

Renewal Action Plan Business Support Evaluation: Appendix C

Renewal Action Plan Priority 2, Stage 2 – Specialist Advisor Support

The stage 2 proposal envisaged a framework where businesses, under referral from a Business Advisor, could draw upon specialist skills to enable them to overcome key challenges they are facing, whether as a direct result of Covid, UK transition or a general slowdown and the need to adapt to survive and grow.

All task groups agreed that this priority would be cross cutting and activity required in both the Supply chain and digital adoption priorities would also need to access this framework of specialisms.

Many providers have registered an interest in being added to any future framework across several specialisms including import and export, legal, LEAN, and financial planning.

A small pilot undertaken in July 21 to look at common challenge's businesses are facing showed that a more sustainable approach would be to ensure businesses utilised other programmes such as Skills Bank, Made Smarter or Peer Network. It is also noted that some of the specialisms exist within the current cohort of RAP Business Advisors but have been more difficult to access due to the LA bound nature of the current model.

The framework model has been a challenge to procure with the specification difficult to define for such a broad range of specialisms. To this end, an alternative interim procurement process has been agreed to allow access to additional specialisms using a 3-quote approach. This has not been utilised to date.