

Enterprise M3 Programme Management Group

15th October 2020

Capital funding for the Inspiring Science for All Digitisation Project– Item 6d

Programme Management Group members are asked to:

Approve an additional award of £260k from the Local Growth Fund to fund an extension to the Inspiring Science for All Project subject to available funding.

1. Background

- 1.1 This extension to the Inspiring Science for All project (currently referred to as the Inspiring Science for All Digitisation project) emerges from a request from Enterprise M3, in a letter sent 9th June 2020, to existing LGF projects. Part of the rationale behind that letter to already contracted projects was to maximise fast economic impact, deliverability, efficient use of team capacity and maintenance of high standards of due diligence, by building on existing contractual arrangements and partner relationships.
- 1.2 The letter asked for proposals to extend and/or accelerate current projects which would have a fast impact on restarting the local economy as it emerged from lockdown and would help stimulate a rapid longer-term recovery and renewal.
- 1.3 This project is a response to that letter and represents a practical, timely and swift implementation of digital infrastructure for the Winchester Science Centre to improve access, reach and learning to the Science Centre and STEM.
- 1.4 This paper now brings forward the detail of the Digitisation of the Winchester Science Centre describing the project, its costs, outputs and an overview of due diligence considerations.
- 1.5 The grant request of £260k is 48% of the existing project value of £548,000 which would take the total Enterprise M3 Grant to £808k.
- 1.6 Participation in STEM is widely recognised as being highly important for national economic competitiveness and greater upward social mobility. There is a strongly-held belief that our future economy and workforce will need more and more diverse young people to enter into and continue with STEM.
- 1.7 Enterprise M3 have previously reported a skills shortage as evidence in the Strategic Economic Plan 2018-30. We highlighted the need for more effort to be put into providing vocational education particularly in STEM subjects.
- 1.8 The work with the Winchester Science Centre has centred on building young people's science capital and generating interest in STEM at an early age in order for young people to continue onto to further and higher education in STEM.
- 1.9 This digitisation project focusses on implementing digital infrastructure creating a complete digital STEM experience to maximise opportunities for all audiences to discover and engage with STEM.

- 1.10 The main purpose of this project is to support the digital learning of young people as they engage with STEM. The Science Centre aims to work closely with some of the local schools creating modules of learning that can be studied at home and form part of the course curriculum. There is also an opportunity to further expand this element and work with schools outside of the local area. The digital infrastructure will support this ambition in the long term.
- 1.11 The digitisation has three main elements which are:
- Creation of a new website to support digital learning
 - Creation of a supporting application
 - Purchase of equipment to support live and interactive content creation
- 1.12 The website can be used as a stand-alone medium for people who are unable to visit the Science Centre and will provide an inspiring, “hands on” virtual experience that the visitor will feel has been tailored to their individual interests. The website will also act as “book ends” to the experience of a physical visit to the Centre, offering a vastly-improved customer journey through the booking process, including online ticketing and support to ‘plan your visit’ thus supporting and adhering to social distancing regulations.
- 1.13 The application will be integrated with the online platform to provide additional information about the exhibits and the science behind them for those wanting to explore further.
- 1.14 The purchase of equipment will allow the Science Centre to create and support live content creation over the long term and further develop their Science@Home initiative launched during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.15 The Science@Home initiative consisted of a range of online events and engagement. Over 12 weeks, the Science@Home initiative reached over 1 million people and one of the intended outcomes for this project is the development and continuation of this initiative to widen accessibility and participation with the Science Centre and STEM.
- 1.16 The initiative was also utilised by schools as part of their home-schooling lesson plans and one of the intended outcomes of the project will be increased engagement with schools to support in-school teaching as well as out-of-school engagement.

