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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, appearing 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)
Nigel Brewster (Co-Chair)
Councillor Lani-Mae Ball
Councillor Tim Cheetham
Professor Chris Husbands
Kate Josephs
Councillor Denise Lelliott
Councillor Paul Turpin

Barnsley MBC
Private Sector
Doncaster MBC
Barnsley MBC
Sheffield Hallam University
Sheffield CC
Rotherham MBC
Sheffield CC

Agenda

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MCA - EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

TUESDAY, 31 AUGUST 2021 AT 1.00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING



Present:

Councillor Sir Steve Houghton CBE (Co-Chair)	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Lani-Mae Ball	Doncaster MBC
Councillor Denise Lelliott	Rotherham MBC
Councillor Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Paul Turpin	Sheffield CC
Kate Josephs	Sheffield CC
Helen Kemp	MCA Executive Team
Rob Harvey	MCA Executive Team
Angela Foulkes	Chair of Skills Advisory Network
Nici Pickering	MCA Executive Team
Tina Slater	MCA Executive Team
Roger Wilde	MCA Executive Team

In Attendance:

Gillian Richards (Minute Taker)

Apologies:

Nigel Brewster	Private Sector
Professor Chris Husbands	Sheffield Hallam University
Helen George	MCA Executive Team
Gareth Sutton	MCA Executive Team

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted as above.

2 Declarations of Interest by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the agenda

None.

3 Urgent items / Announcements

None.

4 **Public Questions of Key Decisions**

None.

5 **Minutes from Last Meeting**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2021 be agreed as a true record.

6 **Matters Arising**

None.

7 **Devolved Adult Education Budget Commissioning Update**

A report was submitted which provided the Board with an update on the commissioning process for devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) funded learning.

It was noted that, as of 1st August 2021, the AEB was devolved for South Yorkshire residents. A total of £30.6m had been committed through grants to South Yorkshire based FE Colleges and local authority providers and contracts for provision worth £10.2m had been let for procured provision. All grant agreements and contracts had been issued and the initial commissioning phase was complete.

The Board was informed that more work would need to be done to analyse data on performance as the academic year got underway but there was some positive messages emerging from analysis of delivery plans which showed a shift in provision consistent with the Authority's priorities. Examples of these was contained within the report.

Members noted that the process of commissioning devolved AEB had had an impact on the pre-devolution provider base and this had resulted in representation being made to the Mayor, MPs and members of the ESE Board about the outcomes of the procurement exercise. Devolution was the catalyst for change in approach and outcomes and some degree of disruption was an inevitable consequence.

Where disruption was unavoidable the challenge was to ensure the disruption was explained, justified by the outcomes and mitigated. Officers were working with local authorities to maximise the benefits of the provision that had been commissioned and to develop signposting to help new learners and others to find new programmes.

As the initial commissioning process was over, the Mayor had requested that a 'Lessons Learned' exercise be carried out. This would be done in the autumn and a progress report would be brought to the Board in October.

The Board was informed that following the allocation of the grant funding and the end of the procurement exercise the Authority had approximately £400k AEB unallocated. It was proposed that an analysis of gaps in skills and

employability provision was carried out to inform the approach to allocating the remaining funds. A report would be brought to the October meeting of the Board.

Cllr Turpin commented that whilst it was agreed that there was a need for progression of learning pathways, it was still important to keep the non-regulated pathways open for the most vulnerable and excluded people and expressed concern that left-behind people may face further barriers to progression.

R Harvey replied that the MCA shared those concerns and wanted to ensure that community-based provision remained available. It was felt that the delivery procured through the commissioning process would still be in place and the key initial rungs on the learning ladder would still be available.

Cllr Turpin commented that the impact of the slow process and delays had made the situation difficult in Sheffield. Information on the final tender process had not been received until July which had put a lot of pressure on officers and had left no time to consult with communities. He also expressed disappointment with the loss of funding to the WEA and felt that removing that funding and providing funding to out of town organisations would lead to a competitive market which would cause problems for the community provision organisations.

R Harvey replied that MCA officers had worked with grant holders for more than a year so organisations could have had conversations with potential partners about what their supply chains looked like.

