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Friday, 8 October 2021

To: Members of the MCA - Education, Skills and Employability Board and Appropriate Officers

You are hereby invited to a meeting of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to be held at **Virtual Meeting**, on: **Tuesday, 19 October 2021 at 10.00 am** for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "D. Smith".

**Dr Dave Smith
Chief Executive**



You can view the agenda and papers at www.sheffieldcityregion.org.uk
or use a smart phone camera and scan the QR code

Member Distribution

Councillor Sir Steve Houghton CBE (Co-Chair)	Barnsley MBC
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Councillor Paul Turpin	Sheffield CC

MCA - Education, Skills and Employability Board

Tuesday, 19 October 2021 at 10.00 am

Venue: Virtual Meeting



Agenda

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Date of next meeting: Tuesday, 14 December 2021 at 1.00 pm At: Virtual Meeting			

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Education Skills and Employability Board

19 October 2021

Programme Approval

Is the paper exempt from the press and public? No

Purpose of this report: Funding Decision

Is this a Key Decision? No

Has it been included on the Forward Plan? Not a Key Decision

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

Gareth Sutton, Chief Finance Officer/s73 Officer

Report Author(s):

Sue Sykes – AD Programme and Performance Unit
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Executive Summary

This report seeks approval for the progression of one scheme. The paper also requests delegated authority to enter into legal agreements for the named scheme.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

This report is seeking approval to progress a business case and enter contract for a proposal which will support the MCA's aspirations.

Recommendations

The board consider and approve:

1. Progression of “Transitional Support Project” to full approval and award of £0.21m to Workers Educational Association
 2. Delegated authority be given to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Section 73 and Monitoring Officer to enter into a legal agreement for the scheme above
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1. Background

- 1.1 The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) took control of devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) for South Yorkshire residents from 1st August 2021.

- 1.2 The SYMCA developed a dual approach to commissioning in order to support these priorities:
- £30.6m grant funding for those providers based in South Yorkshire who had previously been grant funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
 - Procured contract for service provision worth £10.2m.
- 1.3 Due to this approach, plus the overall funding allocation to South Yorkshire, the SYMCA accepted that the overall number of providers delivering AEB funded activity to South Yorkshire residents was likely to reduce substantially. This was considered to be a positive step towards achieving the outcomes listed above, and that the smaller provider base, with all providers delivering either exclusively within South Yorkshire or being accountable for outcomes explicitly in this area, would improve the service for residents.
- 1.4 The impact of a significant reduction in providers delivering AEB funded learning to South Yorkshire residents has led to some disruption of learning for residents, many of whom had been settled with a provider for some time. Given the commitment to deliver different outcomes for South Yorkshire, some level of disruption was inevitable.
- 1.5 The SYMCA recognised that more support was needed to help learners transition to new learning opportunities. More help and guidance has been added to the SYMCA website with more work in progress. Additional help is being given to support development of the working relationship between providers and local authorities to help identify where targeted support is needed

2. Proposal and Justification

- 2.1 In the case of learners who had previously been on programmes with the Workers Educational Association, there is an additional requirement for support due to:
- The extensive nature of provision delivered by WEA, particularly on Community Learning provision.
 - The long-term nature of the relationship between WEA and many South Yorkshire residents, with provision deeply embedded in local communities.
 - The significant barriers faced by many former WEA learners such that identifying suitable provision and moving between programmes and providers without assistance is extremely challenging and distressing
- 2.2 The WEA works with around 2,000 – 2,500 adults in South Yorkshire each year. A high proportion of these students are disadvantaged as a result of a range of barriers relating to:
- Low educational achievement and confidence
 - Physical and / or learning difficulties
 - Mental health difficulties
 - Residing in areas of social and economic disadvantage
 - Long term unemployment or under-employment
 - Ethnicity
 - Other determinants such as insecure housing, drug and alcohol misuse, or domestic violence

- 2.3 Within this group of residents, there are likely to be a range of different requirements:
- Learners who are able to find alternative provision on a self-service basis based on recommendations on where information is available.
 - Learners who are not able to find and access alternative provision themselves, but who with some additional support can make the transition to new arrangements.
 - Learners who are not able to identify alternative provision and who require additional support because culturally, or from the point of view of language or ability barriers more intensive help is required to find options and to ensure the new providers can meet the specific requirements of those residents.
- 2.4 The Project will provide an approach in which previous learners' Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) requirements are assessed allowing them to access tailored support. The support will include:
- An assessment of individual needs and barriers to progressing into alternative provision in line with the groupings above and with individuals' employability and wider learning aspirations.
 - A tailored package of support will be available according to needs including online or face to face support and brokering of discussions with other providers.
 - Depending of the level of needs, the support may, within the parameters of GDPR and with the permission of learners, identify additional support that would be required for the learner to complete a programme successfully.
 - Depending on a learner's progress, the intensive support may also include some follow up to the IAG support with the aim of helping settle a learner into new provision.
 - This intensive IAG support is available for learners who were on programme with WEA in 2020-21 or those who were engaged in WEA programmes in two of the three preceding years with an intention to return in 2021-22.

The expectation is that the need for intensive support for learners will be fully met within 6 months

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

Do not approve the recommendations in this report.

3.2 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

Inability to approve the project presented may result in a slower pace of delivery and delay in offering the support needed by the learners.

3.3 Option 2

Award projects a smaller amount of grant funding.

3.4 Option 2 Risks and Mitigations

A reduction in grant award will have a detrimental impact on the support offered.

- 3.5 **Option 3**
Approve the recommendation

3.6 **Option 3 Risks and Mitigations**

By approving the recommendation, the available AEB programme funding will reduce.

There is a risk that other providers make a similar case for support for learners. Each case would be assessed on its merits based on the particular circumstances and needs assessment. The size of the WEA provision and the specific nature of their learners makes their circumstances quite specific.

- 3.7 **Recommended Option**
Option 3

4. Consultation on Proposal

- 4.1 N/A

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Subject to the approval of the recommendations, the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Section 73 Officer and Monitoring Officer will progress to enter into legal agreements with the promoter.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

- 6.1 This report contains a proposal to deploy £0.21m of resource in support of AEB aspirations.

- 6.2 This proposal can be supported from the residual uncommitted AEB funding for the current financial year, which stands at c. £0.4m. This resource was held in reserve to enable the MCA to react to unforeseen risks and opportunities, such as this.

7. Legal Implications and Advice

- 7.1 The MCA has devolved AEB duties and functions under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The funding will be released in accordance with the terms of appropriate legal arrangements to ensure the services being funded are provided.

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

- 8.1 N/A

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

9.1 In making the decisions contained in this report, Members are reminded of their legal **duty** under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have *due regard* to the need to :-

- I. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- II. Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- III. foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In having due regard to the need advance the equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not, Members should have *due regard* to the need to :-

- a. remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- b. take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c. encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

It is for Members to determine the weight to be given to the various factors that inform the decision, including the equality impacts and the legal duty under section 149. The proposals in the report have positive equality implications.

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

10.1 N/A

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

11.1 N/A

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

12.1 Any new provision will be promoted in line with the MCA's AEB comms and marketing strategy, working closely with providers to ensure learners are aware of and able to access the support on offer.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

None

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