



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

**JAMES PALMER**  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE &  
PETERBOROUGH MAYOR



**THE BUSINESS BOARD**

## **AEB Innovation Fund Criteria**

### **Proposed new Adult Education Budget Innovation Fund Programme outline:**

New grant programme combining Adult Education Budget (AEB) and Local Growth Fund (LGF) funds into a blended Revenue and Capital grant provision to be managed by AEB Officers mirroring the LGF process of project call, application, scoring assessment internally and externally, then finally delegated authority to award grants.

### **What will be achieved if the new programme does not receive the Local Growth Fund investment:**

The LGF will add more funds into the Innovation fund to be able to target a higher number of disadvantaged learners and communities who cannot easily access distant or remote learning and have a strong desire to do so as the effect of COVID 19 restricts normal learning practices. It will assist in providing access to remote learning through physical equipment or internet access and support. Without it many learners will be unable to access provision. It will also help to provide learning support for the most disadvantaged learners and communities.

Reach of Innovation fund curtailed but level of adaptations and new ideas for learning delivery and outcomes will be half utilising the AEB funding element only.

### **What additional outcomes will the LGF investment into this Programme enable:**

For a maximum funding of £50,000 per project, each project will assist 150 residents which for a fund of approximately £350,000 will be up to 1,000 residents who will need to reskills, update their skills and be prepared for the new employment market place. It will also have many social outcomes through improving social confidence and local communities to prepare for any difficult economic circumstances the future presents.

Jobs (both created through learner's future outcomes plus safeguarded staff at FE and providers being able to maintain delivery), Apprenticeships, new business led skills course development online etc, faster course development flexing to COVID impacts

### **How does this fit with what the Business Board aims to achieve:**

All strategies are being looked at for refresh in light of COVID (including the LIS and Skills Strategy) and with the current COVID driven trend for more online and virtual delivery plus risks to future workforce skills levels there is an immediate need to facilitate the maximisation of participation in adult learning.

It will meet the outcomes detailed in the AEB Commissioning Strategy and ensure they are more achievable with the advent of COVID 19 namely

- target people in priority communities
- target sustainable employment for residents during learning and after learning
- improve learning progression and if appropriate onto Apprenticeships
- target low-skilled and low-paid adult residents
- Increase self-confidence for the low skilled and those furthest from the labour market
- Increase skills and qualification at level 2 and level 3
- increase digital skills for residents with no basic digital skills
- increase flexible delivery of learning that supports adults in work to upskill.

In addition, it will enhance the likelihood of achieving the three priorities set out in the skills strategy

- Achieve a high-quality offer tailored to the needs of the three sub economies
- Empower local people to access education and skills to participate fully in society, to raise aspirations and enhance progress into further learning and/or work and career progression
- Develop a dynamic skills market that responds to the changing needs of local business

### **What are the timescales for the Programme:**

This will be an open competition leading to bids being received into AEB team for processing and assessing. The successful grants approved and offered a grant funding agreement which protects CPCA, then claims received for drawdown on the funds with outcomes achieved over coming 12 to 18 months.

- June – bids from FE Colleges, ITPs, local community groups and local providers with a three week
- July – bids approved at the latest
- Allocations and activity from July
- Outcomes measured from September – every quarter and annually

### **The Programme will be planning to achieve the following outcomes:**

Grants up to a value of £50k with a minimum requirement in applications to contribute towards one or more of the programme outcomes of for example:

- 150 learners supported (who could not otherwise access learning) per £50,000 (outcome cost £333 per learner)
- 15 new jobs and 45 jobs retained per £50,000 grant (outcome cost £833 per job)
- 30 new apprentices supported per £50,000 (outcome cost £1,666 per apprenticeship)
- 50% from disadvantaged communities (this outcome does not have a £ value but counts strongly in assessment criteria for scoring bids)

Projects will be expected to hit one of the outcomes above or a combination of these outcomes with the hurdle rates above based on £1 per outcome totalled up.

### **The programme will ensure that the bidding process is fair, open, and transparent:**

The grant fund will be open to all FE and training providers in the CPCA/BB area and the call for applications will either be advertised publicly or will be communicated to all FE and

training providers or through providers forums – or a combination of all these channels. The applications must hit a hurdle rate based on the outcomes above before being progressed into being assessed against the criteria below using a panel of internal Officers from AEB/Skills/LGF teams and independent assessors with AEB experience scoring the 'fit' to the criteria and all decisions plus grant awards made will be loaded onto the CPCA website for transparency. Plus reported through Skills committee and Business Board in programme update reports.

### Programme decision making on which projects to invest in:

Officers in AEB team will lead administration of the new scheme but Officers from Skills team and LGF team will form the scoring panel, with independent assessors and decision based on the panel scores.

All grants awarded will be signed off by the Director of Business and Skills with oversight from legal and finance in the preparation of standard grant funding agreements.

### Programme Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed according to the criteria set out in the table below. Answers will be scored using a scale of 1-4 with four being the highest score. All questions must be answered for applications to be assessed.

Questions	Weighting	Excellent (4 points)	Good (3 points)	Adequate (2 points)	Poor (1 points)
Please provide a summary of your proposal	20%	a clear and compelling case for why the project will add value to existing provision and a clear and detailed summary of the proposed activity.	A good case as to why the project add value to existing provision with a reasonable summary of the activity proposed	A reasonable case as to why it adds value to existing activity and a basic summary of the activity proposed	Fails to make the case for why it adds to existing provision and there is no or a limited summary of the activity
Please explain which AEB and/or skills strategy priority/priorities including COVID 19 your proposed activity will seek to address ?	25%	shows a clear and comprehensive understanding of the AEB and skills priorities and how the proposed activity will seek to address them	shows a reasonable understanding of the AEB and skills priorities and how the proposed activity will seek to address them.	shows a partial understanding of the AEB and skills priorities and how the proposed activity will seek to address them	shows no or minimal understanding of the AEB and skills priorities and how the proposed activity will seek to address them.
How many participants do you expect to reach through your proposed activity?	0%	Gateway question to be able to apply	Gateway question to be able to apply	Gateway question to be able to apply	Gateway question to be able to apply
Please explain what you	20%	Provides a clear and compelling	Provides a reasonable	Provides a partial	Provides no explanation as

consider to be innovative about your proposed activity		<p>case as to why the proposals are innovative in at least one of the following areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learner engagement</li> <li>- Curriculum</li> <li>- Learner progression</li> <li>- Measuring outcomes</li> </ul>	<p>explanation as to why the proposals are innovative in at least one of the following areas</p> <p>Learner engagement Curriculum Learner progression Measuring outcomes</p>	<p>explanation as to why the proposals are innovative in at least one of the following</p> <p>Learner engagement Curriculum Learner progression Measuring outcomes</p>	<p>to why the proposals are innovative in at least one of the following</p> <p>Learner engagement Curriculum Learner progression Measuring outcomes</p>
Please explain how this overcomes the issues prevalent from COVID 19 especially for disadvantaged learners or communities	15%	A clear and comprehensive explanation of the impact of COVID 19 and how the project overcomes them	A reasonable explanation	A partial explanation	Fails to explain
Please identify the outcomes expected	25%	A thorough identification of relevant outcomes that match the AEB and skills strategy	A reasonable explanation	A partial explanation	Fails to explain
Please explain how the outcomes will be measured and how the success of the project will be evaluated?	5%	Provides a clear and comprehensive demonstration of the expected outcomes and how these will be measured	Provides a reasonable demonstration of the expected outcomes and how these will be measured	Provides a partial demonstration of the expected outcomes and how these will be measured	Fails to demonstrate the expected outcomes and how these will be measured