



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

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

Date: Monday 11 November 2019

Time: 10:00am to 11:17am

Present: Councillors John Holdich (Chairman), David Ambrose-Smith, Mike Davey, Neil Gough (substituting for Eileen Wilson) and Jon Neish

Apologies: Councillors Lis Every, Eileen Wilson and Chris Seaton.

40. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Apologies were received from Councillors Lis Every, Eileen Wilson (substituted by Councillor Neil Gough) and Chris Seaton. No declarations of interest were made.

The Chairman announced that there would be a two minutes silence at 11am in remembrance of those that had lost their lives in conflict.

The Chairman brought the Committees attention to item 2.3 on the agenda, Adult Education Budget Commissioning Strategy. The Chairman proposed a motion to defer the report to the next meetings so that the proposal could be developed further.

It was resolved unanimously to:

defer the Adult Education Budget Commissioning Strategy report to the January Committee meeting.

41. MINUTES – 10 JULY 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions received.

43. SKILLS COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered a report detailing the new governance arrangements of the Committee agreed at the Combined Authority Board meeting on 25 September 2019.

In presenting the report officers explained that the new governance arrangements had come into effect on 1 November 2019 and that that matter reserved to the Combined Authority Board were summarised under 2.2 - 2.4 of the report and matters delegated to the Skills Committee were detailed under points 2.5 – 2.7 of the report

In discussing the report Members questioned how the governance arrangements would work in terms of the tracking and reporting of the performance of the Growth Service Management Company. Officers explained that the company would adopt a business plan, which would go to the Combined Authority Board for approval. Reporting on performance against the business plan would go through the Skills Committee and Business Board and the Overview and Scrutiny would also have a role in scrutinising performance. There were five element within the Business Growth Service and the key element that the Skills Committee would have oversight of was in relation to the Skills Brokerage Service.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the new governance arrangements for the Committee.

44. AGENDA PLAN

The agenda plan was noted.

45. UNIVERSITY OF PETERBOROUGH – PROGRESS UPDATE PAPER

The Committee received a report highlighting progress made to date following approval by the Combined Authority Board on 29 May 2019 to adopt the University Action Plan to deliver the University of Peterborough.

In presenting the report officers explained that the project had been re-profiled in May 2019 and that Mace had been commissioned to lead on the project delivery. Since June 2019 the project had moved forward quickly and a project management team had been brought together involving a consortium of consultants, including local businesses. Currently a procurement exercise was underway to seek to provide an experienced Higher Education (HE) partner to deliver the curriculum for the University. The report sought approval for the authorisation of the release of £364, 854.85 of funding to mobilise phase 1 of the project in relation to the design and build. Planning permission was due to be considered at the end of February 2020 and the HE partner would be announced at the end of February 2020, beginning of March.

In discussing the report Members:

- Queried whether all of the constituent authorities and neighbouring authorities had been consulted adequately to ensure the progress of the University. Officers explained that the Business survey had given the team a flavour of the curriculum required but that there was a plan to talk to every constituent authority in January - February 2020, in more detail regarding curriculum requirements. Officers were also consulting authorities within a 45 minute commute of the University. Through the Skills Brokerage team they would also be consulting with over 200 businesses and the team had received an 80 responses to their initial consultation with businesses.
- Questioned whether the funding requested was in line with what had been anticipated at this stage of the project. Officers confirmed that the funding requested was not over and above what had been anticipated.

- Sought clarification on what the HE partner would be asked to deliver. Officers explained that the HE Partner would provide the teaching and learning at the University and would develop the curriculum. The aim was to have a teaching status of Silver and move to Gold very quickly.
- Questioned what the length of the contract with the HE partner would be. Officers clarified that the contract would be for 8 years, with the CPCA funding the University Building. There would then be a review as to whether there should be an Independent University at the end of the 8 years. Members highlighted that there would be complications if the Combined Authority asked the HE Partner to exit from a company at the same time. Officers acknowledged that this could be an issue and would be taken into consideration.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- 1) Note the progress made to date on the programme of delivery for the New University of Peterborough.
- 2) To approve the release of £364,854.85 from the 2019/20 budget to mobilise activities and services. The £364,854.85 is made up of £294,110.55 capital and £70,744.30 revenue.

46. LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN: THE BUSINESS GROWTH SERVICE

The Committee considered a report that gave an overview of the wider business and skills programme being introduced as an economy-wide Business Growth Service. The report provided an overview of the financial strategy to fund the new Business Growth Service and seek the Committees approval for the allocation of £150,000 of the £450,000 Skills Strategy Implementation budget within the Combined Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2022/23.

