

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 55

Subject: Skills Bootcamps Funding

Date of meeting: Thursday, 17 September 2026

Report of: Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Youth Services

Lead Officer: Corporate Director for Families, Children and Wellbeing

Contact Officer: Name: Carla Butler, Donna Keenan

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Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: Yes

Reason(s) Key: Expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the expenditure of the City Council's budget, namely above £1,000,000 and is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions (wards).

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to apply contract extensions of one year to the wave 6 skills bootcamp contracts awarded in 2025 as additional funding of £1.68m has recently been made available from the Department of Work and Pensions to the council. The 2025 contracts were approved through the Annual Procurement Forward Plan in February 2025. These contracts are valid until the 30 September 2026, and they included the flexibility to exercise rights to extend contracts by up to two years. The decision will enable the council to continue to deliver high-quality, flexible skills bootcamp training that responds to local employer demand, supports residents aged 19+ to gain sector-specific skills, and improve access to interviews, employment, progression or new work opportunities.
- 1.2 The proposal directly supports the Brighton and Hove Economic Plan 2024 - 2027 core imperatives – to build a stronger, more inclusive labour by ensuring residents and employers benefit from the provision of employment and skills support which is linked directly to the needs and opportunities within the local economy. It also supports the Council Plan “A better Brighton & Hove for all” by supporting the priorities of a fair and inclusive city, a healthy city where people thrive, and a city to be proud of. Skills Bootcamps help reduce inequality by widening access to learning and employment, strengthen the local economy by addressing skills gaps in priority sectors, and support residents and businesses to benefit from inclusive and sustainable growth. Bootcamps are sited as a key deliverable of the Get

Sussex Working Plan (GSWP). Ambition 6 – to develop and upskills our workforce to boost employment and growth. The GSWP is overseen by the Growth Board, it was endorsed by Cabinet and adopted by the Department for Work and Pensions in October 2025

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet agrees to approve the extension of the contracts for the delivery of Skills Bootcamps in Brighton & Hove for a period of one year to 30 September 2027 to enable the additional grant funding of £1.68m to be utilised.
- 2.2 Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director for Families, Children and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Youth Services, to take all necessary steps to implement, manage and vary the Skills Bootcamp contracts within the available grant funding..

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Skills Bootcamps are flexible, employer-led training courses for adults aged 19 and over. They are designed to help residents develop sector-specific skills in areas where there is employer demand, with delivery typically lasting up to 16 weeks and an offer of a job interview or progression opportunity on completion. They provide a rapid route for adults to retrain, upskill or progress in work, while helping employers address skills gaps in priority sectors.
- 3.2 Brighton & Hove City Council's original Skills Bootcamps grant allocation for 2026-27 was £1.5 million. The council has now been notified of an uplift to this allocation. The Department for Work and Pensions has confirmed that, due to headroom in the 2026-27 Skills Bootcamps budget, the council's allocation can be increased this year. This is in addition to the further Construction Skills package funding that the council was recently contacted about to gauge local interest and delivery capacity.

Funding element	Amount
Additional allocation	£1,500,000
Additional Construction Skills package funding	£168,745
Total additional funding	£1,668,745
Revised grant total funding	£3,168,745

- 3.3. The DWP will be issuing a grant variation letter confirming the allocation uplift in due course. However, the council has been advised to treat the notification on 6 August 2026 as confirmation that it can engage with suppliers and begin planning the additional delivery required within the 2026-27 delivery year. For clarity, the Construction Skills package funding must be used to support delivery in the construction sector. The specific conditions of the original Grant Offer remain unchanged for the additional allocation. The council is permitted to use up to 50% of the delivery cost

element to deliver Skills Bootcamps in any sector needed locally outside the Skills England identified priority sectors of Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy, Digital Technologies, Life Sciences, Creative Industries, Financial Services and Defence, plus Construction and Health and Social Care.

- 3.4. The council's £1.5 million Skills Bootcamps allocation for 2026-27 has already been procured as one-year contracts. This procurement activity was authorised through the Annual Procurement Forward Plan on 19th March 2026, which secured a range of local provision aligned to employer demand and national Skills England priority sectors, enabling residents to access short, intensive training with a clear route to interviews, employment, progression or new opportunities. The additional £1.68 million allocation therefore cannot be accommodated within the current 2026-27 procured value. However, it is possible to extend the contracts that were procured in 2025/26 as they have not expired. This will ensure the additional funding can be delivered compliantly and at pace.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The recommended option is to approve the exercising of the right to extend the 2025-26 contracts to enable Skills Bootcamps delivery. This is recommended because the original £1.5 million allocation has already been procured and committed, and the additional funding cannot be delivered within the 2026-27 contracts. Approval will allow the council to respond quickly to the Department for Work and Pensions' funding uplift, maintain compliance with procurement requirements, secure delivery capacity from the provider market, and maximise the benefit of the additional grant for residents and employers across the city.
- 4.2 An alternative option would be to decline the additional funding. This is not recommended because it would reduce the opportunity to increase access to training, limit the council's ability to respond to local skills needs.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The council was notified of the additional Skills Bootcamps funding on 6 August 2026. Since receiving the notification, the Skills & Employment team has mobilised quickly to assess the implications of the uplift, review existing delivery commitments, consider provider capacity and prepare the necessary governance and contracting activity to enable the additional funding to be used effectively within the 2026-27 delivery year.
- 5.2 The programmes delivered will be shaped by priorities set out in the Local Skills Improvement Plan for Sussex, the Get Sussex Working Plan, local labour market intelligence and evidence of current learner and employer demand, ensuring that additional provision is targeted where it can have the greatest impact for residents, employers and the local economy.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The council has been notified of additional Skills Bootcamps grant funding of £1,668,745 for 2026-27, comprising £1,500,000 additional allocation and £168,745 Construction Skills package funding. This increases the total Skills Bootcamps grant allocation to £3,168,745. The funding is external grant funding from the Department for Work and Pensions and must be used in

accordance with the relevant grant conditions. The proposals in this report seek approval to apply contract extensions to 6 contracts with a maximum value per contract of £450k to enable the additional allocation to be committed and delivered within the available grant funding. There will be no additional pressure on the council's general fund budget unless providers over deliver. This will be closely managed to ensure expenditure remains within the confirmed grant envelope and in line with grant conditions. Financial monitoring will be undertaken through existing budget management and contract monitoring arrangements to manage any risk of underspend, delivery slippage or expenditure outside eligible grant activity.