All nine grant holders had been involved in discussions around what the grant would look like and what it would buy. Alongside the grant process there had also been a procurement process which was open to providers across the country and was judged on the merit of the service provided.

In terms of the grant holders and their supply chains, it was entirely up to them to decide who to bring in to provide the best service for their learners.

Cllrs Lelliott and Cheetham felt that the process had worked well in Doncaster and Barnsley and that fair, open and transparent process had been undertaken.

Cllr Turpin provided suggested questions regarding the lessons learned.

RESOLVED – That the Board:

- i) Note the positive changes in the balance of provision across South Yorkshire that was expected to come out of the devolved approach.
- ii) Note the steps being taken in conjunction with local authorities to stimulate collaboration between providers and accountability for delivering in a place.
- iii) Note the need to step up transition arrangements to support learners.

- iv) Note the proposal for a 'Lessons Learned' exercise.
- v) Approve the approach to undertake an analysis of any gaps in skills and employability provision to inform and develop proposals to make full use of AEB and maximise provision for residents.

8 **South Yorkshire Jobs Fund**

A report was considered which provided an update on programme development activity and work undertaken for South Yorkshire Jobs Fund and sought approval to revise the delivery and funding model and also approval to progress the development of a full business case.

The Board was reminded that in March 2021 it had approved funds of up to £1.2m for a test and learn intermediate labour market model to support activities under the People strand of the Authority's Renewal Action Plan.

The working title for the model would be the South Yorkshire Jobs Fund which would cover:

- 6 months wages for eligible participants based on National Living Wage plus National Insurance contributions for up to 30 hours per week.
- £1,500 payment incentive to employers for support covering costs such as administration, support and in-house training.

The Board had been informed previously that the Department for Works and Pensions would provide a secondee to work specifically with key stakeholders to develop and prepare for the launch of the South Yorkshire Jobs Fund. The secondee had now been allocated on a provisional 6-month appointment with an extension agreement with DWP if needed.

Since the approval in March, a steering group had been formed with membership including representatives from partner organisations. Clear Terms of Reference had been developed to set out the roles, responsibilities and accountability of the steering group. The approved Terms of Reference were attached as an appendix to the report.

The Board was informed that, following consultation with members of the steering group, it was agreed that a revision of the original programme design and funding model was required to ensure maximum outcomes were achieved. Full details of the revised programme design, funding model and delivery options were contained within the report.

The report recommended that a delivery partner/partners were outsourced to undertake a business support role, this would be done through an open procurement process. It was confirmed that local authorities could tender for this if they so wished and officers would ensure they were aware of the opportunity.

With regard to Section 10 and climate change implications, Cllr Turpin suggested that businesses who were not having a big impact on the climate

change emergency should be prioritised.

It was thought that this could be worked into the due diligence process where the quality of employers would be looked at to ensure a high standard of work placements. It was agreed that this should not detract from the main aim of getting people back into work.

RESOLVED – That the Board:

- i) Approve the recommended programme design as detailed in section 2.12 – 2.10 of the report.
- ii) Approve the revised funding model as detailed in section 2.11 of the report.
- iii) Approve the recommended delivery option as detailed in Appendix C to the report.
- iv) Approve progression to full business case development.
- v) Agree timescales for project development based on delivery option 1 as detailed in the report.

9 Skills Support for Redundancy Update

A report was submitted which provided an update on initial activity undertaken to consider the skills support requirement for people being made redundant in South Yorkshire in preparation for them finding new roles.

Members were reminded that the ESE Board had approved the recommendation for the MCA to lead some joint work with partners in order to explore how to improve preparedness for dealing with redundancy and develop a coherent offer across the area. It was agreed that the work should consider:

- Intelligence gathering
- Co-ordination and joint working in developing support
- Ways to secure better outcomes for individuals and employers who were coming through the process
- Understanding how the gap in support for employers with 15 or less employees could be stemmed.

Following the decision of the ESE Board, contact was made with regional partners to bring them together to consider the best way of taking the work forward. An initial meeting was held in July covering the background to the meeting, anticipated impact from the end of the furlough scheme and examples of responses from other areas including their successes and challenges and the approach required in South Yorkshire. Full details were contained within the report.

