

**Forward plan reference number: N/A**

<b>Report title:</b> To Agree Sector Support Fund Project Change Request for Creative Open Workspace Masterplan and Prospectus project	
<b>Report to:</b> Chief Executive Officer of the SELEP	
<b>Report author:</b> Howard Davies, SELEP Capital Programme Officer	
<b>Meeting date:</b> 4 November 2021	<b>For:</b> Decision
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Howard Davies <a href="mailto:howard.davies@southeastlep.com">howard.davies@southeastlep.com</a>	
<b>SELEP Partner Authority affected:</b> Pan – LEP	

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a project change request received for the Sector Support Fund (SSF) project Creative Open Workspace Masterplan and Prospectus (the Project).
- 1.2. The request to extend the delivery timetable was endorsed by the Strategic Board (the Board) by electronic procedure on 15 October 2021.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. **Approve** the request to extend the delivery timetable for the Creative Open Workspace Masterplan and Prospectus project until March 2022.

**3. Summary of Issue**

- 3.1. The SELEP Creative Open Workspace Master Plan and Prospectus project aims to address the gap in suitable workspace for the Creative Cultural and Digital Sector across the SELEP area.
- 3.2. The outputs of the Project will be:
  - 3.2.1. A refreshed South East Creative Economy Prospectus to describe exemplary pipeline projects alongside complementary work packages addressing skills and business support needs;
  - 3.2.2. Produce a Creative Open Workspace report and toolkit to accelerate the pipeline of open workspace projects;
  - 3.2.3. To deliver a Cultural planning policy guidance note that can be adopted by local authorities to support the inclusion of creative workspace in new developments and the re-purposing of under-used buildings as creative workspace;

- 3.2.4. To help enable three Creative Enterprise Zones, leading to increased Business Rates yields;
- 3.2.5. To help development of governance and operating structure for a new creative workspace finance vehicle.
- 3.3. The Board endorsed the allocation of £49,000 SSF in March 2019, contributing to a total project cost of £70,000. At the time it was expected that the Project would complete in March 2020.
- 3.4. A request to extend the timeline of the project was received by the SELEP Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in December 2020, to extend the project completion date until July 2021. The initial stages of the project suffered from enforced delays due to the clarification of the consultants brief and ensuring initial outputs were achieved, leading to a delay in the consultancy team being procured to August 2020. This request was approved in December 2020.
- 3.5. As the Covid-19 pandemic continued early in 2021 the SECEN working group took the decision to pause the project in order to take stock and sense check the project plans. This led to further delays.
- 3.6. It is intended that the project extension to March 2022, will allow for the delivery of all outputs as stated in the original funding application.
- 3.7. The project extension will not impact on project costs.
- 3.8. To date none of the SSF funding has been drawn down as the SSF grant agreement with East Sussex County Council remains outstanding. The signing of the original grant agreement was severely protracted and more recently an updated grant agreement has been delayed due to the change requests submitted for this project.

#### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1. Once approved by the SELEP Chief Executive Officer a grant agreement will be drawn up and sent to East Sussex County Council (ESCC) for their review and execution as the upper tier local authority supporting the project.
- 4.2. Once the agreement has been completed by ESCC it will be returned to SELEP for signing by the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer, on behalf of South East LEP Ltd. It will then be sent to Essex County Council (ECC), acting as the Accountable Body for SELEP for Section 151 officer sign off.
- 4.3. The completed grant agreement will be forwarded to ESCC and grant drawdown will be permitted.

#### **5. Financial Implications (Accountable Body comments)**

- 5.1. The £49,000 awarded to this Project is currently being held by the Accountable Body until the grant agreement is put in place and the grant claimed by East Sussex County Council.
- 5.2. The grant agreement will set out the conditions for use of the grant for delivering the Project.
- 5.3. Under the revised timeline, delivery of the Project and spend of the grant is expected by March 2022.
- 5.4. If the Project extension is not agreed, the SSF £49,000 could be added back to the SSF available for reinvestment in alternative Projects.

## **6. Legal Implications (Accountable Body comments)**

- 6.1. Approval of the proposals set out in this report relating to the Sector Support Fund is delegated to the SELEP CEO.
- 6.2. A written grant agreement setting out the conditions of the funding will need to be put in place between ECC as Accountable Body, SELEP Ltd and East Sussex County Council and this agreement is to be executed by all the parties.

## **7. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 7.1. 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:
  - 7.1.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
  - 7.1.2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - 7.1.3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
- 7.3. In the course of the development of the project business case, the delivery of the Project and the 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 where possible identify mitigating factors where an impact against any of the protected characteristics has been identified.

## **8. List of Appendices**

- 8.1. Appendix 1 – Project Bid Document

8.2. Appendix 2 – Project Change Request

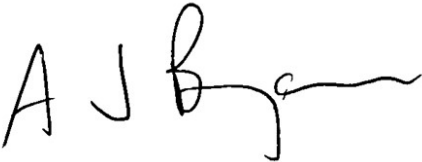
**9. List of Background Papers**

9.1. Sector Support Funding Guidance [Link](#)

9.2. SELEP Assurance Framework [Link](#)

9.3. Minutes of the Strategic Board Electronic Procedure [October 2021](#)

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

Role	Date
<p><b>Accountable Body sign off</b></p> <p><b>Michael Neumann</b></p> <p><b>(on behalf of Nicole Wood, S151 Officer, Essex County Council)</b></p>	<p><b>07/12/2021</b></p>
<p><b>I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.</b></p>  <p>Adam Bryan</p> <p>Chief Executive Officer for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p> <p>6/12/21</p>