



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

## Skills Committee Minutes

Meeting: Monday 4 July 2022

Venue: Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon

Time: 10.00am - 12.06pm

### Present:

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha - Chair and Member for Cambridgeshire County Council

Cllr Sam Wakeford - Huntingdonshire District Council

Cllr Lis Every - East Cambridgeshire District Council

Cllr Lynne Ayres - Peterborough City Council

Cllr Sam Carling - Cambridge City Council

### Apologies:

Cllr Peter McDonald - South Cambridgeshire District Council

Cllr Chris Seaton - Member for Fenland District Council

## Part 1 - Governance Items

### 62. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest and Announcements

Apologies received from Councillors Peter McDonald and Chris Seaton.

### 63. Minutes of the Skills Committee meeting on 16 March 2022 and Actions

The minutes of the meeting on 16 March 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

The Interim Associate Skills Director provide an update to the Committee on action 50 on the action log. She explained that the Deep Dive Panel would be reconvening to further review the status of the Deep Dive so the action remained ongoing.

The representative from Overview and Scrutiny requested that the action log highlight any outstanding actions from questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny.

The action log was noted.

## 64. Public Questions

One public question was received see appendix 1 of the minutes. Questions received from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were taken at the relevant item on the agenda.

## Part 2 – Delivery

### 65. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan Update

The Committee received a report detailing the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan Update. The report provided an update on the progress to collectively develop the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and the next steps to secure investments from the Government as well as provided information on the projects identified and how these would be delivered.

The Committee received a question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this report. The written responses were read out and can be found at appendix 2 of the minutes.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- The core SPF Fund stood at £9.872 million, The Multiply Element was awarded at just under £4 million.
- The People and Skills Element of the funding would not begin until year three of the funding.
- The Local Investment Plan had to be agreed by Government before any funding allocation was released. The Plan had to be submitted online by 1 August 2022. The first years payment was expected in October 2022.
- The Development of the Local Investment Plan was being led by the Combined Authority and was being worked on by the Cambridgeshire Public Service Board, acting as the SPF Board.
- The full list of projects and interventions was included in the report.
- All MPs had been briefed and the plan would be presented to Business Board in the next week with the draft plan being presented to Leaders on Wednesday this week and for final Combined Authority Board approval on 27 July 2022.

Discussing the report Members:

- Queried the Skills and People provision within the SPF, as there were only four projects mentioned within this area, three of which were extremely broad.

A Member queried how the organisations had been chosen in relation to the provision, and in particular how Peterborough had been involved in the discussions. The Interim Associate Skills Director explained that it had been agreed with the Public Services Board that the focus would be on strategic wide projects that sat across the whole of the CA area with a focus on collaboration in the Skills area. She explained that individual allocations had been provided for every district, and that trying to look at projects across the whole of the CA had been challenging. It was agreed that over the first two years skills projects would not be funded. The CA would look at individual projects for each of the districts under place and community and business, and that when officers looked at the final year in relation to skills, there would be a focus on strategic projects as this was where the pooling of resources would result in the biggest gains. She explained that European Skills Funding (ESF) would be coming to an end in 2023 and that the People and Skills Pillar funding would be in 2024. This would continue the provision that was already established in relation to Skills Brokerage, as there was no other funding available for this area. She explained that this would be combined with the regional learning that had been successful in the south of the sub region, as well as funding to establish the All-Age Careers Service

