

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL ON BEHALF OF THE SOUTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

COVID-19 Recovery Skills Training Framework

SPECIFICATION

Issued 6th January 2021

Procurement Project CO0043

1. **South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)**
   1. SELEP is a partnership for growth between business, government and education, working with central government and its key agencies to pursue and attract major investment into the South East to deliver significant economic growth. The SELEP area includes East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock with Essex County Council acting as the Accountable Body for SELEP.
2. **COVID-19 Recovery** 
   1. SELEP is committed to the skills agenda and it is a key priority. SELEP’s Skills Strategy sets out a vision and key priorities to address the skills challenges.
   2. SELEP’s Board has agreed to redeploy existing funding for the purposes of COVID-19 Recovery. This is to respond to significant increases in unemployment across the SELEP area and an increasing need for training and retraining.
   3. Further information can be found on the [SELEP website.](https://www.southeastlep.com/)
3. **Priorities for recovery** 
   1. In order to address the challenges presented by COVID-19, the SELEP Board has agreed to areas of priority based on consultation and evidence:

* Supporting individuals to retrain and to access jobs in sectors still recruiting
* Addressing the digital divide which is presenting a barrier to work and training for many in our local communities
* Addressing increased unemployment across our geography

1. **Introduction and Aim**
   1. Skills is key to economic growth and SELEP’s Skills Strategy 2018-2023 ( A copy has been provided with the tender pack) remains relevant and central to a COVID-19 Recovery approach. The Skills Strategy set out a vision and priorities:
   2. **Vision:** To help deliver a flourishing and inclusive economy across the biggest LEP area in the country equipping employers, adults and young people with the skills, conditions and aptitudes required for significant growth today and tomorrow.
   3. Priorities:

* Increase apprenticeships and industry relevant qualifications for all ages, particularly in priority sectors and at higher and degree level
* Simplify the skills landscape for employers, stakeholders and individuals
* Build an inclusive economy, creating opportunities for all
* Raise awareness of jobs and growth across the SELEP area and its size, scale, national and international significance
* Foster and support the spirit of pride, entrepreneurship, innovation and enthusiasm across the SELEP geography to bring about change 
  1. The need for action against these priorities has become more urgent and widespread as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain issues have also come to the fore including retraining and digital accessibility.
  2. Essex County Council is managing this procurement process on behalf of SELEP. It is proposed that a framework will be established to allow access for SELEP, and those public sector organisations associated with SELEP (East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock), to the services being provided. Ordering and payment processes will be established at the commencement of this agreement.
  3. It is proposed that the framework would be procured on terms which would provide access to the local authorities within the SELEP area including but not limited to; Essex County Council, East Sussex Council, Kent County Council, Southend Council, Thurrock Council and Medway Council. District, borough and city authorities within this geography. These Contracting Bodies will be responsible for ordering of, and payment for, their own services through this agreement.
  4. The purpose of this procurement is to ensure delivery of a range of interventions to address the current challenges through the provision of a multi-supplier Framework based on the Lots described in Section 6.

1. **Background**
   1. The SELEP Strategic Board and Accountability Board have agreed to a procurement approach and focus for COVID-19 Skills Recovery funding, based on consultation and evidence.
      1. Retraining for key sectors as set out in 6.2.1
      2. Retraining for digital roles across all sectors
      3. Addressing basic digital skills needs through kit and connectivity
   2. The next stage is to use these areas of focus as a foundation to build the Skills COVID-19 Recovery Framework on; this will result in rolling out a structured, common and consistent approach.
   3. The aim of the Framework is to ensure that the call off orders for specific and detailed work packages can be expedited to ensure timely delivery of the agreed solutions. As such, we are looking for organisations that are agile, can respond to work packages and deliver services within agreed timescales.
   4. These requirements will be met by the placing of call-off agreements (work packages) with the framework supplier(s) via one of the following methods. Each work package will identify the requirement, deliverables and measures to be met by the supplier.
2. **Scope**
   1. The following diagram is a model representation of the Skills COVID-19 Recovery Framework; there are three key areas of focus (split into Lots of work covered in section 6.2) which sit around the key ambition to aide economic recovery.

