

Report title: South Essex College - Basildon Digital Technologies Centre	
Report to: Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills & Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Economic Development	
Report author: Mark Carroll – Executive Director Economy Localities & Public Health	
Date: 02 July 2020	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Paul Chapman - Economic Growth and Regeneration Officer Tel: 03330 322528 / e-mail: paul.chapman@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: Basildon District /South Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 A decision was taken by ECC on 12 September 2019 agreeing to enter into a capital grant agreement with South Essex College to passport SELEP Local Growth Fund (LGF) award of £1.150m in 2019/20 and £1m in 2020/21. Following this decision, the grant agreement has not yet been signed and the spend profile has changed. This report seeks approval to passport the entirety of £2.15m of SELEP LGF funding in 2020/2021.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree to enter into a capital grant agreement with South Essex College to passport £2.150m of SELEP LGF funding in 2020/2021.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 South Essex College has developed a curriculum and estates strategy focussed on establishing Centres of Professional and Technical specialisms at each of its campuses. This project will establish a specialist campus in Basildon Town Centre, concentrating on delivery of high quality, industry relevant, training facilities to support the Digital Technology Sector. The project was awarded SELEP LGF at the SELEP Accountability Board.
- 3.2 A decision to award the funding had already been taken by ECC on 12 September 2019 where it was agreed:
- For ECC to enter into a capital grant agreement with South Essex College to award a grant of £2.15m towards the development of a new Digital Technologies Campus in Basildon Town Centre; and
 - For the addition of £1.15m to the 2019/2020 capital programme and £1m in 2020/2021 capital programme.
- 3.3 Delays in signing the contract between South Essex College and ECC has meant the funding allocated to 2019/20 could not be drawn down. The works had started but were put on hold due to the impact of COVID-19 working restrictions. The works have now recommenced following the initial effects of

COVID-19 and the original completion date of September 2020 has been moved to December 2020. The funding is still available so ECC is now seeking to provide all the funding in 2020/2021.

4. Options

- 4.1 The project has slipped therefore it is proposed to approve the recommendation in this report so that the South Essex College can be grant funded in 2020/2021 as the works have already commenced.

5. Issues for consideration

5.1 Financial implications

The current capital programme includes £2.150m in 2020/21, this is funded by 100% LGF grant, with no ECC borrowing requirements.

5.2 Legal implications

- 5.2.1 The proposal is not considered to constitute state aid. The State Aid rules do not apply in principle to funding for non-economic activities. An economic activity is one which consists in the placing of goods or services on a given market. State education is a good example of an activity which is not deemed to be “economic”. It is a public function of the State to provide education. Awarding grant monies for educational equipment and property to Further Education Colleges which are publicly funded would not constitute economic activity.

- 5.2.2 ECC will enter into a Grant agreement with the college which will reflect the grant conditions imposed by SELEP.

6. Equality and Diversity implications

- 6.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when ECC makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

6.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposal in this report will not have an adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. Harlow College is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all those who learn and work with them. The proposed capital project will comply with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that the building has appropriate facilities and equipment to enable equality of access. Furthermore, the proposed project will enable the college to offer training that more effectively addresses the needs of different groups in the local community and enables all to benefit from employment opportunities in key economic sectors in Essex.

7. List of appendices

- a. Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment
- b. Appendix B – Original CMA from Sept 2019

8. List of Background papers

- a. SELEP Business Case and associated appendices

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Economic Development	03/07/2020

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Executive Director Economy Localities & Public Health Steve Evison – Director, Sustainable Growth Economy, Localities and Public Health on behalf of Mark Carroll	02/07/2020
Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services (S151 Officer) Stephanie Mitchener on behalf of Nicole Wood	02/07/2020
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer) Susan Moussa on behalf of Paul Turner	26/06/2020