
Report to: Combined Authority

Date: 22 June 2023

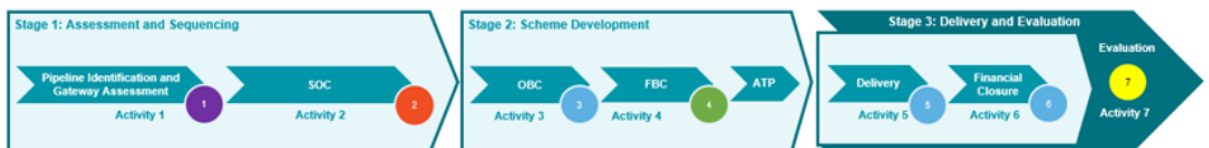
Subject: Project Approvals - Investment Priority 2 – Skills and training for people

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1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To report on proposals for the progression of, and funding for projects under Investment Priority 2 – Skills and training for people, within the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy (WYIS), that have been considered at stages 1, 2 and 3 of the Combined Authority’s assurance process.



- 1.2 The recommendations can be found in Section 12 of this report.

2 Report

- 2.1 This report presents proposals for the progression of schemes through the Combined Authority’s assurance process in line with the Combined Authority’s Assurance Framework. Further details on the schemes summarised below can be found as part of this report.
- 2.2 For more detail on the Combined Authority’s Assurance Framework through which each of the schemes outlined in this report are being approved is provided in **Appendix 1**.

3 Investment Priority 2 – Skills and training for people

- 3.1 The West Yorkshire Investment Strategy (WYIS) sets out the Investment Priorities for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024 across six areas. The Strategy is revised annually with the latest revision approved by the Combined Authority Board in June 2022. Each Investment Priority has a number of

priority project / programme areas have been identified that are the focus for intervention.

- 3.2 In February 2023, the Combined Authority reviewed indicative funding allocations to Investment Priorities and prioritised interventions to support digital and green skills alongside skills support for employers to a value of £6m.
- 3.3 Investment Priority 2 will deliver a range of programmes and schemes which focus on:
- Supporting individuals to access learning through different formats and settings.
 - Supporting new ways of curriculum delivery
 - Enabling communities to become more resilient and sustainable.
 - Employers managing job design and skills so that organisations can build resilience to change.
- 3.4 Investment Priority 2 had an allocation of £18,000,000, to date this has been allocated to the following schemes:
- Employment Support West Yorkshire - a universal employment programme delivered through Local Authority partners supporting 7,700 adults in West Yorkshire to progress towards or within employment. A total of £12,000,000 was allocated and subsequently approved, to allow the programme to be delivered between April 2023 and March 2025.
 - Digital, Green and Employer Support Programme - made up of complementary employment and skills programmes, that will be delivered between September 2023 and March 2026. The programme provides a flexible and responsive skills offer to individuals and businesses to support them to grow and access opportunities aligning to regional strategies and priorities around green and digital skills. A total of £6,000,000 was indicatively allocated to this programme and approval for this funding is now being sought via this report.

