

Enterprise M3 Programme Management Group

15th October 2020

**EM3 Colleges – Digital Response to Covid 19 –
Brooklands, BCOT, Guildford part of the Activate Learning Group,
Sparsholt, Alton – part of HSDC and FCOT – Item 6c**

Programme Management Group members are asked to:

AGREE that the LEP enter into a legal agreement with EM3 College Consortium to deliver the Digital response to Covid – 19 project and allocate £2,200,000 from the Getting Building Fund (GBF) for this project.

1 Summary

- 1.1 The LEP has established a process whereby promoters of schemes that have been provisionally allocated the Getting Building Fund (GBF) should submit completed full business cases to the Programme Management Group (PMG) for further consideration.
- 1.2 The EM3 Colleges submitted a Business Case in August 2020 in response to a request from Government for projects that would support a post Covid recovery. PMG agreed that this Business Case should be progressed to the due diligence stage. The total cost of the scheme is £2,933,000 with Enterprise M3 funding of up to £2,200,000 sought.
- 1.3 This project focusses on the EM3 Colleges response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It builds upon the successful Pathway to IOT project that the EM3 LEP funded 2 years ago and is designed and planned as a phase 2 approach to this original project.
- 1.4 It is widely acknowledged that our educational establishments needed to respond rapidly to accommodate an unprecedented situation this year as the country locked down. Colleges have already reported that our previous investments in e learning platforms and new technology in our colleges allowed them to quickly respond to the lockdown allowing students to access learning from home. Since then work has been carried out to highlight gaps and ways of improving the quality of learning and inclusiveness. This work has highlighted gaps in the ability to provide education as some students did not have technological access either in the form of internet access or hardware. The former is noted by the Department of Education who are working with the Careers and Enterprise Company in this regard. The latter is addressed via this project. It also highlighted the need to modernise delivery and the outcome of this project will address this.

2 EM3 Colleges – Digital Response to Covid - 19

- 2.1 This project is focussed on the Colleges adapting to a post Covid – 19 educational world. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted several areas that the Colleges need support with. There is a requirement for digital upgrades across the different Campus sites so that learning can be delivered in Covid bubbles. The grant will also enable outdated elements of the College network to be upgraded and this will ensure that learning can be delivered in these bubbles. Most importantly the Colleges need to be in a position and equipped to switch rapidly to remote learning if required.
- 2.2 A combination of approaches will be undertaken that will be College dependent. These include the creation of mobile hubs, the increase in stock of mobile technology for loan to disadvantaged learners and the delivery of new technological qualifications and the development of learning and support platforms with integrated solutions that will enable remote learning and working.

- 2.3 It is vitally important that additional equipment in the form of cameras and recording equipment is purchased. This equipment will be installed in classrooms so that students who are absent from lessons due to illness or shielding can still gain access to the learning environment.
- 2.4 Lastly, the purchase of software to enable remote enrolment, click and collect catering and lesson registration for Public Health England notification – track and trace will mean that the Colleges are mobilising their ability to deliver either on a face – face basis or remotely.
- 2.5 The funding will be used in the following way:
- The creation of mobile hubs and the increase in stock of mobile technology providing for access to machines outside of conventional IT rooms or normal points of service delivery and so prevent movement around each campus and provide for learning in bubbles. This also provides a secondary benefit of a stock of machines for disadvantaged learners without digital access to use if colleges or an individual college is required to implement future periods of lockdown.
 - The Purchase of hardware allowing the colleges to specialise in a digital theme or provide for the delivery of the first two modules of new technical qualifications
 - The development of online learning and support platforms including desktop virtualisation to standardise best possible learner experience
 - The purchase of Network or WIFI equipment to safeguard or extend remote learning or extended campus coverage
 - The placement of cameras, recording equipment and digital interactive screens into lecture theatres and some seminar rooms to record lessons to ensure that learners who are temporarily required to shield don't miss lessons and fall behind.
 - The purchase of enhanced security provision to facilitate mobile technology.
 - The Implementation of integrated technology solutions to improve efficiency and effectiveness of staff when remote working e.g., remote enrolment software
- 2.6 The EM3 LEP has received verbal confirmation from the Principals of all 6 Colleges that the match funding of 25% for this project is available should this project application be successful. Normally we would seek 50% match for projects, but PMG and the Board have recognised in the past the financial position of colleges and approved projects with a lower match. We would recommend that this lower match be agreed particularly given the pressing need to ensure that students continue to acquire the skills they need for their working life at this current time.

