



Skills & Employment Committee		Agenda Item
5 June 2023		5
Title:	Contract Awards to Independent Training Providers for 2023/24	
Report of:	Parminder Singh Garcha & Melissa Gresswell	
Lead Member:	Cllr Lucy Nethsingha	
Public Report:	Yes	
Key Decision:	Yes KD2023/004	
Voting Arrangements:	Choose from the following: A A simple majority of voting Members	

Recommendations:

A	Recommend the Combined Authority Board approve contract awards for the Adult Education Budget, Free Courses for Jobs and Multiply to Independent Training Providers for the 2023/24 academic year.
B	Recommend that the Combined Authority Board delegates authority to the Assistant Director - Skills in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, to enter and sign contracts for services with the Independent Training Providers set out in this report and make in-year adjustments to contract values based on performance.
C	To note the contract awards for Skills Bootcamps for the 2023/24 financial year.
D	Recommend the Combined Authority Board allocates £1m of recycled funds from the AEB Reserve Fund to be released for the additional commissioning of Free Courses for Jobs (Level 3).

Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

✓	Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities
✓	Achieving good growth
	Increased connectivity
✓	Enabling resilient communities

1. Purpose

1.1	<p>As a key decision, this report requests that the Skills and Employment Committee recommend to the Combined Authority Board, approval, and delegations for funding allocations to Independent Training Providers (ITPs) and therefore it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">seeks authority and delegations to the Assistant Director of Skills to enter and sign contracts for services with the ITPs set out in Table A for AEB, Free Courses for Jobs
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	<p>and Multiply and authority to make in-year adjustments to contract values based on performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocates c£3m from the Adult Education Budget and c£0.25m Free Courses for Jobs from the 2023/24 MTFP, to ITPs for the academic year 2023-24 inclusive. • Allocates c£480K from Multiply for the academic year 2023-24 from the Combined Authority's allocation as set out in Table A. • seeks authority and delegations to the Assistant Director of Skills to enter and sign contracts for services with the ITPs set out in Table A.
1.2	This report also updates members on contract awards to ITPs for Wave 4 of Skills Bootcamps for the 2023-24 financial year as set out in Table B.
1.3	Members are requested to approve the additional procurement round to be launched over the summer to commission further level 3 courses and recommend that the Board approve c£1m to be allocated from the AEB Reserve for this procurement. This will be added into the AEB Budget line once procurement has been completed.

2. Proposal

2.1	<p>Independent Training Providers (ITPs) in the private and third sector are procured by the Combined Authority for the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB), Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) and Multiply funding streams. The policy objective to contract with ITPs in addition to local colleges and local authority adult education services, is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broaden the local skills provider landscape to provide choice to citizens and businesses • increase capacity to reach more learners and support more businesses with their workforce skills needs • commission additional level 3 courses to ensure delivery of the targets within the Employment and Skills Strategy Implementation Plan to double the number of level 3 enrolments in 2023-24, to 1,600 starts.
2.2	<p>Consultation and Involvement</p> <p>ITPs have been consulted on their proposed funding allocations and officers have been in regular discussion with them with regards to their plans for delivery for 2023/24. ITPs are also invited to the Skills Provider Forum, where key messages are cascaded, and they feel part of the collaborative process.</p> <p>For most ITPs, the allocations for AEB and FCFJ for 2023/24 have been adjusted from the 2022/23 allocations, due to under-delivery. This is partly due to the delays in mobilisation of contracts in September 2022 and some providers reporting a difficult operating environment.</p> <p>Economic Development Officers, who lead on Skills in our constituent councils are kept informed of the providers operating within their area. They are invited to serve as a two-way conduit via the Combined Authority and our commissioned providers, to sign-post to employers and/or residents as required. In addition, to highlight gaps in provision to the Combined Authority so that Learning Organisations can be directed to respond to local need.</p>
2.3	<p>Building Local Capacity</p> <p>Contract awards for two additional providers have been included in the allocations for 2023/24. Peterborough Skills Academy and the College of Animal Welfare (based in Godmanchester) are both locally based organisations with their head-office within the sub-region. A direct contract award is proposed in support of our strategy to build capacity in our local provider base over the coming years.</p>

2.4 ITP Allocations

Table A sets out the funding allocations being made to ITPs that members are requested to approve, so that contracts may be issued in time for the 2023/24 academic year. Contracts run for the academic year 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2024. Contracts are renewed on an annual basis, based on performance, with the Commissioning Cycle running for a further three academic years: 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27.