- Acknowledged that the projects put forward for funding were previously highlighted in the Employment and Skills Strategy.
- Highlighted that the Government had only launched this prospectus on 13 April 2022 and had expected authorities to do a huge amount of work by the 1 August 2022 deadline. She was grateful for all of the work that had been done by the Public Service Board to progress the work quickly and suggested that there should be feedback to Central Government on the tight deadlines that had been put forward.
- Queried whether any of the funding would be moving through to the voluntary sector as the funding was to replace the European Social Fund. Officers explained that it was agreed at the Public Service Board that each area would still look at how the funding could be used locally and this included voluntary organisation that had previously received ESF funding and had kept the ESF Providers Forum up to speed on the process.
- Confirmed that all of the details sought from Huntingdonshire District Council had been received.
- Queried the decline in Apprenticeships in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and why the statistics were worse in this area compared to nationally. The Interim Associate Skills Director explained that there had actually been a bounce back to pre-covid levels this year. She explained that historically this area did not seem to engage with apprenticeships and this is why Growth Works were working to increase the number of employers engaging with

apprenticeships. She explained that an update report on Apprenticeships could be brought back to a future Committee meeting. **ACTION**

- Sought clarity regarding the diagram on page 50 of the pack at figure 8 and whether the institutions listed needed to be an Adult Education Budget (AEB) provider. Officers explained that the diagram should show non AEB providers also, so would therefore review the diagram. **ACTION**. Officers requested that any other comments on the draft should be emailed to them by mid-July. **ACTION**

In bringing the debate to a close, the Chair highlighted the need to keep Members updated on projects as there had been a significant amount of time since the last Committee in March. The Interim Associate Skills Director acknowledged that this was an issue and agreed to set up informal Skills Committee briefings in between each meeting to ensure that Members were kept up to speed. **ACTION**

It was resolved by unanimously to:

- a) Note the progress to date and next steps for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Investment Plan for the Shared Prosperity Fund.

## 66. Multiply Local Investment Plan

The Committee received a report detailing the Multiply Local Investment Plan as a part of the new SPF. Multiply was a new three-year adult numeracy programme, which launched in September 2020. The report included the draft Investment Plan for the Multiply to Central government and attention was drawn to the tight submission deadline of the 30 June 2022. The investment plan would be presented to the Combined Authority Board on 27 June.

In particular, the Interim Associate Skills Director highlighted:

- The two funding pots; the core SPF and Multiply. The CA had received a total of £3,999,186 over a three-year programme. The Investment Plan had been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) on 30 June 2022.
- Key points to note about the programme included the main objective to increase the levels of numeracy in adults across the UK. Three levels of success, one being achievement of maths qualifications up to and including level two, to have improved numeracy skills in the workforce and to increase general adult numeracy across the population.
- The DfE had published a 'menu of option' for providers to deliver separate and distinct from provision that was already funded by AEB. These areas

included; Family Learning, working with schools to engage parents and a strong focus on numeracy in the workplace focusing on in-work progression.

Discussing the report Members:

- Highlighted that this was part of the funding bid published by Government on 13 April therefore there had not been time to take the proposals through Committee before going to Board for approval on 30 June 2022. The Chair stated that she would as Chair contact other Combined Authorities or other Council Networks to highlight to Government that this was not good governance. **ACTION** The Interim Associate Skills Director also confirmed that in future she would notify the Committee of any funding streams as soon as she was made aware of them by Government.
- Queried if there was any funding in relation to adult literacy. The Interim Associate Skills Director stated that they were surprised that the SPF funding did not include literacy. She explained that officers could update the Committee on the current provision for literacy which was funded as part of the AEB. **ACTION**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the outcome of the Combined Authority Board Decision which will be taken on 27th June 2022

## 67. Cambridgeshire Peterborough Economic Growth Strategy

The Committee was invited to approve Cambridgeshire Peterborough Economic Growth Strategy and to recommend it to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board. The strategy set out clear priorities to inform investment decisions, based on the most up to date evidence available. Its primary goal would be to reduce inequality and would drive levelling up within and between the three economies of Peterborough, Fenland and Greater Cambridge.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- The Strategy had been consulted on, and had input into it, from the Business Board and the Mayor and has been developed through workshops with a wide circle of partners and stakeholders, including the Business Advisory Panel, all of the constituent local authority CEOs and economic development officers. In addition, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Business Board, officers in the Combined Authority and the Mayor convened individual meetings with each of the local authority leaders. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.
- On 5 April the Business Board and Combined Authority Board had a workshop that looked at feedback on the consultation process in relation to the strategy.

