

Executive Decision Report

Leicester Graduate City Project

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor

Decision to be taken on: 18th September 2020

Lead director: Mike Dalzell

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All wards
- Report author: Joanne Ives
- Author contact details: 37 2934
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

1.1 This report is seeking approval to deliver the Leicester Graduate City project funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), which will support both graduates and businesses with internship placements within businesses in Leicester.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To accept £840k from the European Social Fund (ESF) and agree to the City Council acting as Accountable Body in relation to it;
- 2.2 To approve a City Council match funding contribution of £309k from existing budget resources;

3. Supporting information including options considered:

- 3.1 A successful application has been submitted for funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) to deliver the Leicester Graduate City project. This will provide internship opportunities at local businesses (less than 250 employees) for graduates from the two city-based universities. The project has been approved and a contract received.
- 3.2 The total project cost is £1,680,166 and the ESF grant approved is £840,043. The table below provide details of the contributions from each match funding partner.

Partner	Match	ESF	Total
City Council	£309,288	£409,501	£718,788
De Montfort University	£213,899	£198,965	£412,864
University of Leicester	£316,897	£231,617	£548,514
Total	£840,083	£840,083	£1,680,166

- 3.3 The project proposal has been led by Leicester City Council and developed as a partnership with De Montfort University and the University of Leicester, building on the existing joint working around graduate retention.
- 3.4 The project runs from 1st March 2020 to 28th February 2023 and will deliver:
- Specific and bespoke quality engagement with local SME businesses to create student internships
 - Increased awareness amongst students of the opportunities available within the city for employment upon graduation. This will contribute more widely to the need for higher level skills levels within the local economy and increase the

- likelihood of graduates staying in the city when they finish their studies
- Collaborative working between SME's and the city universities to identify solutions to technical and professional skills gaps in the area.

3.5 The project will support a minimum of 96 SME's and create 72 internship opportunities.

3.6 The City Council's £309k match funding contribution is from existing staff costs.

4. Details of Scrutiny

Not applicable

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The report proposes that the Council should act as accountable body for the ESF funding, with the Council contributing match funding as part of the partnership project.

Colin Sharpe, Deputy Director of Finance, ext. 37 4081

5.2 Legal implications

This report is seeking approval for the recommended option set out in point 2. The legal implications are given in relation to the recommended option.

Under the Executive Scheme of Delegations, executive decisions in relation to 2.1 and 2.2 are reserved to the City Mayor.

Legal services should be consulted to draft a partnership agreement in relation to the match funding with the University partners and the relevant agreements in relation to the allocation/distribution of funding with the various partners.

Shireen Eliyas
Qualified lawyer
Ext 4479

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are no significant climate change implications associated with the project detailed in this paper. However, as part of this project there may be opportunities to provide further sustainability-related benefits to the city through engaging with SMEs working in environmental business sectors, and with graduates with sustainability skills where appropriate.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

5.4 Equalities Implications

ESF project applicants are required to deliver their services in-line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (as defined in the Equality Act 2010).

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The proposal seeks approval to deliver the Leicester Graduate City project funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) which will support both graduates and businesses with internship placements within businesses in Leicester. There are no direct equality implications arising from the report, however engagement with local SME businesses and raised awareness amongst students of the opportunities available within the city is likely to have positive impacts in terms of advancing equality of opportunity, leading to increase in labour market participation and development of skills.

Surinder Singh Equalities officer 37 4148

6. Background information and other papers:

None

7. Summary of appendices:

None

8. Is this a private report (if so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a "key decision"?

Yes

10. If a key decision please explain reason

Acceptance of European Social Fund revenue to value of £840k.