

Subject: Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1)

Report of: Head of Inclusive Growth

Portfolio: Employability and Inclusion

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the publication of the Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1) call documentation including the assessment criteria for applications.

Recommendations

The Interim Head of Paid Service is recommended to approve the Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1) call documentation and assessment criteria for publication.

1. Background Information, Proposals and Timetable for Implementation

1.1 On 4th June 2019 the North of Tyne Combined Authority Cabinet (NTCA) approved a £3m allocation from the Inclusive Economy Innovation Fund to the Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1).

1.2 On 30th July NTCA Cabinet agreed that the Interim Head of Paid Service be authorised, in consultation with the Investment Panel to:

- finalise and publish the call documentation that will launch the fund
- approve the assessment criteria for applications

1.3 The Interim Head of Paid Service is recommended to approve the Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1) call definition document summarised below and attached as **Appendix A** for publication.

1.4 The Interim Head of Paid Service is also recommended to approve the assessment criteria which will be used to score individual projects

Scoring Criteria	Scoring weighting %
Strategic fit with NTCA Vision	15
Quality of the supporting rationale for the project overall	15
Outcomes and impact associated with the call	10
All Outputs and results associated with the project are above the DWP call minimum	5
Design and evidence of delivery model and activities	10
Status of the match funding	10
Intervention Rate requested from NTCA	10
Deliverability Risk	20
Inclusive Supply Chain	5

1.6 The first stage of the NTCA Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1) call will open on the 9th September 2019 and close on the 3rd October. Prospective applicants for this programme will be invited to submit applications for funding following the formal publication of the call details on the NTCA website.

1.7 The NTCA is committed to bringing forward a programme of activity which supports an inclusive economy in the North of Tyne area. The Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1) will enable good quality and locally tailored interventions that add value to existing support for unemployed and economically inactive residents.

The fund will:

- add capacity and variety to existing provision with an excellent articulation of the role of the proposed provision within the existing provision landscape of the North of Tyne;
- offer innovative and effective delivery models that are differentiated from existing provision;

- demonstrate new or alternative approaches to engaging the most isolated or disadvantaged residents;
- demonstrate how the investment required from this fund to enable the project has been minimised.

1.8 The following are examples of NTCA objectives that this fund may contribute to:

- Opportunity for all and an opportunity to thrive: removing the barriers which make it difficult for people to take up employment and training opportunities. Providing the right support for people to access quality, well paid jobs.
- Promote ongoing learning and development and providing the right support for people to access further training. Closing the aspiration and ambition gap.
- Work with employers to increase opportunities for continued training and skills development, supporting career progression.
- Better alignment of the skills offer to the needs of the local labour market and improve transitions from education to work and ensuring young people to have high aspirations, with support to enable them to make good choices.
- Implement better ways to help people into work – from a fragmented system to a more coordinated approach, in particular tackling health related unemployment or economic inactivity.
- A comprehensive suite of in-work services to promote skills development, support growth and encourage progression from low-paid employment, in partnership with Jobcentre Plus.
- Building on the learning and experience of Generation NE with Jobcentre Plus and DWP to encourage the NE LEP and local businesses to offer employment, apprenticeship, work-related training and work experience opportunities to young people.
- Close the Gap: the gap between the NTCA area and the England (excluding London) average on unemployment, average earnings, education and skills attainment.

1.9 Fit with other Local and National Priorities: Projects funded through the Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1) will be selected based on their strategic fit with the needs of the NTCA area, though it is likely they will also contribute to the delivery of other local and national priorities.

1.10 Investment of up to £3m of NTCA resources in the Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1) will directly catalyse the NTCAs ambition to be the ‘home of ambition’ and will make potentially lifechanging support available for an estimated 3,500 residents of the NTCA area. The projects funded will address the barriers that make it difficult for people to take up employment and training opportunities, to own their own future, have high aspirations and make good choices: in partnership with business, support organisations and residents.