2 Project costs

- 2.1 The Digitisation project is costed at £260k which represents a 48% of the existing £548k Enterprise M3 invested in the Inspiring Science for All Project.
- 2.2 The cost breakdown is as follows:

Research & Development	10,000
Website	70,000
STEM content development	50,000
Kids’ virtual play space	20,000
Schools’ module	30,000
Basic app to support exhibition	30,000
Additional app functionality	20,000
Improved ticketing through Merac	20,000
Equipment to support live, interactive content	10,000
Total	260,000

- 2.3 Costs comprise capital costs, contractor costs, app development, implementation of all schemes including awareness raising and promotion and staff costs for monitoring and evaluation.
- 2.4 Match funding for the total project cost of £1,033,000 is 27% (£225,000) with opportunities for further fundraising to be undertaken. The Science Centre has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and are unable to offer further match funding themselves. There are currently two applications submitted to the National Lottery Community Fund and Ecclesiastical and the Science Centre are awaiting the outcome of the decision.

3 Project outputs

- 3.1 The following project outcomes are expected
- Widening and Increasing participation in STEM through the website and application
 - Creation of learning modules with schools to support learning
 - Improved visitor experience including social distancing considerations
 - Continuation of the Science@Home initiative which has previously reached 1m visitors.
 - Increase in engagement and quality of the Science@Home initiative within the first year to reach over 1.5m visitors and to increase in further years.
- 3.2 A final report documenting the project's achievements and the findings obtained in terms of impacts, along with an executive summary, will be submitted to EM3 after all the implementation and evaluation work has been completed.

4 Due Diligence

- 4.1 The extension proposal was reviewed internally by the Governance and Assurance Manager (acting PM for the Project) and the Director – Operations.
- 4.2 The proposal had detailed information on the milestones, outputs and outcomes as well as timeline for expenditure. It was felt that the costs were reasonable for a project of this nature and the timeline of implementation was sound.
- 4.3 Due to the information provided and relatively small capital cost it was agreed that the internal review was sufficient for the recommendation to be brought before the PMG.
- 4.4 The Applicant's previous performance has been excellent, and they have been responsive to requests for information, monitoring reports and have a good track record of delivering capital projects on time and to budget. The existing Inspiring Science for All project was delivered and full expended in line with their original application.
- 4.5 It should be noted by the Group that appropriate protections within the legal agreement will be put in place to ensure that any further costs would be met by the Science Centre and all other protections for the Enterprise M3 Grant including withdrawal or repayment of the grant will be present.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1 This project is an exciting opportunity to support the Winchester Science Centre in engaging young people in STEM through digital means reaching over 1.5m people. The

digital nature of the project aligns with Enterprise M3's focus on digital infrastructure as well as our focus on closing the skills gap and increasing participation in STEM.

- 5.2 Subject to approval, the project can commence immediately and all capital spend will have been completed by March 2021 with monitoring and evaluation taking place over a further 3 years post completion.

Criteria	Assessment	Comments
Strategic Fit	Good	
Low Carbon	Fair	The Project is not a low carbon project however there would be some indirect benefits in terms of online visits and engagement rather than travelling to the Science Centre.
Digital	Very good	This project is mainly focussed on creating a digital infrastructure that will support digital learning and engagement with STEM.
Impact of the Scheme	Good	The project will have a big impact on engagement with STEM. The aim is to engage with 1.5m people with plans for this to be grown in future years. In the long term, it is hoped that this early engagement will lead to a reduction in the skills gap as more young people enter into STEM learning and work.
Percentage of Match Funding	Fair	The Science Centre are providing in total 27% match funding. I have been in discussions with the Science Centre and have explored the possibility of additional match however they have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and could not provide further investment themselves. Should further match-funding through grant bids to the National Lottery Fund and Ecclesiastical be successful the Grant amount could be reduced in line with Enterprise M3's standard legal agreements.
Past Performance of Scheme Promoter	Very Good	The Science Centre have been responsive throughout the Inspiring Science for All project providing information when requested and have achieved full spend on the original project. The original Outputs and outcomes were achieved and launched to time.

- 5.3 In conclusion, **it is recommended that the Programme Management Group APPROVE a further £260k for the Inspiring Science for All project subject to available funding.**

Jordan Tame
 Governance and Assurance Manager
 7th October 2020