

Forward Plan reference number:

Report title: Colchester Institute Groundworks and Scaffolding Training Centre	
Report to: Cllr David Finch, Leader, Essex County Council, and , Cllr Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	
Report author: Mark Carroll – Executive Director Economy Localities & Public Health	
Date: June May 2019 / December 2019	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: Colchester District and North Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek agreement to enter into a capital grant agreement with Colchester Institute to passport £100,000 of SELEP funding, following a successful bid into the local growth fund.

1.2 The total capital cost of the project is £250,000. This is to be funded by a SELEP contribution of £100,000, £100,000 match funding from Colchester Institute, £30,000 employer contributions and £20,000 sponsorship. The funding will be used to finance the development of a standalone Groundworks and Scaffolding Training Centre at Colchester Campus.

2. Recommendations

Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

2.1 Agree to enter into a capital grant agreement with Colchester Institute to award a grant of £100,000 towards the construction of new training facilities at Colchester campus.

Councillor Gagan Mohindra, Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing and Property

2.2 Agree an addition of £100,000 to the 2019/20 capital programme to be fully funded from Local Growth Fund.

3. Summary of issue

3.1 Complementing existing construction training facilities, the investment will enable the development of a standalone Groundworks and Scaffolding Training Centre at Colchester Campus. This facility is proposed to meet the core aims of the Essex Employment and Skills Board construction sector action plan and counter the identified barriers facing the sector at large. The project will support the vision and priorities identified in the October 2018 SE LEP Skills Strategy.

- 3.2 Colchester Institute was originally approached by the Anderson Group to provide groundworks training in Essex, leading to the formation of an employer led steering group (including MDS, Tamdown Construction, The Knight Group, Cadman Construction, Ringway Jacobs, Rose Builders) all of whom expressed their frustrations towards the lack of availability of local training, which is ultimately impacting business growth.
- 3.3 Without investment the college would be unable to develop a curriculum to meet the need to up-skill a workforce able to support the expected £3bn infrastructure investment across five regeneration areas in North Colchester including St Botolphs, the Garrison, the Hythe, the Northern Gateway and the knowledge Gateway all driving a need for skilled workers in groundworks and scaffolding industries
- 3.4 The project will develop a fit for purpose training centre replicating site conditions that will introduce new entrants to apprenticeships and upskill workforce teams. Funding will allow for site clearance and preparation, design, planning approvals, plant and machinery purchase. Reconfiguration and upgrade of classrooms adjacent to the site will create a genuine first class training facility for Essex businesses.
Providing for:
- Self-contained training areas supporting both industry sectors with modular buildings to replicate site conditions.
 - Scaffolding training will be developed using an existing building adjacent to the proposed ground working area where external practical skills training will complement classroom based activities.
 - Additional certification (bolt-on) qualifications including working at height and safe entry to confined space training as demanded by the employer group.
- 3.5 The total cost of the project is £250,000, which is to be part funded by the Local Growth Fund grant approved at SELEP Accountability Board on the 7th June 2019. The remaining funding will be secured through match funding from Colchester Institute, employer contributions and sponsorship as set out below. Accordingly there are no financial commitments by ECC other than to passport the SELEP funding to Colchester Institute.

4. Options

The development of this project will support the local and regional housing and infrastructure growth plans, the construction sector, its employers and provide high value career opportunities.

As part of the options appraisal process for this scheme, three options were considered:

4.1 Option A - Do nothing – base case

This does not address any of the aforementioned criteria, particularly the evidenced lack of skilled workforce to meet current and predicted labour market requirements.

4.2 **Option B – Continue to use existing facilities**

The use of existing facilities at the Colchester campus are not fit for purpose and would not satisfy the demand of the proposed new curriculum. Without extra funding being made available, the college has little opportunity for expansion, thus constraining curriculum development and delivery.

4.3 **Option C – new purpose built facility (Preferred Option)**

A range of decommissioned 1960's demountable units would be cleared to facilitate the teaching of practical scaffolding training techniques, adjacent to which is a permanent building which it is proposed will be renovated, extended and reconfigured to provide a standalone teaching building, supporting both groundworks and scaffolding classroom activities.

This option provides a positive solution to identified demand.

Key positives include:

- Addresses the shortfall in suitable accommodation by developing proposals to meet specific requirements.
- Addresses the vocational skills gap in FE provision across North Essex and beyond.
- Low planning risk associated with building modifications.
- Allows development to be flexible in design providing future expansion possibilities.

5. Issues for consideration

5.1 **Financial implications**

The total capital cost of the project is £250,000, which is to be part funded by £100,000 Local Growth Fund grant agreed at SELEP Accountability board held on the 7th June 2019, £100,000 match funding from Colchester Institute, £30,000 employer contributions and £20,000 sponsorship.

Grounds and Scaffolding Training Centre	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Total Costs	210,000	40,000
Funding - Local Growth Fund Grant	100,000	-
Funding - Colchester Institute Match Funding	100,000	-
Funding - Employer Contributions	10,000	20,000
Funding - Sponsorship	-	20,000
Total Funding	210,000	40,000

The total cost to ECC of £100,000, funded by the SELEP Local Growth Fund Grant, is not included in the 2019/20 capital programme and is requested to be added above.

A Contingency sum of £15,000 has been included, representing 6% of total project costs. Should costs over-run, Colchester institute will be required to cover these. This condition will be built within the grant agreement between ECC and Colchester Institute.

LGF funding is transferred to the Partner Authority under the terms of a notional agreement due to its dual role as Accountable Body. It is a requirement that all LGF monies transferred are used for the purpose for which it has been allocated and meets the conditions of the grant, primarily that it is used for capital expenditure only.

Any LGF transferred may be required to be repaid. As the partner authority (ECC) are not the delivery body, a back to back agreement will be put in place between ECC and Colchester Institute to transfer the condition to repay all or part of funds received if the accountability board requests so, therefore mitigating the risk to ECC where clawback of grant may be required.

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 Colchester Institute, which will ensure that the grant conditions provided by SELEP are adequately reflected.

5.3 Equality and Diversity implications

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.

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

The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposal in this report will not have an adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. Colchester Institute 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.

6. List of appendices

- a. Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

7. List of Background papers

- SELEP Business Case and associated appendices

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report. Cllr Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Date 07/01/2020
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In consultation with:

Role	Date
Dominic Collins - Director of Economic Growth and Localities Economy, Localities and Public Health On behalf of Mark Carroll – Executive Director Economy Localities & Public Health	18.07.19
Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services (S151 Officer) Margaret Lee	02.08.19
Monitoring Officer Kim Cole on behalf of Paul Turner	23.06.19