Scheme Summaries

<p>Digital Skills, Green Skills, and Skills Support for Business</p> <p>West Yorkshire</p>	<p><u>Scheme description</u></p> <p>Digital Skills, Green Skills, and Skills Support for Business is made up of two programmes which will deliver skills packages to improve West Yorkshire's diverse and skilled workforce, meeting the needs of the local economy and local businesses.</p> <p>The Workforce Development and Growth programme will build on the success of previous skills programmes to support employers to create meaningful talent pipelines and workforce skills plans by upskilling, reskilling, and retraining existing employees, as well as developing and acquiring future talent.</p> <p>The Workforce for the Future programme will seek to inspire learners of all ages to acquire digital and green skills, whilst promoting a good understanding of the local labour market and careers opportunities within the region.</p> <p>The programme will be funded by the gainshare allocation for Investment Priority 2 – skills and training for people and a reallocation of adult skills funding from a previous underspent programme.</p> <p><u>Impact</u></p> <p>The overall programme will engage 10,000 businesses in skills and training opportunities by March 2025, and engage with 500 school young people (aged 7-18 years old) by January 2025 from a minimum of 30 schools in disadvantaged areas.</p> <p>The Value for Money assessment of the programme is based on benchmarked unit costs and/or existing programme costs. The programme is expected to achieve reasonable value for money.</p> <p><u>Decision sought</u></p> <p>Approval to proceed through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and decision point 4 (full business case) and work commences on activity 5 (delivery)</p> <p>Total value of the programme - £7,500,000</p> <p>Total value of Combined Authority funding - £7,500,000</p> <p>Funding recommendation sought - £6,650,000</p> <p>A decision by the Combined Authority is sought as part of this report</p>
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- 3.5 Since the Combined Authority’s meeting on 16 March 2023, when the Project Approvals reports were last considered, the following decision points and change requests have been assessed in line with the Combined Authority’s assurance process and approved through the agreed delegation to the Employment and Skills Committee at its meeting on 23 March 2023. The decisions were made by the Employment and Skills Committee following a recommendation from Combined Authority Programme Appraisal Team.
- 3.6 The full agenda and papers for the meeting can be found on the [Combined Authority website here.](#)

Skills Bootcamps	<p>Approval to the change request to the Skills Bootcamps programme to accept and spend up to £3,649,369 from the Department for Education, increasing the total programme cost to £7,338,369 and to extend the delivery timeframes from September 2023 to September 2024.</p> <p>Funding approved: £3,649,369</p> <p>Total value of the scheme: £7,338,369</p> <p>Total value of Combined Authority funding: £7,338,369</p>
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4 Information

- 4.1 The Combined Authority’s assurance framework requires that formal approval is given to the following elements of a scheme as part of its development:
 - The progression of a scheme through a decision point to the next activity.
 - Indicative or full approval to the total value of the scheme funding requested.
 - The Combined Authority’s entry into a funding agreement with the scheme’s promoter.
 - The assurance pathway and approval route for future decision points.
 - The scheme’s approval tolerances.
- 4.2 This report provides information required to enable the Combined Authority to approve each of the above elements.

Projects in Stage 1: Assessment and Sequencing

Project Title	Digital Skills, Green Skills, and Skills Support for Business
Stage	2 (scheme development)
Decision Point	2 (strategic outline case) and 4 (full business case)

Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:		
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Background

- 4.3 The Digital Skills, Green Skills and Skills Support for Business Programme includes two programmes:

Programme 1: Workforce Development and Growth

- 4.4 This programme will build on the success of previous skills programmes to support employers to create meaningful talent pipelines and workforce skills plans by upskilling, reskilling, and retraining existing employees, as well as developing and acquiring future talent. The programme comprises two projects:

- Project 1: Skills Support for Business: This project will provide skills and training to increase the number of people in employment.
- Project 2: Mayoral Graduate Pilot: This project will test methods to help bridge the gap between employer and graduate, supporting employers to access graduates and develop effective ways of recruiting and retaining, graduates.

Programme 2: Workforce for the Future

- 4.5 This programme will seek to inspire learners of all ages to acquire digital and green skills, whilst promoting a good understanding of the local labour market and careers opportunities within the region. The programme comprises three projects:

- Project 3: Digital Inclusion - will support community organisations to deliver digital skills to those who are digitally excluded. This project involves signposting for community organisations, network and peer

support, digital inclusion funding opportunities for businesses, and evaluation and data sourcing activity.

- Project 4: Regional Careers Engagement and Inspiration for people of all ages - will engage with young people and adults to increase knowledge of careers in the region, with a focus on digital and green areas. Support will be provided for people to further understand how to access digital and green skills and careers.
- Project 5 (Phase 2): Further Education Development Fund - this pilot project will develop and test approaches that support the delivery of green skills in Further Education sectors. This project is still under development will seek decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and decision point 4 (full business case) approval at a later date, when the programme strategic outline case can be updated.

