

**Open**

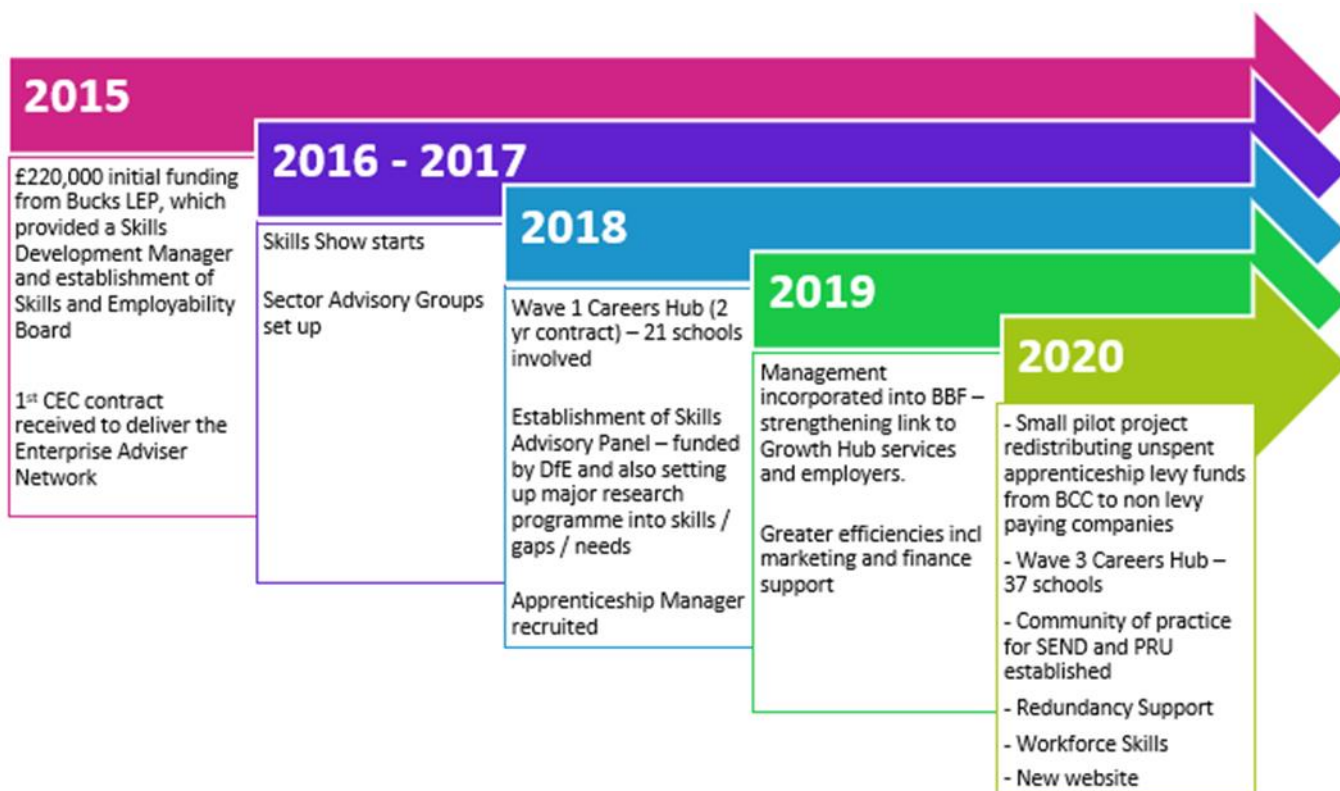
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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Skills Hub Update</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>To provide board members with an update on the activities of the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub and Skills Advisory Panel.</b>
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>That members note the contents of this report and:-</b> <b>i.) Agree the principle of continued funding for the Skills Hub for the period April 2021/March 2026.</b> <b>ii.) Ask the Audit and Finance sub-group to review the skills operational budget for 2021/22 as part of the MOU development process with the BBF Growth Hub. The MOU and agreed budget will be presented to a forthcoming meeting of this Board to support the request for any release of LEP reserve funding.</b>
<b>Impact on Risk Register</b>	<b>The release of this funding will help secure the long term future of the Skills Hub which is a central pillar of the Buckinghamshire Growth and Recovery Proposition and will ensure the continued access to national match funding for the skills programme.</b>

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- 1 Buckinghamshire LEP invested an initial £220k from reserves to establish the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub in 2015. This was one of the wisest investments we have made in terms of impact and investment leverage with over £450k of external income secured each year providing a return of investment of over 10:1. There are funds in place for the remainder of the current financial year, but further investment will be required from the 2021/22 financial year to ensure continuity of delivery.
- 2 We have invited Gavin Brooks as Chair of the Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel, a sub-group to this board to provide a brief presentation on some of the skills programme highlights from the past 12 months and to outline the ambitions for future development of the Skills Hub programme
- 3 The scale of activity undertaken by the Skills Hub has grown considerably over the past 5 years as can be highlighted by the table below. The Buckinghamshire Skills Hub is ranked as the top performing Skills Hub in the country by the Careers and Enterprise Company in relation to careers engagement for young people.

## The Growth of the Bucks Skills Hub over the past 5 years



- 4 The work of the Skills Hub is vital to both our Economic Recovery Plan and the Growth and Recovery Deal for Buckinghamshire highlighted elsewhere in our agenda. In 2020 the Skills Hub have led the development of the redundancy support programme providing a co-ordinated support programme for individuals at risk of redundancy and for companies who are having to lay off staff; a workforce skills manager has been recruited to assist companies to develop traineeship and apprenticeship programmes and a new website is being developed to ensure that all skills support programmes are accessible in a dedicated and easily navigable location. In addition, the popular and well- respected Skills Show moved onto an online platform this year enabling it to reach an even wider audience and to take expert careers support directly into the classroom for over 5,000 young people. A full report providing greater detail on the activities and impact of the Skills Hub is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 5 To maintain this broad programme of activity a further investment from the LEP is expected to be required from the 2021/22 financial year. To support this request for investment we will be seeking for an approved operational budget, including delivery outputs and confirmation on the status of partner commitments is presented to the next meeting of the Audit and Finance sub-group as part of the MOU with the BBF Growth Hub to enable a budget commitment to be made for the next 5 year delivery programme for the Skills Hub.

**Board members are asked to:**

- i.) Agree the principle of continued funding for the Skills Hub for the period April 2021/March 2026.**
- ii.) Ask the Audit and Finance sub-group to review the skills operational budget for 2021/22 as part of the MOU development process with the BBF Growth Hub. The MOU and agreed budget will be presented to a forthcoming meeting of this Board to support the request for any release of LEP reserve funding.**