



Committee

Cabinet

Date and Time

14 October 2026
10.30 am

Public

DWP Skills Bootcamps

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Alex Wagner – Portfolio Holder for Transformation & Economic Growth	
Lead Director:	Kassandra Polyzoides – Interim Service Director for Place Shaping	
Service Area:	Place Shaping	
Report Author	Amy Farley – Strategic Skills Lead – Workforce and Growth	
Officer contact details	01743 252306 – amy.farley@shropshire.gov.uk	
Electoral Divisions Affected	All	
Key Decision?	Key Decision	
Cabinet Forward Plan	Yes	
Report considered by	Cabinet – 14 October 2026	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for Shropshire Council to submit a delivery plan to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for Skills Bootcamps funding, and to act as the accountable body for delivery in Shropshire.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve entering into the Grant Funding Agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver the programme.

- 2.2 Approve Shropshire Council acting as the accountable body for the funding within the Shropshire Council delivery area.
- 2.3 Support the commissioning of training providers to deliver Skills Bootcamps based on employer demand and local need, noting that this approach was approved by CCDG on 7 September 2026.
- 2.4 Note the proposed governance and delivery arrangements, whereby the programme will be managed by the Economy, Funding and Skills Service in alignment with the Get Marches Working Plan, The Shropshire Skills and Employment Strategy and the Councils Corporate Plan priorities.
- 2.5 Acknowledge that approval to submit the Delivery Plan to DWP has been obtained in accordance with BTCRP governance arrangements.

3. Background

- 3.1 Skills Bootcamps are flexible training programmes of up to 16 weeks in duration, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), designed to help adults develop skills in areas of identified labour market demand. Provision includes a guaranteed interview with an employer and is focused on supporting positive employment and progression outcomes.
- 3.2 The programme provides funding to local areas to commission and manage delivery arrangements that respond to local economic priorities, employer demand and workforce shortages. Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring delivery meets national programme requirements and achieves agreed performance outcomes.
- 3.3 The current funding round covers the period April 2027 to March 2028, with a further period available for the achievement and reporting of learner outcomes. Funding is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions through a Grant Funding Agreement with the accountable body.
- 3.4 Shropshire Council has submitted a Delivery Plan to the Department for Work and Pensions setting out the proposed approach to Skills Bootcamp delivery within the county. A funding decision is anticipated in December 2026
- 3.5 The programme represents an opportunity to secure approximately £1.5 million of external investment to support residents to access training linked to employment opportunities whilst helping employers address skills shortages and recruitment challenges.
- 3.6 Evidence from local labour market intelligence, employer engagement activity, the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), the Get Marches Working Plan and the Shropshire Skills and Employment Strategy identifies ongoing workforce challenges across a number of sectors, including construction, health and social care, digital, engineering and advanced manufacturing. Skills Bootcamps provide a flexible mechanism to respond to these workforce needs through targeted skills provision linked to employment outcomes.

- 3.7 Subject to approval of the funding application, Shropshire Council will act as the accountable body (for Shropshire only) for the programme. This will include responsibility for receiving and administering grant funding, commissioning providers, monitoring performance, ensuring compliance with grant conditions, maintaining appropriate assurance arrangements and submitting financial and performance returns to the Department for Work and Pensions.
- 3.8 Cabinet approval is sought at this stage to enable the Council to enter into the Grant Funding Agreement and implement delivery arrangements within the timescales set by the Department for Work and Pensions should the application be successful.
- 3.9 The proposed delivery model has been developed in consultation with relevant internal services and delivery partners. Legal, Procurement, Finance and Risk Management colleagues have been engaged in the development of the proposal and will continue to support implementation should funding be approved.
- 3.10 Approval to submit the Delivery Plan was obtained through the BTCRP. The proposed commissioning approach has also been considered through the Council's CCDG, ensuring alignment with the Council's established governance processes.
- 3.11 The proposal supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and aligns with the objectives of the Get Marches Working Plan and the Shropshire Skills and Employment Strategy by supporting economic growth, reducing barriers to employment and ensuring residents have access to skills development opportunities that meet current and future employer needs.

