

REPORT TO PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 12 September 2019

Report of: Skills Officer

Title: Building Greater Exeter Progress Report

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The report will provide an update on the Building Greater Exeter initiative, detailing progress since launch, achievements and plans for the next stages of development.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 That the committee note the contents of the report, and provide any relevant feedback.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 This report is for information only, providing a progress update.

4. What are the equality and diversity impacts of this decision

4.1 This report is for information only to update the committee on the progress of the Building Greater Exeter initiative, and no decision is required.

4.2 The committee is invited to note that through the delivery of the Building Greater Exeter initiative, consideration is being given to equality and diversity, and the nature of the work, and funding that has been secured (see below), are supporting a variety of groups in to employment.

5. What are the resource implications including non financial resources:

5.1 As indicated in the June 2018 report, the project would require a Project Officer to manage and deliver the activity. We were able to successfully appoint a Project Manager to this role in March 2019 following changes to the Growth and Enterprise team.

6. Section 151 Officer comments:

There are no additional financial implications for the Council to consider.

7. What are the legal aspects?

None identified

8. Monitoring Officer Comments:

The Monitoring Officer has no issues to raise with regards the content of this report.

9. Report details:

9.1 Background

9.1.1 In June 2018, Place Scrutiny Committee approved the development of the Building Greater Exeter initiative, in line with the proposal set out. The basis of the requirement for the initiative was, and still is, centred around the skills and labour shortages in the construction sector, locally, regionally and nationally. Working with public and private sector partners, the need for intervention to support the sector was recognised.

9.1.2 The programme has 3 key goals;

1. Inspire the future construction workforce through an effective engagement programme with schools and young people,
2. Support employers by facilitating recruitment to existing vacancies through up skilling and reskilling,
3. Support the adoption of the National Skills Academy for Construction model through the Client Based Approach (working with Planning and Procurement departments).

9.1.3 At the early stages of development key relationships were formed with; Exeter College, University of Exeter, and the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to provide suitable connections and support the initial strategic direction of the initiative.

9.1.4 Through the development of the partnership, and demand for the activity, sufficient funding has been secured to enable the initiative to run until at least 31 March 2021.

9.2 Geographical Coverage

9.2.1 During the set up and development phase, support and financial contributions were secured from both East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils. Therefore, the geography being covered by the programme now spans the 3 local authority areas.

9.2.2 Regular discussions continue with regard to Mid Devon District Council to support and contribute financially to the initiative, to enable Building Greater Exeter to cover Greater Exeter as a whole.

9.3 Partner and Stakeholder Engagement

9.3.1 As of August 2019, Building Greater Exeter has 28 partners supporting the initiative, as follows;

Private Sector		
AECOM	Apex Scaffolding (Exeter) Ltd*	Bam*
Chartered Institute of Building	Devon Construction Training	Galliford Try Partnerships*
Interserve	Kier*	LiveWest
McLaughlin and Harvey	Midas & mi-space*	Morgan Sindall
RGB Recruitment	Service Design Solution	TClarke
UPP	Vinci	Willmott Dixon*
YTKO Group		
Training Providers / Education		
Bicton College	Exeter College*	Focus Training Group*
Learn Devon	South Devon College	University of Exeter*
Public Sector		

East Devon District Council*	Exeter City Council*	Teignbridge District Council*
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- 9.3.2 All of those listed above are providing a financial contribution to support the delivery of activity to meet the objectives identified above. The annual budget of Building Greater Exeter is approximately £80,000, which can fluctuate each year depending on contributions from partners.
- 9.3.3 As per the original proposal, a steering group has been formed to ensure that the initiative maintains its original purpose, and to support the achievement of the objectives. This group meets every 2 months, with task and finish groups formed when a need is identified. Members of the steering group are drawn from the project partners, and are indicated above by an *, with the addition of a secondary school representative to provide the view from that stage of education. The group is chaired by a private sector representative on a 2 year basis, with a maximum of 2 electable terms. The role is currently fulfilled by Apex Scaffolding.
- 9.3.4 The governance of the initiative was updated early 219, this was due to the rapid growth of the initiative and the support we received from partners.
- 9.3.5 A wider networking group has been formed to support the communication of the achievements of the initiative, with a range of invitees from across the construction sector, and to provide updates from other relevant projects and programmes that can support the sector – such as funded training provision. This networking forum is convened twice a year.
- 9.3.6 Through the delivery of the programme, and associated activity, a number of additional partnerships and joint working arrangements have begun to emerge. These include the following;
- Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) – regular meetings with local and regional advisors and managers to maintain knowledge and understanding of the developments that have an impact on the delivery of Building Greater Exeter and its partners.
 - Building Plymouth – We have worked with Building Plymouth since the proposal to deliver the project in the Exeter region gained momentum. Additionally, we have now worked in partnership to deliver the construction zone at the Big Bang Fair in June 2019, and worked collaboratively on a bid the CITB’s Digital Fund in July 2019.
 - Heart of the South West LEP Construction Skills Group – We play an active role in this group, supporting the identification of the requirements for the sector.