The meeting concluded with the agreement to form a Task and Finish Group, the first priority being to undertake a thorough review of what support and good practice was already in place.

Further activity would cover the challenges outlined in the report including a focus on the region's own skills response and how to address the gap in funding to support training in advance of being made redundant.

A draft forward plan had been developed which was attached at Appendix A.

The Board agreed that the landscape was very uncertain at the moment. There was still too much unknown and there was a need to be able to move quickly and not be too prescriptive.

RESOLVED – That the Board:

- i) Note the activity undertaken to date.
- ii) Note the agreements reached and plans for future activity.
- iii) Request local authorities CEO's continue to support the process by raising with their executive teams.
- iv) Request a short note from Cllr Sir Steve Houghton to Dave Barrow at DWP to secure their support for this initiative.

10 **Skills Advisory Network (SAN) Verbal Update**

A Foulkes gave an update on the work of the Skills Advisory Network (SAN).

The Board was informed that the SAN would next meet in ten days time, on the agenda would be apprenticeships and traineeships. Guests would be attending the meeting to talk about work on the apprenticeship hub and NEET provision and also provision for 16-24 year olds. There would be feedback from the Secretary Heads Group and the Colleges Group.

In the pipeline was discussions around the LSIP Trailblazer and the Strategic Development Fund.

The SAN were just finalising their Work Plan. They would be looking at the impact of Covid-19 on specific sectors and age groups between September and January and would report back to the Board in due course. From November they would be looking at level 3 take up at 18 and above and also the green economy with employer colleagues.

At the next meeting there would be feedback from Chambers and the Federation of Small Businesses to receive much more information on SMEs and micro-businesses.

Cllr Lelliott asked that the Rotherham BMC LEAF event was considered within the SAN planning of events and A Foulkes confirmed that this had already formed part of discussions.

The Chair thanked A Foulkes for the update.

11 **Any Other Business**

None.

In accordance with Combined Authority's Constitution/Terms of Reference for the Board, Board decisions need to be ratified by the Head of Paid Services (or their nominee) in consultation with the Chair of the Board. Accordingly, the undersigned has consulted with the Chair and hereby ratifies the decisions set out in the above minutes.

Signed

Name

Position

Date

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Education Skills and Employability Board

19 October 2021

Proposal for a Lessons Learned Review of Adult Education Budget Commissioning

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Purpose of this report:	Policy 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:
Helen Kemp, Director of Business and Skills

Report Author(s):
Rob Harvey
rob.harvey@southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk

Executive Summary

The proposed evaluation will allow stakeholders to feedback on some of the under-pinning decisions that have shaped how the authority has engaged with providers. It is important that the Lessons Learned process draws out feedback for change that the Authority should consider ahead of any future commissioning of the Adult Education Budget (AEB).

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

AEB represents a significant investment in the skills of South Yorkshire's residents. It is also a new responsibility for the Authority to manage. For future commissioning it is important the authority seeks to learn where improvements could be made as this will improve the adult skills offer available.

Recommendations

The board approves the proposal to appoint a third party to conduct the evaluation as outlined in Option 3.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

None

1. Background

- 1.1 The process of devolving AEB has broken new ground for the Authority. The Authority has brought in significant changes including a substantial rationalisation of the provider base. This change has meant many providers who had been delivering AEB to South Yorkshire residents are no longer able to continue. The Authority is conscious that this will have had a significant impact on providers who relied on AEB funding, leading to premises being closed and staff facing redundancies.
- 1.2 The proposed evaluation will allow stakeholders to feedback on some of the under-pinning decisions that have shaped how the authority engaged with the provider market and how the commissioning and procurement processes were managed.
- 1.3 The scope of the proposed work is important. There are some areas which should not be in scope for review. The review will not look at the individual outcomes of the procurement process. The procurement process was designed to comply with the Authorities procurement policies as well as relevant national procurement regulations. This should not be seen to be an opportunity for providers who did not receive a contract or grant to challenge that decision. Instead, the evaluation will identify recommendations on how the next round of AEB engagement, commissioning and procurement should be managed by the Authority.
- 1.4 The Authority wants to ensure that it is transparent about what it will do with the outputs of this process. The paper also discusses the need for objectivity in the process.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Firstly, there is a small amount of funding (£400,000 unallocated Grant funding and £40,000 unallocated under the separate Adult Level 3 offer) from the AEB budgets. Secondly, there is a possibility that providers awarded contracts through the initial process find themselves unable to meet the performance targets set out in their delivery plans. Thirdly, the demand for Adult skills from employers could change. This is potentially at odds with how we have engaged AEB providers. The Contracts and Grants that are in place are intended to last for three years (subject to appropriate provider performance), this was done to provide stability and to encourage providers to start to think longer term about their offer. This could create gaps in provision. All three of these factors mean that there is a possibility that the Authority could choose to commission further AEB provision this academic year.
- 2.2 The Authority wants to ensure that feedback from providers has been collected to inform any commissioning that may take place this academic year (2021/22).
- 2.3 The Authority has identified the following cohorts to consult with: -