4. Summary of Main Proposals

- 4.1 Shropshire Council have submitted a delivery plan to DWP setting out how Skills Bootcamps will be delivered across the county.
- 4.2 The programme will bring £1.5 million of external funding into Shropshire, including £400,000 ringfenced for construction skills. Up to 20% (approx. £300,000) will be allocated to management and administration, leaving approximately £800,000 to support delivery across other priority sectors, based on local need and employer demand.
- 4.3 The programme will run from 1st April 2027– 31st March 2028, with a view for this to be extended year on year.
- 4.4 Delivery will be led through the Economy, Funding and Skills Service and commissioned to external providers. Provision will be driven by employer demand, focusing on local vacancies and skills gaps, and informed by local skills research, the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), the Get Marches Working Plan, and Corporate Plan priorities.
- 4.5 The Council will procure providers in line with the council's procurement policy to deliver targeted courses linked to real job opportunities, ensuring provision can flex in response to changing labour market need.

- 4.6 To address the challenges of a rural county and limited public transport, delivery will adopt a hub and spoke model, combining central training locations with local outreach delivery. This will be supported by flexible and blended learning approaches, ensuring residents across Shropshire can access provision regardless of location.
- 4.7 All Skills Bootcamps will meet national requirements, including strong employer involvement, a guaranteed interview for relevant learners, and positive outcomes for the majority of participants.
- 4.8 The programme is expected to support residents into employment or progression, helping to reduce economic inactivity and address key workforce shortages.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 Do not proceed with the project. This would result in the loss of an opportunity for external funding in Shropshire to support much-needed activity that would support residents and employers and leave Shropshire as the only local authority area in the wider region not delivering Skills Bootcamps.
- 5.2 Under current circumstances, no alternative funding or resources is available to enable the Council's to support local workforce shortages and help residents into employment in such a way.

6. Key risks and Opportunities

- 6.1 The proposal creates an opportunity to bring external investment into Shropshire, support residents into better jobs and help employers fill vacancies more quickly. The main risks relate to commissioning the right provision, achieving DWP targets and maintaining compliance with grant conditions.

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
Courses do not match employer demand	Use skills research, employer engagement, LSIP evidence and the Get Marches Working Plan to shape course commissioning.	Strategic Risk: Increasing demand for services and economic uncertainty
Underperformance against DWP targets	Set clear performance requirements in provider agreements and monitor learner starts, completions and outcomes through contract management.	Strategic Risk: Governance, performance and financial weaknesses
Funding clawback if grant conditions are not met	Maintain robust assurance, financial controls, data reporting and audit trails in line with DWP requirements.	Strategic Risk: Governance, assurance and value for money

Low learner take-up	Commission provision linked to real job opportunities and promote through provider, employer and partner networks. Use early market engagement with potential providers and apply clear evaluation criteria during procurement.	Strategic Risk: Increasing demand for services and economic uncertainty
Insufficient provider capacity in some sectors	Use market engagement and open commissioning to identify providers with the right quality, reach and sector expertise.	Strategic Risk: Breakdown of critical contracts, providers or strategic partnerships

7. Council Priorities

- 7.1 This proposal supports the Council's Corporate Plan by contributing to a thriving local economy, improving access to opportunity and helping residents gain the skills needed for sustainable employment.
- 7.2 It supports prevention and early intervention by helping people move closer to work, progress in work and improve earnings over time.
- 7.3 It also supports the Council's wider role in enabling economic growth by aligning public investment with business need and labour market demand
- 7.4 The proposal is directly aligned to the Get Marches Working Plan, which sets out the need for a joined-up approach to employment, skills and employer engagement across the area.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The programme is fully funded through external DWP grant and there is no direct call on the Council's core budget to deliver the programme.
- 8.2 The grant can be used to meet eligible delivery and management costs, with up to 20% available for management and administration costs in line with the grant conditions and this will sufficiently cover the M&A needed for the programme delivery without requiring additional council resources. This also included redundancies, Legal, Procurement and finance as well as direct management costs.
- 8.3 As accountable body, the Council will be responsible for financial oversight, grant claims, provider commissioning, contract management and assurance.
- 8.4 There is a risk of clawback if the terms of the grant agreement are not met. This will be managed through robust financial controls, clear provider agreements and regular monitoring of delivery and spend.
- 8.5 The risk of underperformance will be passed on to the provider through a robust Grant Funding Agreement.

