

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3088

Title: Skills Bootcamps programme (2023-24 financial year)

Executive summary:

The Department for Education (DfE) invited the GLA to apply for funding to deliver Wave 4 of the Skills Bootcamps programme in London from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The GLA applied for £28.35m with the DfE approving £19m. This Mayoral Decision (MD) asks the Mayor to approve the receipt and expenditure of this funding; and to delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Skills and Employment, to make all further programme-related decisions in line with the scope of this decision form.

To ensure delivery of the programme can commence as quickly as possible in the 2023-24 financial year (FY), it is proposed that funding is disbursed through a combination of methods as with Wave 3. It is proposed that the main approach will be to allocate funding to current Wave 3 providers based on their current performance. Proposed allocation ranges are presented in Appendix A. Grant awards will be made based on providers' proposals meeting defined criteria. The new funding grant agreements will allow for future extensions should there be Wave 5 funding from the government. Any remaining unallocated funds will be allocated via an open, competitive application process to new providers.

Wave 4 of the Skills Bootcamps programme for the 2023-24 FY will follow on from the Wave 3 programme delivered across the 2022-23 FY and allows the GLA to continue to support London's recovery as part of the Helping Londoners into Good Work mission. Funding will continue to support the development of skills required by key sectors of the London economy, including green, digital, construction, creative, hospitality, health and social care, technical (engineering and manufacturing) and finance (professional services). Consideration will also be given to levels of demand in other sector/skill areas as part of the wider development for future funding waves.

Decision:

That the Mayor:

- approves the receipt of up to £19m funding from the Department for Education, and expenditure of the same on delivery of Wave 4 of the Skills Bootcamps programme (including expenditure of up to £1.27m to cover the management and administration of the programme); delivery will take place across key sectors of the London economy, to support employers to fill skills shortages and Londoners to access employment
- delegates authority to make future Wave 4 Skills Bootcamps programme-level decisions to the Assistant Director, Skills and Employment.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

27/3/23

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The government's Skills Bootcamps were rolled out from Autumn 2020 onwards, to out-of-London regions. These aim to deliver flexible training programmes lasting up to 16 weeks, based on employer/sector 'in demand' skills needs; and may be either regulated (that is, qualification-based) or non-regulated (for example, based on alignment with industry standards). They enable adults to do their training around work and other commitments, and are targeted at those looking to gain work or additional responsibilities, or to access new opportunities. They will offer a guaranteed job interview to individual participants on completion of the course.
- 1.2 Wave 1 of the programme was for £8m, commissioned for 2020-21. Wave 2 in 2021-22 saw over £43m awarded to lead suppliers (or consortia) at regional levels with local subcontracting arrangements to expand Digital, Construction and Technical Skills Bootcamps across England. The Department for Education (DfE) committed £150m to expand Skills Bootcamps for the 2022-23 financial year (FY) (Wave 3), from which the GLA applied for, and was successfully granted, £18.9m to deliver Skills Bootcamps in London.
- 1.3 The DfE invited the GLA to apply for funding to deliver the Wave 4 of the Skills Bootcamp programme in London from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The GLA applied for £28.35m and the DfE approved a maximum of £19m, due to excess funding requests received from Mayoral Combined Authorities/the GLA. The DfE has confirmed that there will be opportunities to request additional funding in-year where the GLA can demonstrate employer demand and strong performance across the London programme. In December 2022, 70 per cent of the grant value was initially confirmed; the remaining 30 per cent was confirmed in February 2023. This means the grant agreement with the DfE will be executed in two parts. The first grant agreement template has been drawn up (a copy is available on request), whilst a variation to include the additional 30 per cent grant value is expected to be executed in March 2023.
- 1.4 The resubmitted proposal from the GLA for the approved £19m is to deliver circa 5,300 courses estimated by priority sector in 2023-24, with an estimated cost per learner of £3,500. Estimates of enrolment proportions by sector in London are based on Wave 3 data and Level 3-5 19+ Further Education and Skills enrolments in 2020-21 (note that Construction and Green also include Level 2). Additionally, large employers are expected to contribute 30 per cent of the cost, reducing to 10 per cent for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)¹, where the employer is training their own existing employees (defined as someone directly employed by the employer – not a worker, sub-contractor or freelancer).
- 1.5 The funding is available to support key sectors of the London economy set out in the GLA's proposal, including green, digital, construction, creative, hospitality, health and social care, technical (engineering and manufacturing), logistics (heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driving), creative, hospitality, and finance (professional services including leadership and management).
- 1.6 To ensure delivery of the programme can commence as quickly as possible in the 2023-24 FY, it is proposed that funding is disbursed through a combination of methods in a similar way to Wave 3. It is proposed that the main approach will be to allocate funding to current Wave 3 providers based on their performance. Allocation ranges are presented in Appendix A and will be issued to providers along with criteria to ensure value for money. Providers will be asked to submit proposals for Bootcamps that can be delivered in the funding range based on their identified employer demand. They will be asked to submit updated employer references, and additional documents supporting their delivery, including updated risks and issues, equalities targets and course content to support wider quality assurance and inspection activities in line with GLA and DfE guidelines. Final

¹ SME defined as an employer with less than 250 employees (DfE Grant Offer Letter Skills Bootcamps 2023-24 FY Grants).

allocations may be adjusted based on latest insight from current Wave 3 delivery after the signing of this decision.