Internal feedback

1. Internal teams within the Authority

Grant Side of Commissioning

2. South Yorkshire Based Grant Organisations (Local Colleges and Local LAs)
3. Providers previously working via Grant conditions who were excluded

Procurement Side of Commissioning

4. Providers appointed to the framework but who weren't offered an initial contract
5. Providers who were offered an initial contract

2.4 The scope of the work will be to seek feedback on the parameters set around commissioning.

2.5 Rather than being focused on elements of commissioning providers didn't like or agree with, the evaluation will be framed around encouraging recommendations for future AEB Commissioning: -

Grant Allocation Process

1. Should the Authority's position on restricting Grant Allocation to providers based in South Yorkshire be changed? If so to what?
2. The Authority decided to provide additional funding to Grant Providers specifically focused on delivery of priority provision – should this continue?

Procurement Process

3. The Authority's decision to not use OfSTED grading as a pre-qualification for potential bidders ensured that new providers, or providers who had undergone recent mergers were able to participate, it also reflected an environment where OfSTED had been unable to properly inspect providers. What should the minimum requirements for providers be in the future?
4. Smaller Organisations, (including the voluntary and community sector) – should the Authority do something different to support their participation such as setting lower minimum contract thresholds in future procurement?
5. Some of the informal feedback we have received has been on the perceived high number of "out of area" providers securing contracts - could the Authority do something different in future to support SY based providers, whilst still running a robust and competitive procurement process?
6. General feedback on the procurement process.

Service Transition

7. How could the Authority improve transition arrangements to support learners to access new providers in the future?
8. How could the Authority improve the effectiveness of Provider Onboarding?

Other Areas

9. The Authority is keen to keep providers who are on the procurement framework aware of how AEB is going. This will mean that these providers

are better able to propose appropriate services. Beyond using the mailing list that the Authority has established is there anything else providers on the framework would want us to do?

- 2.6 In addition to this evaluation on commissioning DfE requires that the authority conducts and submits an annual evaluation of AEB. The scope of this evaluation is set out in the MHCLG's National Local Growth Assurance Framework. This evaluation is submitted each January on the preceding year. SYMCAs first annual evaluation will be submitted in January 2023.
- 2.7 There are three options to be considered in terms of the actual delivery of the lessons learned evaluation: -
1. Conducted and directed internally by Authority Officers
 2. Conducted internally by Authority Staff but supported by and Task and Finish Panel led by Authority Staff but including provider stakeholders
 3. Conducted externally

This paper considers those three options below.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1 - Conducted and directed internally by Authority Officers

Officers from the Policy and Assurance team would work with the Education, Skills and Employment Commissioning team to deliver the evaluation through a mix of surveying and face to face focus group work.

3.2 There would be no cost to the work aside from the displacement of other work.

3.4 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

There is a risk that capacity constraints within both the Policy and Skills Teams would delay delivery of this work. It is unlikely to be delivered in the window needed to inform. There is also a risk that this approach would not be seen as objective by providers.

3.5 Option 2 - Conducted internally by Authority Staff but supported by an advisory panel

A small advisory panel (potentially including a member from key representative groups such as the South Yorkshire College Group, SCR Provider Network and the LA Officers Group) led by Exec Officers could provide advice on the design of the activity and the subsequent reporting. As with Option 1, the expectation would be that Officers from the Policy and Assurance team would work with the Education, Skills and Employment Commissioning team to deliver the evaluation through a mix of surveying and face to face focus group work.

