



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY**  
**SKILLS COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Monday 6 July 2020

**Time:** 14:00pm to 15:20pm

**Present:** Councillors John Holdich (Chairman), David Ambrose-Smith, Mike Davey, Lis Every, Jon Neish, Chris Seaton and Eileen Wilson.

**Apologies:** None

**73. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No apologies received.

Councillor Chris Seaton declared an interest as his wife worked at the College for West Anglia in the Apprenticeships Division.

The Chairman proposed to remove item 2.3 Skills Brokerage Contract Extension Report from the agenda. He explained that given the contract expiry date of 30 June 2020, it would not have been reasonable to await the outcome of the meeting for a decision to be made on this item. He explained that this matter was dealt with via an officer decision and notice of that decision would be published on the Combined Authority website. He clarified that decisions relating to contracts of this value fell within the delegated authority of the Director of Business and Skills.

**74. MINUTES – 27 APRIL 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2020 were agreed as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman when next possible.

**75. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Four questions were received from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman explained that the questions would be addressed at the relevant item on the agenda.

**76. SKILLS COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN**

The agenda plan was noted.

**77. COMBINED AUTHORITY FORWARD PLAN**

The Combined Authority Forward Plan was noted.

**78. UNIVERSITY OF PETERBOROUGH – FINAL BUSINESS CASE – PHASE 1**

The Committee received a report providing them with the information required to make recommendations to the Combined Authority Board to approve and agree the Full Business Case (FBC) for the University of Peterborough incorporating the legal



documentation, financial investment and Higher Education Partner Award.

The Chairman explained that the report and appendices for this item were not available for Members on the publication date of 26 June 2020 and that with his agreement, the report and appendices were published as late reports, once available, which was on Monday 29 June 2020.

The Committee received a question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this report and the written response was read out and can be found at appendix 1 of the minutes.

Introducing the report officers explained that the launch of the Higher Education Partner would be on the 14 July. The Director of Business and Skills explained that due to COVID-19 Mace and the selected Higher Education Delivery Partner had spent six-eight weeks reworking the business model to ensure that it was stress tested for post COVID. He explained that page 62 of the FBC explained this work in more detail. He explained that the selected Higher Education Delivery Partner was in the best place to withstand the post COVID impacts. He clarified that they currently only received 5% of their income from international students and the majority of their courses were based on remote working and blended learning systems with only 25% of students on campus at any one time

In discussing the report :

- A Member queried whether the stress testing had been robust enough. Officers explained that a lot of work had gone into stress testing the business model for post COVID over the past few months. They clarified that as the model was already based on digitalisation it was ahead of the curve and forward thinking.
- A Member commented on the recruitment programme relying on local people and questioned how the recruitment of young people from years 9, 10 and 11 who would have a difficult time catching up post COVID would be managed. She also commented that apprenticeships were in a state of flux and queried how the recruitment could be widened. Officers explained that the successful Higher Education Delivery Partner had just launched the 'Access to Higher Education' Diploma and were strong in widening participation and social mobility and were leaders in the East of England with strong outreach programmes.
- A Member queried when the University would get the go ahead from the Office of Students. She highlighted that many universities were currently in difficulty due to COVID and that the Higher Education Partner was putting a substantial amount of money into the start-up costs. Officers explained that the Office for Students were very excited about the proposed model for the University of Peterborough and from the feedback that had been received they are happy to endorse the University. Officers clarified that there would be an independent review of the University in 2028. The Director for Business and Skills commented that the Office for Students were very interested in the proposed model and that it was envisaged that there would be a number of mergers amongst Universities post COVID. He explained that the proposed Higher



Education Partner already had three campuses and already had degree awarding powers.

- A Member queried who would be scrutinising the transactional contracts and questioned how the contracts would be monitored. Officers clarified that there had been six to nine months of work put into the transactional contracts working directly with the Higher Education Partner. The Director of Business and Skills explained that the Business Board had requested stress testing of the contracts for post COVID and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested to see the documents at their September Committee. He clarified that the documents would be signed in August but that this Committee would also have sight of the documents at its September meeting and as the Combined Authority was by far the majority shareholder there would be some flexibilities for renegotiations if needed. He confirmed that a report would be added to the September Skills Committee agenda. **ACTION**
- A Member queried the geography and distance the authority had been looking to work with Businesses to attract their support. The Director of Business and Skills commented that 12.5% of the funding of the University had come from the Business Board and that the Higher Education Partner was a top University for Business Engagement and number one for Business Apprenticeships in the country.
- A Member questioned whether the University would have its own identity. The Director of Business and Skills explained that for the first six –seven years it had the early year benefits of an established player. He clarified that when this was reviewed to establish if an independent University should be established this would need to be balanced against being independent or losing intellectual property right. He explained however that there was a possibility that the Higher Education Partner could still remain involved and the University could have its own identity.

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

- (a) Approve and adopt of the Full Business Case to mobilise the creation of Phase 1 of the new University of Peterborough project.
- (b) Delegate authority to the Director of Business and Skills, in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Growth, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Financial Officer (Section 73), to develop the following key documents for the SPJV:
  - (1) Prop Co Articles of Association.
  - (2) Collaboration Agreement.
  - (3) CPCA Services Agreement.



(4) Shareholder's agreement

## 79. CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE COMPANY - ANNUAL REVIEW

The Committee considered a report that provided an annual review update on the decision made by the Combined Authority Board on the 29 May 2019, to retain the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) contract that was due to be terminated on 31 March 2019.

The Committee received a question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this report and the written response was read out and can be found at appendix 1 of the minutes.

