

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

OFFICER EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD (Non Key)

The following decision was taken on 16th July 2019 by the Director of City Growth.

Date notified to all members: 24th July 2019

Officer Non-Key decisions are not subject to call-in.

1. **TITLE**

Authorisation to enter into delivery contracts, accept cash match from partners and make payment of grants to SMEs in furtherance of delivering the RISE Enhancement Project.

2. **DECISION TAKEN**

That the Director (City Growth) authorises Sheffield City Council to:

- Enter into delivery partner agreements with the Universities to deliver their element of project activity.
- Accept a cash match contribution from the University of Sheffield (£248,353) and Sheffield Hallam University (£247,173) towards project delivery costs.
- Enter into a contract with the successful bidder following an OJEU procurement process to appoint a Delivery Partner.
- Run a grant programme where grants of up to £2,500 are issued to SMEs across the SCR once they employ a graduate.

3. **Reasons For Decision**

The preferred option is to authorise SCC to progress within the expected delivery timetable and ensure the partnership can deliver an up-scaled RISE Enhancement Project to maximise the outcomes for the region. Approval of the recommendations will allow SCC to:

- Provide a secure financial basis to increase the number of local SMEs realising business benefits from the recruitment of graduates.
- Build on the success of a unique support programme across SCR by providing a 3 year programme proactively targeted to increase graduate recruitment within SMEs, create sustainable graduate level jobs and overcome barriers to business growth.
- Ensure a smooth transition and continuity of business support on offer across SCR from the existing RISE project to the new RISE Enhancement programme.
- Assist 283 SMEs across the City Region to offer graduate level employment opportunities.
- Support 198 unique SMEs to appoint graduate employees
- Deliver 113 net additional graduate level jobs.

4. **Alternatives Considered And Rejected**

Do Nothing

If SCC does not receive approval to enter into Grant Agreements with both Universities

and to receive match funding, there can be no RISE Enhancement Project and the project will not continue as the final cohort of the current contract has already been delivered.

- There are no similar projects within Sheffield City Region that support SMEs to appoint graduates into full-time jobs.
- Market failures would persist as individually many SCR SMEs do not have the capacity to run a comprehensive graduate recruitment process to match their specific needs.
- The latent demand for graduate recruitment advice and support which is deemed a barrier to growth for SME's would remain unaddressed.
- Graduate retention rates would be adversely affected with negative productivity and economic growth implications.

Do Less

It is a requirement of the European Structural & Investment Funds being awarded that we have match funding from both universities to form the whole budget for this project. If we are not able to claim the European Funding, then we would have to significantly reduce the scale and remit of the programme.

- Smaller scale project would mean fewer businesses supported, meaning fewer jobs created and less business growth.
- The lack of available support would negatively impact on the reputation of RISE.
- Value for money would be adversely affected as the model relies upon agglomeration of SME demands and benefits from operating at a level where graduate recruitment and assessment processes can be run more effectively and efficiency through economies of scale.

Delay

If there is a prolonged delay there may be a significant break in delivery between the cessation of the current RISE programme and the start of delivery of the new RISE Enhancement Project. Steps would need to be taken to manage expectations of SME enquiries and ensure referrals to alternative support during the interim period.

5. Documents used in making decision:

The report of the officer.

6.1 Any conflict of interest declared by any Executive Member who is consulted by the Officer when making the decision

None

6.2 Any dispensation granted by the Head of Paid Service

None

7. Respective Director Responsible for Implementation

Director of City Growth