UKPRN	Table A: ITP Allocations	Allocation AEB & FCFJ	of which AEB	of which FCFJ	Multiply
10033156	Back 2 Work Ltd	£300,000.00	£ 300,000.00		
10001149	Capita PLC	£100,000.00	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	
10001539	College of Animal Welfare Ltd	£50,000.00	£30,000.00	£20,000.00	
10021427	eVolve Your Future	£100,000.00	£75,000.00	£25,000.00	£100,000.00
10033758	Ixion Holdings Ltd	£200,000.00	£100,000.00	£100,000.00	£50,000.00
10008935	Learning Curve Group Ltd	£450,000.00	£400,000.00	£50,000.00	
10000311	MPCT				£50,000.00
10021793	Pathway Group Ltd	£100,000.00	£100,000.00		
10036431	Peopleplus Group Ltd	£250,000.00	£250,000.00		
10048439	Peterborough Skills Academy Ltd	£100,000.00	£100,000.00		
10049149	Runway Training Ltd	£100,000.00	£100,000.00		£161,376.00
10005735	Seetec Business Ltd	£100,000.00	£100,000.00		£50,000.00
10018942	Steadfast Training Ltd	£350,000.00	£274,494.00	£75,506.00	£50,000.00
10046979	Portland Training Ltd	£415,785.00	£415,785.00		
10030802	Construction Skills People Ltd	£299,940.00		£299,940.00	
10019581	TCHC Ltd	£100,000.00	£100,000.00		£18,000.00
		£3,015,725.00	£2,395,279.00	£620,446.00	£479,376.00

3. Background

- 3.1 Under orders made from the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, adult education functions from the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 were transferred from the Secretary of State for Education to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority from August 2019. A recurrent budget of c£12m is devolved each year to discharge these duties plus ensure local learning and skills needs are better addressed and aligned to our strategy.
- 3.2 A five-year commissioning cycle for ITPs was launched in March 2022 which resulted in the current ITPs being contracted, subject to performance review on an annual basis. The Skills Committee considered and recommended approval to Board to award and sign contracts at the September 2022 meeting. A link to the report is included below.
- 3.3 At the March 2023, funding allocations for AEB, FCFJ and Multiply to Learning Organisations (FE Colleges and Institutes of Adult Education) were approved for 2023/24 and 2024/25. This equates to £10.3m of AEB and £725K of Free Courses for Jobs, which is 85 per cent of the annual budget.

3.4 Skills Bootcamps – Wave 4

There are currently six ITPs delivering Skills Bootcamps under Wave 4, which are contract extensions for a number of existing Skills Bootcamps ITPs from Wave 3. From the allocation of £2,878,150.00 from DfE for the 2023/24 financial year, allocations totalling £1,382,550.00 has been awarded to the providers set out in Table B below:

Training Provider	Skills Bootcamp	Sector (defined by DfE Skills Bootcamp Sector Categories)
Construction Skills People Ltd	Level 2 Civil Engineering & Groundworks	Construction
Duplex Business Services Ltd	Level 2 - Level 4 Electric Vehicle Repair and Maintenance	Green Transport
Tech Educators Ltd	Level 5 Full Stack Coding with Next.Js	Digital
Mastered Studios Ltd	Level 5 Games Programming	Digital
The Skills Network Ltd	Level 3 Data Analysis	Digital
The Skills Network Ltd	Level 3 Project Management	Other
TWI Ltd	Welding Inspection (various pathway options)	Technical Bespoke

