

28 July 2021

Agenda Item: 10

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE

PROGRESS ON THE EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS BROKERAGE PLATFORM

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - a) provide an update on the procurement of an Employment and Skills Brokerage Platform
 - b) to seek approval for the preferred contractor and
 - c) request approval of funding from the Growth and Economic Development Initiatives budget

Information

2. Launched in September 2020, the COVID-19 crisis Economic Recovery Plan outlines an ambitious plan to supercharge the Nottinghamshire economy in the wake of COVID-19. Nottinghamshire County Council recognised its role in helping repair the immediate economic and social damage brought about by the pandemic. The Council instigated swift and decisive action to ensure a post COVID-19 Nottinghamshire will be more digital, greener and resilient to both current and forthcoming challenges.
3. Some information relating to this report is not for publication by virtue of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 because the information relates to the financial and business affairs of the bidders. Having regard to all the circumstances, on balance the public interest in disclosing the information does not outweigh the reason for exemption because divulging the information would add a limited amount to public understanding or the issues but would significantly damage the commercial position of the bidders. The exempt information is set out in the exempt appendix.
4. At the COVID 19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee on 14 December 2020, a report was approved to undertake the procurement of an online platform for career management and transition. The platform will be an accessible solution focused to support Nottinghamshire residents, improving their access to training and employment opportunities.
5. As part of the Council's Covid-19 Crisis Economic Recovery Strategy, and in preparation for the end of Government's furlough scheme on 30th September 2021, we aim to deliver a flexible digital platform to help businesses recruit local talent, support local residents to access employment, matching their skills and training with job opportunities.
6. Externally funded provision is available in Nottinghamshire to help eligible residents on a one to one basis in their employment journey. Whilst there is access to generic job sites

these do not offer the level of support we require from this platform including, useful and engaging content designed around the needs of an individual entering or returning to work, meeting their career aspirations and finding job opportunities / training and support to access the vacancy.

7. A project working group was established made up of
 - Economic Development Officer
 - Lead Technology Partner ASDMs and Place
 - Senior Communications and Marketing Business Partner (Digital)
 - Chief Technology Officer
 - Head of Engagement and Partnerships at Futures our jointly owned skills and employment social enterprise.
8. We published our requirements via Digital Market on DOS, [Nottinghamshire digital employment and skills brokerage platform - Digital Marketplace](#).
9. The outcome of the process is detailed in the exempt appendix.

Next steps

10. Subject to approval and to meet the timelines provided in the specification the next steps are:
 - To progress the contract with the preferred supplier (within procurement guidelines)
 - Agree and gain sign off of budget for the project availability (set up costs, on-going support and maintenance), in-house resources, overall ownership
 - Finalise procurement / owner to sign off contracts - Identify and assign internal resources
 - Engage with a pre kick off meeting with supplier
 - Engage with Futures on continued support and development of wrap around support.

Reasons for Recommendations

11. The Council recognises the need to be agile in its approach, to enable a switch from recovery to response mode in the event of further lockdowns or to respond to potential issues caused by the ending of Government support packages.
12. Due to confidential financial figures, some information relating to this report is not for publication. This information is set out in the exempt appendix.
13. The Employment and Skills Brokerage Platform will enable Nottinghamshire residents to understand the opportunities right on their door step. The platform will enable employers to engage with local residents. It will provide access to live jobs, apprenticeship and courses with integrated feeds enabling the Council to connect growth sectors to employment opportunities. Ultimately it will be a single place for career opportunities to connect our employers and residents.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. 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

15. It is requested that funding is made available to the project from growth and economic development initiatives budget as outlined in the exempt appendix in 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Economic Development and Asset Management Committee:

- 1) Approve the procurement that has been undertaken and support the preferred contractor and spend as outlined in the exempt appendix.
- 2) Approve funding from growth and economic development budget in 2021/22 2022/23 financial years.
- 3) Confirm agreement for officers in Growth and Economic Development to move forward to contract with the preferred contractor and continued engagement with the project team to bring the project to fruition.

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Matthew Neal, Service Director for Investment and Growth
Place Department
Matthew.Neal@nottscc.gov.uk
0115 977 3822

Constitutional Comments (KK 29/06/2021)

16. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Economic Development and Asset Management Committee.

Financial Comments [RWK 28/06/2021]

17. The report informs committee on progress in implementing an employment and skills brokerage platform. Costs are shown in the exempt appendix for 2021/22 and 2022/23. These costs will be met from the budget for Growth and Economic Development Initiatives for which a sum of £465,036 is included in the revenue budget annually.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- *Update on youth employment support in Nottinghamshire*, Report to COVID 19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee on 14 December 2020 (Available [here](#)),
- *Update on the economy and progress with the economic recovery action plan 2020-2022*, Report to COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee, published on 25 January 2021 (Available [here](#))
- *Progress on the Covid-19 Crisis Economic Recovery Action Plan*, Report to Economic Development and Asset Management Committee, published on 16 June 2021 (Available [here](#))

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

- All