Dates	The first call for applications will open on the 9 th September 2019 and close at midnight on the 3 rd October 2019.
Definitions	<p>For this fund 'employment support' is defined as activity that is fundable under Priority Axis 1 of the European Social Fund 2014-20.</p> <p>For this fund 'skills support' is defined as activity that is fundable under Priority Axis 1 or 2 of the European Social Fund 2014-20 and is focussed on the achievement of accredited or unaccredited learning.</p>
Indicative Fund Allocation:	A maximum budget available for this call is £3,000,000.
Applications	<p>Applications are expected to demonstrate appropriate scale, impact and additionality in the North of Tyne. This NTCA funding is not intended to substitute existing funding, but instead to provide support for new activity or support existing programmes which can demonstrate a need to expand scale or scope by securing ESF funding.</p> <p>Applications must only contain activities which are aligned with the aims of the fund and that are ESF eligible activities/expenditure as NTCA funding will be contingent on the successful applicants securing ESF as match funding; provision of match-funding in this way ensures best value and maximum leverage from CA funds.</p> <p>The NTCA does not intend to allocate less than £200,000 of NTCA funding to any single project, but we would welcome applications from consortia that bring smaller organisations together to meet this threshold. The NTCA is also unlikely to make an allocation of more than 25% of the Call value to any single project or consortia.</p> <p>The application process is a two-stage process. The first stage application will provide enough detail for the NTCA to assess the strategic fit</p>

	<p>and value for money of projects and give an 'in-principle agreement' to match fund the project(s) which will be subject to ESF match funding being secured and any additional conditions identified through the appraisal process being discharged.</p> <p>A second stage application process will be undertaken with successful stage 1 applicants and will undertake further due diligence on the applicant/ delivery partners and the proposal. Stage 2 will commence once applicants have formally applied for ESF funding to complement the NTCA match funding. Grant Agreements for match funding will be issued in parallel with any ESF Funding Agreements issued by the Managing Authority or Lead Accountable Body for other sources of ESF funding.</p>
Duration of project approvals	Projects should be for a maximum of three years, however the NTCA reserves the right to vary the duration in exceptional circumstances.
Geographical Scope	All interventions funded through this call must be focused on activity and beneficiaries within the North of Tyne area, where successful projects cover a wider geography the impact and expenditure in the NTCA area must be able to be disaggregated from the larger project.
Beneficiaries	Residents of the North of Tyne area who are eligible recipients of European Social Fund support under ESF Priority Axis one or two.
Deadlines	For this specific call, applications will be assessed following closure of the call. Applications received after the published call close date will not be considered.
Application selection	<p>All applications will be scored in line with the NTCA scoring criteria for this fund. Applications will be viewed favourably that offer best value for money; bring additional sources of match funding and reduce the required intervention rate for NTCA funds as a proportion of total project value; and clearly evidence need for and additionality of the proposed intervention.</p> <p>It is expected that approximately 80% of available funds will support projects under ESF Priority Axis 1 and 20% of available funds will support projects under ESF Priority Axis 2.</p>

Eligible match funding	It is expected that European Social Fund will be the principal source of match funding, alongside other sources of private and public match sourced by the applicant. Proposals which can leverage other sources of match funding and reduce the match funding requirement from the NTCA to a minimum will be viewed favourably.
Operational completion	Operations must be completed no later than 3 years and 6 months after the project start date.
Procurement	All procurement must be under-taken in line with EU and European Social Fund Guidelines.

2. Potential Impact on Objectives

- 2.1 The Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1) directly supports the NTCA vision and in particular contributes to the Hotbed of Talent and Leaders of Tomorrow pillars of ambition.

3. Key Risks

- 3.1 Risks associated with each funding application will be considered as part of the application and appraisal process. The conditions associated with funding approvals relate to the mitigation of risks.

4. Financial and Other Resources Implications

- 4.1 As the report to Cabinet on the 30th July identified, there are resources available to cover the £3,000,000 budget proposed for the Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1) call.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Interim Monitoring Officer's comments have been included in this report.

6. Consultation/Engagement

- 6.1 Relevant stakeholders have been fully engaged in the development of the Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1)

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A: Employability and Skills Programme (Phase 1) Call Definition Document.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 NONE

9. Contact Officers

9.1 Leigh Mills, Head of Inclusive Growth
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10. Glossary

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NTCA	North of Tyne Combined Authority
ESF	European Social Fund
NE LEP	North East Local Enterprise Partnership
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions

11. Sign-off

11.1 Head of Paid Service: Yes
Monitoring Officer: Yes
Chief Finance Officer: Yes