

Protocol to Support /Section 151 Officer Authorisation (in Consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Growth) to Approve Lancashire County Council Led Bids for Economic Development Grant Resource

1. Funding Types and Limits

- a. **New funds** – specific calls, from national government departments, specialist charitable trusts, or from other Lancashire local authorities from national funds like UK Shared Prosperity Fund. (Suggested limit of authorisation - £5m).
- b. These are generally announced as national (England) competitions.
- c. Ongoing work with some funding partners can result in more direct invitation to formulate bids around specific themes (e.g. Department for Science, Innovation and Technology funding for work associated with skills and business engagement activity to fully realise the economic impact of National Cyber Force).
- d. **Re-current grant awards** – having developed a relationship with some funders, continuation or additional awards are often made to extend the duration or scope of original activity. (Suggested limit of delegation £5m).

2. Lancashire County Council Involvement

- a. **Lancashire County Council applicant and beneficiary** – Lancashire County Council services or hosted services are the applicant and beneficiary of the grant application. (Suggested limit of delegation £5m).
- b. **Applicant and accountable body** – Increasingly, national bids are looking to local authorities as lead applicants as a corollary of policies around devolution. These bids can cover a range of subject matter from skills incentives and provisions to the deployment and testing of new digital technologies. (Suggested limit of delegation up to a maximum of £5m).
- c. **Lancashire County Council as match funding provider** – For those bids requiring or prioritising bids which can demonstrate a level of local funding. Funding asks are typically capped at 1:1 ratio but can be much lower than this. Additional commitments of resource over and above existing budgets will need to be cleared through the existing annual budget/savings process and would **not form part of the proposed delegation process**.

3. Assessment Processes

Officers championing these bids will present a summary request to finance and legal support officers covering the following aspects of bids: -

- a. **Strategic Alignment** – bids need to demonstrate how they contribute to and advance the strategic economic priorities of the county council set out in Lancashire County Council's Economic Development Strategy and supporting sector, skills and business process frameworks. (scoring / weighting 25%).
- b. **Risk** – bids need to consider the financial and legal risk which they represent to Lancashire County Council as applicant or accountable body. Typically repeat activity will be low risk, new activity will be higher. Extended partnerships with multiple delivery partners can represent more risk. (scoring/weighting 25%).
- c. **Administration and data reporting requirements** - Responsibility to report business or individual engagement with projects will be fundamental to our understanding of value offered by new or pilot activity and in terms of reporting back to funders. The burden of maintaining these records across multiple delivery partners and within appropriate data protocols should be clearly assessed. (scoring/weighting 10%)
- d. **Deliverability** – Whilst attractive, the time-bound nature of external funding can create unrealistic delivery scenarios. Failure to spend and spend well can then impact the longer term capacity of Lancashire County Council to win bids in the future. A proper assessment of whether there is time and capacity to deliver well will form part of this brief. (scoring/weighting 20%).
- e. **Additional costs to Lancashire County Council** – Individual grant applications will need to show that they have properly assessed and costed additional work and responsibilities which fall to Lancashire County Council. These may include the costs of staff working entirely or in part on these projects (salary and on-costs) both within the relevant service area and in support functions including additional financial and legal reporting responsibilities. Redundancy and pension liabilities should also be covered. (scoring/weighting 20%).

4. Managing Competition

When Lancashire County Council chooses or is asked to lead bids for pan-regional activity, any decisions to prioritise component projects (or to include or not include projects to remain within a stipulated maximum bid) will need to be marked according to the marking scheme above. The appropriate Cabinet portfolio-holders will also be made aware of any political/geographical sensitivities associated with these decisions via their regular, programmed briefings. The details of this briefing and clearance will be included in the request for authorisation to the Section 151 Officer following consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Cabinet Member

for Economic Development and Growth.

5. Retrospective reporting and evaluation

A report reflecting on the volume, value and success of bids approved in this way will be brought to Cabinet annually, reflecting on the wider impact and lessons learned from this activity.