

**Programme Management Group**

**10<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**Further Digitising of the College post Covid–19 – Brockenhurst College - Item 6a**

Programme Management Group members are asked to:

**AGREE** that the LEP enter into a legal agreement with Brockenhurst project and allocate £100,000 from the Local Growth Fund for this project.

**1. Summary**

- 1.1. The LEP has established a process whereby promoters of schemes that have been provisionally allocated Local Growth Fund (LGF) should submit completed full business cases to the Programme Management Group (PMG) for further consideration. For schemes seeking less than £3m LGF, PMG has delegated authority to approve the allocation of this funding directly to projects.
- 1.2. Brockenhurst College submitted an Expression of Interest to support further digitising of the College post Covid - 19 in July 2020 and this has been progressed to the due diligence stage. The total cost of the scheme is £210,000.00 with Enterprise M3 funding of up to £100,000.00 sought.
- 1.3. The further digitising of the College will deliver much needed investment in IT equipment and associated software to enable the development of remote/blended teaching and learning capability and also safeguard the growing engineering provision.
- 1.4. In April 2019, a LEP boundary change came into effect which saw the New Forest local authority area move from Enterprise M3 to Solent LEP. At this time, an agreement was put into place that the EM3 LEP would continue to work with and support Brockenhurst College with the important projects that the EM3 had invested in until the conclusion of the Local Growth Fund in March 2021 One of these projects was the Pathway to Virtual Campus project which enabled all of the Colleges within the region to continue to deliver learning opportunities during lockdown. The further digitalisation for the College investment will build upon this original project, enabling the College to upgrade software and equipment and ensure that all students have access to learning both through the taught curriculum and if future lockdowns occur.

**2. Further Digitalisation for the College**

- 2.1. This project will support the Colleges response to new measures put into place following the Covid – 19 pandemic. It will enhance access to MS Teams for Communication with staff and students and the delivery of online/remote teaching that will dovetail into a blended learning curriculum and fully exploit the functionality of MS Teams in particular regard to online marking and the development of online courses. The project also focusses specifically upon the needs of the engineering student provision. Critical hardware and software to support the Colleges strategy is required to deliver comprehensive qualifications within this provision and respond to a local and national skills gap. There are currently 200 places offered at the College within this department.
- 2.2. The investment made by the EM3 LEP and Brockenhurst College will enable the College to purchase 316 computers and mobile devices. Currently the students are using outdated software and computers which struggle to connect to modern and complex software.

- 2.3. This project will also enable the College to develop a new and more flexible timetable that reduces the requirement for staff and students to be onsite 5 days per week and will have associated benefits from reduced car travel to and from the college. It will enhance the Students personal skills for example learning to work on their own and the technological Skills required for the new way of working that is developing in a post Covid workplace.
- 2.4. In addition, it will enable the ongoing development of a blended learning curriculum which is essential in a post Covid learning environment. It will further develop the engineering function and attract new students which will benefit local employers. It is hoped that by building this provision that it will attract future investment and sponsorship from local employers and support the safeguarding of jobs at the College.

### 3. Further Digitalisation of the College - Scrutiny

- 3.1. Due to the relatively low level of funding sought to deliver this project. Rachel Barker and Jeannie Satchell reviewed the Expression of Interest and raised comments and questions with the scheme promoter who responded to these in writing.
- 3.2. A question was raised with the College about student numbers and the associated benefits from this project that can be reported to Government. The College have confirmed that in line with funding allocation, evidence of which was submitted, the student numbers for 2020/21 will be 2,793 excluding Apprentices. The Curriculum plan has allocated 161 Apprenticeship places bringing the total to 2,954 for this academic year.
- 3.3. The College were asked to confirm that match funding has been allocated to this project. This has been received and we are satisfied that this funding is allocated within the College budget.
- 3.4. A request was made to the College to supply evidence of quotations for this project to ensure that it remains within budget. The two main suppliers for IT will be Academia and Ebuyer and all quotations include VAT
- 3.5. The EM3 LEP has received assurance that the project is sustainable and that a monitoring strategy and device management strategy is in place. All Students are expected to adhere to the Colleges IT Strategy and devices are logged, tagged, and labelled for security

### 4. Funding

- 4.1. The total cost of the scheme identified in the Expression of Interest is £210,000 with LGF of up to £100,000 being sought. All funding is expected to be drawn down in this financial year.

£m	2019-20	2020-21	Total
<b>Funded Scheme</b>			210,000
<b>EM3 LEP Funding</b>		100,000	100,000
<b>Brockenhurst Match Funding</b>		110,000	110,000
<b>Total</b>			210,000

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 5.1. The internal review concluded that this project is viable and recommends that a grant should be approved.

Criteria	Assessment	Comments
Strategic Fit	Good	The Enterprise M3 plays a key part in the UK's successful digital economy. This project will equip Brockenhurst to deliver access to digital skills and increase the number of people with high level digital skills. It will also enable our future workforce to be work ready.

Criteria	Assessment	Comments
Low Carbon	Very good	Through evaluation of the curriculum there will be less travel to College
Digital	Very good	The project will enable more access to blended learning and an increase in modules relating to key courses e.g. Engineering. It will support the upskilling of both staff and students and enable them to develop key skills required for a post Covid – 19 learning and work environment
Impact of the Scheme	Very Good	The project will have a huge impact on the educational development of Students. If circumstances dictate a local lockdown the College will still be able to support learning programmes though enhanced access to software and the ability to enable less well-off students to become connected through access to hardware
Percentage of Match Funding	Very good	Match funding exceeding 50% is guaranteed for this project
Past Performance of Scheme Promoter	Very good	Brockenhurst College has experience in delivering schemes of this nature and a track record of delivering Enterprise M3 projects.

5.2. The Programme Management Group is asked to **AGREE** that the LEP entering into a legal agreement with Brockenhurst College and award the College £100,000.00 from the Local Growth Fund for this project.

Jeannie Satchell, Head of Careers and Enterprise  
2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020