4.6 Both programmes directly support two of the Combined Authority's objectives "driving economic growth and innovation to enable good jobs" and "enabling a diverse, skilled workforce and accessible learning for all" and will contribute to "building a sustainable, natural rich and carbon neutral region".

4.7 The programmes will develop:

- Support for employers, particularly addressing high growth areas (such as green skills and digital skills), ways to improve the digital capability of businesses, graduate recruitment and retention, and workforce development and upskilling.
- Locally delivered support for digital inclusion, targeting diverse and disadvantaged groups, increasing the proportion of residents with digital skills for life and work.
- A better workforce for the future through the upskilling of educators, building training capacity, and helping people of all ages and from all backgrounds to understand the career opportunities of the future.

4.8 Projects 1 to 4 belong to Phase 1 of the overall programme and are seeking approval to progress to delivery through this report. The total costs for Projects 1 to 4 are £6,650,000.

4.9 Project 5 belongs to Phase 2 and its business case is still under development, and will therefore seek approval to progress to delivery, through the assurance process, at a later date. Approval of the business case will be delegated to the combined Authority's Chief Executive in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route and tolerances outlined in this report. The total cost for Project 5 is £850,000.

4.10 A summary of the programme's business case is included in **Appendix 2**.

Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

4.11 The programme will tackle climate emergency implications by:

- Implementing training programmes to address green skills shortages and gaps and build the local skills base ready for the future.

- Working with key partners to ensure that training aligns with the current labour market demand and that provision can meet future demand in the growing green economy.
- Creating careers opportunities and inspirational activities to ensure a future pipeline of talent in the green economy.
- Aligning to projects being delivered under Investment Priority 2 ensuring that green skills programmes are responsive to the ambitions outlined in the Climate and Environment Plan.

Outputs and Benefits

4.12 The programme outputs and benefits are:

Programme 1: Workforce Development and Growth

- Engage with 10,000 businesses around skills and training opportunities through marketing campaigns and partnerships.
- Engage 1,000 businesses to access skills support and create workforce development plans.
- Work with 50 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to create graduate opportunities.
- Support a minimum of 150 SMEs to access skills funding to develop skills and training for their workforce.
- Encourage SMEs to create 1,000 well paid green jobs for young people. Supporting employers to access skills funding and working with employers to access relevant skills programmes to attract talent in the sector.
- Increase the number of employees with essential digital skills for work in 100 businesses.
- Support businesses to create green and digital jobs.
- Engage with 100 SMEs and third sector organisations to create diagnostics and provide support for essential digital skills in the workplace.

Programme 2: Workforce for the Future

- Engage 300 primary age young people (Key Stage 2 – 7 years–11 years) in inspiration activities
- Support 100 educators to have knowledge and understanding of green and digital careers
- Inspire 50,000 individuals about green and digital careers through marketing and inspiration campaigns and resources.
- Support 30 schools from disadvantaged postcode areas
- Digital Inclusion Officers to support 210 organisations per year to increase their digital inclusion capacity

- Support 210 organisations to develop their digital inclusion offer, including joining a digital inclusion network

4.13 The Value for Money of each programme is based on benchmarked unit costs and/or existing programme costs. The programme is expected to achieve reasonable value for money.

Inclusive Growth Implications

4.14 The programme inclusive growth implications include:

- The programme will simplify access for residents to existing digital skills offerings within communities.
- The programme will aim to reach children who are currently underrepresented, living in disadvantaged postcode areas, inspiring them to take up digital skills and improving their digital literacy.
- The Workforce for the Future programme will reach currently underrepresented children for the world of work generally, as well as for green and digital careers more specifically.
- The programme will supply skills support to identified key sectors in West Yorkshire to fill skills gaps in the local economy.
- Graduates will be supported to find regional working opportunities that are relevant to their skills sets.
- The programme will target training, skills, and career development in high growth sectors for residents of all ages, particularly in the green sector and digital sector.
- Procured suppliers that are commissioned to deliver activities as part of this programme will be required to demonstrate a commitment to implementing social value objectives.

