

One Stockport Construction Hub Implementation Plan

Report to Stockport MDC Board, 6th June 2024

Summary

At the December 2023 meeting of the MDC, the Board agreed to support proposals for the creation of the One Stockport Construction Hub, and act as the Project Sponsor for the first year. Since then, the MDC team and partners have been working to translate these proposals into delivery. This report summarises this work and sets out an implementation plan for the next 12 months.

Background

Stockport's £1bn regeneration programme is a key economic driver, with substantial construction investment creating thousands of jobs over the next decade. The MDC-led Task and Finish group which developed the proposals presented to the Board in December outlined a vision for harnessing this investment to:

- Bring about a step change in the number of construction skills and employment opportunities for local people
- Create inclusive skills pathways for local people to secure good jobs in the sector.
- Drive investment into local construction firms that specialise in environmentally sustainable methods and technologies.

To deliver this vision the group developed proposals for four key work packages (described below), underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- Driving investment into our local jobs and skills infrastructure to ensure maximum long-term impact for local people
- Putting inclusion and accessibility for all at the heart of our approach
- Accelerating the transition to net zero and capturing the benefits of this for Stockport people and businesses
- A consistent approach to social value delivery for public construction projects

Implementation update

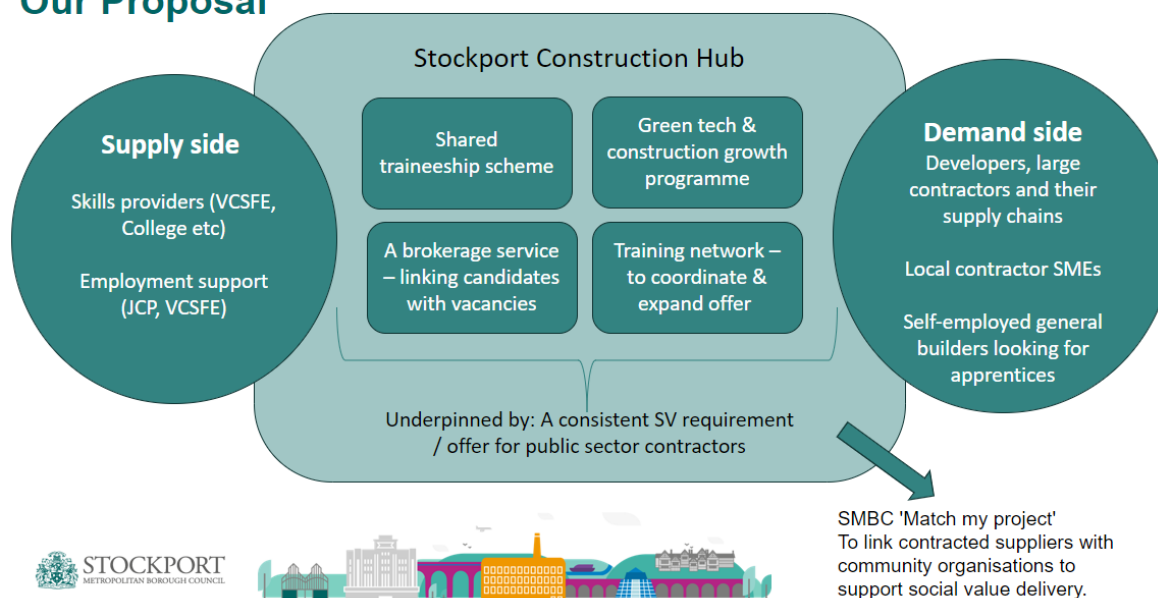
Pathfinder year

Our intention is for the One Stockport Construction Hub to be a sustainable initiative capable of harnessing time limited construction investments to drive long term positive change in employment and skills outcomes in Stockport. Sustainable funding will be crucial to realising this goal. However, to enable us to test and prove the model, we proposed to run a pathfinder year, funded through a combination of grant funding and voluntary contractor contributions with activity subject to an evaluation.

Work packages

The four work packages detailed below have been designed as the first phase of Hub activity. The ambition is that once established the Hub will act as a forum to identify, shape, and deliver further innovation to drive impact:

Our Proposal



Work packages

1. Training Network

Purpose: The training network will serve as a central coordinator, facilitating collaboration between skills providers around funding bids and premises but also providing a route for contractors to deliver Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for educators.

