



CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY
SKILLS COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 3 April 2019

Time: 15:05pm to 16:12 pm

Present: Councillors John Holdich (Chairman), Graham Bull, and Eileen Wilson.

Apologies: Councillor Charles Roberts

19. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Apologies received from Councillor Charles Roberts. Councillor Holdich declared an interest under item 2.6 as a Board Member on the Opportunity Peterborough Board representing Children and Young People.

20. MINUTES – 6 FEBRUARY 2019 AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The action log was noted.

21. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions received.

22. AGENDA PLAN

The agenda plan was noted.

23. ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET (AEB): CONCEPT OPTIONS FOR POTENTIAL UNDERSPEND THROUGH DEVOLUTION

The Committee received a report that identified potential uses for any Adult Education Budget (AEB) underspend. The report requested that the Committee endorsed a combined approach to utilising underspend through a series of mechanisms during the period 2019-2023. The report also identified the potential risks associated with each of the approaches.

In presenting the report Officers drew the Committees attention to the options identified in the table at 2.5 of the report. The Director of Skills highlighted the proposed Skills, Talent and Apprenticeship Hub as a key project for the future and that some of the underspend would potentially be used to fund this work. He explained that any funding put forward by the Combined Authority for this project would be match funded with the European Skills Funding received. He clarified however that the risk of this approach was that there was a potential for underspend to affect the amount the Combined Authority received two academic years later when the allocations to the Combined Authority were calculated on reduced numbers of learners.

In discussing the report Members:

- Highlighted their concerns about how the underspend would be spent and clarified that the focus should be directly on supporting individual learners with skills development.
- Questioned whether the Combined Authority had carried out a risk assessment of how many providers could potentially become insolvent in an academic year. Officers explained that they had produced a Financial Risk and Resilience Toolkit which had been approved by the Department for Education. Officers clarified that of the 12 providers that the Authority were currently working with, only one was of concern. Discussions with all providers took place on a monthly basis and providers were paid a month in advance.
- Queried the commissioning approach to the spending on the budget and that any underspend should be highlighted early in the financial year. In particular how were the Combined Authority monitoring with providers, learners that were enrolling but not completing courses. The Director of Skills clarified that the Combined Authority would be asking providers to provide their completion rates so that this could be forecasted going forwards.
- Sought clarification on how £50,000 had been identified as a contingency budget. Officers explained that the grant provider with the lowest figure was £50,000 so the figure had been based on this.

In discussing the report Members:

It was resolved unanimously to recommend to the Combined Authority Board:

- a) agreement in principle that any underspend of the AEB is rolled forward into the next Academic Year.
- b) that Officers be instructed to (i) develop a bespoke Grant Funding Programme for Employers in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in order to upskill existing employees; and (ii) report back in Autumn 2019 with a structure for such a programme.
- c) that Officers be instructed to consider what other Skills Programmes could be resourced with underspend of the AEB. Further to feedback to Skills Committee ideas that are in line with the Skills Strategy for consideration.
- d) agreement to maintain a contingency budget of £50,000 in 2019/20 to mitigate against the potential insolvency of a provider.

24. SKILLS STRATEGY

The Committee received a report seeking the Committee's endorsement to recommend the Combined Authority Board approved and adopted the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Skills Strategy.

In presenting the report Officers drew the Committees attention to Appendix A of the report containing the draft strategy. Officers explained that the strategy had been produced through a robust process and in consultation with; the Members of the Skills Committee, the Mayor's Office, Combined Authority staff, an expert authors' group, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Public Service Board Chief Executive Officers, ten business roundtables for priority sectors covering 60 businesses, the majority of the AEB providers and a range of key stakeholders. In total 300 individuals and organisations were consulted and contributed to the development of the strategy. The Skills Strategy and delivery plan had been aligned to the Local Industrial Strategy and the Cambridgeshire, and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) and its recommendations.