Name of finance officer consulted: Hannah Birch Date consulted (10/08/2026):

7. Legal implications

- 7.1** The contracts for the delivery of Skills Bootcamps are call-off-contracts awarded under a Dynamic Purchasing System procured in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015). Any modification to those contracts must comply with Regulation 72 PCR 2015. Regulation 72 (1)(a) permits contract modifications where they have been provided for in the initial procurement documents through clear, precise and unequivocal review clauses or options, provided that the scope and conditions of the modification are specified and that the modification does not alter the overall nature of the contract. The procurement documentation for the relevant call-off competitions included the option to extend the contracts. The contracts also contain provisions permitting extension which are consistent with the original procurement documentation. The proposed extensions do not alter the overall nature of the contracts and are made in accordance with the provisions set out in the original procurement documentation. The proposed extensions are therefore considered lawful under Regulation 72 (1) (a) of the PCR 2015.

Name of lawyer consulted: Sian Stevens Date consulted (03/09/26):

8. Risk implications

- 8.1** The key risks relate to the compressed timescale for extending contracts and mobilising additional delivery within the 2026-27 funding year, supplier capacity to respond at pace, and ensuring activity remains compliant and delivers value for money. If the recommendations are not agreed, there is a risk that the council will be unable to utilise the additional grant allocation, reducing the number of residents able to benefit from Skills Bootcamps and limiting support to employers with current skills shortages.
- 8.2** The risk will be managed through engagement with our 2025-26 training providers, clear delivery specifications, monitoring against grant conditions and regular contract management.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The procurement of additional Skills Bootcamps provision will support the council's duty to advance equality of opportunity by increasing access to flexible, employment-focused training for residents aged 19+, including those who may face barriers to learning, work or progression. Providers will be expected to demonstrate how their delivery model supports inclusive access, appropriate learner support and positive outcomes for underrepresented groups.
- 9.2 The additional provision will be shaped by local labour market intelligence, learner demand and employer need. This will help ensure that opportunities are targeted where they can support residents to gain skills, access interviews, progress in work or move into employment. Any equality considerations arising through the procurement process will be managed through the specification, provider assessment and contract monitoring arrangements.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The procurement of additional Skills Bootcamps provision has the potential to support positive sustainability outcomes by increasing access to skills in sectors linked to the transition to a more sustainable and resilient local economy, including clean energy, construction and other priority sectors where there is evidenced employer demand. Providers will be expected to consider sustainable delivery approaches, including efficient use of resources, accessible local delivery where appropriate, and minimising unnecessary travel through blended or flexible learning models. Any negative sustainability impacts are expected to be limited and will be managed through the procurement specification.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 The procurement of additional Skills Bootcamps provision is expected to have positive health and wellbeing implications by supporting residents to gain skills, improve confidence and access employment or progression opportunities. Employment and learning are wider determinants of health, and improved access to good-quality training can support financial resilience, independence and wellbeing for residents. Provision will be targeted in line with local demand and learner need, with providers expected to offer appropriate support to help residents overcome barriers to participation and achieve positive outcomes.

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

- 12.1 The additional Skills Bootcamps funding requires contract extensions as the original £1.5 million allocation has already been procured and committed. Contract extensions will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders, relevant procurement legislation, and grant funding requirements, using appropriate procurement routes to secure compliant, timely and value-for-money delivery.

The contract extension process will support engagement, clear specification of delivery requirements and contract management arrangements to ensure delivery remains aligned with grant conditions, learner outcomes, employer demand and value-for-money requirements.

In line with the Social Value Act 2012, the Council will seek to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits arising from these contracts for Brighton & Hove. Social value considerations will be embedded throughout the contract extension process and contract delivery, including the promotion of local employment and skills opportunities, inclusive access to training, and engagement with local employers and communities. A Social Value Action Plan will be used to monitor, measure and report on social value outcomes, ensuring transparency, accountability and the successful delivery of commitments.

13. Crime & disorder implications:

- 13.1 The contract extensions of additional Skills Bootcamps provision is expected to have a positive impact on the council's duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. By increasing access to skills development, training and employment opportunities, the programme can help address some of the underlying social and economic factors associated with crime, anti-social behaviour and reoffending, including unemployment, low skills levels and social exclusion. Skills Bootcamps will support residents aged 19+ to gain skills that improve access to sustainable employment and career progression, contributing to greater economic resilience and social inclusion. Any specific community safety considerations arising through programme delivery will be managed through the procurement process, provider selection and ongoing contract monitoring arrangements.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 The additional Skills Bootcamps funding provides a significant opportunity to expand local skills provision, respond to employer demand and support more residents to access training, interviews, employment and progression opportunities. As the original £1.5 million allocation has already been procured and committed, contract extensions will enable us to deliver the additional funding compliantly, secure value for money and maximise the benefit of the revised grant allocation within the 2026-27 delivery year.