

GM Talent Match Stakeholder Consultation



Context

Funding has been set aside within the final year of *Greater Manchester Talent Match (GM Talent Match)* budget to design and build a new resource to source work-related opportunities for young people.

Project Overview

GM Talent Match commissioned *Shared Future CIC* and *Reason Digital* to review the development of a Greater Manchester-wide online resource to source work-related opportunities for young people. *Shared Future CIC* consulted with stakeholders to find out what they wanted and needed from such a resource. They also gathered views on the current GM Talent Match Opportunities Hub. *Reason Digital* were tasked with developing technical recommendations based on the findings.

Overall Summary

There were positive responses to the idea of having a Greater Manchester-wide online resource. Opinions as to whether the Opportunities Hub was fit for this purpose were mixed. Many felt the content met the overall objective but its functionality was limited and its design could be more young people focused.

Reason Digital analysed the system currently used and reviewed other systems offering similar functions across Greater Manchester (GM) and elsewhere. They concluded that making the required changes to the current system would be both a relatively costly option and unsustainable in the long run, and recommended investment in a new platform; supported by a large open source community. A number of detailed solutions were recommended, differing by cost and features.

Consultation Findings

Young people

- Online job searches are the most common method young people used to source opportunities.
- There appears to be a good supply of

Opportunities across the city region but some young people are unaware of them.

- They liked the GM-wide online resource idea because they believed it would be young people focused, GM focused and it would make opportunities more accessible and easier to find.

Employers

- Although employers valued direct contact via events to engage young people, they also posted opportunities online but found it difficult due to the vast number of places to advertise roles.
- Employers described a desire to have a 'one stop' holistic approach to target young people with their opportunities directly via an online resource.

Local Authorities

- Recognition that their online resources were not necessarily fully meeting young people's needs and were difficult to keep up to date
- Liked the idea of promoting local and city regional employment programmes more easily and were positive towards having a GM-wide directory

What is needed in an online resource?

- Opportunities listings were considered the most important aspect to include in the GM-wide online resource.
- Recognition that many young people require support to access and fully engage with opportunities.
- Suggestion that the resource could be multi-accessible – for use by both young people and those supporting them.

Concerns

- Keeping the resource up to date
- Lots of other online resources available already, particularly around apprenticeships
- Funding and management of the resource



- Getting buy-in from Mayor and local authorities
- Promoting and engaging to encourage usage

Views on the Opportunities Hub

- 44% of respondents felt the current Opportunities Hub met young people's needs, whilst 40% felt it partly met their needs.
- Respondents found the Hub easy to use, clear and concise. There was praise for wealth opportunities and the centralising of resource in one place.
- Reasons for disliking the Hub included: text and information heavy; needs to be more visually appealing for young people; difficult to navigate due to poor search facilities.

Technical recommendations

- **Use of self-service:** Employers would be willing, with the correct support, to self-serve and post their own opportunities. This current functionality does not exist, and places an admin burden on the team to keep the opportunity listings up to date.
- **Increased automated workflows:** Current systems underpinning the Opportunities Hub require manual interventions and workarounds e.g. events are not created automatically when opportunities are set up. Lots of people are involved in the process of ensuring events are listed.
- **User experience could be more engaging:** Opportunities Hub content is managed via an open source web-based contact relationship management system (CiviCRM), which does

not provide any leeway to create visually engaging content. Mobile responsive design was also recommended.

In order to deliver the capabilities highlighted during the consultation, making changes to the current system would be both a relatively costly option and unsustainable in the long run. The review concluded that in order to deliver the most sustainable option, a new platform should be invested in. This would be supported by a large open source community.

Funding and Management

- 19% of respondents said their organisation would be interested in managing or part-managing the online resource, whilst 15% said their organisation might be interested in partnership arrangements.
- Some Local Authorities said they would consider commissioning the service. Many suggested the GMCA should fund the resource.
- Prior to implementing the GM-wide online resource, it is necessary to determine what local and city regional strategies the resource should link to, to ensure it is a viable option and to identify potential funding opportunities.

Next Steps

Funding to design and build a new resource will not be committed until:

- Agreement has been reached regarding the funding of this resource beyond the end of the *GM Talent Match* programme (December 2018).
- Evidence is gathered to ensure any a new resource does not duplicate any other plans for GM-wide online resource.