

Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

Research report

Dorset Adult Skills Fund

Consultancy Brief

March 2025

Contents

1. PURPOSE	X
2. CONTEXT.....	X
3. COMMISSION	X
4. KEY STAGES & DELIVERABLES.....	X
5. BUDGET	X
6. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT & MONITORING	X
7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	X
8. TIMESCALES	X
9. ASSESSMENT.....	X
10. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION	X
11. GUIDANCE.....	X

1. PURPOSE

Dorset LEP wishes to commission a research report on behalf of the Dorset Skills board to establish understanding of the Pan Dorset provision and priorities for skills as a starting point to inform local plans and to take into devolution discussions with other areas within a proposed Wessex geography.

The Dorset Skills Board (DSB) brings senior representatives from business, the public sector, education and skills providers across Dorset (Dorset and BCP council areas) to provide collective leadership and a strategic steer for skills and employment activity across Dorset to deliver inclusive growth. The DSB aims to;

- strategically plan for skills demands and needs taking into account labour market information and the changing employment landscape
- Influence appropriate strategic responses in skills provision to increase the proportion of higher-productivity, knowledge-intensive jobs

Going forward, skills will be a devolved competency in devolved areas. Devolution allows areas to set their own skills priorities over a longer term with a multi-year funding allocation - in contrast to the current annual allocation to deliver against nationally set priorities.

2. CONTEXT

The [English Devolution White Paper](#) published in December 2024 outlined the Government's intentions for Mayoral Strategic Authorities to be formed ultimately resulting in

“Skills and employment provision that is more relevant to local jobs because Strategic Authorities will have joint ownership of the Local Skills Improvement Plan model (alongside Employers Representative Bodies), have devolved control of non-apprenticeship adult skills funding, ensuring there are clear pathways of progression from education into further education or higher education and employment for 16-19 year olds in their areas, devolution of supported employment funding for the first time in England, and a commitment for Mayoral Strategic Authorities to co-design the future landscape of non-Jobcentre Plus employment support more widely.”

Dorset and BCP Councils indicated their intention to become part of a Wessex Mayoral Combined Authority along with Somerset and Wilshire. While Wessex was not named in the next round of MCAs, alongside skills needs, an evidenced understanding of current deployment of non-apprenticeship adult skills funding, supported employment funding and non-Jobcentre Plus employment support will stand the area in good stead to formulate near term local plans and to take into discussions for formulating larger area devolution plans.

3. COMMISSION

Dorset LEP is seeking to commission a piece of research on behalf of the Dorset Skills board to establish understanding of the Pan Dorset provision funded by the Adult Skills budget as a starting point to take into devolution discussions.

- Commission - a piece of desk-based research to understand as much as possible about all delivery funded by the Adult Skills Fund for Dorset/BCP residents. This would include delivery face to face or online, by Dorset/BCP based providers or national/out of county providers and any other delivery mechanism in receipt of Adult Skills Fund.
- This research is limited to provision funded by the Adult Skills Fund. This may include, but is not limited to, subject areas, patterns of learning, provision offered, providers, participation numbers and funding consumed. Where possible type of learner information should be captured.
- Output – a report that details the extent of Adult Skills funded provision for Dorset/BCP residents to support the county as it proceeds with devolutions discussions and skills planning.

Please note, bidders must have access to appropriate data sources to complete this activity. Access to data sources will not be provided as part of the contract.

4. KEY STAGES & DELIVERABLES

We would expect the following delivery:

1. Report detailing information to support the delivery of skills for residents of Dorset Council or BCP Council areas.
2. A minimum of patterns of learning, subject areas, provision offered, providers, participation numbers and funding consumed should be included. Where possible type of learner information should be captured.
3. Report to be provided to the Dorset Skills Board by 30/10/25

5. BUDGET

The total amount available for this work is £25,000.

Tenders should be submitted clearly setting out, individually for each member of the proposed team, the hourly rate at which they will be charged (exclusive of VAT). Tenders should also show the proposed hourly rates once the total value of work charged exceeds £25,000. Tenders should be valid for six months.

6. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT & MONITORING

This work will be monitored by the Dorset Skills Board. Full details of contact information will be provided in the contract.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Dorset LEP may exclude the Supplier if there is a conflict of interest which cannot be effectively remedied. The concept of a conflict of interest includes any situation where relevant staff members have, directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure.

Where there is any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise then it is the responsibility of the Supplier to inform Dorset LEP, detailing the conflict in the Supplier response to this tender.

8. TIMESCALES

Activity	Date
Invitation to Tender	06/3/25
Deadline for submissions	19/3/25
Assessment of responses received	20/3/25
Inception meeting	25/3/25
Contract start date	27/3/25

The LEP reserves the right to cancel the tender process. No work is guaranteed to be awarded under the tender process and Dorset LEP is not responsible for any costs incurred as part of the bidding process.

The deadline for any Tender Clarifications is 19/3/25.

9. ASSESSMENT

Tenders will be assessed using the following criteria and weightings and the weighted scores within each sub-criteria will be added together to arrive at the total score for this piece of work.

Question	Weighting
Understanding of requirement	20%
Experience of similar work and credibility with stakeholders	20%
Proposed approach to this work	20%
Proposed team	20%
Pricing	20%

Tenders will be scored according to the below scheduled; scoring and comments are confidential and will not be shared with any applicants.

Score	Comment
4 - Excellent	Proposal meets, and in some places exceeds, the required standard
3 - Good	Proposal meets required standard
2 - Acceptable	Proposal meets the required standard in most respects, but is lacking or inconsistent in others
1 - Poor	Proposal falls short of expected standard

0 - Unacceptable	Significantly fails to meet required standard or does not provide the relevant answer
------------------	---

Clarifications may be sought in writing from the suppliers and scores adjusted accordingly. Full or partial proposals that in the opinion of the Dorset LEP are unrealistically low or not reasonable sustainable (in terms of Quality or Price) may be rejected.

Dorset LEP reserves the right not to make any appointment.

10. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

In order to be considered for selection, proposals to this tender must be received by **midnight, 19/3/25**. Any individual or organisation responding to this tender must submit its response via email to the following:

Rebecca Davies
Head of Enterprise, Skills and Industry
rdavies@bournemouth.ac.uk

Please note that submissions not received via the means identified in this document may not be accepted or considered. Any tender submitted and/or received after the time specified may not be considered and the Bidder will be advised of this.

11. GUIDANCE

- Take the time to read and understand this document. In particular, develop a strong understanding of the Commission section.
- In structuring your proposal, consider how it will be evaluated.
- Bidders are advised to allow adequate time for uploading documents and to dispatch the electronic response well in advance of the closing time to avoid any last-minute problems. Failure to submit the tender submission as required may result in the relevant Bidder being excluded from any further participation in this procurement.
- If you require clarification or you have any questions please direct these to: *Rebecca Davies, rdavies@bournemouth.ac.uk*