

## OFFICER DECISION RECORD

**General guidance note:** Please complete using Plain English, avoiding acronyms and use of jargon; this will be a published document so please be mindful of a public audience in completing this decision record.

<b>Decision Title:</b> Skills Connect and Priority Skills Fund
<b>Decision reference number:</b> 02.11.22
<b>Decision date:</b> 9 November 2022
<p><b>Background / reason for decision:</b> <i>Insert a brief description of the background to the decision and the reason for it. If this is an urgent decision, explain the reason for urgency.</i></p> <p>The employment and skills system is too complex and difficult to navigate. There are over 250 programmes currently available in the West of England each with their own area of focus and eligibility criteria. This programme contains two inter-related elements which will strengthen the employment and skills system raise its visibility and simplify access to it.</p>
<p><b>Options considered:</b> <i>(as relevant/applicable)</i></p> <p><b>Option 1</b> - Business as usual: maintaining the status quo with funding being directed to maintain Council delivery</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> - Strengthen the hub and reduce the spokes</p> <p><b>Option 3</b> - Hub and spokes model strengthened.</p>
<p><b>Decision:</b> <i>Insert the detail of the decision taken (background documents / appendices may also be attached to this decision record as necessary)</i></p> <p>Option 3 as set out in the Full Business Case was approved by the Councils Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) on 9 November 2022. With the award of £3m from the recovery fund (£2m for Skills Connect and £1m for the Priority Skills Fund). Delegation of this funding to the West of England Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the other Chief Executive's was agreed the Combined Authority Committee on 8 April 2022.</p>
<p><b>Consultation:</b> <i>Insert details of any relevant consultation that took place before this decision was taken, and the date of that consultation (include the CEO/Director meeting that prompts this form)</i></p> <p>The Skills Connect 'hub and spoke' system approach has been co-designed with the West of England Skills Officer Group (SOG). A number of half-day away days were held with SOG to work up the detail of the proposal (15 June, 22 June, 27 July, 21 September, 27 September, and 5</p>

October) in addition to standard weekly SOG meetings. These have been used to critically assess shortcomings in the current system, identify collective resource, knowledge and expertise and opportunities to enhance and strengthen the system approach, resulting in the proposed approach as set out in the Full Business Case. In addition, fortnightly working group meetings have been held with representatives from the councils.

During August-September 2022 over 100 key strategic stakeholders were consulted about the proposed Skills Connect model. This extensive consultation helped to identify key gaps, barriers, challenges, and opportunities. These responses (summarised in the Full Business Case) further informed the design of the Skills Connect hub and spoke model.

The Full Business Case was taken to CEOs on 9 November for decision.

**Officer making decision:** Patrica Greer

**Position:** Chief Executive

**Report / appendices / background documents:** *If appropriate, list any documents relevant to this decision – these can be included as attachments to this decision record, if appropriate*

- Skills Connect and Priority Skills Fund Full Business Case.