- 1.7 Proposals will be reviewed, and any award of funding will be agreed only once officers are content with the value for money they provide. Grant awards will be made based on providers' proposals meeting defined criteria which, it is proposed, will be signed off by the Assistant Director, Skills and Employment, via internal governance processes. The funding will allow for future extension should there be Wave 5 funding from the government, and the GLA being minded to continue the programme. Any remaining unallocated funds will be allocated via an open competitive application process to new providers.
- 1.8 As with Wave 3, in line with the Mayor's Skills Roadmap for London, the GLA will also require providers to demonstrate a commitment to working towards the Mayor's Good Work Standard. The GLA's ambition is for London Skills Bootcamps to support Londoners into good work – whether that is a new job, apprenticeship, or taking on additional responsibilities or new contracts. In addition to national criteria, the GLA will require good work outcomes. 'Good work' as defined in the Mayor's Skills Academies (MSAs) is employment, in a priority sector, for a minimum of 16 hours per week, that: is expected to last at least four weeks; pays at least the London Living Wage; does not involve the exploitative use of zero-hours contracts; and is part of a structured career development plan.
- 1.9 The DfE funding granted included provision of £1,270,000 for the management and administration (M&A) costs of the programme (7 per cent of the direct cost) to cover the salaries for up to eight dedicated provider managers who manage the Bootcamp grants, including the programme manager; part salaries of staff who also contribute to the successful delivery of the programme and; four support officers responsible for data management, commissioning, performance and reporting back to the DfE. The funding will also cover GLA overhead charges, evaluation, communications and marketing; system use and maintenance; and commissioning support as required.
- 1.10 Procurement of services will be completed competitively in line with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code. Similarly, if required, the second phase of grant commissioning will be executed in line with the Funding Code. The main grant will be disbursed to existing Wave 3 grant providers who have previously been selected via a competitive process. Grant and Contract recommendations will be signed off by the Assistant Director, Skills and Employment via internal governance processes and as part of the local management arrangements. Similarly, management costs (excluding salaries and GLA overhead costs which are fixed as part of the GLA processes) will be signed off by the Assistant Director, Skills and Employment as part of the local management arrangements.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 Skills Bootcamps are intended to support regions and employers to fill skills shortages by bringing participating individuals closer to good jobs through training that meets the skills needs of local employers, and guaranteed job interviews. The overarching objectives are to ensure participating employers commit to interviewing for their identified skills shortage vacancies from the pool of trained individuals. The main outcomes required to meet the conditions of the DfE funding are:
 - a minimum of 5,300 learner starts in total between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 at an average cost per learner of £3,500
 - at least 80 per cent of those who start training will complete the course, which includes 100 per cent of relevant learners² being offered a guaranteed interview with an employer with appropriate vacancies
 - at least 75 per cent of learners who complete their course will have a positive outcome (a new job providing continuous employment for at least 12 weeks; an apprenticeship; increased

² A relevant learner is a learner who is not sponsored by their existing employer and is not self-employed.

responsibilities; a new role with an existing employer; or increased opportunities for the self-employed) within six months of completion of the course.

- 2.2 The grant letter stipulated that at least 20 per cent of learner starts must occur by 31 July 2023; and a total of 50 per cent of learner starts by 30 September 2023. The payment milestones for learner outcomes have been amended slightly for Wave 4, with an increased weighting for the final payment to providers to further incentivise progression into positive learner outcomes. The payment milestones for Wave 4 are set out below:

First payment	Second payment	Third payment
40 per cent on completion of five qualifying days	30 per cent on course completion and offer of an interview	30 per cent on successful outcome

