



## Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

**Private and Confidential: NO**

**Date:** Tuesday, 23 June 2020

### **Skills and Employment Advisory Panel – Department for Education Grant Extension 2020/21**

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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 Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel recommend that the board accept the £75k grant being offered by the DfE, and approve the allied investment in the Skills and Economic Intelligence Officer, to enable the contract to run until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

## **1. Background - Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs)**

- 1.1 The Government announced the formation of SAPs in December 2018, following a year of research and modelling with Lancashire, and five other LEP areas. The Government expect every LEP or Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) to have a SAP as part of their governance. As a result, 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 SAPs in the identification of 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 The LEP Executive Committee approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to release the £75k in January 2019. 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 a Skills and Economic Intelligence Officer, on a fixed term contract.



- 1.4 The DfE have undertaken progress reviews of the SAPs, with the most recent being in November 2019. Feedback to Lancashire has been positive, particularly in regards to the LMI Toolkit and the level of analysis in Lancashire.

## **2. 2020/21 Continuation of SAP Grants**

- 2.1 The 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 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 and Employment Hub have contributed to research which is informing 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 MoU in April 2020 to release the £75k for 2020/21, building on the work undertaken in the previous year.
- 3.2 To summarise, the funds will support the development of a Skills and Employment Covid-19 recovery plan, the production of a Local Skills Report and contribute to data analyst capacity in the LEP, including investment in training, data, forecasting tools and externally commissioned research. To note there are no redundancy liabilities associated with the Skills and Economic Intelligence Officer as the contract length does not exceed 2 years (confirmed with Lancashire County Council (LCC) HR). The fixed term contract is until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.
- 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.

## **4.0 Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel recommend that the board accept the £75k grant being offered by the DfE, and approve the allied investment in the Skills and Economic Intelligence Officer, to enable the contract to run until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.



### List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A