6-8 week cycle throughout the ongoing design period and into delivery. This approach will ensure a robust partnership approach is embedded within the design of interventions, providing localised alignment and targeting of provision, whilst retaining the centralised oversight.

In addition to Constituent Authorities, the project lead will seek to extend strategic and operational dialogues the Combined Authority holds with key local partners such as Department for Education (DfE), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Health and Wellbeing, and Employer Representative Bodies such, to ensure projects can support skills and employment outcomes in a holistic way, driving towards greater cohesion, as well as higher quality and more sustainable outcomes.

PROJECT MOBILISATION

The Assistant Director – Skills (In consultation with the Lead Member for Skills) will now;

- Seek professional advice and make an informed decision regarding the most appropriate delivery vehicle to mobilise the three UKSPF projects into delivery. The Growthworks with Skills Programme, which is due to come to an end in December 2023 has previously provided a vehicle to engage both businesses and residents within the local skills systems, however the end of this contract provides the opportunity to undertake a review as to the effectiveness and the value added return of this commissioned model in practice. The decision as to whether to in or outsource these projects, whether partially or fully, will significantly shape project design budget and features and therefore requires careful and early identification
- Subsequently evolve the project delivery design, to identify a robust budget and resource model
- Develop strategic commissioning in line with the defined delivery model, within the constraints of existing financial signoff authority.

A further paper will be presented to Skills and Employment Committee and CA board members in September with detailed narrative in relation to the points above, detailing next steps.

1. Background

3.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up Agenda. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.

The Government allocated Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority a total of £13,871,810 of UKSPF funding, of which £3,999,186 was ringfenced for multiply adult numeracy support, and therefore not available for localities to redistribute within their plans.

Accessing the remaining £9,872,624 funding was dependent on the submission and approval of a Local Investment Plan (LIP) which was submitted to Government on the 31st July 2022 and approved on the 5th December 2022. (Appendix 1). The LIP was based on spend across outputs & outcomes not specific projects.

During the consultation process to formalise the LIP, Constituent members agreed to contribute a percentage of their People and Skills funding allocation to a create Combined Authority wide projects to meet shared skills priorities.

Following approval by the Skills committee members on the 5th March 23, the Local Implementation Plan was subsequently formalised and approved unanimously by the Combined Authority board on the 22nd March 23.

2. Appendices

4.1	UKSPF Local Implementation Plan (Appendix 1)
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3. Implications

Financial Implications

5.1	There are no finance implications at present, however the position will be revised following the choice of the appropriate vehicle for the delivery of the projects.
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Legal Implications

6.1	There are presently no legal implications, however, once the appropriate vehicle for delivery of the 3 projects has been established, there will be legal implications for the Combined Authority which will need to be reviewed and assessed on how these may impact the Combined Authority.
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6.2	<p>The Local Government Act 1999. Section 3, sets out the General Duty that a best value authority must comply with as follows:</p> <p>“A best value authority must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”.</p>
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Public Health Implications

7.1	No Public Health Implications
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Environmental & Climate Change Implications

8.1	No Environmental or Climate Change Implications
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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.
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Background Papers

10.1	None
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