

**Reference Number – RQNV 027**

## **Invitation to Quote - Specification**

The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) requires the services of a specialist organisation to assist in the development, production and publication of a **Local Skills Report**. To support this, the LEP is seeking an organisation with significant experience of:

- Developing place-based strategic people, employment and skills policy documents
- Using labour market data and analytics to inform local interventions
- Working with partners to align skills policy with evidenced need in order to identify key priorities
- The production of strategic skills reports, such as Local Skills Reports, on behalf of LEPs and/or Mayoral Combined Authorities.

## **Purpose**

The Marches LEP's Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) is a sub-group of the LEP Board and is responsible for *'providing well-evidenced, robust advice to influence investment and strategic decisions for addressing local skills challenges'*.

To enable this, the Marches LEP receives annual funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to increase its analytical capability and inform decision making. This assignment will support the SAP in documenting its skills needs, challenges and opportunities through the development of a Local Skills Report in line with DfE requirements.

## **Assignment**

It is envisaged that this assignment will cover the period **Monday 18 January 2021 – 31 March 2021**. The assignment is split in to two distinct elements:

- **Part A** – Review of the work to date of the Marches LEP Skills Advisory Panel including the analysis undertaken to date, responses taken as a result and how they link to developing people and skills strategic priorities. (Internal LEP facing support.)
- **Part B** – Development, production, and publication of a Local Skills Report in line with guidance issued to SAPs by DfE. A review of activity to date, cross cutting linkage to wider LEP strategies and future priorities. (External facing output.)

## **Specific tasks to be carried out as part of this tender to include:**

- Assessment of all work of the SAP to date including any analytical work, decisions made and actions/impact arising
- Evaluation of the evidence base underpinning forward strategy and appropriateness of the approach / actions proposed
- Assessment of proposed skills indicators and recommendations for further development
- Recommendations on the setting, tracking and communication of both core and local SAP indicators
- Recommendations for future analytical focus based on findings or gaps identified
- Sharing the above information with all relevant stakeholders to improve shared understanding and stimulate action and strategic alignment

- Ensuring compliance with the developing guidance from DfE on the production of Local Skills Reports - Skills Advisory Panels: analytical toolkit. Available online here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-advisory-panels-analytical-toolkit>.

Local Skills Reports will provide a clear and consistent view of local skills needs across areas in a relevant and engaging format for local partners. Reports will be a key source of local skills information that better enable cross-area comparison and help feed local intelligence to central government and the national-level Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).

In achieving this objective, the Local Skills Report must contain as a minimum:

1. The role of the Marches LEP's SAP - strategic aims, objectives, and governance.
2. Local context - An outline of the Marches LEP region's unique economic features, including any particular skills strengths or weaknesses.
3. Skills Strategy - An outline of the overarching / developing skills strategy including its long-term vision and skills priorities for the local area.
4. Skills Action plan - An overview of the skills initiatives and actions the SAP has / intends to take in the local area.
5. Assessment of progress.
6. Case studies / positive impact stories.
7. Forward look - An overview of what the Marches LEP's SAP hopes to achieve between now and the next Local Skills Report and any key areas for improvement.

## **Deliverables**

### **Part A – Delivery of Part A will include:**

- Documented assessment of all work of the SAP to date including any analytical work, decisions made and actions/impact arising
- Evaluation of the evidence base underpinning forward strategy and appropriateness of the approach / actions proposed
- Cross referencing with published reports from other LEP areas
- Recommendations for future analytical focus based on findings or gaps identified
- Review of SAP Panel membership and recommendations to strengthen business engagement.

### **Part B – Delivery of part B will require:**

- The development, through desk research and partnership facilitation, of a public-facing Local Skills Report, designed to meet Marches LEP branding guidelines and aligned with the Marches LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, draft Local Industrial Strategy and other key documents
- A framework for core and local indicator tracking

- Areas of potential collaboration for training provision within the Marches LEP region
- Evaluation of whether it is feasible to achieve skills projections to meet demand in the short/medium/long-term including an assessment of known and forecast student numbers through to March 2021 and beyond
- Outlining the challenges that restrict local supply of required skills to include identifying key strengths and weaknesses in local education and training provision, understanding the drivers of local provision, and assessing the impact of demographic factors on current and future skills supply
- Identifying key business barriers to meeting skills demands including the factors that cause current skills issues/mismatches
- High quality analysis on latest trends in GVA, business, jobs, skills, inward investment, and exports that will enable the Skills Advisory Panel to propose evidence-based policy and delivery decisions to the Marches LEP Board
- Presentation of the report to the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) on 26 February 2021 and the Marches LEP Board on 23 March 2021
- A suite of Marches LEP slide packs tailored to different audiences to aid communication of key points.

### **Maximum Budget**

The budget for this piece of work is capped at maximum of £23,000 including any VAT to be charged, all relevant fees and any associated expenses. The assignment must be completed, and costs claimed by 31 March 2021.

### **Your Proposal**

Proposals should cover the following points:

- Your relevant experience including:
  - Examples of work undertaken on similar assignment
  - Experience of working with education, skills and employment data sets, key drivers, trends, and data interpretation.
- Your knowledge and understanding of:
  - The skills needs and ambitions of private and public sector employers across the Marches
  - The current skills position, comparing that to the short- and medium-term forecast and how the forecast assumptions may be different to those currently being experienced.
  - Apprenticeships and T-Levels – an understanding of the current offer, supply, demand, and skills gaps for the future workforce.
  - DfE policy for SAPs and the stakeholders engaged in delivery of this work locally.
  - The work of the Marches LEP, its aspirations and the role that an effective skills system plays in the wider LEP objectives.
- Your approach to the work described in the specification (500 words).
- The number of days you would be available within the timeframe.
- Daily rates and details of all costs associated with carrying out the work.

- Contact details of two named referees who would be willing to verify your work.
- Details of your indemnity insurance.

## Deadline

Please submit your proposal by **noon on Monday 11 January 2021** by email to [project.support@marcheslep.org.uk](mailto:project.support@marcheslep.org.uk) (please note that late responses will not be considered).

## Evaluation Criteria

Following the receipt of responses, the evaluation panel will score the proposals against the criteria set out below. This evaluation process will enable the Marches LEP to identify the proposal which provides the best value for money. However, the Marches LEP will not be bound to accept the lowest or any cost proposal.

The proposals will be scored as follows:

Scored Criteria		Weighting
Mandatory Information		Pass/Fail
<b>Quality</b> split between:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant experience, knowledge and understanding (40%)</li> <li>• Your approach to undertaking the work (20%)</li> <li>• Added value that your proposal will deliver above the core activities listed above, including any specific economic and social benefits for the Marches area (10%)</li> </ul>	70%
<b>Total Cost of the Service</b> split between:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total cost (20%)</li> <li>• Number of days available to undertake the work (10%)</li> </ul>	30%

It is anticipated that an organisation will be appointed by Thursday 14 January 2021.

Attached is a copy of the general terms and conditions for contracts which are operated in line with those for Shropshire Council, the Marches LEP's accountable body.