3.6 There would be no cost to the work aside from the displacement of other work.

3.7 Option 2 Risks and Mitigations

Again, there is a risk around capacity constraints within the Policy and Skills teams would delay delivery of this work as outlined for Option 1. Establishing a Steering a Panel as well as conducting the work could delay the work further. There is also a

risk associated with the Authority giving control of the direction of the work to the Steering Panel.

3.8 Option 3 - Conducted externally.

The Policy and Assurance Team would commission a third party to deliver the work according to a Request for Quote specification based on this Board Paper. The value of the work would likely to be circa £15k and as such according to the Authority's Procurement Procedure Rules could be secured via obtaining a minimum of 3 competitive written quotes.

3.9 Option 3 is the only option that is fully compliant with the MCA's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The MCA's framework stipulates that the evaluation of MCA funded programmes and projects will be commissioned to ensure impartiality and transparency and that the management of the evaluation will be independent of programme delivery.

3.10 Option 3 Risks and Mitigations

There is a risk that a procurement process causes delays. There is also a risk associated with the Authority giving control of both the direction and the delivery of the work to the third party.

3.11 Recommended Option

Option 3.

4. Consultation on Proposal

4.1 Stakeholder consultation not appropriate for this decision.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The Policy and Assurance Team to commission the evaluation in accordance with procurement rules. Outcome of the evaluation to be used to inform any further commissioning in the 2021/22 academic year.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

6.1 A total of £20,000 has been identified from internal vacancy savings within the AEB management and admin budget. The usage of this is subject to relevant internal approvals regarding reallocating budget.

6.2 Any procurement activity would be delivered in accordance with our CPR's and the PCR regulations.

7. Legal Implications and Advice

7.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

8.1 None.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

9.1 None.

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

10.1 None.

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

11.1 None.

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

12.1 Currently we cannot see any implications, compromises or threats. However, the marketing and communications team will look to review and engage in any external findings provided by a third party. We will then be in a better position to offer further advice and guidance.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

None

Education Skills and Employability Board

19 October 2021

Skills Provision for residents with specific needs

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Purpose of this report:	Policy 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:

Helen Kemp, Director of Business and Skills

Report Author(s):

Helen George

Helen.george@sheffieldcityregion.org.uk

Executive Summary

Following the completion of the initial commissioning of devolved Adult Education Budget provision, the SYMCA Executive Team has begun to look at whether there are opportunities to improve the provision provided to help specific groups of residents to access adult education. The SYMCA Executive Team will pay particular attention to residents whose progression has been affected by changes to provision resulting from AEB commissioning. The SYMCA Executive Team would like to develop a proposal for an additional programme based on earlier programme proposals around support for disadvantaged learners and integration of early intervention to help residents at risk of long-term unemployment find work. A new costed proposal will be developed and brought back to the Board for approval.

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

Devolution of the Adult Education Budget has enabled SYMCA to commission provision which will better help residents develop skills to a higher level and in a way which supports skills demand from employers seeking to fill vacancies in our priority sectors. The SYMCA Executive Team wants all residents who need to access adult skills provision to make a smooth transition into the learning opportunities that have been commissioned. However, we know that some residents may need additional support. This proposal is for development of a programme that

will help to provide additional opportunities for certain groups of learners who need that additional support to progress in learning and enter employment.

Recommendations

That Board members approve development of an additional support and skills development programme.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