**Lot 2**

Pathway to jobs in digital roles across all sectors

**Lot 1**

Pathway to jobs in SELEP growth sectors

**Lot 3**

Providing digital skills, kit and connectivity for all

**CHALLENGE:**

Increased requirement for digital accessibility to access training and employment

**CHALLENGE:**

Increased levels of unemployment, creating renewed requirement for re-training

**SOLUTION**

Retraining to sectors still recruiting and supporting individuals into jobs in key sectors

Retraining to support access to digital roles across all sectors

Providing access to kit, connectivity and basic skills training for those unable to access this

* 1. The key outcome of this tender is to ensure a co-ordinated, effective response to COVID-19. As such, we are seeking organisations that can support us through the delivery of services as set out in the Lots below, a full description of all Lots can be found at Appendix A. Interested Bidders are required to highlight which Lot(s) of work they are bidding for and is clearly marked when completing the Bidder questionnaire. Across all Lots there is an expectation that public data will be utilised effectively to focus on areas of most need.
  2. Lots
     1. Lot 1 – Pathway to jobs in SELEP growth and recruiting sectors. Training specifically to get recently unemployment / redundant individuals into key sectors and illustrating a collaborative approach with employers. Key sectors include construction, logistics, health, care, IT, food production, manufacturing and engineering and the coastal and rural economies are to be supported across all. There is the ability to be flexible if new government funding is issued which addresses shortages in these sectors.
     2. Lot 2 – Maximising jobs arising through the digital revolution. Training specifically to support people into digital roles across all sectors and illustrating a collaborative approach with employers. Example roles include coding, web development, software development and cyber security.
     3. Lot 3 – Digital skills for all – kit, connectivity and access to basic digital training where this is a barrier to work or training.
  3. It is envisaged that for all Lots a single bidder will be awarded a placement per Lot. Bidders may submit bids for all Lots.
  4. The target group of this tender are those recently unemployed or redundant as a result of COVID-19.
  5. The minimum volumes would be:
* Retraining for key sectors – 340 people retrained and supported into relevant jobs across the SELEP geography and with an additional commitment of 36 specifically for Essex County Council’s geography.
* Retraining for digital roles across all sectors – 100 people retrained and supported into relevant jobs across the SELEP geography
* Digital skills for all – training, kit and connectivity – 750 people supported with kit and connectivity, at least an additional 1,000 people accessing basic training across the SELEP geography. Basic digital training can include support for those in work without basic digital skills.
  1. The location of this delivery is to be SELEP wide. Although an evidence-based approach should be taken to targeting areas and cohorts that have been most affected by redundancy and unemployment, bidders should illustrate proportionality of support across the SELEP geography of East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Southend, Medway and Thurrock.
  2. Essex County Council has committed an additional £100,000 to Lot 1 and which would achieve additional numbers over and above those achieved in Essex as part of the SELEP commitment. This would support a minimum of 70 people to undertake training and 36 people to gain employment.
  3. The duration of this Procurement Framework Agreement for a 1-year period; however, there may be an option to extend by a further period of up to 12 months.
  4. Programmes of work must respond to COVID-19 and not duplicate existing or forthcoming local and national, or publicly funded, programmes such as those offered by the Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Education and support already offered via organisations such as the National Careers Service and Job Centre Plus. There will be the ability to change focus according to government initiatives which duplicate and changing circumstances according to COVID-19 rules and regulations.
  5. Projects in the different Lots should work together to ensure a joined up and consistent approach and SELEP will facilitate regular meetings to help ensure this.
  6. Projects must illustrate understanding of the local skills landscape and economy and provide clear evidence of support from local employers and relevant partners in an agreed approach. Training provided should be clearly focused on what is required by recruiting employers and will support an individual into a job. This can include industry tickets, certified and non-certified training (where this will clearly enable an individual to access employment).
  7. Where required, wrap around support should also be provided (or signposting to appropriate support) including insights into sectors, financial interview and CV support. It is recognised that not all individuals will require this.
  8. Projects are not required to provide match funding but should illustrate any added value where this can be achieved. Any match funding cited must clearly align to the project objectives within the same time period and in the SELEP geography and be fully reportable to SELEP.
  9. Funding will be provided to support delivery of the services as required. For Lot 3 we expect the service provider to manage a voucher scheme for the provision of equipment and dongles (or equivalent) to get online and as such, funding will be used to match the value of the vouchers issued.
  10. Projects should deliver against SELEP’s objective to build an inclusive economy and outline how they will support specific cohorts and increase diversity.
  11. Please see Appendix A for a detailed list of each Lot and descriptions. Bidders may bid for more than one Lot.
  12. Programmes should be completed within one year of funding award. Follow up can take place after this.

