

For Information Item: SELEP CV19 Recovery Funds Update

Executive Summary

1. Overview

- 1.1. In 2020, Strategic Board (the Board) approved the use of £4.4 million of Growing Places Fund to establish two Covid-19 (CV19) Recovery Funds, one to develop skills across the region and one to provide business support to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).
- 1.2. Service providers were procured in Quarter 4 2020/21 to deliver six individual and targeted 12-month projects, three supporting skills development and three supporting SME recovery. All six projects were set-up in Quarter 1 2021/22 and are now well underway, delivering support on the ground against agreed timescales, key performance indicators (KPIs) and outcomes.

2. Summary of update:

- 2.1. This report provides the Board with a high-level summary of each project together with an update on delivery progress to date.
- 2.2. The projects within the Skills CV19 Recovery Fund are:
 - Innovative Solutions to Training Barriers (£375,000) – on hold, to be considered under Agenda Item 3
 - COVID Recovery Academy (£300,000)
 - Digital Skills Programme (£279,960)
 - The Digital Bridge (£1,045,000)

There is an additional £20,000 of funding remaining, again this is being considered under Agenda Item 3.

- 2.3. The projects within the Business Support CV19 Recovery Fund are:
 - Starting and Succeeding in Business (£565,000)
 - Adapting with Digital (£750,000)
 - Supporting the Visitor Economy (£1,050,000)

3. Rationale for update

- 3.1. Service providers were contracted in April 2021 and following the launch of the full CV19 Recovery Funds Programme on 27 May, each has been working individually to begin the roll-out of their project(s).
- 3.2. It is timely to provide Board with an update on activities and project progress against spend and KPI profiles. A dashboard has also been developed and is provided in Appendix A. This will be updated and shared with future updates throughout this financial year.



Further Information

4. Update 1: General update

- 4.1. The full programme of support was launched at the end of May, with the targeted areas of focus remaining well-aligned with the needs of individuals and businesses looking to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. These are 12-month projects and are expected to conclude in Quarter 1 2022/23.
- 4.2. Roll-out of the projects preceded the UK's exit from the third lockdown by several weeks, making it timely in that the actual provision of support activities has coincided with both the opening up of the hardest hit sectors and the end of the furlough scheme.
- 4.3. During the roll-out period, parameters for project outputs were agreed alongside delivery timelines, and cost and KPI profiles. Evidence required to demonstrate delivery in line with contracted requirements was mapped out. The data collection opportunities for each project were also discussed and agreed, ensuring compliance with General Data Protection Regulations.
- 4.4. Support provided to an individual or a business will typically take place over a period of several weeks, so achievement of KPIs is expected to increase and peak in the latter stages of the programme. The impact of that support may then take several more weeks or months to materialise. For example, the registration of a new business or the employment of a newly trained individual.
- 4.5. Data collection and project impact evaluation will continue throughout and beyond the activity end-date, to capture and report on the longer-term benefits of the programme.
- 4.6. The CV19 Funds Contract Officer who was recruited in April received another job offer and left the role at the end of August. Management of the individual contracts therefore now sits with the SELEP Skills lead and Business Development Manager. Additional resource from within the existing Secretariat staffing establishment will be diverted to assist covering this role and prioritisation of tasks is currently being managed by the senior managers of the team. The treatment of any potential uncommitted spend on this programme is being considered under Item 3 of the agenda.
- 4.7. Currently there is £395,000 of funding that is not under contract. The contract for the 'Retraining for digital roles' project was £20,000 less than the amount allocated and the £375,000 allocated to the 'Innovative solutions for training barriers' has not yet been put out to contract. This had not yet been fully defined in terms of outcomes and outputs and had been delegated to the SELEP Chief Executive Officer. The treatment of any potential uncommitted spend on this programme is being considered under Item 3 of the agenda.

5. Update 2: Skills CV19 Recovery Fund Projects

5.1. COVID Recovery Academy:

- 5.1.1. The COVID Recovery Academy is delivered by Shaw Trust / Ixion and is offering fully funded training support for 1,002 people recently unemployed or redundant due to the impact of COVID-19. There is a focus on sectors recruiting including construction, logistics, health and care, manufacturing and food production.
- 5.1.2. Shaw Trust have a dedicated webpage and have developed marketing materials to promote the programme. Promotion has also included stands in

local shopping centres and attendance at events. Additional funding was provided by Essex County Council for this programme so marketing in Essex features the Essex County Council logo.

- 5.1.3. 52 referrals have been received to date with 31 enrolments onto training and 3 people have been supported into employment. It is anticipated that numbers will increase now that the summer period is over, and furlough is ending. Meetings have been set up with project leads and Job Centre Plus and other relevant programmes such as Restart.

