

**REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE**

DATE: 8TH APRIL 2022

REPORT TITLE: WEST OF ENGLAND CAREERS HUB

**DIRECTOR: STEPHEN BASHFORD, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS
AND SKILLS**

Purpose of Report

- 1 To present the Full Business Case for match funding to continue the West of England Careers Hub beyond August 2022.

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

The Combined Authority has actively reviewed its key activities and work programme to reflect changing priorities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific issues relating to the Covid-19 situation that impact on or are addressed through this report are as follows:

- The Careers Hub has effectively adjusted its model of delivery over the last two years to help provide careers support to schools in challenging circumstances brought about by Covid-19.

Recommendation

- **To agree the Full Business Case for the West of England Careers Hub and award £810,000 to match Careers Enterprise Company funding and continue the service for another three years.**

Background / Issues for Consideration

- 2 The West of England Careers Hub was established in Sept 2018 and built on the Enterprise Adviser Network which had been delivered by the Local Enterprise Partnership, and then the Combined Authority, since 2015.
- 3 The Careers Hub brings together schools and colleges, universities, employers, and other local organisations to better support 97 schools and colleges to improve career outcomes for young people as well as better align

education to the needs of the local labour market. The Hub is a team of specialised careers individuals who work with school leadership teams to build and strengthen careers advice into the school curricula. It aims to improve young people's understanding of the potential career routes open to them and helps bring employers closer to schools.

4. The work is currently part funded by the Careers Enterprise Company (CEC) and by the West of England Combined Authority's investment fund. CEC funding is contingent on match funding from the Combined Authority – without this the Hub would not exist. A three-year funding allocation of £810,000 will bring in an additional £1.78m investment to the region. It also enables the Combined Authority to bid into additional CEC funds for enhanced local delivery (see below).
5. Careers Hubs are the delivery vehicle for the Government's Careers Strategy which has been recently updated through the "Skills for Jobs" white paper and Skills Bill currently going through parliament. Secondary schools and colleges should work towards achieving the eight Gatsby Benchmarks and are supported by Careers Hubs to do this. Evidence shows that schools and colleges within Careers Hubs have better careers provision (evidenced by performance against the Gatsby framework) than those not in a Hub.
6. The attached Full Business Case shows that through the Careers Hub, the region's schools are now performing above the national average on careers education, with strong progress against the Gatsby benchmarks. In addition, 96% of schools and Colleges are matched with a volunteer from a local employer to support their employer engagement. The Careers Hub has also linked to other regional programmes, including the Digital Engineering Technology Innovation (DETI) programme which has helped 4,200 children with STEM skills.
7. The Careers Hub receives a 'local hub fund' each year from the CEC. This is a flexible fund which can be used to support delivery of careers activities. The Combined Authority is working collaboratively with the Unitary Authorities to co-design activities and delivery which will complement and add value to local arrangements. A further £93,000 has been created for a UA collaboration fund to further strengthen the links between regional and local delivery.
8. In addition to the core delivery and funding, over the past year the Careers Hub has been able to secure additional funding to support Unitary Authorities through £200k funding for prevention of NEET, £72k to support looked after children, and £60k (over 3 years) to support young people who face additional barriers to transition.
9. Feedback and input from the Business and Skills board members has been gathered and an emphasis on co-design and collaborative working with the Unitary Authorities will be a priority in future delivery of the Careers Hub. Complementary careers programmes being delivered by the Unitary Authorities will continue to work collaboratively to explore opportunities to

access funding to further expand local, targeted support.

10. We are also committed to working with Unitary Authorities to develop further support for young people (via the Regional Recovery and Adaptions Fund) through developing our 'All Age Access Hub' to ensure full linkage and access to advice and guidance in the most appropriate way to meet need and look forward to beginning to work up ideas on how that can best complement the Careers Hub and all other existing initiatives.
11. This project will follow the delivery assurance 'use it or lose it' principles as set out in the Delivery Assurance Report on this agenda, subject to that reports approval.

Consultation

12. No statutory consultation is required in relation to this report.

Other Options Considered

13. These are set out in detail in the Full Business Case.

Risk Management/Assessment

14. A risk assessment is included in the Full Business Case.

Public Sector Equality Duties

15. The public sector equality duty created under the Equality Act 2010 means that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 15.1 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
 - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
 - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- 15.2 The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.
- 15.3 An Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment and Plan is included within the

Full Business Case.

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate:

16 Forecast of spend on salaries

	Forecast				Total
	Sept 22 to Mar 23	Apr 23 to Mar 24	Apr 24 to Mar 25	Apr 25 to Aug 25	
Investment Funded - Staff costs	£129,566	£234,376	£247,018	£106,433	£717,392
CEC Funded - Staff Costs	£166,070	£284,784	£284,784	£118,660	£854,298

Advice given by: Richard Ennis, Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services

Legal Implications:

17 None

Advice given by: Stephen Gerrard, Interim Director of Law and Democratic Services

Climate Change Implications

18 On 19 July 2019, the West of England Combined Authority declared a climate emergency, recognising the huge significance of climate change and its impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the region's residents. The Combined Authority is committed to taking climate change considerations fully into account as an integral part of its governance and decision-making process.

18.1 Funding will be used to support schools to align their careers programmes and curriculum to the green skills agenda, including through for example the Green Futures Fund.

Land/property Implications

19 There are no land/property implications associated with this report.

Human Resources Implications:

20 There are no HR implications arising as a result of this report. The management of the Careers Hub will be through the existing team.

Advice given by: Alex Holly, Head of People and Assets

Appendices: Full Business Case [Careers Hub](#)

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

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