None

1. Background

- 1.1 SYMCA took over responsibility for £39.3m devolved AEB funding from August 2021. The Authority took a dual approach to commissioning provision along with an additional £2.79m funding for Level 3s for adults aged 24+, devolved to SYMCA as part of the Government's Adult Skills Offer.
- 1.2 In the first year of devolution, the SYMCA Executive Team has been working to ensure a smooth transition which supported stability in the region's FE Colleges and allowed the SYMCA Executive Team to focus on bedding in the new technical functions for which it now has responsibility – such as development of the funding and performance management approach and paying providers.
- 1.3 As we move beyond that initial commissioning, and with the new shape of provision in mind, the SYMCA Executive Team has started to review provision and to consider the join up between AEB funded provision and other skills and employment work and more widely with programmes in other areas. We also want to maximise opportunities in relation to groups of residents who need additional support to engage with learning, develop skills and progress into employment. This is in line with the approach set out in the Back to Work section of the RAP and includes commitments to provide support to key cohorts.
- 1.4 The SYMCA Executive Team would like to draw on work that it has previously invested in developing that we believe may now be required to provide additional targeted support to residents as a proactive move to put additional support in place. This is a good opportunity to provide additional support for learners who have unintentionally been displaced from existing learning programmes through the devolved AEB commissioning process. Feedback from local authorities and conversation with providers suggests some of these learners will find it particularly difficult to find appropriate alternative provision.
- 1.5 Significant time and effort have already been spent developing evidenced and robust business cases for proposals that spoke directly to key needs across South Yorkshire and from which residents could benefit. The SYMCA Executive Team would like to review those proposals with a view to re-casting them in the new post-pandemic and post- devolution context. The two key proposals are the Disadvantaged Learners Pilot which was developed initially with a focus on young care leavers, and the Early Integrated Employment Support for Claimants at Risk of Long-Term Unemployment proposal.

Disadvantaged Learners Pilot (Young Care Leavers)

- 1.6 Even before the pandemic, NEET rates across South Yorkshire were already higher than comparator areas in England, particularly among 18-24 year olds. Among certain groups – such as young females in Barnsley and Doncaster – rates were among the highest in the country with over 19% of young women in these areas NEET. Even though unemployment rates do not appear to have increased substantially as a result of the pandemic, there is still a concern that the disruption to education and ‘normal life’ for so many young people and their families is likely to have affected their employment chances.
- 1.7 This is likely to have been compounded by the decline in sectors such as retail and personal services and apprenticeship opportunities during the pandemic, affecting the groups of young people who would have made their first steps into employment within these sectors. Care leavers and those who face disadvantaged in finding good employment are likely to be doubly affected.
- 1.8 Through our procurement exercise, we have secured provision in each of the local authority areas to support hidden NEETS and we will want to pay attention to how well this provision supports those young people. But we need to act to ensure that there is sufficient targeted provision in place for the key groups who are most at risk of becoming NEET, which includes groups such as leavers of Alternative Provision and Care Leavers.
- 1.9 In 2015, the SYMCA Executive Team developed with stakeholders a proposal for a pilot valued at just of £1m Adult Education Budget to commission a programme of specialist employment and skills support within the existing Care Leaver pathway to increase the number of former relevant care leavers aged 19-24 participating in education, training or employment in the Sheffield City Region.
- 1.10 We would like to use this model as the basis for additional support for young people to consider whether revisiting a pilot of this sort would add value to and fill a gap in the mix of provision we now have in South Yorkshire.

Early Integrated Employment Support for Claimants at Risk of Long-Term Unemployment

- 1.11 Across the suite of employment programmes that are available to South Yorkshire residents to help them get into work (Kickstart, Restart, SCR’s South Yorkshire Jobs Fund), there is robust support for people who are relatively close to the labour market. Getting people who have become unemployed as a result of the pandemic into support which helps them move back into work as swiftly as possible has been a key priority for government, understandably as numbers have started to rise.
- 1.12 However, for unemployed residents with more severe and/or complex barriers to work, the system is still too often not delivering the integrated range and depth of support that these claimants need. The likelihood is that as a consequence of additional resources being made available to those who can move quickly back into work, those who need more help will have fallen even further behind.
- 1.13 The SYMCA Executive Team previously developed a proposition for a pilot programme aimed at cohorts of early intervention voluntary referrals of claimants with complex and/or severe barriers to work who are at high risk of long-term

unemployment. The programme was proposed for roll out from summer 2017 and would have picked up 4500 people in total at a cost of £13.14m (£8.95m financial and £4.19m in kind). Those costs were to be shared between the SYMCA Executive Team and central government.