1. **Key Dates**

Commencement date - March 2021

Completion date – March 2022

Duration -1 year with an option to extend for a further period of 12 months.

1. **Statement of Requirements**
   1. The expectation is that bidders will clearly articulate their skills, competencies and experience in a range of delivery techniques, use of industry best practice tools and models, fit for purpose methodologies, bring innovation and incorporate technology to demonstrate their suitability as well as to quote affordable rates to maximise the return on investment. Bidders should outline how they will ensure continuity of effective online delivery where physical delivery is not possible.
   2. Successful bidders will be required to produce a detailed delivery plan specifying planned learning programmes, learning aims and objectives, intended outcomes and planned progression routes.
   3. Successful bidders are to ensure that there is no duplication with current government funding (e.g. kickstart, apprenticeship incentives, National Careers Service, traineeships) and work with relevant partners (such as Job Centre Plus and the National Careers Service) to ensure maximum utilisation of resources.
   4. Successful bidders are to ensure that all marketing, references and delivery of the training includes clear acknowledgement of this being funded by the South East LEP.
   5. Continuous improvement – it is the expectation that bidders will endeavour to continually improve their services in line with new technologies, research, or latest thinking and aim to be ‘best in class’ for what solutions they are designing and delivering.
   6. Performance, targets, and monitoring arrangements – Metrics will be agreed for each work package and these would be built into each contract along with milestones and deliverables.
   7. SELEP and the preferred bidder(s) will agree Implementation and Mobilisation plans following award of contract.
   8. Business Continuity – Preferred bidders may be required to provide a business continuity plan following award of contract.
   9. SELEP is required to discharge its responsibilities for these services in line with its Assurance Framework, a copy has been provided with the tender pack , and as such the preferred bidder would be expected to comply accordingly. Bidders should also declare any relationships with SELEP Board members or secretariat as per <https://www.southeastlep.com/good-governance/our-boards/strategic-board/> and <https://www.southeastlep.com/about-us/secretariat/>
2. **Authorities policies**
   1. ECC's [Information Policy Requirements for Suppliers](http://www.essex.gov.uk/Business-Partners/Supplying-Council/Documents/Information-Policy-Requirements%20-Suppliers.pdf) – A copy has been provided with the tender pack.
3. **Insurance and warranties**
   1. Employer’s liability insurance - £5 million.
   2. Public liability insurance - £10 million.
4. **E-Procurement Requirements**
   1. Overview
      1. Essex County Council has implemented a fully automated Purchase to Pay system. Purchase to Pay enables the full purchasing and payment process to be carried out on-line, from order creation and authorisation to receipting and invoice matching. It is easier, faster and more efficient than conventional purchasing processes.
      2. Marketplace is a Proactis Solution. It is a web based system used by Essex County Council to submit purchase orders electronically and receive and process e-invoices and e-credits.
      3. The Marketplace supplier interface is both simple and secure. All the successful bidders will need to access Marketplace is an Internet browser. Marketplace supports the latest release of web browser technologies, for example, Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari etc.
   2. Electronic Ordering
      1. A record on Marketplace will be created for the successful bidder and a user ID and password will be issued via e-mail.
      2. The user ID and password will allow the successful bidder to:

