

Decision Report: 13 November 2023

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, GREEN GROWTH, INVESTMENT AND ASSETS

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CREATE GROWTH PROGRAMME

Purpose of the report

1. To secure approval to deliver the Create Growth Programme expansion across the County.

Background

Policy background

1. A key ambition of the **Nottinghamshire Plan** is to strengthen businesses and create more good quality jobs. In order to help deliver this, the Council's **Economic Transition Plan** identifies three main priorities for the "Business" theme:

- Ensure business can access the support they need to grow and thrive.
- Support businesses to build resilience and prepare for the future.
- Seek opportunities to continually improve our business support offer through partnership working.

2. Under the current uncertain economic climate, the Business and Enterprise team are considering various ways of supporting local businesses. This includes securing external funding to offer specialist advice and generate further investment into the county.

The Create Growth programme funding.

3. As part of ensuring the three priorities identified in the Economic Transition Plan are met, the Business and Enterprise team work closely with a range of partners and business support providers. An opportunity has arisen to partner with Nottingham City Council who have bid to deliver on the Create Growth programme (Big Sky) that focusses on supporting Creative businesses.

4. The proposed consortium members are Nottingham City Council (Lead), Nottinghamshire County Council (NottsCC), NBV Enterprise Solutions Ltd (NBV), Nottingham Trent University (NTU), The Creative Quarter Company (CQC), The University of Nottingham (UoN), D2N2 LEP and Marketing Nottingham (MN).

5. The objectives of the Create Growth Programme are to:

- Support high-growth potential creative businesses to become investment ready outside of London, by developing businesses' knowledge, skills and access to finance.
- Increase the number of investors willing to invest in creative businesses outside of London, by educating and developing investor networks.

Information

6. The first expression of interest submitted in August 2022 was unsuccessful. Those successful local area partnership were awarded approximately £1.3 million in grant funding to deliver the business support package across three financial years. In addition to this, businesses across participating local area partnerships will have the opportunity to benefit from up to a £7 million fund for finance support. Local area partnerships will also benefit from the investor capacity building activities developed through the programme.

7. This project was reopened to a second round and the previous consortium agreed to resubmit an expression of interest, which was then invited to progress to a full bid. The detailed bid proposal was submitted to DCMS in September 2023 and we have been notified that this has been successful. The total project value submission was £520,000, with the County Council receiving a specific allocation of £49,700 to cover our existing staff cost over the duration of its participation between January - December 2024.

8. The County Council will help provide the pipeline of businesses from the wider geographic area into the core programme. A business advisor will be assigned who will work with businesses from across the wider County area. Of the 32 businesses identified (to fulfil the 20% growth sustained after 3 years target), ten are identified as wider Nottinghamshire (outside the greater Nottingham city area). This resource will be key to getting the wider pool of businesses (159 out of the 600 in D2N2) as well as identifying those with growth potential and investment readiness to be part of this proposal.

9. The funding package has been shaped so that there will be a finite revenue amount awarded to the County and we can use it as we wish e.g. 100% of one adviser, 50% of two or part of a few officers' time. We have currently not agreed any match funding and therefore have only agreed for one post, which would be fully funded through this programme, if successful.

10. The County Council has been working closely with NTU recently, on their Mansfield and Ashfield campuses, and there is a potential for some of the programme to be delivered locally if demand requires. There is also scope to help secure space for businesses in some of the enterprise centres across the region, either directly or with local district and boroughs – for example Digital Worksop.

Next Steps

11. The consortium will need to accept the offer and Nottingham City Council would be the accountable body. The County Council would need to enter into an agreement to claim the staff costs back. If contract approved, delivery would start in January 2024 (subject to securing the necessary Cabinet approval).

Other Options Considered

2. The Council had the option to explore direct delivery as the primary partner. However, it was deemed more favourable and logistically feasible to adopt a consortium approach for advancement as also expected by funder (DCMS). This decision is based on the Council's current

limited dedicated business support officer/s with the specialised expertise necessary to cater to the specific demands of the business-focused audience and depth of content.

3. The other option considered was 'do nothing'. This was discounted on the basis that the opportunity will enable the council to support businesses across the county which would not be available within this funding.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. Delivering Create Growth Programme will support the Nottinghamshire Plan for a healthy, prosperous, and greener Nottinghamshire, in particular the delivery of Ambition 5: Building skills that help people get good jobs, and Ambition 6: Making Nottinghamshire a great place to live, work and visit, Ambition 7: Attracting investment in infrastructure, the economy and green growth. The revised Framework also fulfils objectives outlined in the Council's Economic Transition Plan.

Statutory and Policy Implications

5. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

6. There are no financial costs to the Council arising from the recommendations of this report. It is worth noting though that the County Council will receive funding of up to £49,700 which will fund the staffing resources required to deliver the project as detailed within the body of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management approves:

- 1) the County Council entering into an agreement with Nottingham City Council for the delivery of the programme.
- 2) the acceptance of the grant for implementation and delivery.

Wayne Bexton

Service Director for Green Growth, Investment and Assets

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Joelle Davies, Group Manager, Tel: 0115 977 4857 joelle.davies@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (LPW 16/11/2023)

7. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management by virtue of their terms for reference.

Financial Comments (PAA29 14/11/2023)

8. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 6 of the report. The staffing resources required by the Council to deliver the project will be met from the £49,700 allocated from the total project sum of £520,000. There will be no additional costs to be met by the Council.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

Authorisation

Cabinet Member	Signed	Name Councillor Keith Girling	Date 11th December 2023
Corporate / Service Director	Signed	Name Derek Higton	Date 11th December 2023