

## **AGENDA ITEM 8**

### **WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE**

**4 OCTOBER 2019**

#### **COMMENTS FROM COMBINED AUTHORITY BOARDS**

Meetings of the Combined Authority Boards were held during September 2019. Comments from the Boards about items included on the 4 October WECA Committee agenda are set out below:

#### **INVESTMENT FUND REPORT (agenda item 12)**

##### **Comments from the Skills Board (meeting held on 16 September 2019):**

##### **a. Comments on recommendation 6 – approval sought for a Feasibility and Development Funding application for Careers Advice Analysis and the award of £50,000 to produce a report outlining prioritised co-designed interventions:**

The Board considered a report which set out the brief to take forward actions to expand the existing Careers Hub by co-designing a world class careers advice service that will add value to and complement the current offer.

Key points raised / noted in discussion:

1. It was noted that the report set out a brief to take the work forward through research to better understand the existing landscape (the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities) and options for public interventions. The brief set out the following key information in particular:

- Overview of research brief and rationale;
- Objectives of the research and deliverables;
- Proposed methodology.

The total funding for this phase of work would be £50,000, to be sought from the Investment Fund through the report to the 4 October WECA Committee, with £19,332 match funding from in-house staff costs.

2. A point was raised about whether the research would slow down delivery. In reply, it was stated that this needed to be action-based within the existing landscape.

3. An issue was raised about whether some of the timings could be 'moved-up' the list as the funding had been available for some time - it was important to ensure the pace of the delivery of projects.

4. It was noted that the proposal would build on the existing West of England Careers Hub. The research would be used to improve the project planning. The authority was keen to hear views so these could be built into the plans from the beginning.

The Board was supportive of the bid to the Investment Fund.

**b. Comments on recommendation 9 – approval sought for the Full Business Case for Future Bright Plus and award of £3.6m subject to the supply of a detailed risk register, cost breakdown and project plan, and finalising the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:**

The Board considered a presentation given by the Future Bright Project Manager on the Future Bright Plus proposal. The full Business Case had been circulated with the agenda papers.

Key points raised / noted in discussion:

1. Future Bright was an initiative designed to help support people on low incomes access jobs and training. However, the plan was to broaden its scope. A number of referral routes existed through social housing providers, unions, etc. Job Centres also provided more potential for support.

2. It was estimated that there were around 78,000 zero hours contracts in the West of England, many of which existed in the 'gig' economy. Those identified as self-employed were also increasing in number. Future Bright Plus would focus on these groups as well as helping to address mental health issues encountered by some participants.

3. The impact of Future Bright had been that 69% of participants said that awareness of opportunities had increased, 50% stated that skills had increased and 41% that their health and wellbeing had improved. 17% had seen an increase in income.

4. Future Bright Plus aimed to increase its reach to some groups that were not readily visible, such as those on low incomes but not on benefits. Another target was that 4,000 children could see an improved environment in their home life; 1,000 people to enter training over a three year period. These were set out in the appendices to the action plan which confirmed that the scheme would provide around £4.4m in social value.

5. The scheme would require endorsement by the WECA Committee in October 2019 and the Board's endorsement of the proposal was sought.

6. It was planned to use the original pledged funding to extend delivery to the end of 2020.

Following discussion, the Board agreed to endorse the full Business Case for Future Bright Plus, noting that approval would be sought at the 4 October WECA Committee.

**Comments from Transport Board (meeting held on 18 September 2019):**

**Comments on recommendation 3 – approval sought for the allocation of £3.9m for the Future Mobility Zone (FMZ) subject to securing the Department for Transport funding and business case**

The Board was updated on progress on the Future Mobility Zone bid.

Key points raised / noted in discussion:

1. The Board noted that the FMZ would be closely aligned to the Joint Local Transport Plan and would embrace new technology to enable people to travel more sustainably, offer better choices for travel, achieve more efficient use of the network and improve air quality. It would also target a host of wider benefits associated with “healthy” travel and tackling climate challenges. The technology should enable people to make different, informed travel choices.
2. It was noted that the full FMZ bid was being prepared. At the 4 October WECA Committee, match funding of £3.9m would be sought subject to DfT funding being secured and a full business case being developed.
3. It was suggested that the project must be as ambitious as possible.

The Board was supportive of the Investment Fund bid, noting that the full delivery plan would be worked up if the DfT funding was secured.