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Report To: Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board

18 June 2015

Lead Officer: Graham Hughes, Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment
Cambridgeshire County Council

Proposal for developing the City Deal Skills Service

Purpose

1. This report outlines proposals for a Skills Service for the Greater Cambridge area. The proposals have been produced by a working group consisting of Assembly and Board members.
2. The Skills Service will help to achieve the City Deal objective of promoting at least an additional 420 apprenticeships in key areas of need over the first five years of the deal and generally increase the employability of young people.

Recommendations

3. The Executive Board is recommended to:
 - adopt the model of the Skills Service and its governance described in this paper; and
 - request that officers establish it so that it can start work at the beginning of the next academic year (September 2015).

Reason for Recommendation

4. Creation of a Skills Service is one of the key outputs that partners have agreed as part of the City Deal. The Executive Board requested that a working group be set up to develop a proposal for the Skills Service and following two meetings of that group, the proposal contained in this paper has been developed.

The proposed Skills Service

5. Following discussion at the Executive Board meeting, a working group of Assembly and Board members have considered options for the proposed City Deal Skills Service. The group consisted of Cllr Tim Bick (Cambridge City Council), John Bridge (City Deal Board Member), Cllr Noel Kavanagh (Cambridgeshire County Council), Andy Williams (Astra Zeneca), Claire Ruskin (Cambridge Network), Anne Constantine (Cambridge Regional College), Neil Darwin (Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership), Anne Bailey (Cambridge Area Partnership), Graham Hughes and Lynsi Hayward-Smith (Cambridgeshire County Council).

6. The purpose of the service will be to improve the employability of all students in Greater Cambridge area schools and colleges through active engagement with employers. To deliver this, it will be measured on its tangible achievement of the following core purposes and will:
- sustainably develop students' careers awareness, particularly as it links with related subject choices;
 - facilitate opportunities to improve their employability and entrepreneurial skills;
 - work with schools, colleges, learning providers and businesses to close the gap between the necessary and available workforce;
 - focus on increasing the numbers of apprenticeship starts, particularly in the strategically important STEM sectors;
 - focus on improving gender diversity; including specifically the achievement of the initial target agreed within the City Deal;
 - focus on future business requirements.

The Approach

7. The Skills Service will enable schools, colleges and businesses to find each other in a way that is currently hit and miss and where contacts are unevenly distributed. For schools, it provides the chance to draw on new and additional resource that will inspire, inform and motivate students and it enables businesses to invest in the future workforce, future suppliers or future customers, and to contribute to community well-being and social cohesion. The benefits from participating are shared by schools and employers.

The Business Model

8. The Service will act as an integrator: facilitating connections between schools, colleges and employers in order to guide students from education into working life; designing curricula that fit business needs; gathering and sharing information on labour market trends and employer requirements; helping young people think more strategically about their futures; and providing activity programmes that offer students opportunities to improve their employability and careers awareness. The activities of the Skills service for primary and secondary schools as well as post 16 will be measured and evaluated in order to improve quality and impact and include the following:
1. Career fairs: Businesses will be invited to exhibit their company together with other businesses. Students will be able to freely engage and talk to the companies of interest, learning about different career paths offered and the concept of entrepreneurialism.
 2. Career carousels: A group of business will be invited to run workshops or discussion groups with the students in question. This provides an opportunity for students to learn about specific careers in more depth.
 3. Mock interviewing and CV writing events (primarily for older students). The goal is to ultimately increase their employability at the time of application.
 4. Subject related guest lecturers. Businesses visit a lesson, demonstrating how curriculum content is applied in their work
 5. Business trips: visiting workplaces to explore possible career paths. These trips will be organized by subject area.
 6. Work experience placements-the service acting as a brokerage.
 7. Mentoring Scheme with the service acting as a broker between adult volunteers and interested students

8. Partnership brokerage, supporting the formation of partnerships between schools and businesses.
9. Digital platform, a recently developed website will enhance and facilitate the process of connecting school and colleges with resources and opportunities to prepare for life after leaving school or college. It will enable business and local enterprise to promote their offer to students.
10. Partnerships, it is intended to work with a wide range of partners including business membership organisations, professional organisations and with charities with whom there are overlapping objectives like STEM team East, Business in the Community etc.

Resources

9. To operate effectively, the service will need the following roles and expenditure. The costs of these on an annual basis.

Role	Purpose	Annual cost (£)
1x Senior Business Manager	Focus on directing the programme and building links to schools/colleges	57,769
2x Business/Education development role	Focus on developing business relationships and engagement, retain and build business support	102,348
1 Business Intelligence co-ordinator	Focus on obtaining and securing business intelligence to drive the activity	46,102
1 x additional administrator Back office including, marketing, accounts and administration	Explore potential to share LEP existing back office functions	26,737
General overheads	Insurance/IT support/OP/payroll etc	11,000
Marketing		12,000
Total cost		£255,956

10. In the first year, the service will also require start-up costs which will include basic equipment such as laptops, phones, stationery. It is expected that those working in the service will operate flexibly and generally not have an office base so no costs for that have been included.
11. Funding for the service will come from a variety of sources. The Enterprise Partnership has agreed to contribute £50,000 per year. The County Council can contribute one post in kind valued at £50,000 and efficiencies by joining the service up with the existing Skills Service operated by the Enterprise Partnership will generate savings of £25,000. The net cost that it is expected will be funded by the City Deal pooled funding is therefore £130,956.

Management and Governance

12. It is proposed that the Service will be managed within the existing LEP Skills Service and it will link to the service in place in the North of the county with potential to share back office costs and a local team delivering.

13. It is proposed that overall accountability for the service will sit with the Executive Board which will receive regular reports on progress and set overall objectives. Routine monitoring of the progress of the service against the achievement of the core purposes will be undertaken by an Advisory Group comprising the City Deal Assembly sub-group members as listed in paragraph 5 above.
14. With the agreement of the Executive Board, the service could be up and running for the start of the next academic year (September 2015).

Implications

15. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered

Financial

The ongoing running cost of the service has been described in this paper. Commitment has already been given the Executive Board to the principle of funding the Skills Service at a net £125,000 per year for two years. In reality, the outputs from the service will build up over time and so to be truly effective, the service will need a longer period of time. It is assumed that this will be covered by future funding decisions of the Executive Board

Legal

As the service will be an addition to the existing LEP Skills Service, no legal implications are anticipated.

Staffing

It is proposed that staff will be appointed on an open competitive basis and there will be no direct implications on existing council staff.

Equality and Diversity

The Skills Service will aim to increase the life and employment chances of youngsters and so will have a positive impact on equality. As an explicit objective, it also plans to increase gender diversity in key skill areas (see paragraph 6).

Background Papers

No background papers were relied upon in the writing of this report.

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