

Stage 2 – Full Equality Impact Assessment Form

Title of the Equality Impact Assessment report:

Digital Skills Programme

1. What is the service area(s) and who is the lead officer?

Regeneration & Economic Development – Jemma Curtis

2. What change are you proposing?

To deliver a programme during 26/27 focused on Digital Skills for young people in partnership with independent training provider, Tech Educators as part of the Council's Raising Skills and Aspirations programme.

The aim from the proposal is to deliver a programme of events leading into a [Hackathon](#) at the Corn Exchange, focusing on using tech for confidence building, career/pathway awareness raising and employer engagement with employers who have future tech based skills and workforce needs (the Queen Elizabeth Hospital being a key partner).

3. How will this change help the Council achieve its Corporate Strategy priorities (and therefore your Directorate/service objectives)?

Aligns with the corporate priority to 'Promote growth and prosperity to benefit West Norfolk'

The WN Skills Strategy action plan and WN Economic Development Strategy identified priority to be given to future workforce skills needs in order to support continued growth and competitiveness in our local economy. A key focus of the government's industrial strategy with digital expected to be one of the [key skills required by employers](#) during 2026-2030. This programme directly response to local employer needs and support to address/reduce the at risk of NEET or NEET young people in West Norfolk.

4. What is your evidence of need for change?

The [West Norfolk Economic Strategy \(WNES\)](#) and [Marmot Place](#) baseline data identifies the above average levels of NEET and the below average skills and educational attainment levels of residents. The WNES identifies this as a key barrier to economic growth, supported by qualitative data from employers in key sectors that are struggling to recruit to roles which have higher/bespoke skills required. Specifically, the Hospital 2.0 Programme has identified the future workforce needs for the health sector locally will be dramatically different to that of the current workforce. By focusing on the opportunities digital related careers, this programme will inspire local young people on the opportunities available to them and build their confidence and aspirations to work towards training and employment opportunities locally.

5. Does this change deliver improved value for money and/or release efficiency savings?

This project is funded through the Raising Skills and Aspiration reserve budget to support wider social and economic objectives.

6. What geographical area does this proposal cover?

The target audience for this programme is young people who are NEETs (or at risk of NEET), that will engage year 11 high school students from across West Norfolk, College of West Anglia & Boost participants (reaching circa 100 people).

7. What is the impact of your proposal?

This is a 'trailblazer' programme where we have an opportunity to pilot the initiative with a view to secure funding and sponsorship for future events in West Norfolk through corporate CPD, social value contributions and skills-based programmes.

We anticipate that the social value achieved by this project will include;

- Retention of young people in education
- Pathways to careers relating to digital skills
- Employer and future employee engagement to support recruitment in key roles in priority sectors
- Aspirations raised and opportunities identified for future career opportunities locally.
- CPD for employer staff involved in the Hackathon delivery

Immediate outputs and KPIs include;

- number of young people engaged in careers activity
- number of businesses supporting local career activity
- number of young people retained/completing education and training qualifications.

However, it is recognised there will be many softer outcomes that are not measurable immediately including confidence building to pursue onward training and employment in digital skills.

8. What data have you used to support your assessment of the impact of your proposal?

As above, supported by stakeholder support from NCC, College of West Anglia, Queen Elizabeth Hospital and secondary high schools.

9. What consultation has been undertaken/will need to be undertaken with stakeholders/groups directly or indirectly impacted by the proposals and how do you intend to use this information to inform the decision?

Stakeholder consultation in developing the programme has been undertaken with the Chief Executive, NCC, Careers Hub, College of West Anglia, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, secondary high schools and portfolio holder (Cllr Rust). This has directly shaped the target age, timeframe and delivery approach to the programme

10. Are there any implications for other service areas?

HR – we plan to offer CPD opportunities to council staff through being involved in the Hackathon event, particularly to support future recruitment in ICT /digital skills related roles.

11. What impact (either positive or negative will this change have on different groups of the population?

Implications on groups with protected characteristics;

- Age – this programme is specifically targeted at age 16-18 years to building confidence and raise aspirations to mitigate potential of becoming NEET
- Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)

Note that these are positive impacts – all other Protected Characteristics are neutral.

The longer term positive impacts will support minimising the number of NEET young people, number of young people going into higher level of training and employment to support the future growth in the west Norfolk economy utilising skills that will be required by the next generation workforce.

This will be measured through the monitoring framework established in the West Norfolk Economic Strategy Action Plan.

12. Other staff involved in Assessment (including Corporate Equality Group Representatives), and comments from Equality Working Group reps

Jo Stanton

Dave Robson

We feel this is a positive initiative, with no negative impacts identified. We agree with the findings of the assessment and the EIA clearly identifies how this will impact on the local area. There is the opportunity to identify lessons learned and expand the initiative going forward.