5.2. Digital Skills programme:

- 5.2.1. The Digital Skills Programme is delivered by Tech Talent Academy and will provide 200 individuals with training in areas such as software, data, cyber and cloud skills. There is a particular focus on females and other unrepresented groups to improve the diversity of the digital sector, although increasing requests have been received from males in the area who will also benefit from training.
- 5.2.2. Tech Talent Academy have a dedicated webpage and have developed marketing materials to promote the programme. The first training is underway. A webinar is planned soon in collaboration with SELEP's Digital Skills Partnership to ensure awareness of these fully funded training opportunities and entry to jobs.
- 5.2.3. 74 referrals have been received to date and case studies are in development to help showcase what the programme is doing and the difference it is making to individuals. An example case study from another geography is at <https://techtalent.academy/women-in-software-academy-chelseas-story>. Links are also in place with the Department for Education Digital Bootcamps to ensure alignment (Tech Talent Academy delivers Bootcamps elsewhere in the country).

5.3. The Digital Bridge:

- 5.3.1. The Digital Bridge is delivered by We are Digital and offers basic digital training to 1500 people and equipment and / or internet access to 800. This includes online training sessions, tablets and / or data and SIM cards.
- 5.3.2. We are Digital have a dedicated webpage and have developed marketing materials to promote the programme. There is a dedicated phone number. The first training is underway and devices and SIM cards have started to be allocated to individuals.
- 5.3.3. 303 referrals have been received to date, 62 people have a one-to-one booked ahead of training and 99 are booked in for webinars. 46 tablets and 6 SIM cards have been allocated and case studies are in development to illustrate how the programme is helping as well as what a barrier lack of kit and connectivity can be. As with all programmes, meetings have been set up with Job Centre Plus colleagues and other national programmes such as Restart.

6. Update 3: Business Support CV19 Recovery Fund Projects

6.1. Starting and Succeeding in Business, and Adapting with Digital:

- 6.1.1. WSX Ltd. launched an online portal for both projects on 27 July, allowing businesses to register for either scheme and access online events, one-to-one support and videos. To date, 121 businesses have applied to access the support, one third of which have come through as referrals from the Growth Hub, and 79 businesses to date have attended a course or event.
- 6.1.2. An information pack and marketing collateral has been produced for both projects and shared with Area Growth Hubs and other interested, intermediary organisations. Events are being promoted through a variety of channels, including the South East Business Hub and social media platforms.
- 6.1.3. The 100% grant opportunity that both projects offer, open to businesses completing a minimum number of hours of online support activities, will go live on 18 October.

6.2. Supporting the Visitor Economy:

- 6.2.1. The Revi-VE 100% Grant Scheme for the South East Visitor Economy was launched on 15 July and the application window was open for four days, including a weekend.
- 6.2.2. 330 applications were received, which significantly exceeds the circa. 150 grants available given the size of the grant funding pot and maximum grant value of £3,000. However, several applications have been withdrawn and some have been rejected. To date, 12 grants have been awarded (meaning the business has made the required purchase), a further 42 applications have been approved and the rest are still being processed.
- 6.2.3. Once the first wave of applications has been fully assessed, the project will determine whether a second application window is needed.
- 6.2.4. Most applications received represent businesses in events and hospitality; many are requesting funds for outdoor equipment and website development. The average grant value being applied for is £2,500. It is also noted that there is a fair and reasonable spread of applications across the SELEP geography.
- 6.2.5. Element 2 of the project is now being initiated with key partners, which will engage and network 80 plus organisations and businesses to develop visitor economy reboot campaigns scheduled to launch in early 2022.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1. Updates on delivery of the programme will continue throughout this financial year. An update will also be provided at the SELEP AGM on 3 November, which will include case studies to showcase impact on the ground.
- 7.2. Information on the funded projects can be found on the [SELEP](#) and [South East Business Hub](#) websites.



8. Comments from the Accountable Body

- 8.1. The Accountable Body has entered into contracts with each of the selected suppliers, on behalf of SELEP, to support delivery of each element of the Programme. A small proportion (£7,425) of the overall £4.4m of funding allocated was defrayed in 2020/21 to support the procurement activity; the remaining funds are held in an earmarked reserve to support the contracts, and the associated monitoring activity.
- 8.2. There is circa £450,000 currently uncommitted across the Covid-19 Business Support and Skills programmes; the Accountable Body will continue to hold this funding in the earmarked reserve until required and the necessary governance is in place. This is discussed under Agenda item 3 for the Board to determine if uncommitted funding on the existing Covid-19 programme can be diverted to the secretariat budget, for carry forward into the 2022/23 budget. This will be subject to Accountability Board approval.