In discussing the report;

- A Member expressed her concerns about what would happen next and when the Committee would have an update. Officers explained that they had monthly contract meetings with the CEC Regional Lead and that they had been using the lockdown period when schools were closed to ensure SEND training was in place and putting plans in place for the future. Officers agreed to come back to Committee with an update following the start of the next academic year.

### **ACTION**

- A Member queried whether there had been any benchmarking against any similar authorities regarding performance as some of the percentages in the report were of concern, particularly in relation to 43.24% saying that there were no Encounters with Employees and 20% having no personal guidance. Officers explained that there were a number of reasons why the authority was behind in the benchmarking which included the contract being paused with only one advisor and that the authority had done well to catch up and was meeting monthly targets. Officers clarified that Fenland and East Cambridgeshire were one of the higher performing areas. Officers explained that many schools could not afford advisors or the job was being done as an add on. Officers explained that they were working closely with the data team to look at growth sectors in order to plan for the future. Officers clarified that research had been carried out pre COVID on Careers Guidance and this was due to be presented to Senior Officers in the next few weeks. Officers explained that following this meeting they would circulate the findings to the Committee. **ACTION**
- A Member highlighted that Huntingdonshire had not been mentioned in the reporting and that he would like to see the data drilled down by area. Officers explained that they did have the data by school but that they would need to seek the permission of schools to share the data with the Committee. **ACTION.** Officers clarified that they were working actively with all of the district economic development teams on the talent portal and retraining scheme.
- A Member queried whether there were other partners that could take on this partnership. The Director of Business and Skills explained that the authority was in tender at the moment and had some very exciting bids to consider.



It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) Note the Annual Review applicable to the decision by the Combined Authority Board on 29th May 2019, to retain the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) contract a year on.
- (b) Note the update on the decision made on the management and delivery of the Careers and Enterprise Company contract, on 29th May 2019.
- (c) Recommend the Annual Review report to the Combined Authority Board.

#### **80. SKILLS BROKERAGE CONTRACT EXTENSION**

This report was withdrawn from the agenda

#### **81. INTEGRATED BUSINESS & SKILLS INSIGHT EVALUATION PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report that proposed to consolidate all Business and Skills activities to provide;

- (a) Economic, sector and place insight to inform the focus of current and future programmes, and
- (b) Monitoring and evaluation of the efficacy of current and past projects to inform the selection of the most effective intervention types for that focus

This consolidation would integrate currently separate activities as below to create an Integrated Business & Skills Insight & Evaluation Programme:

- (a) The current COVID-19 Impact Survey (co-funded with GCP)
- (b) The planned COVID-19 Impact Econometric Assessment
- (c) The planned COVID-19 refresh of the LIS, Skills and Sector Strategies
- (d) The planned Growth Observatory to identify clients for Growth Service
- (e) The ongoing skills market insight for workforce skills and adult education

The report recommended resourcing the commissioning exercise through existing MTFP budgets and sought authorisation for this.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. Approve the Integrated Business & Skills Insight & Evaluation Programme and the commissioning of the programme;
2. Recommend the Combined Authority Board approve the consolidation of the SME Observatory budget and the LGF Top Slice and BEIS Support Funding as detailed in Table 1, to resource the commissioning:





3. Recommend the Combined Authority Board approve the consolidation of the AEB Programme costs, National Retraining scheme and Apprenticeships as detailed in Table 2, to resource the commissioning.

## **82. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FOR GROWTH COMPANY**

The Committee received a report that sought approval of the corporate governance arrangements for the Growth Company (Growth Co).

In discussing the report:

- A Member explained that they did not know what Angle Holdings was until they got right to the end of the report and that this should be explained upfront.
- A Member questioned how confident officers were that they would receive the relevant EU funding. The Director of Business and Skills explained that he was very confident that the authority would receive the funding. He clarified that the ESF funding had already been confirmed and that the EDRF funding had been held up by COVID but that the proposal had now been re-evaluated and they expected confirmation of the funding in the next two weeks. He explained that the treasury had already underwritten the funding and that it would not be affected by the EU exit and that he was comfortable that the contracts would be in place within the next couple of months.
- A Member explained that the membership of the Board would have been useful to see in the report and more detail in relation to the Business Case. The Deputy Monitoring Officer clarified that Brian Hyland and Jon Alsop would sit on the Board with an Independent person yet to be appointed. She explained that the Committee would receive further details when they were available. **ACTION**

It was resolved by majority to recommend that the Combined Authority Board:

- (a) approve the business case in Appendix 1
- (b) approve the business plan in Appendix 2
- (c) approve the composition of Growth co Board of Directors to include an independent director
- (d) delegate authority to the Director of Business and Skills to approve the appointment of the Independent Director for the Growth Co, following an open and transparent recruitment process
- (e) Delegate authority to the Director of Business and Skills, in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Growth, the Section 73 and the Monitoring Officer, to develop the necessary legal documentation for the Growth Co.
- (f) Approve the execution of the deed adherence and accession, contained within



the shareholder agreement for Angle Holdings Ltd.

**83. EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS BOARD UPDATE**

The Committee received a report that gave an update on the progress of the Employment & Skills Board (ESB) and advised on the appointment of a new Chair and members of the ESB

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) note the updates from the Employment & Skills Board
- (b) note the appointment of a new Chair and Board members

**84. BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee received a report that provided the May budget and performance monitoring for the Business and Skills Directorate.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) Note the May budget and performance monitoring update.

**85. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as 14 September 2020.

**Chairman**