- Work was already underway to produce an implementation plan and this would be part of the discussion at the second workshop between the Combined Authority Board and the Business Board is on 5 September 2022.

Discussing the report Members:

- Referred to page 128 in relation to rising unemployment and queried were the focus on youth unemployment sat. A Member stated that they found it difficult to pull together all of the initiatives that were supporting young people into employment as there was no overall picture or strategy. The Interim Associate Skills Director stated that Matt Oliver was leading on the Needs Strategy and Youth Employment would be one workstream that sat under this strategy and would bring together all youth interventions and strategies. The Chair requested that a report be brought to Committee on the NEETs Strategy. **ACTION** The Interim Associate Skills Director clarified that the draft Implementation Plan would be brought to Committee for comment.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note that this report will go before the Combined Authority Board on 27th June 2022 with a recommendation for approval of the Economic Growth Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- b) Endorse the Economic Growth Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

## 68. Growth Works Management Review to 31 May 2022 (Q6 is April to June 2022)

The Committee considered the Growth Works non-financial performance report.

The Committee received a question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this report. The written responses were read out and can be found at appendix 2 of the minutes.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- The report showed the latest position to the end of May 2022, which was roughly half way through the contract.
- A meeting had taken place with the Growth Co Chair to review the format and content of the report and are taking on feedback including simplifying jargon and reviewing the tables and charts used including the interpretation of the data to ensure it was fit for purpose.

- Overall performance of the programme was strong, with four out of the five service lines working well contractually, although close focus was underway in Coaching, specifically on ERDF 'nudge grants' and the number of businesses provided with a diagnostic and then starting a coaching journey. Growth Co and Gateley Economic Growth Services (GEG) the prime contractor were working closely with YTKO who delivered the coaching service line to ensure there was a recovery plan which has a high level in confidence of being delivered. Officers to circulate an update on performance to cover the rest of quarter 6 which would cover up to the end of June 2022. **ACTION**
- Capital Grants were ahead of profile and on Equity investments were slightly being due to the pipeline and due diligences taking longer than expected.
- The Skills service line continued to perform well and metrics were being met. The focus now was on more strategic conversations with FE colleges over the next quarter.
- The Careers Hub was one of the highest performing Careers Hubs in the country.

#### Discussing the report Members:

- Highlighted that the Apprenticeships and Jobs targets on page 144 of the agenda pack showed the targets to be behind and that it did not match the text which stated that there was solid performance. The Interim Associate Skills Director explained that Apprenticeships had a huge intake in September and therefore it was a whole year target so therefore expect that number to be higher. Officers stated that they would review the figure relating to jobs under 2.3 in the report and come back to Members with further clarification on the data. **ACTION**
- Queried whether working at home had an impact on business taking on apprenticeships. The Interim Associate Skills Director explained that the data so far this academic year had shown a bounce back in figures so this did not currently appear to be so. She explained that she had asked the data team to look in more detail at which apprenticeships were being taken forward. She stated that they had seen a decline in the level two apprenticeships but that this was more to do with the structure of the standards that were being taken forward. The Chair asked that apprenticeships be covered in the NEETs Strategy report that had been requested by Committee. **ACTION.**
- Sought clarity on how much the CA had gone back to Business to question how successful the work that had been done with coaches had been. Officers stated that there was an independent survey carried out, one carried out in January and one in March and Officers would circulate the results of the surveys. **ACTION**
- Questioned how applications for Inward Investment were made and if there had been any applications from the Peterborough area. Officers to review and feedback to Members. **ACTION**

It was resolved by unanimously to:

- a) Note the Growth Works programme performance up to 31 May 2022 (Q6 is April 2022 to 30th June 2022).