9. Appendices, Supporting Documents and Previous Decisions

- 9.1. Appendix A – SELEP CV19 Recovery Funds Dashboard September 2021
- 9.2. Strategic Board Agenda pack setting out the Skills COVID-19 Recovery Fund:
https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2020/08/SELEP-Strategic-Board-Agenda-Pack_Sept-2020.pdf (page 6)
- 9.3. Strategic Board Agenda pack setting out the COVID-19 Business Support Fund:
https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2019/11/SELEP-Strategic-Board_Oct-20_Agenda-Pack.pdf (page 5)
- 9.4. Accountability Board Agenda pack setting out the award agreement and delegated authorities for the Skills COVID-19 Recovery Fund:
https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2019/09/Accountability-Board-Agenda-Pack_Sept-20-WITHOUT-confidential-appendix.pdf (page 250)
- 9.5. Accountability Board Agenda pack setting out the setting out the award agreement and delegated authorities for the COVID-19 Business Support Fund:
<https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2020/07/Agenda-Document-Pack-16.10.20-WITHOUT-CONFIDENTIAL-APPENDICES.pdf> (page 85)
- 9.6. Strategic Board Agenda pack, for information item providing an update on the CV19 Recovery Funds:
https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2019/11/SELEP-Strategic-Board-Agenda-Pack_Dec-2020.pdf
- 9.7. Strategic Board Agenda pack, for information item providing an update on the CV19 Recovery Funds:
<https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2020/10/SELEP-Strategic-Board-Information-Items-Pack-June-2021.pdf>
- 9.8. [Decision report as published for Accountability Board 15 December 2020](#)
- 9.9. For further information please contact Jo Simmons, Business Development Manager (jo.simmons@southeastlep.com) or Louise Aitken, Skills Lead (louise.aitken@southeastlep.com).



PROJECT	VALUE AND SPEND TO DATE	ACTIVITIES TO DATE	KPIs AND PROGRESS TO DATE	RAG RATING															
<p>Starting and Succeeding in Business</p> <p>WSX Ltd: Business Support</p>	<p>£565,000</p> <p>£113,000 (20%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Registration portal launched ✓ 28 businesses attending pre-start and start-up courses to date ✓ Plus 36 hours of 1-2-1 support provided to date 	<table border="1"> <caption>Grants awarded</caption> <tr><th>Metric</th><th>To date</th><th>Target</th></tr> <tr><td>Grants awarded</td><td>~120</td><td>~120</td></tr> <tr><td>Business safeguarded</td><td>~50</td><td>~50</td></tr> <tr><td>Businesses created</td><td>~10</td><td>~120</td></tr> <tr><td>Businesses engaged</td><td>~20</td><td>~300</td></tr> </table>	Metric	To date	Target	Grants awarded	~120	~120	Business safeguarded	~50	~50	Businesses created	~10	~120	Businesses engaged	~20	~300	<p>Green</p>
Metric	To date	Target																	
Grants awarded	~120	~120																	
Business safeguarded	~50	~50																	
Businesses created	~10	~120																	
Businesses engaged	~20	~300																	
<p>Adapting with Digital</p> <p>WSX Ltd: Business Support</p>	<p>£750,000</p> <p>£150,000 (20%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Registration portal launched ✓ 51 businesses attending digital awareness event, webinars and DNASix workshops to date ✓ Plus 33 hours of 1-2-1 support provided to date 	<table border="1"> <caption>Grants awarded</caption> <tr><th>Metric</th><th>To date</th><th>Target</th></tr> <tr><td>Grants awarded</td><td>~100</td><td>~100</td></tr> <tr><td>Businesses safeguarded</td><td>~300</td><td>~300</td></tr> </table>	Metric	To date	Target	Grants awarded	~100	~100	Businesses safeguarded	~300	~300	<p>Green</p>						
Metric	To date	Target																	
Grants awarded	~100	~100																	
Businesses safeguarded	~300	~300																	
<p>Supporting the Visitor Economy</p> <p>Visit Kent: Business Support</p>	<p>£1,050,000</p> <p>£210,000 (20%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Revi-VE 100% Grant Programme launched ✓ Grant applications being processed ✓ Development of VE network for re-boot campaigns 	<table border="1"> <caption>Grants awarded</caption> <tr><th>Metric</th><th>To date</th><th>Target</th></tr> <tr><td>Grants awarded</td><td>~15</td><td>~150</td></tr> <tr><td>Organisations engaged</td><td>~15</td><td>~80</td></tr> </table>	Metric	To date	Target	Grants awarded	~15	~150	Organisations engaged	~15	~80	<p>Green</p>						
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PROJECT	VALUE AND SPEND TO DATE	ACTIVITIES TO DATE	KPIS AND PROGRESS TO DATE	RAG RATING
<p>COVID Recovery Academy</p> <p>Shaw Trust: Skills</p>	<p>£1,045,000*</p> <p>£209,000 (20%)</p> <p>*£100K ECC / £945,000 SELEP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 52 referrals, 31 enrolments ✓ 3 into jobs ✓ Marketing & promotion including events ✓ Registration and referrals underway ✓ Dedicated web page ✓ Team in place to deliver 		<p>Green</p>
<p>Digital Skills Programme</p> <p>Tech Talent Academy: Skills</p>	<p>£279,960</p> <p>£55,992 (20%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Marketing and promotion ✓ 74 referrals ✓ First training taking place ✓ Dedicated webpage ✓ Webinar planned with SELEP DSP 		<p>Green</p>
<p>The Digital Bridge</p> <p>We Are Digital: Skills</p>	<p>£300,000</p> <p>£69,547 (20% + first payment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Marketing and promotion ✓ 303 referrals ✓ First training taking place, 52 tablets/ SIMs allocated ✓ 161 attending webinars or 1:1 ahead of training 		<p>Green</p>