

West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network

Economic Challenge Investment Fund

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In March, the Board was presented with the ECIF proposal to HEFCE. This paper provides an outline of the progress made to date.

2. Update

- 2.1. The initial response from HEFCE was that the WYLLN's proposal was unsuccessful. However, when feedback was requested, it appeared that the proposal was successful and would be funded to the full amount.
- 2.2. Although behind original timescales, partners have met and the details of the offer are being pulled together. An approach to Marketing was also agreed. Meetings have taken place with Yorkshire Forward and the managers of the Train to Gain Enhancement Fund regarding matched funding and with Job Centre Plus and Nextstep regarding referral processes. A second meeting is being planned for late June or early July, after which it is hoped the partnership may be in a position to deliver on the outcomes.

3. Matched Funding

- 3.1. Yorkshire Forward supported our proposal and offered to provide the full match through the Train to Gain Enhancement Fund. Unfortunately, due to the late approval by HEFCE and the high success in Yorkshire and the Humber of other ECIF proposals, more funds were having to be drawn down to provide the match. We have been informed that Yorkshire Forward will not be able to contract with us for the matched funding until August 2009.
- 3.2. A great deal of time and effort is being spent on trying to find solutions to this difficult situation. At the time of writing, the WYLLN is in communications with HEFCE to establish the level of risk of clawback, if we started to draw down HEFCE funding and the matched funding was not forthcoming. Approval of alternative sources of matched funding, not identified in our original proposal is also being sought.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1. The delayed approval of the project has increased the risk that the partners may not be able to deliver the outcomes due to the reduced timescales. Every effort is being made to address the situation.
- 4.2. The Board is asked to receive and comment on the content of this paper.