

Report to Accountability Board	Forward Plan reference number:
Date of Accountability Board Meeting: 18th November 2016	
Date of report: 15th November 2016	
Title of report: Amendment to Grant Agreement: Mid Kent College	
Report by Louise Aitken, LEP Skills Lead	
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1. Purpose of report

To seek Accountability Board (the Board) approval for an amendment to Mid Kent College Round 4 project for a Transport and Logistics Skills Hub which was awarded £82,000 by the Board in June 2016.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the following amendment to the Mid Kent College project that was awarded £82,000 of Skills Capital Funding to purchase equipment to deliver a Transport and Logistics Skills Hub:
- 2.2 To **approve** the change to the delivery location of the Transport and Logistics Skills Hub from a local business premises, (Alan Firmin Ltd, Kemsley Fields Business Park), to Kent County Council's Swale Skills Centre. This is with the expectation that original outputs will still be delivered or exceeded.
- 2.3 This change is subject to final arrangements to be agreed to the satisfaction of Mid Kent College, Alan Firm Ltd and Kent County Council.

3. Background

- 3.1 The original bid from Mid Kent College intended to deliver the Transport & Logistics Skills Hub in partnership with Alan Firmin Ltd (hereafter known as Firmins) to provide education and training for the transport and logistics industries within the Kent and Medway area using specialist facilities located at the Firmin headquarters based in Swale.
- 3.2 This partnership was formed as a direct result of Firmins raising concerns on behalf of the sector regarding skills shortages, recruitment challenges and a desire to improve the profile of the industry as a career option for young people under the age of 25.
- 3.3 To be based in Swale, the project aimed to develop the partnership by creating a dedicated training facility that will serve the skills needs of the transport and logistics industries in the locality, Kent and across the region. The Transport & Logistics Skills Hub was intended to be

operated by MidKent College, with Firmins still supporting curriculum development with sector insight and providing the physical operating space for training delivery. Firmins will still play an instrumental role in accessing the industry and providing the route for work experience opportunities for the Sector Based Work Academy elements. They will also work to develop and deliver the CPD Programmes for the sector. An MOU will be signed to this effect.

3.4 The project was intended to support 4 key objectives:

1. Support transport & logistics companies based in the immediate area of Swale and the surrounding areas of Kent & Medway for training and up-skilling.
2. Address current skill shortages identified by Firmins and other local transport & logistics companies
3. Raise the profile of the transport and logistics industries as distinct and attractive career paths for young people
4. Provide qualification pathways through level 2 to 7 and will include Apprenticeships

3.5 In the intervening period since the approval was given by the Board, the partnership have re-considered the proposal to locate the Transport and Logistics Skills Hub at Firmin's site in Sittingbourne They have identified an alternative location in Sittingbourne at Kent County Council owned Swale Skills Centre. As this is owned by the local authority, there are fewer risks and vulnerabilities than would be the case with a private sector host. Additionally, the Swale Skills Centre is an established facility and offers training for sectors such as engineering so there is a clear fit and added value.

3.6 Kent County Council has given support to relocation pending agreement from East-Kent College (which will also deliver at Swale Skills Centre). This has been secured, with Mid Kent and East Kent College having agreed the relocation at a meeting between each Principal at a meeting with Kent County Council on 4th November 2016. This has been confirmed by Kent County Council and that it fits with current plans to develop a technology centre building at the Swale Skills Centre in partnership with Canterbury and Mid Kent College. Therefore if the Board approves this amendment, a final agreement will be secured and put in place with all parties as soon as possible so that this project can proceed.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 This project is being funded from the Skills Capital Programme which is part of the Local Growth Fund. The change requested by this paper does not impact on the total allocation made in 2016/17. There is no cost implication to this change. Although the categories of spend may differ, there is no material difference to the overall financial commitment from the Skills Capital Programme.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 All approved allocations are required to enter into a Grant Agreement with the Accountable Body, which contains the obligations for monitoring and reporting, which will allow for updates to be received going forward. The proposed change set out in this

paper does not alter this requirement, but will require the wording of the agreement to be amended to reflect the changed location.

6. Staffing and other resource implications

6.1 None

7. Equality and Diversity implications

7.1. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when a public sector body makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

7.2. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

7.3 The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

8. List of Appendices

8.1 None

9. List of Background Papers

(Any request for any background papers listed here should be made to the person named at the front of the report who will be able to help with any enquiries)

Role	Date
Accountable Body sign off	
On behalf of Margaret Lee	