

Report to Accountability Board	Forward Plan reference number: FP/AB/90
Date of Accountability Board Meeting:	26th May 2017
Date of report:	4th May 2017
Title of report: Sussex Downs College 3rd Phase of refurbishment of Science Facilities at the Lewes Campus	
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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Accountability Board (the Board) approval for the award of Local Growth Fund (LGF) to Sussex Downs College 3rd Phase of refurbishment of Science Facilities at the Lewes Campus (the Project).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is asked to:

- 2.1.1 **Approve** the award of £39,515 LGF (Skills Capital allocation) to the 3rd Phase of refurbishment of Science Facilities in the Lewes Campus.
- 2.1.2 **Note that** the remaining skills capital underspend of £25,439 will be added to the uncommitted LGF for consideration by the Board.

3. Background

- 3.1 This report brings forward the Project for the award of £39,515 LGF to Sussex Downs College (the College) for the 3rd Phase of refurbishment of Science Facilities in the Lewes Campus.
- 3.2 In January 2017, the Skills Management report to the Board outlined a reduced LGF requirement resulting from cost savings to the College's Round 1 project, of £79,440.
- 3.3 The Board agreed on 20th January 2017 that the College could submit a business case to utilise the uncommitted amount for their broader project to enhance their first floor laboratory. The submission of the business case required the application being subject to an independent technical evaluation and subsequent approval by the Board.

- 3.4 Accordingly an application for £39,515 of LGF has been received and evaluated, the detail of which is set out below.
- 3.5 The balance of the funding no longer required by the College of £39,925 is considered in paragraph 8 below.

4. Sussex Downs College 3rd Phase of refurbishment of Science Facilities at the Lewes Campus – The Project

- 4.1 The original bid from the College outlined proposals to create a new Reception /Hub on the Ground Floor of the new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Centre at their Lewes Campus and an alteration to the existing Science Laboratory which was inaccessible to many students. The bid stated that *‘the Lab will be raised to adjacent floor levels, providing high quality science facilities’*.
- 4.2 The College have an associated (unfunded by SELEP) project to build a first Floor Science Laboratory above the STEM Centre. The Project is for the development of the first floor laboratory (76.65 m²) enabling the third phase of refurbishment at the Lewes Campus.
- 4.3 The specialist facilities will enhance the College offer and the experience of learners seeking to work in the STEM sector. It is part of an ongoing ‘phased improvement plan’ to create a single, coherent STEM Centre that is commercially relevant to local industry standard on the Lewes Campus within the existing footprint of the building.
- 4.4 The facility is based on employer need locally and is in line with SELEP and national aspirations to increase STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). This will support sectors such as manufacturing and engineering and also respond to a high level of demand in the health sector in East Sussex. Updating facilities will ensure they are in line with industry standards and changing technologies. Within East Sussex there are clusters of businesses requiring these skills including vacuum technologies, photonics and precision instruments.
- 4.5 The centre will offer a dynamic teaching space, assisting in the recruitment of students to STEM related subjects and specialisms. It will ensure students understand the importance of STEM in their future career pathways and have an inspiring learning environment.
- 4.6 The Project is supported by and aligned to the priorities of Skills East Sussex, which has identified STEM as a priority given current and future skills gaps and projected growth. This is also in line with the SELEP priority sectors and government’s industrial strategy in delivering technical skills.
- 4.7 The expected impacts of the scheme include:

Positive Impacts

- 76.65 m² refurbished space to industry standard
- An ambition for 'very good' BREAM rating for the overall project
- 66 additional learners per year including 26 higher and advanced apprenticeships and expansion of offering to 19-24 year olds
- Engagement with NEETs (young people not in employment, education or training)
- Introduction of Laboratory and Science Tech Apprenticeship
- Training for adult learners

Negative Impacts / risks

- Capability of main contractor to undertake the work and to complete within schedule
- Availability of materials in accordance with the programme
- Removal of asbestos prior to the building work starting on site

5. Project cost and funding contributions

- 5.1 The total Project cost is £119,740. In line with the original application, the college are requesting 33% of total costs, at £39,515. The College will provide the remaining funding.