* View their purchase orders online
* Update their status
* Notify delivery
* Submit and monitor the status of electronic invoices and credits, once they have been submitted.
  + 1. Purchase orders will be sent electronically to the successful bidder’s central e-mail address
  1. Emailed Purchase Orders
     1. Orders will be sent electronically, via Marketplace, to the successful bidder’s preferred central e-mail address from the contract start date. To ensure continuity of service, the successful bidder will be responsible for ensuring that orders are processed quickly and efficiently. It is therefore not advisable to provide individual e-mail addresses unless appropriate access is available, to ensure that orders are still processed if the main contact is unavailable. There is no transaction charge for e-mail orders which are sent to a preferred central e-mail address, via Marketplace.
  2. Electronic Invoicing
     1. The successful bidder will be expected to submit electronic invoices and credit notes via Marketplace by utilising the PO Flip method from the contract start date. On approval of the electronic invoice an automatic payment will be made via BACS, direct to the successful bidder’s bank account, in line with Essex County Council’s contracted payment terms. In addition to the above, the successful bidder will be able to view the status of their invoices, via the Marketplace system.
  3. Purchase Order Flip (PO Flip)
     1. The successful bidder will be able to gain access to the Marketplace system via a web browser, to view their Purchase Orders and turn any outstanding Purchase Orders into electronic invoices, by choosing the PO Flip method. There is no charge for this method.
     2. Further information about all of the above can be found on ECC’s website: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Business-Partners/Supplying-Council/Pages/IDeA-Marketplace.aspx>
  4. Please be aware, the successful bidder will also be registered onto ECC’s Finance system, Oracle. They will in turn receive a registration email to activate their iSupplier portal account. This account is used to:
* View the status of invoice payments
* Amend your supplier details e.g. address, contact details, bank details
* Create additional user accounts
  1. E-Procurement Terms of Trading
     1. A preferred central e-mail address, (where orders will be sent electronically via Marketplace) must be provided. It is the responsibility of the supplier/ successful bidder to ensure that they can provide a central e-mail address for orders sent electronically via Marketplace from the contract start date. The Successful Bidder/ Supplier/ Contractor will be asked to submit this e-mail address. It is also the supplier’s/ successful bidder’s responsibility to ensure that continuity of service is maintained at all times and that orders are processed promptly.
     2. All invoices and credit notes must be submitted electronically by the supplier/ successful bidder to Essex County Council and as a minimum must be raised using the PO Flip method via Marketplace from the contract start date.
     3. Goods/Services should only be provided/carried out on receipt of an Official Purchase Order which has been issued via Marketplace by the Authority.
     4. The Successful Bidder assumes full responsibility for ensuring that programs or other data downloaded uploaded or in any way transmitted electronically to the Authority are free from viruses, or any other items of a destructive nature whatsoever. The Authority makes every effort to virus check information made available for download from Marketplace. The Authority cannot accept any responsibility for any loss, disruption or damage to your data or your computer system which may occur whilst using material derived from Marketplace. The Authority recommends that users recheck all downloaded material with their own virus check software.

1. **Agreement term**
   1. The Agreement term for this agreement with be 1 year with an option to extend for a period of 12 months. The decision to extend the Agreement with is at the sole discretion of SELEP.
   2. Each individual work package, call-off, will identify the term of that specific piece of work.
2. **Payment** 
   1. SELEP will pay any invoice issued by the Supplier within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice following the delivery of the Good(s) and/or service(s). On the thirtieth day the payment will leave the account of SELEP
   2. The rates/prices stated on the invoice must be those specified under this Agreement.
   3. It is proposed to fund projects using the following payment model, with a proportion of the total amount payable linked to the achievement of targets agreed for the project:
      1. Lot 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 20% | Paid at beginning of project (pump-priming) |
| 20% | Held until first delivery of agreed volumes in training |
| 10% | Held until final delivery of agreed volumes in training and evidence of delivery of project and targets to that point |
| 50% | Paid in equal instalments across length of project as agreed between SELEP and the preferred bidder. |

* + 1. Lot 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 20% | Paid at beginning of project (pump-priming) |
| 20% | Held until first delivery of agreed volumes in training |
| 10% | Held until final delivery of agreed volumes in training and evidence of delivery of project and targets to that point |
| 50% | Paid in equal instalments across length of project as agreed between SELEP and the preferred bidder. |

* + 1. Lot 3

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 20% | Paid at beginning of project (pump-priming) |
| 20% | Held until delivery of agreed volumes of training (basic digital skills) |
| 55% | Vouchers to be reimbursed across length of project upon submission of a valid receipt for the equipment |
| 5% | To be paid upon completion of project and evidence report, with case studies and numbers |

* 1. As per the above tables, payment will include one up-front payment to enable set up and establishment. Further payments will be made quarterly in arrears upon evidence of delivery.

1. **Commercial Response**
   1. The Tenderer is to complete the commercial response detailed within the E-sourcing portal

