

Education Skills and Employability Board

08 March 2022

Programme Approval

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Purpose of this report:	Funding Decision
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Yes

Director Approving Submission of the Report:
Gareth Sutton, Chief Finance Officer/s73 Officer

Report Author(s):
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Executive Summary

This paper seeks approval for an extension and variation of an existing agreement with Calderdale College for the continuation of delivery of the current Skills Bank Programme until the new programme is fully operational. The paper also seeks approval for delegated authority to be granted to the Head of Paid service in consultation with the Section 73 Officer and the Monitoring Officer to enter into legal agreement for the schemes.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

This report is seeking approval to extend the existing skills Bank which will support the MCA's aspirations and provide support needed to enable businesses upskill their workforce which, for some, is critical in planning for future growth whilst recovering from the impact of the pandemic

Recommendations

The board consider and approve:

1. Progression of an extension and variation to the existing agreement with Calderdale College for the continuation of Skills Bank Extension of "Skills Bank Interim programme".
 2. Delegated authority be given to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Section 73 and Monitoring Officer to enter into a legal agreement for the scheme above
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1. Background

- 1.1 On the 2nd March 2021 the board agreed for interim arrangements to be explored to enable the current Skills Bank programme to continue until the new Skills Bank programme had been developed and implemented.
- 1.2 Skills Bank was originally delivered on behalf of the MCA by Calderdale College who were recruited through a full procurement exercise in 2018. They were contracted directly with the ESFA with a separate contract in place for the MCA element of the programme. The contract between the MCA and Calderdale College was extended to June 2022 with all training to have commenced by March 2022.

2. Proposal and Justification

- 2.1 The current Skills Bank programme is currently performing well against its contracted outputs. Despite the difficulties experienced from the Covid-19 pandemic demand remains high with over 107 business applications received and 998 learners approved for training with 273 already supported so far this year.
- 2.2 So far this year (21/22) £386k has been invested in training support from Skills Bank funds along with £412k employer contributions and the programme is on track to fully achieve programme outputs. Pipeline activity means we also have the potential to considerably overachieve on learner starts.
- 2.3 All training in the interim model is to have commenced in March 2022 but due to completion of the current Skills Bank procurement exercise this report is seeking approval to extend the programme for a further 3 months which would require a further investment of £188k. This would enable the programme to continue the offer to businesses without a break in provision.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

Do not approve the recommendations in this report.

3.2 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

If the Skills Bank programme were to close at the end of March this would leave many businesses without the support needed to upskill their workforce which, for some, is critical in planning for future growth whilst recovering from the Impact of the pandemic.

3.3 Option 2

Approve the recommendation.

3.4 Option 2 Risks and Mitigations

The Skills Bank Reserve is forecast to be £10,716k at 31st March 2022. The interim model would require a further investment of £188k leaving a further

£10,528k to support the future Skills Bank programme. In addition to this investment would be the MCA costs for programme management and admin of the programme which will be taken from a separate reserve budget

3.5 Recommended Option

Option 2

4. Consultation on Proposal

4.1 N/A

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 Subject to the approval of the recommendations, the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Section 73 Officer and Monitoring Officer will progress to enter into legal agreements with the promoter.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

6.1 This report contains a proposal to deploy £188k of resource in support of Skills Bank aspirations.

6.2 This proposal can be supported from the reserve Skills Bank funding for the current financial year, which is forecasted to be c£10.7 million at 31/3/22. This resource was held in reserve to enable the MCA to react to unforeseen risks and opportunities, such as this.

7. Legal Implications and Advice

7.1 The MCA has devolved AEB duties and functions under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The funding will be released in accordance with the terms of appropriate legal arrangements to ensure the services being funded are provided.

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

8.1 N/A

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

9.1 The Skills Bank is not designed as an approach to improving social inclusion, in the same way that this features in the devolved AEB programme, however data is monitored and reported upon and will continue for the duration of this interim programme.

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

11.1 N/A

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

- 12.1 Provision will be promoted in line with the MCA's Skills Bank comms and marketing strategy, working closely with partners to ensure businesses are aware of and able to access the support on offer.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

None