9.4 Activity Update

- 9.4.1 Since the launch of Building Greater Exeter in September 2018, working with partners, we have been able to deliver the activity highlighted below under the 3 key objectives.
- 9.4.2 Inspire the future construction workforce through an effective engagement programme with schools and young people;
- a. Working with a sub group an ‘offer’ to schools has been produced, setting out the range of activities that Building Greater Exeter can co-ordinate to support young people, careers leaders and teachers to understand the opportunities available within the construction sector. This includes; talks – assemblies or class groups, attendance at careers fairs, support for lesson planning etc.
 - b. Attendance at events, including;
 - i. Schools Careers Fairs / STEM Events – St. Peter’s Exeter, Honiton, Exeter College
 - ii. National Apprenticeship Show, West Point – January 2019 – a 2 day event showcasing apprenticeships within the construction sector to young people and parents.

- iii. Exeter Apprenticeship Event, Exeter College – March 2019 – an afternoon / evening event during National Apprenticeship Week. Working with partners to deliver a construction zone with a range of activities.
- iv. Big Bang STEM Fair, West Point – June 2019 – a full day event, working in partnership with Building Plymouth and a range of private sector organisations to deliver the ‘Construction Zone’ and inspire young people about the sector.
- c. Supported Devon County Council’s ‘Step Forward’ programme for care leavers with sourcing work experience opportunities.
- d. Developed joint working with the Heart of the South West Careers Hub to ensure that the construction sector is well represented when careers strategies and activities are being developed by schools. This will include a construction focussed event for Careers Leaders, and providing an activity at a regional workshop in November.

9.4.3 Support employers by facilitating recruitment to existing vacancies through up skilling and reskilling:

- a. Co-ordinated a ‘construction zone’ at the Exeter City Council Jobs Fair in March.
- b. Supported a successful bid for funding that will encourage people from defined groups in to the industry. This will also support the ‘Job Shop’ concept as outlined in the original proposal.
- c. Made connections with and for the employer team at Job Centre Plus.
- d. Made connections with a variety of groups to support service leavers; The Royal Marines Charity, The Career Transition Partnership (CTP), Commando Training Centre Royal Marines, The Navy and Buildforce.

9.4.4 Support the adoption of the National Skills Academy for Construction model through the Client Based Approach:

- a. Discussions with CITB about the revised approach and application process.
- b. Presented to Exeter City Council Planning team in July to set out the opportunities and discuss the process for adopting the approach in Exeter.
- c. Support to be provided to East Devon with monitoring the Employment and Skills Plan with ISG at the Amazon depot build.

9.4.5 Project Management

- a. A significant proportion of time is being spent engaging with and generating the right networks to support the initiative and enable the activity to be developed. This is ensuring that the profile of Building Greater Exeter continues to be raised, and kept at the forefront of the construction sector within Exeter.
- b. Engagement and communication is key to the success of this programme, and delivering the networking and collaboration events, as well as communicating the activities, successes and raising the profile of our partners has been activity we have needed to invest time and resource in to during the first 12 months.

9.5 **Funding Opportunities**

9.5.1 Pathways to Employment Fund (CITB) – working with YTKO, one of our project partners, we have secured funding through the CITB’s ‘Pathways to Employment’ fund, and will be a key partner in delivering the ‘Building Growth SW’ project over the next 3 years. The total project value is £900,000, of which 70% is match funded. The Building Greater Exeter element of this is c. £80k, with some of our project partners also receiving funding and contributing match – in time and funding. This programme will support the delivery of objective 2, and will be focussed on encouraging people from the following 5 groups in to employment in the sector;

- Long term unemployed,
- Service leavers,
- Women,

- NEET young people,
- Those leaving a full time further education course in construction.

There will be a programme of communication and events to raise the profile of the sector, and to showcase the opportunities that are available. In addition, there will be pre-employment training – soft and site skills, and access to mentoring to support the transition in to employment in the industry.

Match funding is required, and through Building Greater Exeter, the intention is that the purchase of a 'mobile unit' to be used as a 'job shop' and engagement space will provide the match funding element.

- 9.5.2 Digital Leadership (CITB) – working in partnership with Building Plymouth and a range of private sector organisations, we collaborated with a specialist digital consultancy – Cosmic – to submit a bid to the CITB's Digital Leadership fund. Unfortunately, this was not successful, but the intention is to bring together a group that can drive this agenda forward across the region.
- 9.5.3 Onsite Training Hubs (CITB) – this is a live funding opportunity from CITB to provide onsite training activity to support people in to employment, linked to live project sites. We are currently working with Building Plymouth and the HotSW LEP to establish the viability of a bid to this fund for the Building Greater Exeter and wider region.
- 9.5.4 Skills Support for the Workforce – through the European Social Fund, there is the opportunity for businesses to access support for funded training, with the construction sector identified as a priority for this. The opportunity is being promoted to businesses across our network.