## 69. Expansion of the Careers Hub

The Committee received a report detailing the successful bid and the plans to expand the Careers Hub model to cover all schools and colleges across the Combined Authority will be in a Careers Hub and is subject to approval of the Combined Authority Board on 27th June 2022.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- A proposal was submitted to the Careers and Enterprise Council (CEC) to extend the Careers Hub model to all Schools and colleges on 15 March 2022 and the CA were informed on the 29 April 2022 that the bid had been successful. The additional grant award would fund two additional posts: a fully funded Operations Manager and a match funded part time Project Officer.
- In the last academic year the performance of the hub had exceeded the national average and was one of the best performing hubs in the country.
- Secured additional funding to run STEM related activities aligned to the local labour market in Fenland.
- Currently developing a regional microsite to support those with SEN.
- Establishing a steering group which would help to inform and drive the performance of the careers hub and give a greater focus on system change.

Discussing the report Members:

- Welcomed the report and expressed their thanks to officers
- Requested information on the schools engaged in with the hub in the Peterborough area. **ACTION**
- Queried whether the hub included the College of West Anglia. Officers clarified that they did work with the college from a campus point of view.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note, subject to the approval of the Combined Authority Board on 27th June 2022, the Careers and Enterprise Company grant funding for an extended Careers Hub in 2022-23 and the recruitment for two new positions, employed by the Combined Authority.



## 70. Employment and Skills Strategy – Delivery Plan & Gainshare Skills Projects

The Committee considered a progress report regarding the development of the Employment and Skills Delivery Plan, including actions undertaken to align strategy implementation.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- Officers have been working on the implementation plan, mapping and gapping the existing activities.
- There were three areas of focus; business as usual, capital investment including FE coldspots and a levelling up fund bid for Fenland District Council and system lead change.
- The implementation plan was coming to committee at an early stage to seek engagement and input.

Discussing the report Members:

- Congratulated officers on the work that had been done so far on the plan.
- Highlighted work in East Cambridgeshire with Metrodynamics to carry out a further survey to ensure a place and systems-based approach could be rolled out and thanked the officers for their regular support and contact.
- Questioned whether there was sufficient infrastructure for active travel for the proposals. Officers explained that the sites highlighted in the Project Initiation Document had not yet been identified so the infrastructure would need to be put in place as part of the project planning and design.
- Queried the rationale behind the proposed development of the additional sites. Officers clarified that the rationale was in relation to both demand and upskilling both in the 16-18 and 19-25 age brackets, working with the County Council to ensure they have suitable and sufficient places for young people and more local provision. Officers explained that the CA were working in partnership with the County Council to refresh the 16-18 sufficiency requirements, that were published in 2019. This would include updated 2011 census data, including demographic growth and demand from new developments.. In terms of upskilling, the two new provisions would focus on technical education. The feasibility study would focus on the local requirements in St Neots and in East Cambridgeshire and this would inform the curriculum pathways. Local Advisory Boards would be established to steer the projects and facilitate co-production.

- Sought clarity on where the funding would be coming from for both sites. Officers explained that there had been funding allocated by the CA through Gainshare over the next three years. Officers clarified that the next stage of the process was to seek approval from the CA Board and request a draw-down of approximately £100,000 of the £4.8 million of funding allocated. A Feasibility Study and Business Case would be commissioned through consultancy as the first stage of the process. The CA would use the funding as leverage to access more capital funding through the Department for Education, through the FE Transformation Fund and the Demographic Capital Growth Fund. Would also be looking at other local Capital Funding through partners that could be accessed to develop the sites.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Approve the draft Employment and Skills Strategy Delivery Plan
- b) Note the project – FE coldspots and the associated actions.