A Procurement process is currently underway to commission the following Skills Bootcamps, in response to local labour market needs:

Skills Bootcamp	Sector (defined by DfE Skills Bootcamp Sector Categories)
Level 3 Leadership and Management	Other
Level 4 or 5 Leadership and Management	Other
Level 3 Care	Other
Level 3 Digital Marketing	Digital
Level 3 IT Support Technician	Digital
Level 4 Digital Accessibility Specialist	Digital Bespoke
Level 3 Cyber Security	Digital
Level 4 or 5 Data Analysis / Data Science	Digital
Level 3 Nursing	Pathway to Accelerated Apprenticeship linked to Nursing Associate or Nursing Degree Apprenticeship
Levels 2 - 5 Retrofit	Green Construction & Buildings

The Assistant Director of Skills has delegated authority, previously approved at the Skills Committee, and ratified at Combined Authority Board (January 2023), to enter into contracts / direct awards / contract extensions.

4. Appendices

4.1 None

5. Implications

Financial Implications

5.1 The Combined Authority has received its annual Section 31 Funding Letter from the Department for Education (DfE) on 9 February 2023, for both Adult Education Budget (AEB) and Free Courses for

	Jobs (FCFJ) the National Skills Fund – level 3 adult offer. Funding of £12,054,361 (2022/23: £11,977,722) is confirmed for the 2023/24 academic year for AEB and £851,550 for level 3 courses. This equates to an adult education settlement of £12,905,911 (2022/23: £12,972,691), plus £2,606,457 underspend carried forward from previous years: an available budget of £15.5m to allocate.
5.2	Funding for Multiply for 2023/24 academic year has been confirmed, with our Investment Plan has been accepted by DfE and an overall allocation of c£4m. Grant Agreement for £1,395,065.01 for 2023/24 financial year has been signed. DfE will adjust allocations based on delivery.
5.3	ITPs are paid on actual delivery based on data returns. Historic performance suggests that there will be under-performance and so while allocations are made based on professional judgement in consultation with providers; we are allocating from the AEB Reserve; but to date have not spent it.
Legal Implications	
6.1	The recommendations and activities outlined in this paper are to discharge the Combined Authorities' statutory duties under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. Under the devolution agreement of 2016, specified adult education functions from the Secretary of State were transferred to the Combined Authority.
6.2	The Combined Authority discharges its devolved adult education functions in line with the DfE Statutory Guidance for Combined Authorities (July 2018).
6.3	Contracts for Services will be issued to the ITPs listed in this report.
Public Health Implications	
7.1	The report recommendations have positive implications for public health. Participation in adult learning improves the health and wellbeing of participants and wider society. In addition, the AEB funds skills training for professionals in the health care sector as well as short courses for adults on managing physical, mental health and wellbeing
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
8.1	The report recommendations have positive implications for the environment. Environmental Conservation courses and Carbon literacy are funded by AEB. In addition, training for retrofit occupations (in construction trades) and electric vehicle maintenance and charging and digital skills are also funded by AEB, FCFJ and Skills Bootcamps.
Other Significant Implications	
9.1	The recommendations in this report have due regard to the Combined Authority's Equalities duties under the Equality Act 2010 in implementing funding policies which seek to widen participation and make learning opportunities more accessible for all citizens including all protected characteristics.
9.2	Within their funding allocation, all ITPS have Learner Support Funds to enable them to discharge their duties under the Equalities Act 2010. Funding is provided to enable reasonable adjustments and additional support to be provided for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, to access and progress in learning.
Background Papers	
10.1	Skills Committee Report - Contract Awards to Independent Training Providers (5 Sept 2022) Skills Committee Report – Grant Funding Allocations (6 March 2023) Skills Committee Report – Grant Funding Allocations Appendix A(6 March 2023) Skills Committee Report – Skills Bootcamps Wave 4 (9 January 2023)