



LEP – Sub Committee

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

Private and Confidential: No

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Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

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Executive Summary

This report describes the background and progress against the government's requirement for local Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs), and the extension of grants into 2020/21.

Recommendation

The Skills & Employment Advisory Panel are asked to note the planned use of the SAP grant in 2020/21 and recommend to the LEP Board that the LEP accept the £75k grant being offered by the DfE

Background and Advice

1. Background - Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs)

- 1.1 The Government announced the formation of SAPs in December 2018, the Government expect every LEP (or Mayoral Combined Authority) to have a SAP as part of their governance. The Lancashire Skills and Employment Board evolved to become the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel in April 2019.
- 1.2 The Government outlined the remit and responsibilities of the SAPs and issued an analytical toolkit to support the analysis of local labour market intelligence to enable the SAP to identify skills and employment priorities. To support the adoption of the toolkit, in 2019/20 each LEP and MCA was offered a £75k Government grant to help support local analytical capacity.
- 1.3 Lancashire agreed a Memorandum of Understanding to release the £75k. The grant was used to refresh the Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) Toolkit and evidence base, including a digital skills study:
(<https://www.lancashireskillshub.co.uk/our-people/evidence-base/>), and recruit



Joe Mount, Skills and Economic Intelligence Officer, on a fixed term contract until the end of March 2021.

- 1.4 As reported in the March update, DfE undertook a review of the SAPs in November 2019, and progress in Lancashire was deemed positive.

2. 2020/21 Continuation of SAP Grants

- 2.1 The Department for Education (DfE) have offered a further £75k to continue to support MCAs and LEPs to meet the SAP requirements in financial year 2020/21. The DfE are keen that SAPs continue to build their leadership role in ensuring that local skills provision better meets the needs of employers in the local area.
- 2.2 The production of a Local Skills Report, described in the March update, is a prerequisite for funding in 2020/21. The DfE are keen for SAPs to go beyond the provision of labour market intelligence and progress to publication of annual Local Skills Reports, which will highlight how the panel has supported local providers and employers to respond to local skills priorities and set out the future challenges for the area.
- 2.3 The Skills Hub have contributed to the research to inform the development of policy in this area. It is the DfE's intention to produce guidance in the summer regarding the Local Skills Reports.

3. 2020/21 Memorandum of Understanding

- 3.1 The DfE issued a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in April to release the £75k for 2020/21, building on the work undertaken in 2019/20. This included outlining plans for local spend.
- 3.2 To summarise, the funds will support the development of the Skills and Employment Covid-19 recovery plan, the production of a Local Skills Report and contribute to data analyst capacity in the LEP. This will include investment in training, data, forecasting tools and externally commissioned research.
- 3.3 DfE recognises that the uncertainty created by Covid-19 means that the activities local areas plan to undertake could change during the year. As a result they will accept changes as long as any new or additional activities continue to support the overall objectives of the funding set out in the MoU i.e. analysis of the Local Labour Market and identification of local priorities in relation to skills and employment. Substantial changes to activities need to be discussed with DfE in advance.
- 3.4 We are awaiting approval of Lancashire's MoU by DfE, and the release of the £75k for spend in 2020/21.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 To note the planned use of the SAP grant in 2020/21 and recommend to the LEP Board that the LEP accept the £75k grant being offered by the DfE.



List of Background Papers

Paper

Date

Contact/Tel

N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A