- 2.3 The grant letter for Wave 4 stipulated that 70 per cent of the funding should be used for the priority sectors and skills areas identified by the government – digital, technical, construction, green skills and logistics (HGV driving) and Pathway to Accelerated Apprenticeship. The GLA is permitted to use the remaining 30 per cent of the delivery cost element of the grant award to deliver Skills Bootcamps in a wider range of skill areas and these should align with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) Occupational Routes. The GLA proposal intends for 30 per cent of the total grant value to be allocated for London priority sectors, covering creative, hospitality, health and social care, and professional services.
- 2.4 For Wave 4 the DfE has set an indicative target of 60 per cent of employers involved in the development of Skills Bootcamp provision being SMEs.
- 2.5 Bootcamps can run up to a maximum of 16 weeks and will mainly focus on higher-level training (Levels 3-5). The green, construction and logistics sectors can include Level 2 training; however applications for Level 3+ training will still be prioritised. The provider must offer Skills Bootcamps of a minimum of 60 guided learning hours (GLH) over a maximum of 16 weeks, except HGV driving training which may be less than 60 GLHs.³ Delivery will consist of blended, online and in-person delivery models, tailored to the needs of the individual sector. The Bootcamps will complement and not duplicate existing and planned provision through the Mayor's Academies Programme, along with additional subject areas where this can be supported by clear evidence of skills demand and vacancies.
- 2.6 The programme will complement the MSA and as with Wave 3 will continue to include support for under-represented groups; and those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis on the journey to employment. As such, and to ensure the GLA can commence delivery as quickly as possible (as required by the grant offer letter), the GLA will disburse the funding through a combination of processes.
- 2.7 The GLA's approach to disbursing funding will provide opportunities for employers to develop tailored proposals for higher level training, progression opportunities for those taking Adult Education Budget (AEB) funded training and accelerated apprenticeship routes. The approach will also allow the GLA to be able to commission the funds as quickly as possible to meet the requirement of at least 20 per cent of learner starts by 31 July 2023. This flexible and agile approach to directing funding to providers in accordance with the principles in this MD is the reason for the proposal to delegate further Wave 4 programme-level decisions to the Assistant Director, Skills and Employment.

³ GLHs are the time a learner spends being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, whether online or in person. Pre-recorded content does not count towards GLHs.

3 Equality comments

- 3.1 Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 provides that, in the exercise of their functions, public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.2 Relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 3.3 Skills Bootcamps will be open to all adults aged 19 or over who are full-time or part-time employed, self-employed or unemployed, as well as adults returning to work after a break. The grant offer requires Skills Bootcamps to be designed to encourage the participation of underrepresented groups, including learners with protected characteristics and learners who might face barriers to employment. These are defined in the guidance as including learners with an ethnic minority background; learners with a disability; women; veterans; prison leavers; serving prisoners due to be released within six months of completion of the Skills Bootcamp, and those on temporary release; and learners with childcare or similar responsibilities. These may include those with protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and those who might face barriers to employment. The application process will therefore focus on ensuring individual Bootcamps make a commitment towards these groups and include appropriate targets in the signed grant agreement.
- 3.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Wave 3 was published with the programme prospectus in April 2022. This will be refreshed ahead of delivery start and considered by the Skills and Employment Unit's management team. Providers must also demonstrate the provision of a "wraparound service" of learner support. This includes demonstrating a coaching and mentoring approach throughout all stages of the programme, to move people into jobs or new opportunities as appropriate.

4 Other considerations

- 4.1 The confirmation of allocations from the DfE has been received. Whilst the funding the GLA was able to bid for covers only one FY, GLA officers have made the case to the DfE for a multi-year funding agreement, with funding provided up front so the GLA can allocate to providers more efficiently and enable more effective planning of provision.
- 4.2 Whilst one of the DfE funding conditions stipulates that where recipients (including the GLA) reasonably consider that it would be more appropriate for providers to be funded by way of a grant, then the GLA must ensure providers are selected on the basis of a competitive process for grant funding approximating as closely as possible to a competition for the award of a public contract subject to the provisions of section seven of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (light-touch regime). The condition, however, states that if the grant recipient reasonably considers that it would not be appropriate for providers to be selected using a competitive process (whether in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or under a single tender action), the grant recipient may, using its sectoral knowledge and existing relationships, award funding by way of grant on the basis of objective criteria without any prior competitive process. This is on the condition that the grant recipient uses reasonable endeavours (for example, by relevant benchmarking) to ensure that none

of the funding paid to such subcontractors (including grantees) in respect of any services or supplies delivered by them represents more than the market rate for equivalent services (after duly informing itself and taking relevant professional advice and after taking into consideration any regional differences, the scale of service provided and any resulting efficiencies of scale).

- 4.3 Officers believe the approach to grant fund existing providers is in alignment with the latter condition mentioned above, at paragraph 4.2. Though providers were all previously selected via competitive process, including conducting financial due diligence on the organisations, providers have also shown understanding of the Skills Bootcamp programme and can quickly turn around onboarding of learners whilst establishing the required employer relationships as quickly as possible. This approach will also meet another clause which stipulates the GLA can award funding by way of grant on the basis of objective criteria without any prior competitive process using sectoral knowledge or existing relationships.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.4 The Skills Bootcamps programme outlined in this decision aligns with commitments made in the Mayor's Skills for Londoners Strategy, the Skills Roadmap for London, and the Helping Londoners into Good Work recovery mission.

