



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

**Date:** Friday 17 January 2020

**Time:** 10:00am to 11:30am

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

**Apologies:** None

**51. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No apologies received.

Councillor Mike Davey declared an interest for item 3.1 on the agenda – Work Readiness and Careers Inspiration Pilot in that his wife Sarah Ferguson is the Assistant Director: Housing, Communities & Youth Community & Safety across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Councillor Chris Seaton declared an interest for item 3.1 on the agenda – Work Readiness and Careers Inspiration Pilot in that his wife works at the College for West Anglia in the Apprenticeships Division.

Councillor John Holdich declared an interest for item 3.3 Skills Brokerage Contract Extension as he sits on the Opportunity Peterborough Board.

**52. MINUTES – 11 NOVEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**53. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions were received. The Chairman stated that a number of questions had been received from Councillor Coles the Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills. The Chairman read out the responses to the question received (see appendix 1 for responses).

**54. AGENDA PLAN**

The agenda plan was noted.

**55. CA FORWARD PLAN**

Officers explained that the Full Business Case for the University of Peterborough would now be going to Committee on 27 April 2020. The director of Business and Skills clarified that there had also been one addition to the agenda for the March



meeting 'Review of Adult Education (AEB) Administration costs.

The agenda plan was noted.

## **56. UNIVERSITY OF PETERBOROUGH – OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE – PHASE 1**

The Committee received a report that provided the information required to make recommendations to the Combined Authority Board to approve and agree the Outline Business Case for the University of Peterborough.

In introducing the report officers explained that the Outline Business Case incorporated an Options Appraisal which required approval on the preferred option. The preferred option was detailed at 3.2 of the report. Officers clarified that the Subscription Agreement between the Combined Authority and Peterborough City Council was for the capital investment into the development of phase 1 of the University and the land required and that delegation was sought for the authority to negotiate and complete the subscription agreement for the Director of Business and Skills, in consultation with the Lead Member for Skills, the Chief Financial Officer and the Monitoring Officer. There was also a recommendation to approve a commitment to invest the £12.3 million capital budget into the Phase 1 build and to draw down the funding to mobilise the activities and milestones identified in the Outline Business Case.

Officers explained that they were currently midway through the procurement process for the Higher Education (HE) Partner. Work had progressed in the development of a draft curriculum and officers acknowledged that the cohorts that were being targeted were currently not serviced in the area and that the numbers were upwards of 17,000. The intention of the new University was to address the cold spot through an increase in the number of HE entrants from the sub-region by attracting and retaining students locally, in particular people who did not currently participate in HE but who would participate and remain locally if suitable provision was available. Officers explained that it was a technical university model seated within industry and the economy to support productivity and enhance high value jobs and skills.

In discussing the report Members:

- Queried whether the Committee would see the final subscription agreement before it was signed off and questioned what the risks were in relation to the agreement. The Director of Business and Skills explained that it was a subscription agreement for the ownership of the building to allow the Combined Authority and Peterborough City Council to recover rent from the building in the future. Officers explained that the report sought delegation for the responsibility for finalising the agreement to the Director of Business and Skills, in consultation with the Lead Member for Skills, the Chief Financial Officer and the Monitoring Officer giving them authority to negotiate and complete the Subscription Agreement. He clarified that the risks were that the University was not successful but the building had been designed to be flexible and could be rented for other uses and there was minimal risk at this stage.
- Questioned who would be providing the software and the hardware for remote delivery. Officer explained that the HE Partner would be responsible for the



curriculum and the corresponding software and hardware and that the majority of the applied learning would take place in the workplace. A Member queried whether this would affect Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) at all. The Director of Business and Skills explained that the majority of learning would take place within the company/organisation with four days a week in-work learning and one day a week in the classroom. He explained that SMEs would not be disadvantaged as the focus would be on project modules that would benefit the employer.

- Sought reassurance that the timescales for getting the first cohort of students in place for two years' time would be met. Officers explained that the Higher Education Partners bidding for the contract were tried and tested quality partners and had the infrastructure in place for the marketing and promotion of courses. The Director of Business and Skills reiterated that they were currently negotiating the curriculum and student numbers with the HE partner which was up to 2,000 students in 2022. The Chairman explained that he had attended a project planning meeting the day before and had been assured that the project was working to time.
- Highlighted concerns around how much wider afield the Combined Authority had looked in terms of catchment areas for students. Officers clarified that the curriculum was based on the work that has been done on the Local Industrial Strategy to underpin the skills gaps and work around the three sub economies and the aim was to attract students from a lot further afield as well as the local area. The Director of Business and Skills explained that there was a negotiation to be had around the design of the curriculum and catchment area of the University with the HE Provider as ultimately they would need to have a viable business. He clarified that this was part of the reason why there was a need to delay bringing the Full Business Case to Committee to April. A Member questioned what affect the proposal by Anglia Ruskin and College of West Anglia for a High Tech Module in Wisbech would have on the development of the University and how aware the Combined Authority were of the developments. The Director of Business and Skills commented that it was an interesting development and that the Combined Authority was very aware of it.
- Queried where the final sign offs would be done in terms of the different elements of phase 1 of the project. The Director of Business and Skills explained that there were three elements to be signed off, the land which would go to Peterborough City Council for decision, and the Combined Authority (CA) money was in two lots. There was the £12.3 million which would be brought back to Committee in April along with the Full Business Case, £12.5 million from the Local Growth Fund and this would go to the Business Board for sign off on 27 January 2020 for their final approval.
- Questioned what stage the planning permission was at. Officers clarified that they had received pre-planning permission.
- Queried whether any residential accommodation would be included in the development of the University. The Director of Business and Skills explained that residential accommodation had not been included in the first phase of the