3 EM3 Colleges – Digital Response to Covid-19 – Due Diligence

- 3.1 AECOM have reviewed the project and have concluded this to be a low risk project with clear strategic outputs which addresses the need to further develop the digital infrastructure within the six colleges in response to Covid-19.
- 3.2 AECOM have identified areas for further clarification and the scheme promoter (Sparsholt College) has already responded to some of these, both in writing and through e-meetings with the project team at AECOM and on behalf of the Consortium. The following areas are outstanding and further information requested.
- AECOM have recommended that each college provides actual costs/quotes for the purchase of equipment. ***This has been requested***
 - AECOM have recommended that a clear outline is provided that shows the allocation of funding for each college and their outputs in relation to this project be tabled – ***This has been requested***

- AECOM felt that more detailed clarification was required around the development of commercial courses. – ***This has been requested***
- AECOM have recommended that a letter confirming match funding and board approval for this project is in place. – ***The Colleges have been asked for this information***

3.3 ***All areas for clarification will be addressed prior to awarding the contract.***

3.4 It is anticipated that this project will be completed by August 2021. The tendering process will start in October 2020 and hardware, software, network kit, services and online platforms will be purchased and in place by March 2021. The learning platforms will be developed during the October 2020 – August 2021 period.

4 Funding

4.1 The total cost of the scheme identified in the business case is £2,933,000 with GBF of £2,200,000 being sought. The Colleges have committed the maximum of match funding available during this time.

College Match Funding	Capital	Revenue (match)
<i>Sparsholt College</i>	121,001	39,500
<i>Farnborough College</i>	153,333	7,500
<i>Alton College</i>	29,000	1,000
<i>Brooklands College</i>	58,000	2,000
<i>Basingstoke College</i>	153,333	7,500
<i>Guildford College</i>	153,333	7,500

£m	2020-21	Total
Funded Scheme	2,933,000	2,933,000
EM3 LEP Funding	2,200,000	2,200,000
College Match Funding	733,000	733,000
Total		2,933,000

4.2 The key outputs from this project are that 930 Apprentices will be given remote learning access over the next 5 years. The project will improve the learning experiences of over 7000 level 2-5 learners. The grant will support the provision of equipment and platforms to deliver both now and in the event of a future lockdown and that 6 commercial courses offering learning access to 300 employed learners can be developed.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 AECOM have concluded that once the recommended actions have been undertaken that this project is viable and that a grant should be approved.

Criteria	Assessment	Comments
Strategic Fit	Very Good	The Enterprise M3 plays a key part in the UK's successful digital economy. It recognises that its Colleges play a key part in this success by equipping young people for the future of work. This is a vital project that will enable learning to take place in these challenging and unusual times and in the event of another lockdown
Low Carbon	Good	Remote learning will reduce travel and the purchasing of energy efficient hardware will support this priority for the EM3
Digital	Very good	This project focusses on the ability to deliver lessons both in college and remotely and to enable young people to continue to learn in the difficult circumstances that they find themselves in post Covid. It also means that absence no longer means missing vital lessons linked to exams and successful qualification gain
Impact of the Scheme	Very Good	The project will have a huge impact on the ability to deliver the curriculum in a changing and challenging educational environment
Percentage of Match Funding	Fair	All of the Colleges have experienced financial difficulty due to Covid-19 and have had to direct finances into areas that they had not envisaged before the pandemic. Therefore, the match is a realistic reflection of their ability to participate in this project and bring benefit to their individual establishments
Past Performance of Scheme Promoter	Very Good	The Pathway to IOT was delivered on time and within budget

5.2 The Programme Management Group is asked to **AGREE** that the LEP enters into a legal agreement with the EM 3 College Consortium and award the Colleges £2,200,000 from the Getting Building Fund for this project.

Jeannie Satchell
Head of Careers and Enterprise
7th October 2020