

Date: 29th March 2019

Subject: Greater Manchester Careers Application Platform Update

Report of: Cllr Sean Fielding, GMCA Portfolio Lead for Education, Skills, Work & Apprenticeships

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide an update for Leaders on the progress of Mayoral manifesto commitment to developing and implementing a UCAS-style application system (the GM Careers Application Platform).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The GMCA is asked to review and note the content of the report and:

1. Agree that GMCA request approval from each GM Local Authority to act as Joint Data Controller for the Platform on behalf of the 10 LA’s to utilise concurrent statutory powers and legislative duties held mainly by them (Education and Skills Act 2008 / Education Act 2007).
2. Delegate authority to the GMCA Treasurer (in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Education, Skills, Work & Apprenticeships) to approve contract award following the procurement process

CONTACT OFFICERS

Gemma Marsh, Assistant Director – Skills

Gemma.Marsh@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Mat Ainsworth, Assistant Director – Work

Matthew.Ainsworth@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

TRACKING/PROCESS		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution		No
EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN		
Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the AGMA Scrutiny Pool on the grounds of urgency?		No
TfGMC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
N/A	15 th March	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Delivering the Mayoral manifesto & Greater Manchester Strategy commitment to creating a ground breaking UCAS-style application system for all Technical / Apprenticeships & opportunities in GM will contribute significantly to GM's ambitions for a reformed technical education system across the region and **underpin the Local Industrial Strategy** by informing the talent pipeline of the future. GMCA Employment & Skills Team have been working on the initial development stages of this system, carrying out extensive consultations with key partners across GM including schools, colleges, independent training providers, employers, website developers and young people.
- 1.2 The overarching aim of the Platform is to create a single, digital space that help GM's young people to make appropriate and informed decisions about their future careers in a way that makes it simple for them and their parents / families to choose between and apply for an academic or technical pathway. It will also provide a clear line of sight to other opportunities across GM such as Work Shadowing. It will act as a natural enhancement to the current Bridge GM activity, giving employers a space to share their opportunities to young people. Bridge GM has created the foundations for employers, schools, colleges and providers to connect to and create an excellence framework to develop the Gold Standard of careers education information and guidance.

In particular, the Platform will:

- **Deliver on the Mayoral Manifesto/GMS and improve the way young people search and apply** by providing a digital platform similar to the UCAS application system for University which will make it easy for those applying for apprenticeships or Technical qualifications between the ages of 16-18;
- **Provide all young people with other opportunities** offered by employers and business professionals such as work shadowing, mentoring, inspirational talks;
- **Provide a clear line of sight to careers opportunities** (outside of the traditional academic route) by offering two clear chances pre and post-16 to express an interest in and apply for an apprenticeship;
- **Develop a Curriculum for Life for young people to own and capture in a digital portfolio** that showcases to a prospective employer a diverse set of skills and interests in addition to their academic qualifications;
- **Improve young people's knowledge and awareness of jobs** and career opportunities in their local area and across GM;
- **Ensure employers have a place to share their opportunities** in an easy and quick way, ensuring quality is at the heart;
- **Connect more young people to meaningful employer opportunities**, including experiences of the world of work, industry insights, work shadowing and volunteering;
- **Help to address social and systematic inequalities** by challenging stereotypes and directing content and resources towards young people and / or sectors that are underrepresented;
- **Create closer alignment** between young people's career aspirations and the demand from business, **linked to the Local Industrial Strategy** in terms of future talent requirements for growth and replacement; and

- **Improve the way information about young people’s progress and progression plans are captured and recorded** to support transitions in and out of education, training and employment.
- **Align to the Opportunities Pass developments** to ensure a joined up enhanced offer for GM’s young people.

1.3 Early discussions during the consultation stage have highlighted that there is a clear demand for a system that is young person facing that brings together post-16 options, opportunities and careers tools / resources, including apprenticeships and other progression routes in one place. This is particularly important for those high numbers of young people who know they do not wish to follow the well-understood A’ level pathway and need to navigate a path to a skilled occupation or higher level study. This is why the system is being referred to as a ‘Careers Application Platform’.

2. PROGRESS UPDATE

Consultation

- 2.1 Consultations took place via online surveys and group discussions and were beneficial in terms of understanding what works, what doesn’t work, what the audience wants and needs and how it would look as an online platform. Common views from employers included:
- The need to better understand a young person’s interests, skills and activities outside of school;
 - More focus on young people being supported to apply for the right opportunity and being taught and equipped with the right tools to succeed;
 - Young people need more financial management training;
 - Having a system that marries employment, training and extra-curricular opportunities/ activities **would be a superb tool for employers** / opportunity givers to use.
- 2.2 Group discussions were useful in understanding how a system needs to be able to work for all target users and to understand how it would be used in a school / college setting. Particular considerations included:
- Ensuring that the Platform works with current school / college systems;
 - Ensuring the Platform is user-friendly and accessible to user groups, including those with special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEN/D);
 - Use of the Platform from Year 9 onwards, but with an option to introduce it in Year 7 so the system and functionality can be embedded throughout the student’s education;
 - Should help teachers and practitioners to identify those young people who are not engaging in activity and / or are at risk of not participating in education, employment or training (NEET) post-16;
 - Use of strategic labour market information to show growth in local sectors, using future skills needs to target applications and opportunities; and
 - Use of system reports to inform commissioners, tutors and curriculum leads about curriculum design.