Equality and Diversity Implications

4.15 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken for the programme and equality and diversity impacts taken account of as part of the development of the programme and the business case development.

4.16 The programme will use existing business support, enterprise, and skills programmes to benchmark and develop Equality and Diversity Impact targets.

4.17 The programme will deliver interventions to support those who are digitally excluded, benefiting people and communities in a broad way so that they can access online resources around health, regeneration, education, etc.

4.18 75% of adult residents of Yorkshire and Humber do not have 'Essential Digital Skills for Life', as determined by the UK's benchmark for digital skills, with 7% of these residents being considered as 'digitally excluded'. The programme will break down this barrier.

4.19 By January 2025 the programme will engage 500 school young people (ages 7-18 years old) from a minimum of 30 schools in disadvantaged postcode areas.

Risks

4.20 The programme risks include:

- There is a risk of delay due to the lead-in time for procurement of a specialist service. To mitigate this risk, the procurement process will commence as soon as possible once funding has been approved.
- There may be potential overlaps in the delivery of Digital Inclusion support with existing support services which could impact interest of the new service. This has been mitigated by ensuring that the new service complements existing offers and enhances them by connecting to wider networks and pools of funding.
- There is a risk that the offer receives more interest from well-resourced employers, as opposed to those that are struggling the most. To mitigate this risk, there will be set criteria for employers who are targeted. For example, “employers with live recruitment for longer than 6 months”.

Costs

4.21 The total programme costs are £7,500,000.

4.22 The funding is provided by the Combined Authority with £6,000,000 from the Investment Priority 2 Gainshare Fund and £1,500,000 from underspend from the European Social Fund (ESF) Programme.

Programme 1: Workforce Development and Growth	
Project 1: Skills Support for Business	£3,271,432
Project 2: Mayoral Graduate Pilot:	£500,000
Programme 1 Total	3,771,432
Programme 2: Workforce for the Future	
Project 3: Digital Inclusion	£746,000
Project 4: Regional Careers Engagement and Inspiration	£1,250,000
Project 5 (Phase 2): Further Education Development Fund	£850,000
Programme 2 Total	£2,846,000
Overall total	£6,617,432

4.23 The remaining funding totalling £882,568, will be used for development work to the Future Goals website, staffing resource across the overall Digital Skills, Green Skills, and Skills Support for Business programme and evaluation and marketing.

- 4.24 Private sector match funding will be explored as the programme is delivered. Businesses in receipt of skills funding could contribute up to 30% match funding.

Assurance Pathway and Approval Route

Phase 1 – comprising Project 1: Skills Support for Business, Project 2: Mayoral Graduate Pilot; Project 3: Digital Inclusion and Project 4: Regional Careers Engagement and Inspiration

Assurance pathway	Approval route	Forecast approval date
2 (strategic outline case) and 4 (full business case)	Recommendation: Combined Authority's Programme Appraisal Team Decision: Combined Authority	22/06/2023
5 (delivery)	Recommendation: Combined Authority's Programme Appraisal Team Decision: Combined Authority's Chief Operating Officer	01/09/2026

Phase 2 – comprising Project 5: Further Education Development Fund

Assurance pathway	Approval route	Forecast approval date
2 (strategic outline case) and 4 (full business case)	Recommendation: Combined Authority's Programme Appraisal Team Decision: Combined Authority's Chief Executive	30/11/2023
5 (delivery)	Recommendation: Combined Authority's Programme Appraisal Team Decision: Combined Authority's Chief Operating Officer	01/09/2026

Other Key Timescales

- Delivery of the programme will commence in September 2023 and will be completed by March 2026.