In presenting the report, officers explained that the Skills Strategy, approved by the Combined Authority Board on 29 May 2019 identified a Skills Talent and Apprenticeship Recruitment Hub, a brand which has been simplified to Skills Brokerage, as one of the key interventions in the strategy. The Local Industrial Strategy, approved by the Combined Authority on 27 March 2019, identified the Business Growth Service as bringing together a suite of interventions into a new, targeted approach to business growth support, evolving from the Growth Hub and Skills Brokering pilots funded by the Combined Authority. The report sought to gain approval from the Committee to the allocation of £50,000 pa for three years starting in 2020/21 from the £150,000 pa Skills Strategy Implementation budget, for the part funding of the Skills Brokerage element of the proposed new Business Growth Service. Officers explained that 87% of the Apprenticeship Levy of larger employers had been going straight back to the Treasury and the Combined Authority had estimated that there was around £20 million available to fund apprenticeships. Since the introduction of the levy, apprenticeships had dropped in the area from 6,000 a year in 2012 to 3,500 when the levy came in. The Skills Brokerage Service would connect business with the money to pay for apprenticeships.

In discussing the report Members;

- Sought further clarity that the funding requested was solely for Skills Brokerage. Officers clarified that this was the case and that the total budget for Skills Brokerage was £4 million.
- Queried how business would be engaged with Skills Brokerage in terms of identifying the relevant apprenticeships to suit their future needs. Officers explained that the Skills Brokers would be the human element of the system connecting stakeholders together and that they would be working with businesses to identify apprenticeships that would fit their future aspirations.
- Questioned whether the European Regional Development funding would be available in future years. Officers clarified that the Treasury had underwritten the funding until 2022.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the Outline Business Case and the proposal for the establishment of a Growth Service Management Company initially to be a wholly owned subsidiary of Angle Holdings Limited as set out in the Financial Implications.
- b) Subject to all the remaining public funding set out at paragraph 4.7 below being secured, to approve the allocation of £50,000 pa for three years starting in 2020/21 from the £150,000 pa Skills Strategy Implementation Budget set out in the Combined Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan, for the part funding of the Skills Brokerage element of the proposed new Business Growth Service.

47. EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS BOARD CREATION AND RECRUITMENT UPDATE PAPER

The Committee received a report that gave an update on the creation of the new Combined Authority Employment and Skills Board and on recruitment of Board Members.

In presenting the report officers explained that Employment and Skills Boards were also known as Skills Advisory Panels. The aim of the Board was to bring together local employers and skills providers to pool knowledge on skills and labour market needs, and to work together to understand and address key local challenges. The Department for Education had published an analytical toolkit to support Skills Advisory Panels with a one off block funding of £75,000 to grow the analytical capability. Officers clarified that the first meeting of the Board was due to take place on 11 December and the Combined Authority had already recruited a number of Board Members including Pat Carrington, the Principal of City College Peterborough and Assistant Director Employment and Skills – Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, an NHS Trust representative, a Department for Work and Pensions representative and representatives from a number of companies including Marshalls

Metalcraft and Cambridge Ahead. Officers were currently seeking a representative from the voluntary sector.

In discussing the report members;

- Queried how the Board would report in to the Skills Committee. Officers explained that there would be a standing item at each Committee meeting for officers to report back from the Board.
- Questioned whether there was any duplication with the work of constituent authorities. Officers explained that they worked closely with the constituent authorities to avoid duplication as far as possible.
- Discussed how the analytical work would be undertaken. Officers explained that the Combined Authority had a Service Level Agreement with Cambridgeshire Insight for data analysis and had recruited a new analyst to ensure that robust data was available to the Authority, which had already been hugely beneficial.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the formation of the new Employment & Skills Board and reporting structure.
- b) Note the recruitment of Board members.
- c) Note the overview of support to the Employment & Skills Board for the Analytical Capability.

48. APPRENTICESHIP LEVY POOLING SERVICE UPDATE PAPER

The Committee considered a report that gave an update on the launch of the new Combined Authority Apprenticeship Levy Pooling Service.

In presenting the report officers explained that a Levy Pledge letter that had been signed by the Mayor which was a joint letter from the Education Skills Funding Agency and the Combined Authority as a letter of indemnity and assurance to Levy Employers, to commit up to 25% of their unspent levy, known as Levy Transfer. This would support small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) microbusinesses and non-levy employers who would not otherwise have had funding to recruit apprentices and support providers who were low on non-apprenticeship levy funding. The Combined Authority had appointed a Levy Advisor and were currently recruiting another to go out to businesses to support them with the process.

In discussing the report Members queried whether other authorities had similar services. Officers explained that other authorities were looking to the Combined Authority as an exemplar to support them in utilising their levy as part of the Levy Pooling Service.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the launch of the CPCA Apprenticeship Levy Pooling Service.
- b) Note the Mayors Levy Pledge to support Levy transfer.

49. BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report that provided a proposal for future budget and performance reporting to the Committee.

In discussing the report Members:

- Queried the current set of performance indicators and how they would be developed. Officers explained that a significant piece of work to review the whole of the Combined Authorities Key Performance Indicators was currently underway and the outcome of this work would be presented at a future committee meeting. Officer clarified that there would be a more granular level of activity captured within the new set of indicators.
- Requested that the impact of climate change on growth be taken in to consideration when developing the indicators. Officer confirmed that this was being considered as part of the review.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the November budget and performance monitoring update.
- b) Agree to take reports in the format proposed for future meetings.

50. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Members noted the date of the next meeting as 8 January 2020

Chairman