
Executive Decision Report

Skills Bootcamps 2026-2027

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor

Decision to be taken on: 17 February 2026

Lead director: Peter Chandler

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All wards
- Report author: Joanne Ives
- Author contact details: joanne.ives@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

1.1. This report is seeking approval to accept grant funding for the delivery of Skills Bootcamps across Leicester and Leicestershire for delivery from April 2026 to September 2027.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 The City Mayor is recommended to:

- (a) accept Department for Education (DfE) revenue grant funding for Skills Bootcamp of £1.5m, and
- (b) agree for the City Council to act as accountable body for the financial management of these funds and for any subsequent year allocations.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency (EDTCE) Scrutiny committee on 21st September 2023.

Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency (EDTCE) Scrutiny committee on 12th March 2025.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

4.1 In 2023 Leicester City Council assumed the role of Lead Accountable Body for the procurement of Skills Bootcamps across Leicester and Leicestershire. This report provides details of the impact of the pilot year (2023-24), an update on the 2024-25 and 2025-26 programmes, and a summary of the 2026-27 programme.

4.2 Skills Bootcamps are a national Department for Education programme, commissioned locally by Leicester City Council on behalf of Leicester City and Leicestershire. The Leicester City Economic Regeneration team are responsible for contracts and commissioning, reporting and programme management. The Leicester City Adult Education team oversee the quality of the Bootcamp delivery.

Skills Bootcamps are designed to be short intensive courses intended to:

- re-train existing staff to boost productivity or respond to changing requirements
- train potential staff for new roles and sectors of high demand
- upskill self-employed people to increase productivity and develop their businesses.

4.3 Bootcamps are required to be at least 60 hours long and be delivered over a maximum of 16 weeks. They are normally at Level 3 (A Level standard) or above and are mapped to Apprenticeship standards.

4.4 All bootcamp providers must ensure there are real job openings and a guaranteed interview for each participant.

4.5 The grant is paid based on results with 30% of funding associated with one of the following positive employment outcomes within 6 months of completing the bootcamp:

- additional responsibilities at work using the skills developed in the Bootcamp
- new job related to the skills developed on the Bootcamp is secured
- increased self-employed business related to the skills developed on the Bootcamp

2023-24 (Wave 4)

4.6 Three training providers were commissioned to provide Skills Bootcamps in the 2023-24 pilot. The overall achievements were delivered against a total budget allocation of £700k including management costs.

2024-25 (Wave 5)

4.7 The allocation for 2024-25 was £2.1m (including management costs). Ten providers were awarded to provide 12 Skills Bootcamps.

4.8 The Skills Bootcamps providers were awarded to deliver bootcamps for either unemployed, self-employed or employed individuals in the following areas: digital marketing; construction; garment production; sewing and repair; pharmacy; agriculture; solar installation; teaching; environmental management; agriculture; software development and cyber security.

2025-26 (Wave 6)

4.9 The allocation for 2025-26 was £3.2m (including management costs), and of this allocation £235k was awarded for construction bootcamps. 45 bootcamp applications were received and 22 providers were awarded contracts to provide 25 Skills Bootcamps in 2025-26.

4.10 For Wave 5, a two-stage process was introduced to enable a wider category of bootcamps to be delivered which commissioned 22 providers covering a broad range of bootcamps including (digital analytics; digital marketing; cyber; digital electronic patient records linked to NHS provision); construction (plant, groundworker); early years; HGV (different categories) and fashion.

4.11 Most of the bootcamps 1st cohorts started in September or October 2025 for delivery until the end of March 2026, with the final positive employment outcomes to be achieved by September 2026

4.12 All contracted providers are awarded a grant for delivery based on a specific number of learners, with individual unit costs agreed per bootcamp for each learner

supported. Payments are then processed on delivery of each milestone, with an example set out below.

- Milestone 1 (40%) of unit cost:
 - 10 Guided Learning hours achieved by the individuals
- Milestone 2 (30%) of unit cost
 - Completion of course plus
 - If unemployed learner offer of job interview
 - If self-employed learner completion of action post on how course will support business
- Milestone 3 (30%) of unit cost:
 - If unemployed learner offer of job or job secured
 - If self-employed learner evidence of new work secured as result of the skills bootcamp

2026-27 (Wave 7)

4.13 The DfE invited areas to submit a proposed budget, however for 2026-27 a lower allocation has been awarded. The funding allocation for 2026-27 is £1.5m (including management fees). Of the allocation, £400k was awarded for skills bootcamp(s) in construction skills.

4.14 A new call for providers will be launched in February / March 2026 which will outline the key priorities for the Wave 7 skills bootcamps to support 402 learners, bearing in mind the reduction of funding.

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

This report proposes that Leicester City Council act as accountable body for £1.5m of revenue grant funding from DfE. The grant conditions and mechanisms for reimbursing training providers have been reviewed and these do not expose the Council to financial risk. The Council will only pay providers in arrears, once performance targets have been validated, so any repayment of grant back to the funding body will not result in a loss to the Council.

The £1.5m includes a sum to cover the administrative cost to the Council of acting as Accountable Body. As such, it is not anticipated that there would be any net cost to the Council of the proposed arrangements.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

Dated: 30th January 2026

5.2 Legal implications

A subsidy control assessment should be carried out by Legal Services to assess the receipt of funding from the Department of Education ('DfE') (including any forward usage/funding) complies with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

The DfE terms and conditions of the funding will need to be reviewed by Legal Services to ensure obligations are understood and can be met.

In using the funds, as in previous rounds, the Council proposes to carry out a call for competition to appoint partners to carry out the training required under the DfE grant funding terms and conditions. Care should be taken when carrying out the call for competition and entering into grant funding terms and conditions, to ensure that any ensuing agreements could not be seen as being services contracts which require a compliant procurement process to be undertaken.

Where the Council is procuring services to deliver the training, and other related services, it will need to comply with public procurement rules and its own contract procedure rules. Legal Services will draft contracts to be entered into with the employers and/or training providers which will ensure that the grant monies are only used to meet the eligible costs of the project and to ensure that Council complies with its obligations to the Department for Education and are appropriately cascaded down

Signed: *Mannah Begum, Principal Solicitor (Commercial)*

Dated: 14 January 2026

5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report is looking to accept funding for the delivery of Skills Bootcamps across Leicester and Leicestershire for delivery from April 2026 to September 2027 and provides an update on waves 4, 5 and 6. There are no direct equalities implications arising from the paper. Skills Bootcamps are developed in partnership with local employers, providers and authorities to help fill skills gaps and vacancies in local areas. Accessible initiatives that are designed to help learners develop their skills and equip them with the knowledge to find a job or apprenticeship should lead to positive impacts for people from across all protected characteristics. And are likely to support positive equalities outcomes and provide an opportunity to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills, gain knowledge and experience and fast-track to an interview or progress in their current role can also help improve vocational skills. Some people may not be able to afford similar commercial courses to that offered by Skills Bootcamps, having free courses should make them more accessible.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 15 January 2026

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

Green Skills is one of the categories of training within the Skills Bootcamps programme, covering a wide range of potential areas for skills training.

If successful applications are made for green skills courses, delivery of these should have a positive climate impact within the city, helping to develop vital skills for enabling net zero within Leicester. Providers should also be encouraged to explore opportunities to embed sustainability-related skills within the other courses to be delivered, as relevant to those skills areas.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 16th January 2026

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:

N/A

7. Summary of appendices:

N/A

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

No