



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 3.2

Adult Education Budget: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Local Planning

To:	Skills Committee
Meeting Date:	10 November 2021
Public report:	Yes
Lead Member:	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Lead Member for Skills
From:	Parminder Singh Garcha, Senior Responsible Officer – Adult Education
Key decision:	No
Forward Plan ref:	N/A
Recommendations:	<p>The Skills Committee is invited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Approve the Combined Authority's new approach to ESOL Local Planning, which aims to improve the co-ordination, delivery, and impact of ESOL in local communities.b) To note the local approach taken with regards to recent Government schemes for different refugee communities, asylum seekers, and migrants.c) To note the learner participation data on ESOL courses in the region, following devolution of the Adult Education Budget in 2019/20 and the implementation of fully funded ESOL in 2020/21.
Voting arrangements:	A simple majority of all Members present and voting.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek approval from the Skills Committee, to implement a new collaborative approach to ESOL Local Planning, building on national models of best practice. This is a new and different way of working from the Combined Authority's current model, which extends our role and influence in providing system-leadership. Therefore, approval from Skills Committee is sought for this policy change, to ensure greater strategic alignment across partnerships.
- 1.2 To update the Skills Committee on progress in implementing the first year of fully funded ESOL and the Combined Authority's approach to various government schemes for refugee and other migrant communities.

2. Background

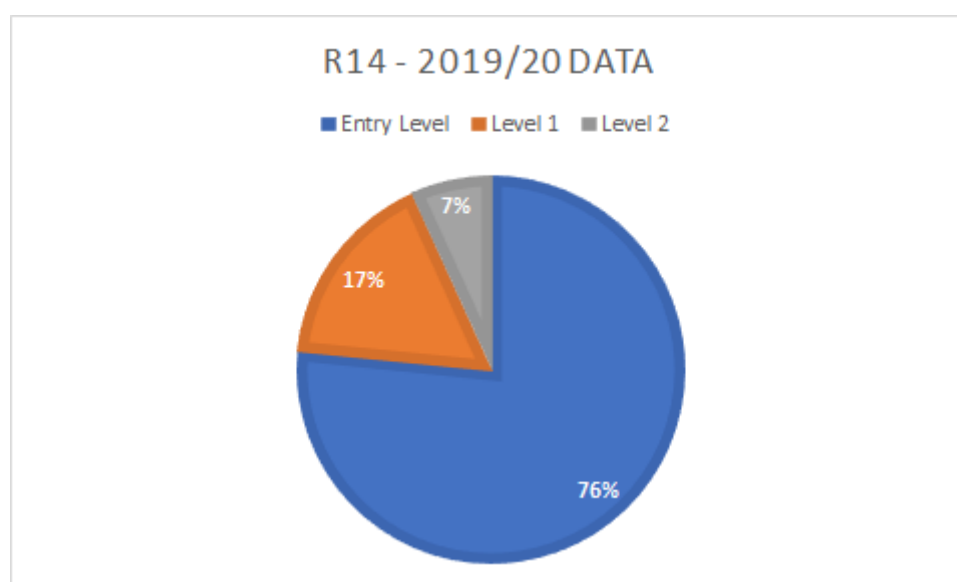
- 2.1 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is the term used for English language courses taken by people whose first language is not English and who need English to communicate in daily life.
- 2.2 Under Theresa May's government, the Integrated Communities Green Paper was published in March 2018 for consultation. It outlined the Government's vision for building an integrated and multicultural environment where people of all backgrounds live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. Statistics from the 2001 census show that approx. 770,000 adults in England, aged 16 and over, cannot speak English well or at all. According to the 2011 census around 62,155 citizens aged 16 plus did not speak English as a first language in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This equates to 10% of the region's 16+ population. Out of these, 1,801 (3% of those who did not have English as a first language and less than 1% of the regional population as a whole) could not speak English at all.
- 2.3 The Green Paper highlighted, how an individual's lack of proficiency in English may hinder their ability to integrate by limiting opportunities to get a job, to mix with people from different backgrounds, and to participate in community life and access vital services such as health. In addition, the strategy stated that the landscape of English language can be difficult to navigate and there is too little provision at the early stages of learning, with providers struggling to meet demand at pre-entry and entry levels.
- 2.4 Development of an ESOL Strategy for England was a previous Government manifesto commitment which to date has not been published. Given that the Combined Authority is the primary funder of ESOL in the region, and many of the issues highlighted in the Integrated Communities Green Paper are still prevalent, there is a need to develop a coherent local plan and approach.
- 2.5 **Local Picture**

In 2019/20 there were 2,038 enrolments for adult ESOL across all types of provision in CPCA, which equated to 989 ESOL learners. The majority of ESOL courses were delivered by City College Peterborough.