9.6 Future Plans

- 9.6.1 There is a huge amount of potential to develop the Building Greater Exeter initiative over the coming years. In conjunction with the steering group the priority projects – in line with the objectives will be determined and action plans agreed to deliver.
- 9.6.2 There is the need to further develop the metrics to monitor the outputs and impact of the project, in particular for objective 2 – supporting people in to employment – and a large element of this will come through the Building Growth SW project.
- 9.6.3 The future activity planned under the objectives for the project is as follows;
- 9.6.4 Inspire the future construction workforce through an effective engagement programme with schools and young people;
- Build a calendar of school activity to be supported by partners. Schools have been asked to respond to the 'offer', which will enable us to diarise and plan for a variety of events and support across the full academic year.
 - Attend key regional and local events, such as; National Apprenticeship Show SW (January 2020), Big Bang SW (June 2020), apprenticeship expos
 - Support Careers Leaders to gain a better understanding of the opportunities available in construction, and to incorporate suitable activities in to their careers strategies.
- 9.6.5 Support employers by facilitating recruitment to existing vacancies through up skilling and reskilling;
- Delivery of the Building Growth SW project (Pathways in to Construction), which will include the mobile 'job shop', and promotion of opportunities.
 - Develop a mechanism to link contractors, the supply chain and others offering opportunities with individuals, groups and organisations that are looking for; employment, work experience and apprenticeships.

- Develop relationships with key organisations and groups that support people in to employment, or facilitate transitions (such as those supporting service leavers).
- Support for people to access and the industry to provide Apprenticeships.

9.6.6 Support the adoption of the National Skills Academy for Construction model through the Client Based Approach;

- Develop the process and ways of working to build the relationship with the Exeter City Council Planning team, with the intention of achieving an Employment and Skills Plan on all major developments.
- Use this as a basis to develop the approach in East Devon and Teignbridge, working with Economic Development and Planning colleagues in both of those local authorities.
- Monitor the delivery of ESPs on those developments that already have them in place; St. Sidwell's Point, Amazon Depot.
- Apply to the CITB for National Skills Academy for Construction status to demonstrate the commitment to this approach across the Building Greater Exeter project.

9.6.7 Project Management

- Fully develop appropriate metrics to monitor and measure the impact of the project across the 3 key objectives.
- Ongoing partner engagement to ensure that the project is meeting expectations and requirements.
- Attend and support relevant events to promote the project and achieve the objectives.
- Develop and maintain a programme of marketing and communications to promote the project and enable efficient and effective communication with project partners.
- Continue to develop strategic working relationships where relevant, e.g. Building Plymouth
- Continue to explore and apply for funding opportunities to support the delivery of the project objectives.

10. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

10.1 The initiative supports the Exeter Vision, and in particular elements the 'Accessible World-Class Education' strand.

'Exeter will be agile and innovative, and economic growth will be clean, inclusive and resilient. Local supply chains will be stronger, supporting the city's businesses and social enterprises and keeping more money within the local economy. All residents will have access to world-class education and training, and meaningful, high-quality employment with fair wages. The life-changing benefits of access to and participation in arts, culture and physical activity will be realised. Employers will be able to recruit, nurture and retain a skilled local workforce as well as attracting the best global talent.'

10.2 The basis of the Building Greater Exeter initiative to support access to employment, opportunities for our young people, provide a pipeline of talent for employers within the construction sector. All of which is underpinned by supporting the local economy, and by the nature of the construction sector, the local supply chain.

10.3 The benefits of delivering the initiative also have wider ranging impact on other areas of the corporate plan – support for this sector will support the housing delivery plans for the city.

11. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

- 11.1 There are potential risks around the sustainability of funding the initiative after 31 March 2021. The steering group are alert to these, and the budget and programme of activity is being managed in line with expectations.
- 11.2 As a project team we are very conscious of the need to demonstrate impact and value for money to all of our project partners to ensure their ongoing commitment and support. The project manager is ensuring that all the needs and expectations of our partners is well understood, and that there are opportunities for all to engage in the different elements of the programme.
- 12. What is the impact of the decision on health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs, economy, safety and the environment?**
- 12.2 The initiative has no adverse impact on equality and diversity, young people and vulnerable adults. Building Greater Exeter will work with any person who has an interest of working within the construction sector. Working with young people and those looking to gain employment within the sector will continue to be a priority of the initiative.
- 13. What other options are there, and why have they been dismissed?**
- 13.1 The other options were presented to committee in June 2018, there are no further options to present as part of this progress report.

**Director
David Bartram**

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:
None

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