

Title: NU Futures Project Extension

**Report of: Adrian Doherty, Head of Public Sector Innovation & David Braithwaite-Wilson,
Programme Assurance Manager**

Portfolio: Education, Inclusion and Skills

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to document and authorise the extension of the NU Futures Project to allow continued delivery of careers education and awareness programme for 11- to 16-year-olds, delivered in North East schools.

The careers and employability content is accessible for all pupils in each year group, providing an insight into the skills and qualities employers are looking for and the processes linked to the world of work. It builds on three years of successful delivery and is targeted to improve aspirations of those students who may be more likely to access and sustain employment difficult.

The activity will be delivered across 36 schools over the 24/25 academic year and support 5,400 students.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive and Director of Finance, in consultation with the Mayor and relevant Cabinet Member, are recommended to approve/authorise an extension of £100,000 of North East Combined Authority North East CA) Investment Fund for the NU Futures Project in line with the delivery plan provided by NU Foundation. The activity will be delivered between 1st September 2024 and August 2025.

A. Context

1. Introduction

1.1 The NU Futures project, delivered by Newcastle United Foundation, was approved in 26 September 2019 to design and build a learning facility in Newcastle City Centre, and deliver a programme of educational activities focussed on disadvantaged young people aged 11-25 as part of a learning, skills and careers programme that prepares them to thrive and transition into future careers.

1.2 The £2.6m project has been successful in delivering financial and output targets, creating 24 direct and 142 indirect jobs, as well as 177 apprenticeship/trainee opportunities and creating 233 square metres of learning floorspace.

2. Current position

2.1 On 12 March 2024, Cabinet approved an extension of an additional £100,000 to ensure continuation of the employment readiness programme, and delegated authority to the Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer to finalise arrangements, including agreement of a revised delivery plan with project sponsors.

2.2 NU Futures have submitted a revised delivery which has been reviewed by the Programme Assurance Team. The delivery plan sets out a clear plan to continue a free to access careers education and awareness programme for 11- to 16-year-olds to be delivered in schools. Delivery is bespoke to each school that engages so that the content can be adapted to meet the needs of both the school and the pupils.

- 2.3 The project will be delivered over the 2024/25 academic year and the total costs equal £2,750 per school and £17.85 per student accessing the provision, representing strong value for money.
- 2.4 The extension will support 5,400 students and 36 schools over a 9-month delivery period.
- 2.5 Subsidy control has been considered as part of the delivery plan assessment.

B. Impact on North East Combined Authority Objectives

The extension delivery plan has been reviewed in detail, it is considered all projects will remain in line with the original strategic fit, value for money, and delivery objectives. Particularly providing young, disadvantaged individuals additional skills and opportunities to access the job market.

C. Key risks

Individual programme risks have been included in the application form and continue to be updated and reported through quarterly claim submissions.

Risk will be managed by the Programme Assurance Team in line with the standard claims process. Risk is reported to the Investment Board as part of performance reporting.

D. Financial and other resources implications

The extension includes £100,000 of additional Investment Funding previously agreed by Cabinet. There are no internal staffing and resource implications as the project is currently being managed within existing staff portfolios.

E. Legal implications

Comments of the Monitoring Officer have been incorporated into the body of the 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. There are no anticipated negative impacts on groups within the protected characteristics. In relation to this project we have ensured that, whilst the provision is targeted at a specific age group, the recipient will ensure that the activity is made available to all the other protected characteristics groups.

G. Consultation and engagement

Throughout the process, extensive consultation has taken place, this has included discussions at Officer level between teams in North East CA, key stakeholders, and the Director of Finance and Investment.

H. Appendices

None

I. Background papers

- 26 September 2019 – Cabinet Report – Investment Fund Update
- 12 March 2024 – Investment Fund Cabinet Report

J. Contact officers

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K. Glossary

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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