Assurance Tolerances

Assurance tolerances
Combined Authority costs remain within +10% of those outlined in this report. Delivery (DP5) timescales remain within +3 months of those outlined in this report. Outputs remain within -10% of those outlined in this report.

Appraisal Summary

- 4.25 The programme clearly aligns with the strategic position of the Combined Authority, including the Corporate Plan, and Employment and Skills Framework. The programme also supports Mayoral Pledges.
- 4.26 The programme will meet regional and local demands for skills, training, and employment opportunities in high growth sectors, more specifically the green sector and digital sector.
- 4.27 Equality and Diversity Impact targets will be developed as part of a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan during the Delivery phase of the programme. A Communications and Engagement Plan will also be developed to ensure under-supported businesses and areas are able to access opportunities.
- 4.28 The delivery team are experienced with programmes of this nature and are taking key learnings from existing and previous skills and enterprise programmes into the programme.
- 4.29 The team will work with the Commercial Team and with Finance Partners to develop and deliver a robust Procurement Strategy and quarterly spend profile for each individual project.
- 4.30 A Stage 2 Carbon Impact Assessment will be developed in the Delivery phase of the programme.

Recommendations

- 4.31 The Combined Authority approves that:
- (i) Projects 1 to 4 (Phase 1) of The Digital Skills, Green Skills, and Skills Support Programme proceed through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and decision point 4 (full business case) and work commences on activity 5 (delivery) of these projects. Project 5 continues work on its full business case.
 - (ii) An indicative approval to the Combined Authority's contribution of up to £7,500,000 is given (Projects 1 to 5). The total programme cost is £7,500,000.
 - (iii) Approval is given to the Combined Authority's contribution of up to £6,650,000 for Projects 1 to 4 (Phase 1).
 - (iv) Future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route and tolerances outlined in this report. Where required, any future committee level approvals are delegated to the Employment and Skills Committee.

Projects in Stage 2: Scheme development

4.32 There are no schemes to review at this stage.

Projects in Stage 3: Delivery and Evaluation

4.33 There are no schemes to review at this stage.

5 Tackling the Climate Emergency implications

5.1 The Climate Emergency implications have been considered on all projects included in this report as part of their business case development.

6 Inclusive Growth implications

6.1 The inclusive growth implications have been considered on all projects included in this report as part of their business case development.

7 Equality and Diversity implications

7.1 Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) have been undertaken on all projects included in this report as part of their business case development.

8 Financial implications

8.1 The report seeks endorsement to expenditure from the available Combined Authority funding as set out in this report.

9 Legal implications

9.1 The payment of funding to any recipient will be subject to a funding agreement being in place between the Combined Authority and the organisation in question.

10 Staffing implications

10.1 A combination of Combined Authority and local partner council project, programme and portfolio management resources are or are in the process of being identified and costed for within the schemes in this report.

11 External consultees

11.1 Where applicable scheme promoters have been consulted on the content of this report.

12 Recommendations (Summary)

Digital Skills, Green Skills, and Skills Support for Business

12.1 The Combined Authority approves that:

- (i) Projects 1 to 4 (Phase 1) of The Digital Skills, Green Skills, and Skills Support Programme proceed through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and decision point 4 (full business case) and work commences on

activity 5 (delivery) of these projects. Project 5 continues work on its full business case.

- (ii) An indicative approval to the Combined Authority's contribution of up to £7,500,000 is given (Projects 1 to 5). The total programme cost is £7,500,000.
- (iii) Approval is given to the Combined Authority's contribution of up to £6,650,000 for Projects 1 to 4 (Phase 1).
- (iv) Future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route and tolerances outlined in this report. Where required, any future committee level approvals are delegated to the Employment and Skills Committee.

13 Background Documents

13.1 None as part of this report.

14 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Background to the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework

Appendix 2 - Digital Skills, Green Skills, and Skills Support for Business - Business Case Summary