In discussing the report Members:

- Congratulated Officers on the development of the strategy and commented that it was a comprehensive document.
- Highlighted an error at 1.2 of the report where it read Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridge). Members requested the deletion of (Cambridge and South Cambridge) as this was inaccurate. Members requested that this was also amended in the Mayors brief at the beginning of the strategy. **ACTION**
- Questioned why languages had not been included in the strategy as a key skill. Members highlighted that languages would be a key skill particularly over the next few years after Brexit negotiations and there was a need to focus on languages for business. Officers agreed to review the strategy to reflect this. **ACTION**
- Discussed the Health and Care Sector Work Academy. Officers explained that there was devolved funding for the Department for Work and Pensions programme. There was a three year pilot for 2,100 learners. This would include those on in work benefits and individuals in the sector and those that might not be in the care sector, but had an interest in working in the sector. Officers clarified that the Combined Authority were looking at the current Health & Care Sector Work Academy and taking the model and good practice to develop potential models in other sectors if this was successful. Members noted that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Board were aware of the pilot and the Academy and Combined Authority were working with them to bring partners together on the pilot. The pilot could potentially be a good feeder to the University of Peterborough. Officers explained that there is an existing Construction Industry Training Board (CTIB) funded via the National Retraining Scheme Construction Training Hub. There was potential to develop a Digital Academy and Agri-Tech Clubs. One member commented that she has worked on the development of the policy for this pilot when she had worked at the Department for Work and Pensions. The Committee requested that an update on the pilots at the July Committee including details on the implementation of this strategy including timelines. **ACTION**
- Queried whether rurality would be an issue. Officers clarified that this had been considered when producing the strategy including looking at poor transport connections.

In discussing the report Members:

It was resolved unanimously to recommend to the Combined Authority Board:

(a) approval and adoption of the Skills Strategy at Appendix A of the report.

25. UNIVERSITY OF PETERBOROUGH – OUTCOMES OF REVIEW AND REFLECT LEADING TO THE PROGRESSION OF AN OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

The Committee received a report outlining the findings from the recent independent reviews of the University of Peterborough project and sought endorsement from the Committee to request approval from the Combined Authority Board to move into the next stage of the project.

In presenting the report Officers drew the Committees attention to Table B on page 41 of the papers which set out the key timescales for commitment and spend of the funding. The Director of Skills clarified that the Combined Authority were happy that the plan would deliver the University and that they had worked with Gleeds' to identify ideas to lead to better outcomes to match business needs to course provision. He explained that it was a good news report and it set out the action plan to be on site by 2022.

In discussing the report Members:

- Sought clarification on the level of degrees the University would provide. Officers clarified that the University would initially provide level six degrees and that they would be looking at research and Masters Degrees later down the line. The University were looking at the higher level apprenticeships and in-work degrees as well as two year degrees. Officers explained that this was quite a different approach from a traditional University and was designed to meet business and employer needs and increased productivity and economic growth. Officers acknowledged that this would be challenging commercially as this was currently a business area of low take up of level six degrees. The Combined Authority were currently looking at how they could engage employers on this through the Skills, Talent and Apprenticeship Hub, including looking at placing undergraduates for a year in business.
- Queried whether the University would be looking at providing research opportunities. The Director of Skills explained that this was something that would be looked at when the University had been established.
- Noted that University Centre Peterborough had been successful in achieving validation from Anglia Ruskin University for 28 courses and that their own application to the Office of Students for New Degree Awarding Powers was imminent. Officers explained that the Combined Authority had been working with University College Peterborough closely to look at the challenges that they faced and the needs of business in the area.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. note the findings of the reviews that recommend the way forward for the University of Peterborough to be developed to meet the outcomes of the CPIER, LIS and Skills Strategy.
2. recommend to CPCA Board to approve:
 - (i) running an academic partner review, comparison and selection process that includes PRC, ARU and others.
 - (ii) release £300,000 of capital funding identified in the 2019/20 Capital Programme to deliver items 3 and 5 of the programme outlined in Table B in the report and power is delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Skills Committee, to approve/agree Officer Decision Notices to maintain the momentum in project delivery for items 3 of Table B – Timescales for commitment and spend of funding. Progress will be reported back to the Skills Committee in July.
 - (iii) approve the release of £235,000 from the non-transport feasibility funding in the revenue budget for 2019/20 to deliver items 1, 2, 4 and 6 in Table B in the report and power is delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Skills Committee, to approve/agree Officer Decision Notices to maintain the momentum in project delivery for items 1, 2 and 4 of Table B – Timescales for commitment and spend of funding. Progress will be reported back to the Skills Committee in July.
 - (iv) the Action plan and Timescales set out, noting they both enable meeting the original objective of 2000 students on the Embankment site by 2022.
 - (v) Officers procuring expert consultants to support the execution of that Action plan to these timescales.
 - (vi) agree to a review, through the OBC Process, of the current assumptions regarding:
 - a. the level of CPCA capital investment in the build; and
 - b. the Governance Process of the University Programme.
3. agree to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to enter into the contractual relationships following the procurement of the external consultants required to undertake the activities specified.
4. agree the definition of the University as set out in 2.5 of the report.