Appendix A: Lot Descriptions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LOT** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| **Lot 1:** Jobs for Growth, retraining for key sectors | * Industry relevant training specifically to get individuals into sectors recruiting (construction, logistics, health, care, IT, food production, manufacturing and engineering) and supporting jobs in the coastal and rural economies * To support as many of the listed sectors as possible with clear evidence of available jobs * At least 630 enrolments and learner assessments undertaken, with an additional commitment of 70 people in Essex County Council’s geography. * Accredited and non-accredited training eligible but at least 70% of training should be accredited (accredited by a recognised awarding body) or industry certified (recognised by business and industry). Variances to this will be upon agreement with the SELEP and with clear evidence of industry need and benefit to the individual. (Non-accredited training has no recognised external accreditation). * Training should be at a level appropriate to the individual but must clearly advance them for the purposes of entering a new job role * At least 340 SELEP based individuals supported through training into jobs in these sectors in the SELEP area, with 4-month progression report, with an additional commitment of 36 people in Essex County Council’s geography * To include wrap around support for individuals and signposting to other support where appropriate. Support could include interview, CV support or basic digital skills. * Awareness raising of sectors recruiting and jobs within them to be incorporated * Ensuring no duplication with current government funding (kickstart, apprenticeship incentives, traineeships) * Ensuring join up to existing support such as that available through Job Centre Plus, industry bodies and the National Careers Service * Evidence of local employer led approach and collaboration with relevant providers across the SELEP geography * Evidence of ability to deliver quickly and flexibly to respond to COVID-19 challenges * Ensuring a fair and equitable geographic spread of delivery and beneficiaries across the SELEP area and within SELEP’s federated areas, based on population and identifying any areas or cohorts of high need * Ensuring all marketing, references and delivery of the training includes clear acknowledgement of this being funded by the South East LEP. * No extra training costs or charges to be incurred by the recipient undertaking the training * Regular progress reports and a final evaluation report to include case studies and lessons learnt. |
| **Lot 2:** Maximising jobs arising through the digital revolution. Training specifically to support people into digital roles across all sectors | * Industry relevant training to support individuals into digital roles across all sectors * At least 70% of training should be accredited (accredited by a recognised awarding body) or industry certified (recognised by business and industry). Variances to this will be upon agreement with the SELEP and with clear evidence of industry need and benefit to the individual. (Non accredited training has no recognised external accreditation). * Training should be at a level appropriate to the individual but must clearly advance them for the purposes of entering a new digital job role * Supporting individuals into roles in all sectors such as coding, web design, cyber security, software development and video production or roles with a significant proportion (over 75%) of digital based work. * At least 200 enrolments and learner assessments undertaken * At least 100 SELEP based individuals to be supported into digital roles in the SELEP area with 4-month progression report * To include wrap around support for individuals and signposting to other support where appropriate. Support could include interview, CV support * Awareness raising of digital roles, to be incorporated * Evidence of local employer led approach and collaboration * Ensuring no duplication with current government funding (kickstart, apprenticeship incentives, traineeships) * Ensuring a fair and equitable geographic spread of delivery and beneficiaries across the SELEP area and within SELEP’s federated areas, based on population and identifying any areas or cohorts of high need * Ensuring join up to existing support such as that available through Job Centre Plus, industry bodies and the National Careers Service * Ensuring all marketing, references and delivery of the training includes clear acknowledgement of this being funded by the South East LEP. * No extra training costs or charges to be incurred by the recipient undertaking the training * Regular progress reports and a final evaluation report to include case studies and lessons learnt. |
| **Lot 3:** Digital Skills for all: Kit, connectivity and training | * Ensuring access to digital kit, connectivity and training to individuals for whom this is a barrier to employment or training * 750 people (minimum) to be supported with kit and /or connectivity appropriate to their individual needs (dongle or equivalent) and support to source and utilise this effectively * 1,000 people (minimum) to be supported with basic digital skills training (adapted according to existing knowledge of individual) * Voucher and ongoing support system for individuals to access appropriate kit and / or connection and dependent on their specific need and working with local suppliers where possible. * Vouchers set at a maximum level to ensure minimum volume of individuals supported. * Clear evidence of purchase and use to be monitored * Wrap around support to be provided for individuals in how to use kit, gain connection and access free training * Training and support to be provided for broader cohorts, i.e. those in work requiring digital skills – at least 1,000 individuals and maximising the opportunity to align with the new digital entitlement for adults. * Ensure areas of deprivation are targeted and that those with disabilities and in BAME groups are supported representative of the local population * Evidence of ability to deliver quickly to respond to COVID-19 challenges * Ensuring a fair and equitable geographic spread of delivery and beneficiaries across the SELEP area and within SELEP’s federated areas and identifying any areas or cohorts of high need * Ensuring all marketing, references and delivery of the training includes clear acknowledgement of this being funded by the South East LEP. * No extra training costs or charges to be incurred by the recipient undertaking the training * Regular progress reports and a final evaluation report to include case studies and lessons learnt. * Illustrating any added value such as commitments from partners and corporates to supply additional kit and connectivity. |