Lead Partners: B4Box, Pure Innovation, Groundwork, the Trafford College Group and contractors.

Key milestones: The hub will convene its first training network meeting by July 2024.

2. Shared Traineeships and supported apprenticeships

Purpose: The aim of the shared traineeship is to tackle poor retention rates and insecure entry level jobs in the construction industry by providing a route into good quality, semi-skilled employment for people with barriers to employment.

Lead partners: Lead B4Box, with SMBC Leaving Care Team

Key milestones:

In our pathfinder year we aim to test out two delivery models, funded via UKSPF People and Skills programme (bid submitted and awaiting confirmation of funding):

Model 1: For young people at very high risk of becoming NEET:

- Step 1: **Pre-Supported Apprenticeship Summer Construction School** (targeted for school leavers at high risk of becoming NEET). A pre-traineeship made up of an 8-week programme running from July – September 2024.
- Step 2: **A supported apprenticeship.** Building on existing Stockport Council supported apprenticeship programme for young people who are care experienced, have an EHCP or are young carers. The apprenticeship enables the young people to access enhanced support aimed at supporting them to complete a 2 year apprenticeship.

Model 2: Construction multi-skills Traineeship (for young people who are already NEET)

- Strand 2 will support a cohort of 12 NEET learners to complete a Level 2 multi-skills apprenticeship from October 2024 – March 2025.
- This will involve work experience on live construction projects in Stockport and close collaboration with contractors and their supply chains to identify apprenticeship and wider work opportunities for graduates of the programme.

3. Brokerage Service

Purpose and updated scope: After an unsuccessful UKSPF Community Grants bid in May 2024 we have committed to launching a virtual brokerage team in September 2024. The virtual brokerage team will monitor local employment and skills opportunities and link these to organisations working with people seeking opportunities in construction.

The Virtual Team will lay the foundations for improved coordination. Beyond this we remain committed to creating a public facing brokerage service which will:

- Connect suitable candidates with appropriate opportunities.
- Pair construction companies with relevant training programs.
- Advance inclusivity through proactive engagement with schools, wider voluntary, community, and social enterprise sectors.
- Promote continuous employment, while also facilitating the upskilling and career advancement of individuals within the construction sector.

Lead Partners: Employer Partnership Manager (Trafford College Group), Careers Advisor, contractors with Social Value obligations, VCSFE organisations, SMBC Leaving Care Service.

Milestones:

- Coordination meetings commence (July 2024)
- Submit bid to CITB for proactive engagement activity with schools and colleges to advance inclusivity in the construction sector (September 2024)

4. Green Tech and Construction Growth Programme

Purpose: The aim of the Green Tech and Construction Growth Programme is to engage local suppliers from the design phase through to procurement, ensuring their involvement in the supply chain.

Partners: Green Economy, SMBC Climate Action Now team, MDC.

Milestones: The One Stockport Construction Hub has committed to work with Green Economy to run a 'New Entrants' solar PV installation programme. Through the scheme trained local suppliers are given the opportunity to install solar panels on Stockport schemes. This installation project, supported and certified by industry bodies, will not only provide local suppliers with practical experience and certification opportunities but also create jobs and promote sustainable energy solutions.

This will be a cohort of 8 people and the first programme will run in autumn 2024.

Long-term funding options

Critical to the long-term success of the programme is sustained funding. We have identified three potential routes to securing this beyond the pilot year and are working with SMBC and GMCA colleagues to assess options for delivery:

- A modest levy on all residential and commercial schemes as part of Planning Contributions.
- A consortium model, with local construction firms and active local contractors paying a modest annual membership fee.

- Opportunities to flex Adult and 16-18 Skills funding around this model in the medium to long term.

Next steps

1. The MDC team will continue to work with partners, lead organisations and Task and Finish Group participants to deliver the four works packages detailed in the implementation plan.
2. We are actively engaging with contractors on upcoming schemes (including Cheadle Eco Park and Marple Community Hub) to secure their support for pathfinder year activities
3. A communications campaign to announce the start of activity and promote the Hub will be developed over the summer for launch in September
4. We will continue to progress sustainable, long-term funding options for the Hub and bring forward proposals to the MDC Board by the end of 2024.

