

## Skills Committee – 17 January 2022

### Overview and Scrutiny Questions

	Question from:	Question to:	Question
1.	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 2.3: EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN</b></p> <p><b>What is the definition of community learning and how does it support the overall skills agenda?</b></p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha – Chair of the Skills Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<p>The purpose of Community Learning is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation, and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-engage in learning and progress towards formal learning or employment and/or</li> <li>• Improve health and well-being, including mental health and/or</li> <li>• Develop stronger communities.</li> </ul> <p>Community learning courses are delivered and reported under the following four delivery strands:</p> <p><b>1. Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)</b> - learning for personal and community development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation and for enjoyment (in most cases not leading to a formal qualification)</p> <p><b>2. Family English, Maths and Language</b> - learning to improve the English, language and maths skills of parents, carers or guardians and their ability to support their children</p> <p><b>3. Wider Family Learning</b> - learning to help different generations of family members to learn together how to support their children's learning</p> <p><b>4. Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC)</b> - supporting local Voluntary and other third sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for the residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.</p>

			<p>Community Learning is an important component of our local learning offer for adults, supporting our Life-wide Learning strand of the new Employment and Skills Strategy. Community Learning supports adults to re-enter learning at any age, through informal routes, short courses, taster sessions and in accessible community venues such as libraries, village schools and community centres. The two main providers of Community Learning are Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.</p> <p>To note that those residents who can afford to pay for learning, particularly for 'leisure and pleasure' are expected to contribute. The Combined Authority's funding is targeted to addressing inequalities and supporting 'disadvantaged' learners and those furthest from the labour market.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question to:</b>	<b>Question</b>
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 2.3: EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN</b></p> <p><b>In terms of funding on what criteria are community learning courses judged?</b></p>
	<b>Response from:</b>	<b>Response to:</b>	<b>Response</b>
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha – Chair of the Skills Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<p>Funding to deliver Community Learning is allocated to Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County College as a block grant and is not subject to a 'funding formula' in the same way as funding for Adult Skills qualifications. Many learning courses are non-accredited. The criteria that the Combined Authority currently uses to judge provision are: learner participation, funding spent, contextual data, completion of learning aims and positive destinations.</p>

3.	Question from:	Question to:	Question
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 2.3 : EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN</b></p> <p><b>Are there geographical areas where apprenticeships are not being taken up when viewed across the combined authority area, and also are there any particular business sectors not using apprenticeships to benefit recruitment and upskilling?</b></p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha – Chair of the Skills Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<p>The Apprenticeship Data for 2020/21 has recently been released and we are currently awaiting a report from Cambridgeshire Insight which will provide full analysis.</p> <p>Unsurprisingly, due to Covid there has been a 4% decrease in Apprenticeship starts across the whole of the CPCA area. The region has experienced substantial growth for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships, however, there has been a decline in the number of Apprentices starting level 2. This will be due in part to a number of popular standards at level 2 being withdrawn.</p> <p>We have observed a higher proportion of starts across the CPCA region in the Health, Public Services and Care sector with Business, Administration and Law being the second most popular sector.</p> <p>Across the area, half of all apprenticeship starts are being taken up by people aged 25+, with Peterborough and Cambridge both recording higher proportions of starts by people in this age group. In Fenland and East Cambridgeshire cohorts tend to be younger, with a higher proportion of starts made by people under age 19</p> <p>Overall, Peterborough has the highest number of Apprenticeship starts, with Cambridge having the lowest.</p>

<b>4.</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question to:</b>	<b>Question</b>
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 2.3 : EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN</b></p> <p><b>The gaps identified in the SWOT analyses are they due to lack of provision in certain areas; and if so, what is being done to remedy this, if anything?</b></p>
	<b>Response From:</b>	<b>Response to:</b>	<b>Response</b>
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha – Chair of the Skills Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<p>There are many reasons why gaps were identified and some of this is due to a lack of provision in certain areas.</p> <p>We have already identified some cold spots in FE provision in East Cambridgeshire and St Neots. Analysis continues into how best to support these areas. The CPCA has recently invested into the new Apprentice centre in Chatteris. Together this work will help to close some of the gaps in regional provision.</p> <p>The longer-term ambition is to offer a regional curriculum that meets the needs of our employers. Engagement with FE, HE and Independent Training Providers will continue with a renewed focus on the regional curriculum as a part of the implementation of the new employment and skills strategy.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question to:</b>	<b>Question</b>
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 2.3 : EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN</b></p> <p><b>Are we confident the SWOT analyses will lead to the solutions that are proposed?</b></p> <p><b>The solutions proposed to the issues raised in the SWOT analyses seem to arise from an expectation of a move towards uniformity across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Given the ‘three economies’ identified by the Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Independent Economic Commission, what analysis has been carried out of the underlying reasons for differences</b></p>

			<b>between districts, and whether an expectation of eventual uniformity is the right one?</b>
	<b>Response From:</b>	<b>Response to:</b>	<b>Response</b>
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha – Chair of the Skills Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<p>As a part of the implementation of the Employment and Skills Strategy, an implementation plan is in development which will be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis which will allow us to track progress against actions and the impact of these actions on the performance indicators. Within the implementation plan, actions will be aligned to specific performance indicators.</p> <p>This strategy goes further than the three sub economies and actions aligned to all district councils will be considered. This strategy provides more tailored solutions than ever before. Uniformity is not the suggestion but instead a collaborative approach to create and efficient and effective skills system tailored to local need.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question to:</b>	<b>Question</b>
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 2.3 : EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN</b></p> <p><b>Do we fully understand what is happening in terms of the ‘working from home’ environment?</b></p>
	<b>Response From:</b>	<b>Response to:</b>	<b>Response</b>
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha – Chair of the Skills Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	It is too soon to understand the longer-term impact. This is being monitored through several actions including monitoring of LMI and our continued work with Metro Dynamics to understand the implications of working from home on the labour market and impact on skills and talent.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question to:</b>	<b>Question</b>