26. CREATION OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS BOARD INCORPORATING SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL AND ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee received a report that sought endorsement from the Committee to request approval from the Combined Authority Board for the creation of a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Employment and Skills Board.

In presenting the report Officers explained that when drafting the terms of reference for the Employment and Skills Board they had spoken to other Combined Authorities that already had Boards established. The next steps would be to look at the membership of the Board to work to establish the Board by autumn 2019.

In discussing the report Members:

- Welcomed the establishment of the Board but reiterated that the Board should not be bureaucratic and that it needed to be able to make decisions and not just be a talking shop. There was a need to create an appropriate environment for business and industry to participate. Officers explained that they would be speaking to businesses in the summer about what they felt was missing from adult education and skills demand and supply. The Director of Skills commented that Cambridgeshire Insights were contracted with the Combined Authority to provide data analysis support for this work.
- Discussed who should sit on the Board including Large Companies, Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), and the Districts Economic Development Units. There was a need to identify what different stakeholders could offer and some stakeholders may be a conduit to others providing a cross exchange of knowledge.

It was resolved unanimously to recommend to the Combined Authority Board:

- a) agreement to the creation of a Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Employment and Skills Board.
- b) agreement to the proposed Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Employment and Skills Board Terms of Reference.
- c) approval to adopt the proposed Terms of Reference and Governance.

27. SKILLS TALENT & APPRENTICESHIP HUB PILOT

The Committee received a report outlining the development of the new Skills Talent & Apprenticeship Hub (STA Hub) including progress to date and the next steps to be taken including an Outline Business Case being brought to Committee in July 2019.

In presenting the report Officers explained that there was an error in the report on page 61 of the papers under 3.5 it should read 'Geo Hubs in each sub economies are led by a partnership of Training Providers including Colleges and Partners and supported with a Brokerage team'. The diagram at appendix 1 was in draft and therefore after discussions with some Providers and Partners it was deemed necessary to develop this further through a workshop with those who could support the Geo hubs. Further Education Colleges would not be exclusive partners in 'Geo Hubs', there would be many more partners involved. **ACTION.** Officers clarified that the new hub would include a Digital Talent Portal and App, a Brokerage Service, the creation of Geographical Apprenticeship Hubs 'Geo Hubs' and growing apprenticeships by creating a Levy Pooling Marketplace with SME's.

In discussing the report Members:

- Queried how much the work fitted in with current work that the Greater Cambridge Partnership were undertaking. Officers clarified that they were working closely with the Greater Cambridge Partnership to ensure their input into the development of the hub.

It was resolved unanimously to recommend to the Combined Authority Board:

- (a) to note the progress to date in developing the STA Hub to deliver the skills strategy.
- (b) that an Outline Business Case be brought to the Skills Committee in July 2019.
- (c) to support the Director and officers to progress a bid to the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the potential delivery of the STA Hub, if a call for bids is made before the Committee meets in July 2019.

28. SKILLS BROKERAGE CONTRACT & FUTURE OF THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY CONTRACT FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH

The Committee received a report giving an update on the Skills Brokerage Contract and progress of the Careers Enterprise Company (CEC) Contract.

In introducing the report Officers explained that following the report to Committee back in November 2018 regarding the CEC Contract the Combined Authority had worked with CEC to change the parameters of the CEC offer, namely connecting the Brokerage and CEC Contract activities and align them with the development of the Skills Talent & Apprenticeship Hub. This had resulted in an offer to continue the contract through to August 2020 with no additional cost to the Combined Authority. In relation to the Skills Brokerage Contract, it had been identified that it was vital the ongoing work undertaken by Opportunity Peterborough (OP) was continued in the short to medium term, allowing the Combined Authority to consider the strategic direction it would need to take to deliver skills post 2020. Officers had negotiated a revised contract with OP to cover the CPCA areas for twelve months. Members welcomed the report and update provided.

It was resolved unanimously to recommend to the Combined Authority Board:

- a) agreement to the grant of £272,500 for Skills Brokerage to Peterborough City Council as accountable body for Opportunity Peterborough for the delivery of the Skills Contract.
- b) agreement to a revised contract with CEC to August 2020 and linking the match funding provided to Peterborough City Council for Opportunity Peterborough.
- c) agreement to the grant of £37,500 to Form the Future, funded via the revised CEC contract, to provide 50% funding for 1.5 FTEs for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire skills brokerage delivery.

29. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Members noted the date of the next meeting as 10 July 2019.

Chairman