Risks arising/mitigation

- 4.5 Key risks and mitigation measures are outlined below:

Risk description	Planned mitigations	RAG Rating
Delivery partners are unable to deliver eligible activity to a level which uses funding allocation within the 2023-24 FY.	Using the experience of Wave 3 delivery, and related performance tracking tools, to effectively monitor and tackle underperformance at key milestones during Wave 4 delivery period.	A
Manual non-Individualised Learner Record-based data collection and payment process means that managing performance and payments become harder to manage.	The Skills and Employment Unit's Delivery team is experienced in contract management and has established offline payment contingency arrangements with GLA Finance for AEB delivery, which has served as a model for handling payments to Bootcamp providers. The Skills and Employment Unit will also monitor capacity to ensure appropriate resourcing is in place. Alongside this, the Skills and Employment Unit's Delivery team is working closely with the DfE on the development of data processes for Wave 4; and will also use the experience of Wave 3 delivery to update and improve claims and payments process.	A
New COVID-19 variant impacts on vacancies, employer engagement and learner recruitment.	The GLA will require applicants to include a COVID-19 risk assessment within their refreshed Risk and Issues template as part of their proposal.	G

There is insufficient capacity within the team to manage the application process and possible delays to completion of the application process due to tight timescales.	Additional staff have been recruited to support the programme for Wave 3 in recent months; and have been budgeted for Wave 4. The GLA will also consider options to bring in temporary staff or outsource elements of the application process to increase capacity. To control delays, key holiday periods where the GLA and providers are likely to have reduced capacity have been considered in the timeline.	A
Insufficient bids/response to the expression of interest to deliver the 2023-24 FY budget.	The GLA has used knowledge from recent application exercises and monitoring of the Wave 3 programme to predict likely provider capacity in London.	G

Conflicts of interest

- 4.6 There are no conflicts of interest to note from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is sought for the receipt of £19m funding from the government for the Skills Bootcamps Programme, granted to the GLA under section 14 of the Education Act 2002 from the DfE.
- 5.2 Approval is sought for the planned approach to commission Skills Bootcamp providers to deliver Bootcamps across key sectors of the London economy – including green, digital, construction, creative, hospitality, health and social care, technical (engineering and manufacturing) and finance – to support employers to fill skills shortages. The approach to delivery will also have regard to the levels of demand in other sector/skill areas that align with the IfATE occupational maps. The estimated allocation of funds is set out at paragraph 2.3, above.
- 5.3 Approval is also sought for the expenditure of up to £1.27m of the total funds received to cover the management and administration of the programme.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that:
- the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of economic development and wealth creation in Greater London
 - in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
 - pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
 - consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom
 - consult with appropriate bodies.

- 6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty – namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion) and persons who do not (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3 The Mayor may delegate the exercise of the GLA's functions to the Assistant Director, Skills and Employment, as proposed.
- 6.4 If the Mayor makes the decisions sought, officers must ensure that:
- they are satisfied that their proposed delivery of Wave 4 of the Skills Bootcamps Programme is compliant with the DfE funding conditions (including, should any direct award of funding be proposed, the existence of a robust rationale of why to do so is better than competing the funding opportunities based clearly upon the GLA's "...sectoral knowledge and existing relationships..." and by reference to "...objective criteria...") and the agreement with DfE for the provision of the same is executed before placing any reliance upon the same
 - to the extent that expenditure concerns the:
 - award of grant funding, it is distributed fairly, transparently, in manner which affords value for money and in accordance with the requirements of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and grant funding agreements are put in place between and executed by the GLA and recipients before any commitment to fund is made
 - payment for services, those services are procured in liaison with TfL Procurement and in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and contracts are put in place between and executed by the GLA and contractors before commencement of such services
 - payment for staffing resourcing at the GLA, if such staffing is to be covered by establishing any new roles, they comply fully with the GLA's "establishment control" procedures.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
DfE grant signing	March 2023
Commissioning exercise – submission and reviews of proposals	March/April 2023
First phase grant awarding process	April 2023
First phase cohorts first starts	May 2023
Commissioning exercise – second phase (if required)	May/June 2023
Second phase grant awarding process	June 2023
Second phase cohorts first starts	July 2023

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix A – Provider Allocation Ranges

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will be published either within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES

If YES, for what reason: Deferred until 31 July 2023 to avoid distorting the commissioning process.

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer
to confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Iain Mitchell has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following: ✓

Sponsoring Director:

Tunde Olayinka has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities. ✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Jules Pipe has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations. ✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal. ✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 27 March 2023.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:



Date:

27 March 2023

pp. Enver Enver on behalf of David Gallie

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor.

Signature:



Date:

27 March 2023