project, the second phase was a research centre and the third phase included residential accommodation. The Chairman clarified that there had already been interest in building student accommodation and that there was land already earmarked for this. The Director of Business and Skills explained that a report on the future funding strategy for the University would be brought to Committee in the Summer and this would include details of phase 3 of the project. Officers explained that a public consultation was due to take place between 4-6 February at Peterborough Cathedral. Councillor Holdich and Mayor Palmer would be opening the event and Members of the Committee would be receiving an invite to the opening event.

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

1. Approve the preferred option as part of an Options Appraisal and adopt the Outline Business Case for the new University of Peterborough as a Combined Authority priority and key element of the Local Industrial Strategy and Skills Strategy.
2. Approve the development of a Subscription Agreement between the Combined Authority and Peterborough City Council for the capital investment into the development of Phase 1 and the land required and delegate to the Director of Business and Skills, in consultation with the Lead Member for Skills, the Chief Financial Officer and the Monitoring Officer, authority to negotiate and complete the Subscription Agreement.
3. Approve the commitment to invest the £12.3M capital budget into the Phase 1 build and draw down the funding to mobilise the activities and milestones identified within the Outline Business Case to achieve the target of opening the University in September 2022 to 2000 students.

## **57. WORK READINESS AND CAREERS ASPIRATION PILOT – HAMPTON ACADEMIES TRUST UPDATE PAPER**

The Committee considered a report that gave an update on progress to date within the Work Readiness and Careers Aspiration pilot being undertaken at the two secondary academies within Hampton, namely the Hampton Academies Trust.

In introducing the report officers explained that the pilot focused on young people at risk of exclusion from school and focused on getting them ready for the workplace. The pilot had been a recommendation from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) and had three workstreams: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and STEM career promotion, Careers advice and the promotion of apprenticeships and technical and vocational pathways and Work readiness project for a target cohort. Officers clarified that there had been some good outcomes from the pilot and there was now a need to review whether these outcomes could be rolled out/replicated across the region. There were concerns raised over affordability as well as overlap with other projects on patch. The possibility of using other funding streams are to be explored.

In discussing the report;



- A Member commented that there were schools in other areas doing very similar things and queried whether there were opportunities to bring successes from other schools together and benchmark against outcomes. Then the Combined Authority could take the best from all of those and share best practice across the region which would be more cost effective. She also commented that the Combined Authority via the ESF project programmes had just provided a sum of money to a company to look at pre-NEETS and there needed to be a partnership arrangement between the two. Officers acknowledged that there was a real need to share best practice and promote inclusive growth for all as it was not one size fits all.
- A Member queried whether there had been any work to look at how much Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) cost the economy. Officers explained that this information would be available from Cambridgeshire County Council.
- A Member commented that the issue was around the baseline and data and that it was too early to say whether the results from the pilot had been effective. He commented that he would like to see the data from the year before the pilot as a comparison. **ACTION.** He also commented that there were certain schools around the County that would be more applicable and these schools needed to be taken into consideration.
- A Member commented that there had been more good outcomes than negative and questioned how long the pupils would be tracked for. Officers clarified that this would be for three years.
- Members discussed the funding of the project and how it might be funded going forwards. Officers explained that the project had not been put into the budget for the next financial year and that Officers would need the permission of members to do this.

The Chairman proposed a motion to amend the recommendation to the report in order to defer the decision to the next meeting in order that a proposal could be developed that included benchmarking and identified alternative funding lines in order that the pilot could be extended into years two and three. The motion was seconded by Councillor Wilson.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Defer the decision to the next Committee meeting so that proposals could be developed to identify alternative funding lines within the Combined Authority's MTFP for 2020-2022, that might enable the activities and outputs from this pilot to be extended past its first year, and into years two and three.

## **58. SKILLS BROKERAGE CONTRACT EXTENSION**

The Committee received a report that requested a four month extension to the Skills





Brokerage contract with Peterborough City Council as accountable body for Opportunity Peterborough at a cost of £75,000 to the Skills Brokerage Budget line. Officers clarified that there was a need to extend the contract as the Combined Authority were awaiting confirmation on its application for European Social Fund (ESF) to fund the programme from July 2020 to June 2023.