TABLE A below shows the total adult skills spend on ESOL against the number of enrolments in Peterborough, Fenland and the rest of Cambridgeshire for 2019/20.

ESOL Learning Aims and ESOL Spend by CPCA Area				
CPCA Area	Number of ESOL Enrolments	% of Total ESOL Enrolments	ESOL Spend	% of Total ESOL Spend
Peterborough	1,445	71%	£512,625.01	65%
Fenland	76	4%	£63,338.63	8%
Rest of Cambridgeshire	434	21%	£214,724.25	27%
Unknown	83	4%	£34,227.75	4%
Total	2,038	100%	£790,687.88	100%
Source - Individualised Learner Record 2019/20 (R14), ESFA				

Level of ESOL Learners R14 - 2019/20 Data
 Enrolments – 2,038
 Learners - 989



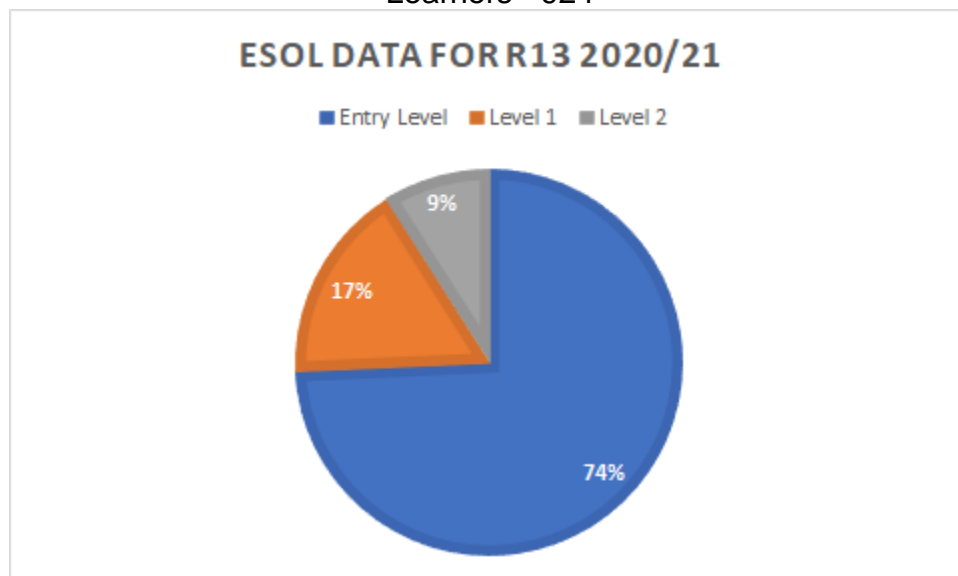
Enrolments by Outcome R14 - 2019/20 Data

Enrolments by Outcome

Achievement Status Description	Number of Enrolments	% of Total Enrolments
Achieved	1,607	78.85
Partial Achievement	3	0.15
No Achievement	155	7.61
Withdrawal	239	11.73
Transfer to New Aim	33	1.62
Break in Learning	1	0.05
Study Continuing/Outcome Unknown	0	0.00
Total	2,038	100.00

- 2.6 For 2020/21, interim data (R13) suggests that participation in ESOL was slightly lower, due to some ESOL students being reluctant to enrol onto online courses during the two lockdowns. This was the first year of fully funded ESOL, with anecdotal information, suggesting that enrolments 'held-up' when compared to other areas, where ESOL was not fully funded:

Interim ESOL data for R13 2020/21 Enrolments – 2,046
Learners - 924



3. Current Challenges

- 3.1 There is currently no centralised or regional planning of ESOL to address the challenges identified by stakeholders and partners. The Combined Authority receives regular feedback from the local Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) local teams, working in Jobcentres and the Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP) for the Eastern Region. Both stakeholders report:
- the patterns of ESOL provision, funding and attendance are complex
 - there is a lack of clear signposting to the different types of provision
 - provision is inflexible to meet the needs, often with long waiting-lists
 - there is a lack of intensive, full-time ESOL
 - there is a lack of vocational ESOL leading directly into employment.
- 3.2 The Combined Authority or any other agency does not have a systematic way to quantify demand and therefore address specific gaps for different types of learners. For example, one provider reported there were 400 people on an ESOL waiting list!
- 3.3 Partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector report that there is a general lack of awareness of ESOL and other support to improve skills is available. In some cases, people may not want to learn English, but may be encouraged to do so if the right outreach is in place and accessing provision is made as easy as possible.
- 3.4 There is a lack of coherence and local leadership. Referral organisations may not be aware that there are a variety of different funding streams and eligibility criteria. Learners may be told they are ineligible for provision for fully funded provision and may be unaware they may be eligible under a different funding stream at another provider.
- 3.5 Providers have reported there is a lack of suitably qualified and proficient ESOL teachers in the region, to increase capacity and meet demand from learners and employers.
- 3.6 Multiple government departments including the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC formerly MHCLG), Home Office, DWP and DfE, have all funded ESOL, with different criteria. There is a role for the Combined Authority to provide regional coherence and co-ordination across multiple funding streams for ESOL to ensure quality, greater impact and better outcomes for local communities.

