



Agenda Item No: 3.2

Skills Bootcamps Evaluation

To: Business Board

Meeting Date: 9 May 2022

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Chair of the Business Board, Austen Adams

From: Interim Associate Director for Skills, Fliss Miller

Key decision: No

Recommendations: The Business Board is asked to

Note the report on the performance of Skills Bootcamps.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Business Board with an update on the performance of the delivery of Wave Two Skills Bootcamps - Digital in the East of England.
- 1.2 The paper also informs the Business Board of a successful proposal to deliver Wave Three Skills Bootcamps in the Combined Authority for April 2022 to March 2023.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Department for Education (DfE), via the National Skills Fund, has invested in the delivery of Skills Bootcamps across the country to meet the skills needs of local areas. Skills Bootcamps form part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee announced by the Prime Minister in September 2020.
- 2.2 Skills Bootcamps are intensive, Level 3-5 or equivalent, flexible training courses up to 16 weeks, with a guaranteed job interview (in the case of a new job), which equip adults with technical skills that enable them to access in-demand jobs, apprenticeships, new opportunities and an increased level of income over time (including for the self-employed).
- 2.3 The Combined Authority has been delivering Digital Skills Bootcamps since September 2021, following a successful competitive bid to the DfE for Wave Two delivery across the East of England. However, the DfE only approved two of the nine consortium delivery partners in the bid; Cambridge Regional College (CRC) and Purple Beard, an Independent Training Provider.
- 2.4 The Combined Authority was the only successful bidder in the East of England for the delivery of Digital Bootcamps. The funding is to support 805 learners within the East of England. The Bootcamps are Level 3 or above and must address the needs of employers and the wider economy.
- 2.5 There was a significant delay in the notification of the award. The original schedule by the DfE was for successful bidders to be informed of the outcome in March/April 2021. The contract was awarded in late June 2021.

3. Delivery and Performance

- 3.1 Due to the delay in the award of the contract, the first cohort of learners started in September.
- 3.2 A Change Control Notice (CCN) was submitted to the DfE in December 2021 and was subsequently agreed. The CCN was at the request of CRC and Purple Beard.
- 3.3 Purple Beard's funding allocation remained the same – their change request was to reduce their offer from four to two courses, with different pathways. This request was informed by employer demand. The reallocation allowed Purple Beard to continue to offer their two more popular courses to employers and learners.

- 3.4 CRC reduced their allocation of 400 learners to 100. An independent training provider, The Skills Network (TSN) were contracted to deliver the reallocated 300 learners.
- 3.5 The number of learners by provider and course are outlined in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Supplier	Row Labels	Sum of Count of Learners	Combined Pathway Figures
Purple Beard	Cloud Engineering – Cloud Pathway	72	186
Purple Beard	Cloud Engineering – Data Pathway	114	
Purple Beard	DevOps – Data Pathway	20	155
Purple Beard	DevOps – DevOps Pathway	48	
Purple Beard	DevOps – Front End Development Pathway	87	
CRC	Advanced Database Design	9	38
CRC	Digital Marketing	20	
CRC	Website Development	9	
TSN	Data Analyst	113	185
TSN	Digital Marketer	69	
TSN	Technical Sales	3	
	Grand Total	564	564

Table 1 – Number of learners by provider

Course	Number Of Learners
Cloud Engineering	186
DevOps	155
Advanced Database Design	122
Digital Marketing	89
Website Development	9
Technical Sales	3
Grand Total	564

Table 2 – Number of learners by course

- 3.6 A number of lessons have been learnt through this first contract. The Combined Authority was hampered in successful delivery through only being awarded two of the nine providers in the consortium bid, along with a significant delay in the award of the contract. CRC faced multiple challenges in delivery, with only 38 learners out of the original award of 400.
- 3.7 Wave Three Skills Bootcamps are funded via a grant to Combined Authorities. This will resolve a number of the challenges faced in Wave Two.

4. Future Skills Bootcamp Delivery

- 4.1 Following a second proposal submitted by the Combined Authority to the DfE on 28th January 2022, the Combined Authority received notification on the 8th March 2022 of award for the full amount proposed; £4,891,985 in grant funding to deliver Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps to 1,780 learners, for the first year period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. Within the grant award, £342,439 has been allocated to management costs.

- 4.2 The Combined Authority has been approved to deliver Skills Bootcamps in the following sectors; digital, technical (including engineering and advanced manufacturing) construction, green and a number of pathways to accelerated apprenticeships. Furthermore, up to 10% of the value of the funding is being allowed to test the value and effectiveness of Skills Bootcamps in the sectors defined by the Combined Authority in addition to the sectors outlined above.
- 4.3 The DfE may extend the funding period of this agreement for 12 months by giving written notice to The Combined Authority no later than 31st March 2023, and a further 12 months by giving written notice to The Combined Authority no later than 31st March 2024.
- 4.4 For Wave Three Skills Bootcamps, the funding is received via a grant. This is different from Wave 2 funding.
- 4.5 Unlike Wave Two, the Combined Authority has the freedom to decide, acting reasonably, how best to ensure that the funded activities are delivered during Wave 3 in accordance with the relevant aims and objectives of this Grant Funding Agreement. The Combined Authority can therefore decide to engage with providers to deliver Bootcamps in three ways; issue grant awards, issue direct awards and/or undertake a competitive tendering process, provided that, where applicable, it complies in full with its duties as a contracting authority under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and internal governance rules and duly selects and awards contracts to providers in accordance with those regulations and such rules.

Significant Implications

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no significant financial implications for consideration in this report.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no significant legal implications.

7. 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, some of the bootcamps are for professionals in the health care sector.

8. Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 8.1 The report recommendations have positive implications for the environment. Bootcamps will be delivered to support the NetZero agenda.

9. 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.

10. Appendices

- 10.1 None.

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 None.