In discussing the report:

- A Member commented that the constant change in contract extensions was very unsettling and queried what would happen if the funding was not secured. The Director of Business and Skills explained that the funding had been provisionally approved and only 5% of proposals for ESF funding did not go through to contract. He clarified that the CA were going out to procurement for skills brokerage at the end of January and that this would give a firm contract for a full three years. He acknowledged that the bid had not come through quick enough but that they were positive of getting confirmation of the bid within the next few months.
- Members questioned if the ESF funding was successful, what would happen at the end of the three year term. The Director of Business and Skills explained that the Combined Authority then hoped to be the recipients of funding from the Shared Prospect Fund which would take over from ESF funding.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Agree a four month extension to the Skills Brokerage contract with Peterborough City Council as accountable body for Opportunity Peterborough at a cost of £75,000 to the Skills Brokerage CX0095 budget line.
- b) To note a European Social Fund (ESF) bid has been submitted to support the continuation and connectivity to Skills Brokerage activities.

## **59. EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS BOARD UPDATE PAPER**

The Committee received a report that gave an update on the newly established Employment and Skills Board.

In introducing the report officers explained that the Board had 13 members so far and that there was a broad representation on the board which included 6 from business, 2 from Further Education, an Independent Training Provider, a Higher Education Lead and 4 Public Sector leads. Officers explained that there were gaps in relation to the Voluntary Sector and Life Science and that there needed to be more coverage from Peterborough.

In discussing the report:

- A Member queried how many people were not accepted on to the Board that were interviewed as part of the process. Officers explained that there had been good coverage from the priority sectors and there had been people that applied



that would have been doubling up on representation. She also clarified that there were a number of people that applied that did not have the relevant background and experience. Officers highlighted that they were pleased that there was a strong board in place.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the newly established Employment & Skills Board.
- b) Note the appointment of Board members.

## **60. BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN**

The Committee considered a report that requested approval for a proactive promotional campaign for 2020-21 to:

- a) Raise the profile of all Business and Skills services to the target audiences across the Business and Educational Communities.
- b) Create a strategy which attracts an increased level of engagement from target clients and end users.

In introducing the report officers highlighted appendix 1 of the report which showed the Combined Authority's LinkedIn following compared with other Local Business Networks and other Mayoral Combined Authorities. Officers explained that this indicated how invisible the services currently were. Officers highlighted that action needed to be taken now ahead of the launch of the Growth Service in the summer. Officers clarified that there were two workstreams that set out pan-directorate activities and that there was a need to bring in dedicated specialist resource to oversee the work as well as upskilling the workforce. Officers explained that funding for the campaign would come from three virements of £25,000 from each of the Local Industrial Strategy Implementation, Skills Strategy Programme Delivery and Market Town revenue budgets. The remaining £50,000 would be met from two £25,000 recharges to the Adult Education Budget programme costs, for the AEB elements of the promotion, and the Local Growth Fund Costs, for the promotion of small grant and innovation grant schemes. Officers explained that the AEB budget topslice had already been approved by the Committee and £40,000 had not been spent so £25,000 of this would be taken into the next financial year.

The Chairman commented that AEB suppliers should be encouraged to promote their funding from the CPCA and this could be stipulated in their contract.

In discussing the report Members:

- Commented that it was a small amount of money and whether this would be enough. The Director of Business and Skills explained that there would be funding factored into the broader Growth Service so this amount was to cover until the Growth Service was established.

It was resolved unanimously to:



- a) Note the requirement to improve the profile of the full range of Skills and Adult Education Services in the external network.
- b) Approve the planned activities detailed within the Promotional Campaign (Appendix 2).
- c) Note the revised budget re-allocations as detailed in Section 6.2.
- d) Note the subsequent benefits of mobilising this campaign alongside the launch of the Business Growth Service and its new STAR Hub (Skills, Training, Apprenticeship, Recruitment).

## **61. BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee received a report on the position of budget and performance monitoring for the Business and Skills Directorate.

In discussing the report Members:

- Queried whether underspends and carry forwards created risks in relation to future funding. Officers explained that government targets were being met and there were no risks to future funding opportunities. The Director of Business and Skills commented that due to the newness of the organisation there were a number of reasons for underspends including not being invoiced by providers in a timely manner, a deliberate underspend as the spend would make more impact in the next financial year and genuine underspends on programmes that had not taken off.
- Commented on the AEB ITP programme figures. The Director of Business and Skills explained that providers bid for funding and then underperformed at certain times of year, which the Department for Education had highlighted as a repeat pattern. He explained that the funding was being carried forward to allow for claims for additional learners.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the December budget and performance monitoring update.

## **62. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Members noted the date of the next meeting as 9 March 2020

**Chairman**