## 71. Digital Skills Bootcamps

The Committee received a report detailing the key considerations for taking the Wave Three Skills Bootcamp grant funded secured for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- Following a proposal submitted by the Combined Authority to DfE on the 28 January 2022, the Combined Authority received notification on the 8 March 2022 of award for the full amount proposed; £4,891,985 in grant funding to deliver Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps to 1,780 learners, for the first year period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Within the grant award £342,439 had been allocated to management costs.
- Bootcamps were intensive, Level 3-5 or equivalent flexible training courses up to 16 weeks, with a guaranteed job interview (in the case of a new job), which equipped adults with technical skills that enable them to access in demand jobs, apprenticeships, new opportunities and an increased level of income over time (including for the self-employed).
- The Bootcamps were across a number of sectors including Digital, Construction and Green.
- Significant work had been undertaken in relation to the procurement of contracts and the process was currently in standstill period before the awarding of contracts to training providers in the next few weeks.
- A number of individuals had recently been appointed to Skills Bootcamp roles and were due to start in the coming weeks.

Discussing the report Members:

- Highlighted that one of the issues in the past had been recruiting people on to these courses and queried what had changed and if there were new strategies in place to encourage applications. The Interim Associate Skills Director explained that the third wave was grant funded, therefore the CA had more control in terms of the providers appointed and as part of the exercise and that there was strong weighting on employer engagement as part of the procurement process. She explained that was an additional £5 million in a short 9-month timescales so this was a huge investment into the CA and skills landscape that the CA expected a further two years of investments.
- Queried where the employers were that were engaging with the bootcamps as there had been issues in the past particularly in Peterborough, and particularly around finding the staff that could support the bootcamps. The Interim Associate Skills Director explained that they would bring an update to Committee on performance. **ACTION**

In bringing the debate to a close the Chair congratulated the skills team on getting the funding.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the report approved by the Combined Authority Board on 30 March 2022.

## 72. Budget and Performance Report

The Committee received a report detailing the Budget and Performance Report that provided a performance update on Skills projects and the trajectory of expected performance against the devolution deal objectives.

In particular, the Head of Finance highlighted:

- Forecast Outturn position was still subject to final year-end adjustments and to an audit that would take place later in the year. A report would be taken to the July CA Board on the final expected outturn position with confirmation of any carry forwards.
- Paragraph 3.2 of the report gave the breakdown of revenue expenditure which currently showed an underspend of circa £1.9 million. Paragraph 3.4 highlighted the work being undertaken to address the underspends.

Discussing the report Members:

- Noted their thanks to Vanessa Ainsworth who had reported the Budget and Performance report previously to the Committee who had now move on to a

new role. The Head of Finance stated that Julia Hoban had recently joined the CA and would be presenting the report to Committee at future meetings.

- Queried the delay in creating legal contracts detailed under 3.4 b. between the Combined Authority and Growth Co. The Head of Finance clarified that there was a lot of ongoing work and stated that there was nothing to be concerned about in relation to the delay and that it would not be an ongoing issue.
- Questioned under 3.4 c in relation to where it highlighted that the additional activities that were being undertaken were unlikely to impact on the underspend in the current financial year, in relation to the Health and Social Care Work Academy project and whether this related to the previous or current financial year. The Head of Finance clarified that the report was covering the previous financial year.
- Highlighted the red RAG rating in relation to the University of Peterborough. The Head of Finance explained that there was a red rating in relation to phase one as there was a risk in terms of ensuring that there were enough students signing up and joining the University and there was a red RAG rating in relation to phase three due to concerns around the ongoing impact of inflation on the project. He explained that there had been a change to the RAG rating system with the default now being amber and not green. He explained that additional information on these changes could be circulated to the Committee.

#### ACTION

It was resolved unanimously to

Note the 2021/22 revenue forecast outturn position for Skills related budgets.

#### 73. A Summary of the Employment and Skills Board Meeting 17 May 2022

The Committee received a report detailing the overview of the Employment and Skills Board held on 17 May 2022.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the paper which provides an overview of the recent Employment and Skills Board held on 17 May 2022.

#### 74. Skills Committee Agenda Plan

The Committee received a question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this agenda item. The written responses were read out and can be found at appendix 2 of the minutes.

It was resolved to note the agenda plan.

### Part 3 – Date of the next meeting

75. It was resolved to:

Note the date of the next meeting as 5 September 2022.