

Meeting: Skills 360 Board Meeting
Date: 02 June 2020
Report Title: Skills Advisory Panel Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan
Report by: Claire Witz
Item No: Item 4
Part: A

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to:

- **Discuss and agree** the proposed activities set out in the Action Plan for the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) Memorandum of Understanding with Department for Education (DfE).

1. Context

In February, DfE announced further SAP grant funding of £75,000 for the financial year 202/21. The focus of the grant will continue to be on building analytical capability and growing the influence of SAPs locally, which will include the production of a Local Skills Report.

DfE recognises that SAP activities may look different now due to the impact of Covid-19 on the Coast to Capital area and the need to focus priorities on economic recovery. They have therefore extended the original deadline of 7 May 2020 until 30 September 2020 for sign off of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the required action plan, which detail the activities and the proposed spend. In addition, they have allowed for additional flexibility to make changes to plans once the MOU is agreed.

2. SAP MoU – Key Objectives of Fund

The key objectives of the funding are as follows:

- a) Continue to build and increase analytical capability
 - SAPs should produce local skills and labour market analysis which meets the standards set out in the SAP Analytical Toolkit – this was completed and published in December 2019. This analysis should now be updated

where appropriate, and where there are significant changes in local skills needs.

- SAPs must ensure that good progress is made in turning the skills and labour market analysis into effective action plans so that their increased understanding of skills gaps and labour market need is turned into effective interventions on the ground.
- Local areas should continue to increase their own analytical capability in ways that are sustainable and where possible part of routine practices.

b) Build Influence and local leadership role

- SAPs should build effectiveness and influence locally and ensure analysis is easily accessible and presented in a way that is relevant to local stakeholders. This will help SAPs play a more prominent role in the local skills system.
- Ensure the production of a Local Skills Report by the end of March 2021. DfE will provide further information and guidance on the expected content of Local Skills Reports by summer 2020. These reports will need to be produced at regular intervals.

This year DfE has included the option for neighbouring SAPs to pool funds as they recognise that some local areas may want to work together to purchase data and/or build their analytical capacity. This is permissible as long as each SAP area continues to produce its own analytical output and as long as such arrangements do not jeopardise the sustainability of the analytical capability.

3. Coast to Capital MoU Action Plan

We have set out a variety of activities and their associated cost for this financial year including:

- Salary for 0.75FTE Skills Project & Research Coordinator
- Purchase of analytical software tool license, support and training package
- Data analysis training for Skills Manager and Skill Project & Research Coordinator
- A review of our evidence base and current skills priorities and subsequent production and implementation of a Skills Action Plan
- Stakeholder Events/Webinars
- Production of a Local Skills Report

Further details of the activities and costs can be found in **Annex 1**.

4. Grant Funding

In addition to the £75,000 for 2020/21 there is also the possibility of carrying over the surplus from the 2019/20 budget. This figure stands at £24,660, which was due to be used to purchase analytical software during March. However, due to the Covid-19 crisis this activity was put on hold.

DfE has stated that funds can be brought forward in exceptional circumstances, we have therefore requested that the £28,612 be made available to now continue with the purchase of the analytical software, support and training. Should this be agreed by DfE the total SAP budget for 2020/21 will be £103,612.

5. Conclusion

This paper seeks to **gain the Skills 360 Board's approval** of the draft MoU Action Plan in order that it may be finalised and submitted to DfE to release the SAP funding for 2020/21.

6. Next Steps

- Finalise MoU Action Plan
- Gain Coast to Capital Chief Executive sign off
- Submit MoU by mid-June 2020
- Receive feedback and approval from DfE
- Commence MoU Action Plan activities

7. Diversity Statement

There are no diversity implications for consideration regarding the recommendations set out in this paper.

8. Legal Statement

There are no legal implications for consideration regarding the recommendations set out in this paper.

Annexes:

- Annex 1 – SAP Action Plan - DRAFT