	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 2.4: GROWTH WORKS MANAGEMENT REVIEW – JANUARY 2022</b></p> <p>The report suggests significant success during the pandemic for growth works despite what we have seen in other education settings to deliver effective learning. How robust are the figures and is there a danger that the lack of qualitative data risks misinterpretation of the success of the programme?</p>
	<b>Response From:</b>	<b>Response to:</b>	<b>Response</b>
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha – Chair of the Skills Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<p>The contract is outcome based and the Growth Works consortia and Officers within CPCA review and track data on the CRM HubSpot. We are confident in both the quantum of outcomes reported, quality of service delivery and service levels to our customers.</p> <p>From a qualitative point of view, the Consortia do a customer satisfaction Net Promoter Score survey with customers. The survey was completed by an independent third party and has reported a Net Promoter Score of positive 68, reflecting a high-quality service. Random audits are completed for thoroughness of completion. Further the CPCA SRO Fliss Miller has attended some of the meetings to assess the quality of the deliverables from the Skills Service. Granularity of the data is provided in the appendix of the reports submitted to CPCA.</p> <p>An early success, is that the programme TUPE'd a team from Opportunity Peterborough with existing relationships which no doubt enabled early traction with employers and education providers.</p> <p>Growth Works has a strategic relationship management approach, the team are a solution focused service, working with both ESF and Adult Education Budget and</p>

			independent training providers. Some of the providers are also outside of the Combined Authority providing more flexible solutions if required for businesses in relation to their training and development needs. The Growth Works Skills Service has focused on understanding what employers need for their current and future needs, rather than what training providers may have in their tool kit. Growth Works is proud of our solution focused approach embedded within the consortia's strategic account management with employers across the region.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question to:</b>	<b>Question</b>
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<b>AGENDA ITEM 3.1: ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET ANNUAL RETURN AND EVALUATION</b>  <b>Has it been a policy based decision that has seen the loss of so many providers?</b>
	<b>Response From:</b>	<b>Response to:</b>	<b>Response</b>
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha – Chair of the Skills Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	In 2019/20, the first year of devolved AEB, a policy decision was taken by the Combined Authority to reduce the number of directly funded providers delivering within the sub-region from 190 in 2018/19 to 17 in 2019/20. In subsequent years, new providers have been procured through the in-year commissioning process.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question to:</b>	<b>Question</b>
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<b>AGENDA ITEM 3.1: ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET ANNUAL RETURN AND EVALUATION</b>  <b>How does the skills strategy respond to people who might wish to become entrepreneurs?</b>
	<b>Response From:</b>	<b>Response to:</b>	<b>Response</b>
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha –	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Through the Adult Education Budget, we will continue to fund business start-up courses to support entrepreneurs, such as the Level 2 Certificate in Creating a Business Start-Up. To note, we funded 127 learners across four providers in

	Chair of the Skills Committee		<p>2020/21 on accredited Business Start-up courses. We will also continue to fund Business Management courses and there were 242 learners in 2020/21.</p> <p>In addition to accredited courses, a wide range of online business support resources have been developed by Growth Works and are available for free on their website.</p>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question to:</b>	<b>Question</b>
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 3.1: ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET ANNUAL RETURN AND EVALUATION</b></p> <p><b>The student survey states 32% want to gain skills needed to move into employment; and 22% want better jobs. Why are we not meeting the aspirations of the students?</b></p>
	<b>Response From:</b>	<b>Response to:</b>	<b>Response</b>
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha – Chair of the Skills Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<p>To clarify, the question that was asked of learners was: ‘What motivated you to apply to your course?’ All 112 respondents answered this question and respondents could select multiple answers, which corresponded with their individual motivations, such as their wish to progress into employment or within their career.</p> <p>Therefore, the survey response does not infer that courses are not meeting the learner’s aspirations. The answers capture the learner motivations.</p>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question to:</b>	<b>Question</b>
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Skills Committee	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 3.1: ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET ANNUAL RETURN AND EVALUATION</b></p> <p><b>Are we confident the programmes focussed on the right people as enrolments are largely at level 2?</b></p>



	<b>Response From:</b>	<b>Response to:</b>	<b>Response</b>
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha – Chair of the Skills Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<p>This is a helpful and insightful question from Over-view and Scrutiny Committee, which has also been highlighted by the Business Board as an area for our providers to focus on.</p> <p>The new Employment and Skills Strategy shows we need to increase the number of residents qualified to level 3 and above.</p> <p>Given the focus on addressing inequalities, such as targeting low skilled adults across the sub-region, including Peterborough and Fenland, it is right that a higher proportion of enrolments were at level 2 and below in 2019/20 and 2020/21.</p> <p>The AEB Evaluation and report to the Business Board shows that historically, an insufficient proportion of enrolments have been at level 3. Given the local labour market needs, our colleges and providers need to ensure there is progression from level 2 to level 3 and they are actively promoting opportunities at level 3.</p> <p>To address this, a report was approved by the Skills Committee on 15 March 2021 by allocating additional funding for first level 3 courses and a local flexibility for a second level 3. For future years, we are planning on the basis of doubling level 3 enrolments each year for the next five years.</p>