

Title: Employment Partnerships: Project Change Request
Report of: Ruth Gaul, Principal Programme Manager
Portfolio: Education, Skills and Inclusion

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to take forward an agreed Project Change Request for the Employment Partnerships Projects.

Employment Partnerships were created with the former North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) and constituent local authorities, building on the experiences of the Youth Employment Partnerships project which was co-designed and co-funded by NTCA and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The 3 Employment Partnerships started delivery in July 2022 and are due to end on 31st March 2025.

An additional £90,000 is sought to extend the Grant Funding Agreements (GFAs) for each local authority and provide additional time to secure approval from Cabinet for future investment.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive is recommended to approve the request for an additional £90,000 from the North East CA investment fund to extend the Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Employment Partnerships to 30th June 2025.

A. Context

1. Introduction

1.1 The Employment Partnerships in Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland are led by the local authorities and bring together DWP, local employment support providers and wider partners. Investment enables the partnership to have dedicated resources, an Employment Partnership Co-ordinator and an Employer Engagement Coordinator, who drive the partnerships with the purpose of:

- Developing a shared understanding of employment support provision.
- Enhancing collaborative working.
- Maximising existing provision and avoiding duplication.
- Co-ordinating and strengthening employer engagement to address training, recruitment, and retention needs.
- Pooling intelligence to identify synergies, new partnerships and highlight gaps/issues.

The three partnerships are currently meeting or exceeding NTCA investment related output and outcome targets and are on track to meet budget profiles by the end of delivery. The partnerships are well received by partners and provide added value to the employment support landscape across their locality. To measure impact, an external evaluation of the Employment Partnerships is being undertaken and findings highlight a wide range of benefits including: enabling greater alignment and co-ordination between delivery organisations; creating a space for collective action for employment services; supporting integration of new projects to work alongside existing provision; and collaborating across the Partnerships, allowing success in one area to be transferred to another and extending reach to region-wide employers.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 An additional £90,000 is required to extend the GFAs for each local authority to provide continuity of service for residents whilst the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programme is developed and launched. It is envisaged that the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programme will reduce the reliance on North East CA investment funding to carry out this activity across the North East in future years. The financial split is set out in section D.

B. Impact on North East Combined Authority Objectives

The North East Combined Authority is in the process of designing and launching the Connect to Work programme and the extension of this activity is seen as key to ensuring continuity of employability provision whilst the region wide programme is mobilised.

C. Key risks

The request is a short-term extension of existing activity. There are no significant risks with approving the funding. Without the approval there will be a key gap in employability support available and a risk of losing activity and expertise providing co-ordinated local employment support.

D. Financial and other resources implications

The Employment Partnerships Programme is split into four individual projects. The change request approves a total of £90,000. The split between projects is set out in the table below:

Project Name	Grant Recipient	Current Budget	Additional Funding	Revised Total
Employment Partnerships – NECA	North East CA	£49,186	£3,500	£52,686
Employment Partnerships – Newcastle	Newcastle City Council	£306,346	£34,750	£341,096
Employment Partnerships – North Tyneside	North Tyneside Council	£254,512	£23,000	£277,512
Employment Partnerships – Northumberland	Northumberland County Council	£258,612	£28,750	£287,362
Total		£868,656	£90,000	£958,656

Grant Recipients will be informed of changes via Deed of Variation.

E. Legal implications

This is a short extension to existing activity. There are no legal implications with regard to project activity as the projects will continue to operate in line with their existing Grant Funding Agreement. Legal will be required to issue variation letters to each of the Local Authorities to finalise the process. The comments of the Monitoring Officer have been included in this report.

F. Equalities implications

The North East CA follows the Public Sector Equality duty and this report has due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. In June 2024 the North East CA adopted equality objectives to reflect the different roles of the Combined Authority as an employer, a commissioner and deliverer of services, and a civic leader. In relation to this project, equality position set out in the original application will continue to be adhered to.

G. Consultation and engagement

All local authorities have been consulted and are supportive of the proposed approach.

H. Appendices

None

I. Background papers

[Delegated Decision Report](#) 01 August 2022 – Employment Partnerships
Item 7_ Employment Partnerships Investment Panel July 2022
Former North of Tyne Combined Authority Cabinet Meeting [Decision Notice](#) 7 June 2022

J. Contact officers

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K. Glossary

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions
GFA – Grant Funding Agreement
NTCA – North of Tyne Combined Authority
North East CA – North East Combined Authority

L. Sign-off

1) Cabinet Member: Yes	2) Director/Head of Service: Yes	3) Director of Finance and Investment: Yes	4) Monitoring Officer: Yes
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