6. Independent Assessment

- 6.1 The SELEP Assurance Framework sets out the requirements for an Independent Technical Evaluation (ITE) Gate 1/2 review of the Business Cases for schemes where the Business Case is being developed or assessed by another Government Department or Statutory Body.
- 6.2 In these instances, the role of the Independent Technical Evaluator is to review the business case and provide professional advice to the Board of any key risks or issues arising from that assessment that need to be considered by the Board to support the funding decision.
- 6.3 The ITE review of the Project Business Case confirms that the assessment is thorough, complete and demonstrates at least a high value for money case for the Project.
- 6.4 Through independent assessment of the application by Steer Davies Gleave, a recommendation for approval was given.

7. Compliance with SELEP Assurance Framework

- 7.1 Table 3 below considers the SELEP Secretariat assessment of the Business Case against the requirements of the SELEP Assurance Framework.
- 7.2 The assessment confirms the compliance of the Project with SELEP's Assurance Framework.

Table 3 SELEP Secretariat assessment of the Business Case against the requirements of the SELEP Assurance Framework

Requirement of the Assurance Framework to approve the project	Compliance	Evidence in the Business Case
A clear rationale for the interventions linked with the strategic objectives identified in the Strategic Economic Plan		The application makes clear reference to SEP priorities and within the federated model, to Skills East Sussex sector focus.
Clearly defined outputs and anticipated outcomes, with clear additionality, ensuring that factors such as displacement and deadweight have been taken into account		The Business Case defines the expected skills and job outputs/outcomes of the project in terms of: i) adult and young learners, ii) apprenticeships, iii) technical and higher level skills and iv) clear employer need and growth.
Considers deliverability and risks appropriately, along with appropriate mitigating action (the costs of which must be clearly understood)		The ITE review has confirmed that risks and mitigating factors have been clearly considered and a risk register is in place.
A Benefit Cost Ratio of at least 2:1 or comply with one of the two Value for Money exemptions		The business case has been assessed on the basis of skills outputs (refurbished learning space, learners and apprenticeships) and illustrates value for money.

8. Financial Implications (Accountable Body Comments)

- 8.1 Approval of the 3rd Phase of refurbishment of Science Facilities in the Lewes Campus at the College would leave a balance of £39,925 of the original LGF Skills Capital allocation to the College of £159,000 that is no longer required.
- 8.2 Taking into account the existing over-commitment of the overall skills LGF programme of £14,486, the outstanding balance for allocation to other projects will be £25,439
- 8.3 It is noted that the outstanding balance, given the relatively low value is considered for reallocation as part of the wider uncommitted LFG programme, the process for which is expected to be considered by the Board at a subsequent meeting.

9. Legal Implications (Accountable Body Comments)

9.1 The Local Growth Funding to support the delivery of the 3rd Phase of refurbishment of Science Facilities by the College, will be transferred to the College under a grant agreement with the Accountable Body.

10. Staffing and other resource implications (Accountable Body Comments)

10.1 None at present.

11. Equality and Diversity implications (Accountable Body Comments)

11.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when a public sector body 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.

11.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

11.3 In the course of the development of the project business case, the delivery of the Project and their ongoing commitment to equality and diversity, the promoting local authority will ensure that any equality implications are considered as part of their decision making process and were possible identify mitigating factors where an impact against any of the protected characteristics has been identified.

12. List of Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 - Report of the Independent Technical Evaluator (see appendix 1 Agenda Item 5).

13. List of Background Papers

16.1 Business case submitted by Sussex Downs College

(Any request for any background papers listed here should be made to the person named at the front of the report who will be able to help with any enquiries)

Role	Date
Accountable Body sign off	
Lorna Norris (On behalf of Margaret Lee)	16.05.2017