Funding is performance-based, with payments linked to delivery milestones, including learner starts, completions and job outcomes. This requires strong contract management and employer engagement to ensure outcomes are achieved. These will be covered in the GFA between Shropshire and the provider.

8.6 Payments model:

- 40% start training
- 30% completion training + interview
- 30% job outcome

20% of the £1.5 million is paid upfront to cover Management and administrative. 40% of delivery costs are paid upfront.

8.7 Employer co-funding will apply where existing employees are trained, in line with national programme requirements

9. Legal and HR implications

9.1 The Council will need to ensure any commissioning of providers is undertaken in line with procurement legislation, the Council's internal rules and the requirements set out in the grant offer letter. As the commissioning body, the Council will be responsible and accountable to Government and partner authorities for the spend under the programme and for managing the relationship with providers of any commissioned services.

9.2 Provider contracts or funding agreements will need to include clear requirements on delivery standards, performance, data sharing, compliance and audit.

9.3 There are no direct HR implications arising from the recommendation as delivery will be commissioned externally and managed through the Economy, Skills and Funding Service, which has capacity due to the closure of the UKSPF programme.

10. Electoral Division Implications

10.1 The proposal has county-wide implications and may benefit residents across all electoral divisions.

10.2 Delivery will need to consider both urban and rural access so that local provision reflects need across Shropshire.

10.3 As the proposal affects the whole of Shropshire, no specific local member consultation is proposed beyond the normal Cabinet process

11. Health, Social (including “Child Friendly Shropshire”) and Economic Implications

11.1 Employment is an important wider determinant of health. By helping residents gain skills and move into work or progress in work, the programme has the potential to improve income, confidence, wellbeing and longer-term financial resilience.

- 11.2 The proposal supports inclusive access to training and employment opportunities, including for people who may face barriers to work or progression.
- 11.3 There is a positive economic impact through helping employers (including Shropshire Council) fill vacancies, improving productivity and strengthening the local workforce.
- 11.4 Although Skills Bootcamps are aimed at adults aged 19+, there may be indirect benefits for Child Friendly Shropshire ambitions through improved family stability and reduced financial pressure in households.
- 11.5 Commissioning arrangements can also encourage providers to consider accessibility and tailored support for priority groups, including care leavers where relevant.
- 11.6 Improving access to locally available and flexible skills provision will help reduce inequalities linked to rural isolation and transport barriers.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 Skills Bootcamps are open to eligible adults aged 19+ and are intended to widen access to in-demand training for people who are unemployed, employed, self-employed, returning to work or facing barriers to progression.
- 12.2 National guidance expects delivery to encourage participation from underrepresented groups and those with protected characteristics.
- 12.3 Equality considerations will need to be reflected in commissioning, including accessibility, rurality, support needs and fair access to provision.
- 12.4 The proposal is expected to have an overall positive equalities impact. An ESHIA should be completed as part of the final report process if required.
- 12.5 Particular consideration will be given to rural access and transport barriers to ensure equal access to provision across all communities.
- 12.6 The programme can also support the Armed Forces Covenant by improving access to training and employment opportunities for veterans and the wider armed forces community.

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

- 13.1 The proposal is expected to have a neutral to minor positive environmental impact.
- 13.2 There may be indirect environmental benefits where local delivery reduces travel and where Skills Bootcamps support sectors linked to green skills, clean energy or low carbon growth.
- 13.3 No significant adverse impacts on biodiversity or the environment have been identified at this stage.

14. Background Papers

- 14.1 Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 2026–2030
- 14.2 DWP Skills Bootcamps Wave 7 Guidance and Policy Specification
- 14.3 DWP Skills Bootcamps Grant Offer Letter Template
- 14.4 Get Marches Working Plan
- 14.5 Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

15. Appendices

- APPENDIX A - DWP Skills Bootcamps Wave 7 Guidance and Policy Specification
- APPENDIX B - DWP Skills Bootcamps DRAFT Grant Offer Letter Template