



## Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

**Private and Confidential: NO**

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### **National Skills Fund: Skills Bootcamps for 2022/23**

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#### **Executive Summary**

Digital Bootcamps were piloted in Lancashire and Greater Manchester through the Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund, in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The model was driven by employers, with employer-provider collaborations developing 12+ week bootcamp programmes, which provided intensive training to fast track unemployed residents into hard to fill digital jobs.

The model was adopted and adapted by the Department for Education (DfE) under the National Skills Fund, with pilots taking place locally and in several other areas across the country. The DfE model had an increased focus on guaranteed interviews and progression into employment or within the workplace. Following devolved pilots, Skills Bootcamps were rolled out nationally through a national procurement process focusing on digital and construction, and subsequently HGV training.

The DfE have recognised the benefits of balancing locally driven procurement processes with national procurement and have invited LEPs and MCAs to submit proposals for devolved grant funding for financial year 2022/23. Local consultation has been undertaken to build a pipeline of ideas for Skills Bootcamps, building on the success in Lancashire to-date, and a proposal submitted to DfE by the deadline of the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to secure funds for Lancashire.

Whilst Lancashire has worked in collaboration with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to-date, expertise has been built up through proactive engagement in the procurement of provision and project management, and more recently a Skills Bootcamps has been procured and contracted locally, providing a springboard to scale up a programme that is driven locally.



## Recommendation

The Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Board recommend to the board that grant funds are accepted should the application to DfE be successful, subject to review of the grant funding offer and the terms and conditions by the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer and any related procurement considerations.

## Background and Advice

### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Digital Bootcamps were piloted in Lancashire and Greater Manchester through the Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund, in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The model was driven by employers, with employer-provider collaborations developing 12 to 16 week bootcamp programmes. The bootcamps provided intensive training to fast track unemployed residents into hard to fill digital jobs.
- 1.2 The model was adopted and adapted by the Department for Education (DfE) under the National Skills Fund, with pilots taking place locally and in several other areas across the country. The DfE model had an increased focus on guaranteed interviews and progression into employment or within the workplace. Following devolved pilots, Skills Bootcamps were rolled out across the country through a national procurement process focusing on digital and construction, and more recently HGV driving. There are now a range of different Skills Bootcamps available in Lancashire which are summarised on the Lancashire Skills Hub website:  
<https://www.lancshireskillshub.co.uk/skillsbootcamps/>
- 1.3 The Skills Bootcamps are targeted at all adults 19+ and aim to address technical skills shortages at Level 3 and above, thereby complementing Sector Work Based Academies, which are typically shorter in length and targeted at lower skills levels. Skills Bootcamps typically support unemployed people into technical jobs or enable people to progress within the workplace. In Lancashire there has been a focus on boosting diversity through the targeting of women and ethnic minorities.
- 1.4 The DfE has reflected on the pilots and the benefits of locally driven procurement processes, such as the partnership between Lancashire with GMCA, and the success of the national procurement process. As a result, they have invited LEPs and MCAs to submit proposals for Section 14 grants, to enable locally driven procurement to address technical skills gaps in local economies. This is welcomed as the national procurement process resulted in some provision being delivered on a national basis, with little drop down in Lancashire, and by providers with minimal relationships with Lancashire employers. A locally driven approach enables specific skills challenges to be



addressed, working with Lancashire employers. This approach will complement the national procurement process.