- 1.14 This is the kind of intervention that the SYMCA Executive Team would like to put in place to support residents across South Yorkshire and help them into work. However, the context in which the pilot would be delivered has changed significantly since the initial work was done. Critically, no central government funding is available so if we are to take this pilot forward, a new SYMCA investment case would need to be developed.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The SYMCA Executive Team is not wedded explicitly to further development and delivery of either or both of these programmes exactly as previously articulated. While there is merit in considering both projects as ways of providing additional support to residents, it is conscious that funding and capacity issues may mean we need a different approach, either focusing on one or other of the proposals or bringing elements of the two proposals together. The final proposition will need to evolve to reflect devolved AEB, including the Test and Learn provision procured through Lot 4, or could also bring in other aspects such as sectoral priorities.
- 2.2 With the approval of the ESEB, the SYMCA Executive Team intends to develop and deliver a 2-year pathfinder programme targeting residents who may need additional support to engage and progress in learning and / or employment. The programme should draw on work done previously through the development of proposals as indicated above. Costings for the programme will need to be developed and brought to the Board for approval.
- 2.3 The following are the key milestones:
- Review of existing project proposals in the context of devolved AEB and wider changes within the skills system.
 - Development of a project proposal with delivery partner and in consultation with local authorities.
 - Recommendation's to the Education, Skills and Employability Board in January 2022.
 - Launch of the Programme no later than 1st April 2022.

One or more delivery partners will be procured.

- 2.4 Longer term, the SYMCA Executive Team will feed learning from this programme into our future AEB commissioning plans, making the need for this additional support temporary.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

Develop a costed programme proposal for approval by ESEB with a two-year delivery window from April 2022.

3.4 **Option 1 Risks and Mitigations**

Risk 1 – development time for the programmes takes longer than anticipated with a delay to the start of the programme and additional time when residents are unable to access support. Mitigation – the SYMCA Executive Team to ensure there is capacity in place to develop this programme. Option to extend the end date for the programme.

Risk 2 – failure to identify the target group which could most benefit from the programme, leaving residents without the support they need and potentially reducing take-up. Mitigation – the SYMCA Executive Team will consult with external partners in development of the proposition.

3.5 **Option 2**

Do nothing. Await final year data on AEB performance before reviewing gaps. This would mean developing additional provision after October 2022.

3.8 **Option 2 Risks and Mitigations**

Risk 1 – some learners who face additional barriers in the shift of provision may fail to find alternative provision and may fall outside the system.

Risk 2 – significant delay in reaching key target groups for provision

3.13 **Recommended Option**

Option 1

4. **Consultation on Proposal**

4.1 Significant consultation took place in development of the two projects for which proposals have already been developed. Additional consultation will be baked into development work around the new proposal.

5. **Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 Development work will be commissioned by the Authority in time for a recommendation to the ESEB in January 2022.

6. **Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice**

6.1 Any procurement activity will be delivered in accordance with our CPR's and the PCR regulations.

6.2 Currently, no budget has been identified for this work. A further paper will need to be presented and approved once funding and budgets have been identified.

7. **Legal Implications and Advice**

7.1 The general parameters of the Programme as described fall within the functions granted to SYMCA by the Barnsley Doncaster Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority (Functions and Amendments) Order 2020.

7.2 Delivery Partners must be procured in accordance with procurement law and SYMCA's contract procedure rules. If the indicative budget for the Programme is

below the threshold of £663,540 set for educational services in the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The procurement will remain subject to SYMCA's CPRs and a tender process must be carried out which must:

- i. Be run by a Procurement Professional
- ii. Use the full competitive tender process
- iii. Be appropriately advertised
- iv. Be undertaken using an appropriate electronic tendering system

If a waiver is sought as the value is over £100,000 it must be referred to the Mayoral Combined Authority.

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

8.1 None.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

9.1 This proposal will develop additional targeted support for those most at risk of being left behind due to gaps in provision in South Yorkshire. We anticipate that take up for the programme will be higher for females and those in the BAME communities than for the SY population as a whole.

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

10.1 No specific climate change implications resulting from this proposal for development of a programme proposal.

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

11.1 The programme proposal has yet to be developed. The proposal will make use of suitable ICT where appropriate and where necessary, delivery will consider the availability and accessibility of ICT for participants.

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