NORTH OF TYNE COMBINED AUTHORITY

Delegated Decision Report
22nd March 2019

Subject: Investment Fund Update and Funding Approvals – STEM and Digital Skills Programme

Report of: Interim Director of Inclusive Growth

Portfolio: Economic Growth

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the publication of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and Digital Skills call documentation.

Recommendations

The Interim Head of Paid Service is recommended to approve the STEM and Digital Skills call documentation for publication.

1. Background Information, Proposals and Timetable for Implementation

1.1 In November 2018, the North of the Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) Cabinet agreed that further development work should be undertaken on a STEM and Digital Skills Programme which would deliver school-based interventions that will inspire more young people to pursue STEM subjects and get involved in the development of coding skills.

1.2 On the 12th March 2019, the NTCA Cabinet approved a budget of up to £1,250,000 over 3 years for the STEM and Digital Skills Programme and authorised the Interim Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Interim Mayor and portfolio holder for Education Improvement, to finalise and publish the call documentation.

1.3 The Interim Head of Paid Service is recommended to approve the STEM and Digital Skills call definition document summarised below and attached as appendix B for publication. The first stage of the NTCA STEM and Digital Skills call will open on the 22nd March 2019 and close on the 17h April. A second stage will open in June 2019. Prospective applicants for this programme will be invited to submit applications for funding following the formal announcement of the call details on the NTCA website.

Newcastle City Council

North Tyneside Council

Northumberland County Council

1.4   The NTCA is committed to bringing forward a programme of activity which supports the delivery of the North of Tyne Education Challenge and the North East Ambition programme. The STEM and Digital Skills programme aims to inspire the development of STEM and Digital skills in children and young people and will provide support for high-performing STEM and digital Skill programmes that are shown to
- add capacity and variety to existing provision;
- offer innovative and effective delivery models that are differentiated from existing provision;
- are clearly designed to inspire interest and increase take up in STEM subjects and digital skills; and
- link directly to the Good Careers Guidance.

1.5   The STEM and Digital Skills programme will
- support STEM and Digital skills enrichment activities which explain and demonstrate the benefits and enjoyment of studying science to children and their influencers;
- support activities that break down barriers in studying STEM and Digital subjects for children;
- support continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers, both specialists & non-specialist
- equip our young people with knowledge of the options available to them in STEM related careers, supporting the Good Career Guidance so that they are able to make better informed decisions on their futures.

1.6   The STEM and Digital Skills programme will be framed around the following specific call components:
- STEM enrichment activities for young people and CPD opportunities for teachers using the North East's unique assets, opportunities and heritage;
- STEM enrichment activities for young people and their influencers and CPD opportunities for teachers which specifically link to the North of Tyne's key sectors (Ageing and Life Sciences, Digital, Tech and Data; Energy, Subsea and Offshore; Culture, Tourism and Creative Industries);
- Digital skills programmes which support young people to move onto higher level digital and technical skills pathways and raise awareness of digital career opportunities with young people and their influencers.

1.7

Dates	The first stage of the NTCA STEM and Digital Skills call will open on the 22nd March 2019 and close at 12pm on the 17th April. A second stage will open in June 2019. **The NTCA** reserves the right to change the dates and numbers of stages subject to the volume and quality of proposals received.
Definitions	In the context of this programme STEM is defined as Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths and includes Design.

Indicative Fund Allocation:	Indicatively, the NTCA has agreed a budget of up to £1,250,000 for this programme. **The NTCA** reserves the right to decrease or increase the indicative allocation or support more or fewer projects subject to the volume and quality of proposals received.
Applications	Applications are expected to demonstrate appropriate scale, impact and additionality. The NTCA funding is not intended to replace existing funding but to provide support for new activity or support existing programmes which through the funding would expand scale or scope. Applications can only contain activities which are aligned with the aims of the STEM and Digital Skills programme and directly link to one or more of the call components The NTCA does not intend to allocate less than **£100,000 of NTCA funding to any single project**, but we would welcome applications from consortia offering a joined-up offer. The NTCA is also unlikely to make an allocation of more than £400k for any single project.
Duration of project approvals	Projects should be for a maximum of three years, however the NTCA reserves the right to vary the duration in exceptional circumstances.
Geographical Scope	All interventions should be focused on activity and beneficiaries within the North of Tyne area
Beneficiaries	Primary and secondary aged pupils Teachers and support staff in primary and secondary schools Parents and carers of pupils
Deadlines	For this specific call, applications will be assessed following closure of the call. Applications received after the published call close date will not be considered.
Application selection	All applications will be scored in line with the NTCA scoring criteria.
Eligible match funding	No specific intervention rate is specified however proposals which are able to leverage match funding will be scored more favourably through the assessment process.
Operational completion	Operations must be completed no later than 3 years and 6 months after the proposed start date.
Procurement	All procurement must be undertaken in line with EU regulations.

2. Potential Impact on Objectives

2.1 Leaders of Tomorrow is one of 6 pillars framing the NTCA vision. The focus is on supporting a high quality, inclusive education system, which ensures our young people have the skills and qualifications to take up good quality training, apprenticeships and jobs. The STEM and Digital Skills programme will directly contribute to this pillar.

3. Key Risks

3.1 Risks associated with each funding application will be considered as part of the application and appraisal process. The conditions associated with funding approvals relate to the mitigation of risks.

4. Financial and Other Resources Implications

4.1 As the report to Cabinet on the 12th March identified, there are resources available to cover the £1,250,000 budget proposed for the STEM and Digital Skills Programme call.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Interim Monitoring Officer's comments have been included in this report.

6. Consultation/Engagement

6.1 Stakeholders have been fully engaged in the development of the STEM and Digital Skills programme

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix A – NTCA Cabinet Report 12th March 2019, Investment Fund Update and Funding Approvals

Appendix B – STEM and Digital Skills Call Definition Document

8. Background Papers

8.1

9. Contact Officers

9.1 Tom Warburton, Interim Director of Inclusive Growth,
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10. Glossary

11. Sign-off

11.1 Head of Paid Service: Yes

Monitoring Officer: Yes

Chief Finance Officer: Yes