## 2.0 Proposal for Skills Bootcamps

- 2.1 The DfE set a deadline of the 15<sup>th</sup> February for LEPs to submit high level proposals setting out proposals for Skills Bootcamps. Evidence is required to substantiate the need including labour market intelligence, vacancy data and employers who would likely engage. The offer at present is for one financial year, however it is likely that the model will be rolled into future years – and indeed may form part of future devolution agreements.
- 2.2 This forms an opportunity for Lancashire to secure funds for Skills Bootcamps to address local skills shortage areas, building on the success of the bootcamps to-date, and for residents to boost their employability and earning potential. Skills Bootcamps can help to address the technical skills needs resulting from industrial digitalisation and the drive to net zero, as well as address skills shortages in digital, advanced manufacturing, construction and other areas, aligning with the LEP's growth pillars and enablers.
- 2.3 Skills Bootcamps also provide opportunity to boost diversity and to drive social mobility in disadvantaged areas of Lancashire through the targeting of provision. For example, a priority of the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership is to increase the number of females in Lancashire's digital workforce.
- 2.4 In terms of timescales, it is intended that grants to LEPs be confirmed swiftly, to enable local procurement to take place early in the financial year, so that delivery can commence from July 2022, with provision completing by the end of March 2023.
- 2.5 A stakeholder consultation was conducted by the Skills Hub including providers of existing digital bootcamps, and the wider Lancashire provider network mid-January, after the DfE briefing session for LEPs, to present and discuss the opportunity. Providers were given the opportunity to submit ideas, to help build a pipeline of projects and inform the submission to DfE. The session also enabled connections to be made to enable conversations regarding collaborative approaches.
- 2.6 The consultation supported the formulation of the proposal. It was made clear that should grant funds be confirmed by DfE, that applications would need to be made via the local procurement process to secure funds.
- 2.7 If the DfE confirms grant funds to Lancashire, further market engagement events will be run in March / April to support procurement.



2.8 There are a number of areas of focus for Skills Bootcamps emerging – some of which build on the foundations built in Lancashire to-date and also some new areas, including:

- Digital Marketing
- Internet of Things (IoT) (sensor technology, gadgets, data analysis, AI and quantum computing)
- ElecTech (electronic skills to support design and manufacturing, as well as skills to support hardware for cyber security)
- Software Development & Programming
- Project Management – digital and more generically
- Technical Services Desk
- Data Analytics
- Cyber Skills & Cyber Security
- Cloud Engineering
- Green Power (installation of heat pump systems)
- Green Skills Retrofit
- Construction Trades
- Project Controls and BIM
- Vehicle Electrification

2.9 DfE suggested a minimum of £1m. A proposal was submitted for £2.6m.

### **3.0 Key risks**

3.1 Lancashire has been working with GMCA on the piloting of bootcamps, initially through the Fast Track model and through DfE for the past 3 years. In that time considerable expertise has been built up through active engagement in the procurement process and joint project management of bootcamps that have been delivered in Lancashire. However, the GMCA have acted as the accountable body.

3.2 More recently the Skills Hub has secured funds to trial a Project Controls and BIM Skills Bootcamp in Lancashire, and as a result has developed a specification for a Bootcamp, run a request for quotation, with legal developing a back-to-back contract in-line with the terms and conditions of the grant offer from the DfE. The process and contract have thus been developed and tested and can readily be scaled up. Procurement in Lancashire County Council have been alerted to the opportunity and are building the process into their timelines to ensure resource is available to support the process.

3.2 Funds can be built into the grant to invest in project management and officer capacity to manage the programme, noting the limited capacity in the Skills Hub team to manage the programme effectively. Recruitment of staff will be a priority but may prove challenging due to the fixed term nature of the funds and thus employment contracts. As it is likely the posts would be one year contracts there would no redundancy liabilities to consider at this stage.



3.3 The policy intent of the programme is to fast track people into vacancies in the local economy or to upskill employees to progress within the workplace. DfE have set an expectation that 75% of participants will progress into employment or within the workplace. If guaranteed interviews and job outcomes are not forthcoming an element of the funding may be withheld. This will be built into the back to back contracts but is a risk for providers.

#### **4.0 Recommendation**

4.1 The Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Board recommend to the board that grant funds are accepted should the application to DfE be successful, subject to review of the grant funding offer and the terms and conditions by the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer and any related procurement considerations.

#### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A