

WMCA Board

Date	9 February 2024
Report title	2024/25 Skills Bootcamps Change Request
Portfolio Lead	Skills & Productivity - Councillor George Duggins
Accountable Chief Executive	Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk
Accountable Employee	Clare Hatton, Interim Director for Employment, Skills, Health & Communities email: clare.hatton@wmca.org.uk
Report has been considered by	Investment Panel - 18 December 2023

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The WMCA Board is recommended to:

- (1) Approve receipt of £26,794,280.20 from the Department for Education to enable the extension of Skills Bootcamps programme to cover the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- (2) Delegate authority to the Interim Executive Director for Employment, Skills, Health & Communities, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer, to enter into the appropriate form of agreements and any necessary procurement activity relating to the Skills Bootcamp programme.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to secure approval of the grant from the Department of Education (DfE) to extend Skills Bootcamps into a 5th year, and to delegate authority to enable onward commissioning activity to skills delivery providers.

2. Background

- 2.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority has been delivering Skills Bootcamps since our initial pilot in 2018, securing over £34m from the Department for Education during this period. Skills Bootcamps are accelerated adult training in technical occupations found in sectors such as digital, construction and new emerging occupations e.g. Retrofit. They provide an alternative to qualifications and apprenticeships where either the job roles are new, where qualifications are not available or where accelerated models of delivery can address labour market gaps.
- 2.2 Skills Bootcamps training can support both those who are unemployed to progress into work through a guaranteed interview on completion of training, or those already in work to retrain and upskill to support onward career progression. To date 6,178 of residents across the West Midlands have benefitted from training and 2,996 unemployed residents have achieved a positive job outcome.
- 2.3 Skills bootcamps are delivered by a variety of skills providers in the region including colleges, universities, independent training providers and voluntary community sector and the training is accessed by residents through direct marketing, referral and employers seeking to upskill and retrain their staff.
- 2.4 Due to the success of Skills Bootcamps in the West Midlands, funding has been increased annually and we have now received a further grant, of £26,794,280.20 for the financial year 2024-25 specifically ringfenced for skills bootcamp delivery.

3. Strategic Aims

- 3.1 The WMCA has set out in its Employment Skills strategy the importance of meeting future skills needs at level 3 and above through upskilling and reskilling. Skills Bootcamps deliver training at level 3, 4 and 5, and with the associated funding is an enabler to support the upskilling and reskilling pillar as part of our strategy.
- 3.2 Skills Bootcamps will enable us to:
 - Further strengthen our level 3+ offer and increasing the proportion of residents progressing into higher skills jobs
 - Establish accelerated training in occupations aligned to the WMCAs Plan for Growth
 - Encourage more business to upskill and reskills their workforce

- Support those seeking to secure employment in technical jobs roles to access training to support this progression

3.3 We propose to scale our existing bootcamp offer and increase the number of training places across the WMCA in occupations covering Digital, Green and Sustainability and Retrofit, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering and Logistics and a new offer in Professional Services. The additional funding will create 6,000 places for the 2024/25 financial year split across the following areas:

Bootcamp Subject Area	Number of Individuals Trained	Est. Funding Allocation
Digital	2,100	£11.55m
Green and Sustainability	700	£2.695m
Retrofit	1,600	£4.928m
Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering	500	£2.64m
Logistics	500	£1.925m
Professional Services	500	£2.2m
Monitoring and Evaluation and Regional Marketing Campaigns	N/A	£0.856m

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 West Midlands Combined Authority's Skills Bootcamps allocation to £26,794.20 for the financial year 2024/25. The budget is outlined in section 3.3 above.
- 4.2 Funding is awarded by the Department for Education and ringfenced for Bootcamp delivery activity only. The grant letter and grant conditions have both been received, reviewed, and accepted by WMCA.
- 4.3 The onward award of funding to delivery partners will follow the WMCA governance routes to ensure alignment with strategic direction and represent value for money.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The function of adult education provision was conferred on the WMCA by the West Midlands Combined Authority (Adult Education Functions) Order 2018.
- 5.2 WMCA has a statutory duty in respect of adult education and are the accountable body responsible and accountable for funding monies allocated to them for adult education related training in the WMCA region. As such the funding streams impose terms and conditions on WMCA that have to be met and complied with. Failure to do so could result in the funding becoming repayable in whole or in part to the funding stream. Where funding is used as a grant scheme a full subsidy analysis should have been undertaken.

- 5.3 The approval sought is a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan.
- 5.4 WMCA has received the grant offer letter from the DfE. The grant conditions have been reviewed and accepted.
- 5.5 Contract awards must comply with the WMCA's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as applicable.
- 5.6 The proposed agreements will be developed in consultation with Procurement and the Delivery Leads on a case-by-case basis. This is to ensure that consideration is given to the prospective providers and grant recipients capacity to deliver the Skills Bootcamp Programme outcomes to the satisfaction of the WMCA and the standards prescribed by the DfE by virtue of the provisions of the overarching Funding Agreement Rules.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 Through work with providers tailored and focused activity will be progressed for individuals who have faced barriers or challenges entering sectors/careers. Ensuring all residents have the opportunity to thrive.
- 6.2 Programmes are designed to support specific resident groups, including neurodiverse and ethnic minority. In addition, programmes are designed to be delivered flexibly to enable full accessibility to residents.

7. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 7.1 The scheme will contribute towards Inclusive Growth within the West Midlands through provision of training for improved levels of skills, enabling our residents to flourish and realise their potential. The programme will provide residents with the opportunity to secure better employment and increase their household income and a better standard of living.
- 7.2 Programmes are aligned to employer need, labour market intelligence and the Plan for Growth and Net Zero strategy. This will enable residents to gain the vital skills needed by business and enable career transition and progression which will contribute to economic growth.

8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 8.1 The Scheme is being delivered in all parts of WMCA region.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 The programme supports the regional Net Zero ambitions and Plan for Growth through reskilling and upskilling residents to work in these growing sectors.

10. Schedule of Background Papers

- Skills Bootcamp Change Request Form