Specification – Key Features

- 2.3 A draft specification has been drawn up with a value of £500,000 as agreed in October 2018 GMCA, taking into account all of the information collated during the consultation stage. The Platform will consist of the following key features:

Function / Key Feature	Purpose
Digital Portfolio (C4L)	This element will capture and record achievements relevant to young people’s career aspirations and progression plans, including predicted and / or achieved qualifications; work related learning experiences; personal skills and attributes; extra-curricular activities and career goals. The young person will be able to share their Digital Portfolio when applying for learning and training opportunities through the Platform
Career Management Resources	This section which will include the use of diagnostic and psychometric tests that provide young people with options for possible careers; application and interview skills; digital skills; workplace behaviours and attitudes; and financial management. The completion or achievement of these modules will be recorded in the young person’s Digital Portfolio.
GM Employers – Meet your Future	This section will be an opportunity for young people to hear from employers from across GM; understanding their personal journeys; what jobs exist now and in the future.
Post-16 Course Directory	This will be a fully searchable directory that enables young people and other relevant user groups (e.g. teachers, careers staff, parents/carers) to search for appropriate post-16 education and training opportunities, including apprenticeships, A-levels, technical and vocational study programmes and other work-based learning pathways. The Platform will use intuitive technology to initiate course searches and will allow young people to search by keyword, location, course type or provider. Employers will be able to list specific programmes and courses offered to young people, including apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships.
Activities Directory	This will supply young people with a fully searchable database of accredited and non-accredited enrichment and engagement opportunities helping them build their own Curriculum for Life, which young people can use to improve their personal and professional development. Specific employer led opportunities may include volunteering programmes, work shadowing, work experience, re-engagement activities and local events. Employers who express a desire to offer and promote experiences of the workplace to young people through Bridge GM will be supported by the Bridge GM Team to make these quality opportunities available on the Platform for young people to access.
Application Module	This element will build on the Mayoral Manifesto commitment by providing a place where young people can easily apply for both technical and academic courses. The Platform will have a common application process (CAP) which young people can use to apply for post-16 programmes, engagement activities and provision offered by employers (e.g. apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience etc.). The Platform will have a tracking and reporting function which will enable teachers, practitioners and local authorities to better understand the choices young people are making, and ensure that they are equipped and prepared with the necessary skills to transition

	into the next stage of learning. In the long term this will enable us to minimise churn and drop-outs and improve completions and further progressions onto apprenticeships at 17 and 18.
--	---

2.4 The project team are currently working with GMCA IT, procurement, legal and information governance teams to ensure that the specification is fully compliant and ensures that we get the right provider who can deliver all of the outcomes / outputs and KPI's outlined in the specification and contract.

3. Data

3.1 In order for the Platform to utilise and process data effectively it is proposed that GMCA act as Joint Data Controller for the Platform and as such be authorised by all 10 local authorities to utilise concurrent statutory powers and legislative duties held mainly by them (Education and Skills Act 2008 / Education Act 2007). Firstly to enable the sharing of data between local authorities and schools as part of ensuring individuals remain in education until the age of 18 and also for schools regarding the provision and impact of careers services support. This approach would negate the need to establish separate sharing arrangements but it does require a contractual arrangement or evidencing of an accountable consultation process gaining the agreement of the 10 local authorities. This needs to be in place before any live data was processed which is currently planned for early September.

4. Next Steps

4.1. The next stage is to launch the procurement process to secure a suitable software supplier, with a phased rollout expected to be carried out over the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years. Key milestones are highlighted below:

Activity	Date
Launch of ITT on The Chest and advert placed in OJEU	05/03/2019
Supplier Engagement Event	w/c 18/03/2019
Deadline for questions	01/04/2019
Deadline for responses to questions	05/04/2019
Return of ITT	16/04/2019
Evaluation of ITT	17/04/2019
Invitations to interviews via the chest	26/04/2019
Interviews & moderated scoring	01/05/2019 - 02/05/2019

Selection of successful bidder	07/05/2019
Issue Successful/unsuccessful letters	07/05/2019
10 day standstill period begins	07/05/2019
Issue of final award of contract letter (will be same day as standstill ends)	17/05/2019
Contract negotiation	20/05/2019 - 30/05/2019
Liaise with legal re seal of contract/Issue of formal contract	30/05/19 - 31/05/19
OJEU award notice	31/05/19
Contract initiation & Implementation period	03/06/19
Service commencement	02/09/19