4. Approach to ESOL Local Planning Partnerships

- 4.1 ESOL Local Planning (also known as ESOL Partnerships) is a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach to co-ordination of ESOL and community integration strategies in a defined geography. The aim is to provide independent and impartial system-leadership across public sector actors (DWP, SMP, local authorities, health, and police), adult education providers, civic, faith and voluntary organisations. Public sector partners can be expanded or reduced depending on the focus as can others such as business support agencies. National good practice has been published by DfE, Education and Training Foundation and Learning and Work Foundation for ESOL Local Planning, referenced in this paper.

- 4.2 It is proposed to implement ESOL Local Planning Partnerships (ESOL LPP) in the Combined Authority area. Given the unique geography of the region, two ESOL Local Planning Partnerships are proposed: North (covering Peterborough and Fenland) and South (covering Greater Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire).
- 4.3 ESOL LPPs aim to improve the planning of ESOL provision locally, addressing gaps, ensuring better connectivity, reach and access to employment and wider support.
- 4.4 ESOL LPP will also support continuous improvement of the ESOL system, through promoting good practice, opportunities for continuing professional development, sharing lessons learned, supporting increased quality of provision locally and ensuring it is tailored to local need. This will result in:
- Increased staff capability, capacity and morale through development opportunities and collaborative working on shared issues and challenges
 - Improved ability to secure external funding, potentially increasing investment in ESOL provision and infrastructure locally (e.g. UKSPF)
 - Increased visibility of English language – internally and to local strategic partners, leading to further improvements in provision (e.g. new progression routes, links with external agencies and services)
 - Improving the quality of data which underpins the planning and delivery of ESOL to balance demand with labour market and community need
 - Removing duplication of provision to improve efficiency
 - Collaboration with partners to create an independent and impartial single-point of contact for ESOL (for example, through Skills Brokerage).
- 4.5 Subject to Skills Committee approval, it is proposed to convene the first ESOL LPPs in December, meeting half-termly during the development stage.

5. Non-AEB Funding for ESOL and Destitution Support - British Nationals (Overseas) From Hong Kong

- 5.1 DLUHC (formerly MHCLG) is leading delivery of a £43m funded national 'Welcome Programme' to support BN(O) status holders and their eligible family members to help them successfully settle in their new communities. BN(O) status holders are not eligible for AEB.
- 5.2 The SMP have reported that due to its international reputation for outstanding education, Cambridge City is a draw for BN(O) status holders. The Combined Authority has to date struggled to collect data to monitor BN(O) status holders settling in the region. Data has been requested from partners, including the County Council. One local college has made enrolments for ESOL from a small number of BN(O) status holders.
- 5.3 The Combined Authority was made aware that previous programmes offering funding for ESOL and other support for migrant communities remained underspent nationally. Up to £800 per individual may be claimed under this scheme. Therefore, to ensure Colleges and

Providers in the region can claim the funding and eligible BN(O) learners are not turned away from courses, the Combined Authority has set-up a centralised process to co-ordinate and ensure funding is claimed. This has been disseminated to AEB providers.

6. Adult Education Budget and funding for Afghan adults

- 6.1 DfE has confirmed that all Afghan adults, who are being resettled through the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), are immediately eligible for Further Education (FE) 19+ funding as per the current AEB funding rules. The Combined Authority has updated the devolved AEB funding rules accordingly to provide this clarification.
- 6.2 Afghan adults and their family members resettled through ARAP and ACRS on or after 1 August will automatically receive 'indefinite leave to remain' making them exempt from the three-year ordinary residence rule. Afghan adults coming to the UK under the ARAP scheme, and through the future ACRS are not classed as asylum seekers. Afghan adults resettled through these schemes are eligible for unemployment benefits and have the right to work and will, in most cases, be fully funded ESOL. There is an additional £850 available through these schemes.

Significant Implications

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There is no impact on the Combined Authority's budget for the policy change.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 None

9. Other Significant Implications

- 9.1 None

10. Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – ESOL Local Planning Model

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 [Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, \(2018\)](#)
- 11.2 [Making Sense of ESOL – West Midlands Combined Authority](#)
- 11.3 [ESOL Partnership – Greater London Area](#)
- 11.4 [ESOL Partnership – Case Studies: Luton, Bristol, Suffolk, and Leeds](#)