



# Skills & Employment Committee – Draft Minutes

**Monday 6 November 2023**

Venue:	Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, Huntingdon PE29 3TN	
Time:	10.00 to 13.00	
Present:	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha Mayor Dr Nik Johnson Councillor James Lay Councillor Eileen Wilson Councillor Ian Benney Councillor Sam Carling Councillor Sam Wakeford Mr Nitin Patel Mr Vic Annells*  *Joined via Zoom link	Chair and Member for Cambridgeshire County Council CPCA Mayor East Cambridgeshire District Council South Cambridgeshire District Council Fenland District Council Cambridge City Council Huntingdonshire District Council Business Board Representative Business Board Representative
Apologies	Councillor Peter Hiller	Peterborough City Council

## Minutes:

<b>1</b>	<b>Announcements, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</b>
1.1	Although Cllr Hiller, the new Peterborough member was unable to attend the meeting given the short notice, the Chair welcomed him on to the Committee. The Chair went on to express her thanks for the work of the outgoing Peterborough member, Cllr Lynne Ayres, and her deputy, Cllr Jackie Allen.
1.2	Apologies were received from Councillor Peter Hiller
1.3	No declarations of interest were made.
	<b><u>RESOLVED</u></b>  That on behalf of the Committee, the Chair write to Cllr Ayres to formally express the Committee's thanks and appreciation.
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of the Skills Committee meeting on 3 July 2023 and Action Log</b>
2.1	The minutes of the meeting on 4 September 2023 were approved as an accurate record subject to the following amendment:
2.2	The Action Log was noted.
<b>3</b>	<b>Public Questions</b>
3.1	No Public Questions had been submitted.

<p><b>4</b></p> <p>4.1</p>	<p><b>Combined Authority Forward Plan</b></p> <p>There were no comments from the Committee.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>1. That the Combined Authority Forward Plan be noted.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p><b>Growth Works - Management Update to Year 3, Quarter 11 (to September 2023)</b></p> <p>Steve Clarke, Acting Associate Director Business, Trade and Investment, introduced the report which updated the Skills and Employment Committee on the latest performance data from the Growth Works Programme for the reporting period to 30th September 2023. The report also updated Members on the progress being made on the Exit Strategy to wind down the Growth Works Programme. Nigel Parkinson, Chair of Growth Works was in attendance to answer members' questions.</p> <p>During discussion the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The last quarter (11<sup>th</sup> of 12) had been the best performing quarter of the whole programme and had shown marked increases in the three key performance measures of the contract; new jobs, learning outcomes and apprenticeships.</li> <li>b) Although they had performed well in this last quarter, apprenticeships remained a challenge not only for the programme but also nationally.</li> <li>c) As well as the Client Satisfaction survey and the Net Promoter Score referenced in the report additional surveying about the impact of the programme had been undertaken. To date this had not been shared externally but would be included in the Programme closure report which would report on lessons learnt and how businesses had been impacted.</li> <li>d) On the closure of the programme a full impact evaluation would be undertaken.</li> <li>e) Conversations were being had with the Economic Development Officers (EDOs) at the constituent authorities in order to disseminate knowledge about the exit plan. All information was logged onto a central hubspot CRM (Customer Relationship Management tool) which the CPCA owned and was able to share with other partners.</li> <li>f) The intention was to have all stakeholders (including representatives from all the constituent authorities) present at a final review session in January to ensure that questions could be asked and there were no gaps in information.</li> <li>g) From January, and the move to in-house, there would be a different style of reporting.</li> <li>h) The Growth Works team were confident that funds could be allocated to more companies that would come through this month and into December. Any remaining monies would not be lost but would be reallocated at the end of the programme when different options could be explored.</li> <li>i) Apprenticeships had been in sharp focus throughout the programme with the approach taken adapting to try and encourage more engagement and take-up, particularly with SMEs (Small – medium sized enterprises). It was very difficult for companies to run with apprenticeships on their own because of the administration involved and their own lack of resources to support them.</li> <li>j) It was suggested that there was space for the Committee to lobby Government to lessen the bureaucratic burden of the current system.</li> </ul> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <p>That the Skills and Employment Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the Growth Works Programme &amp; Performance Update to Year 3, Quarter 11 (to 30th September 2023).</li> <li>2. Note the draft Growth Works Programme Exit Plan (to the contract end on 31st December 2023)</li> </ul>
<p><b>6</b></p> <p>6.1</p>	<p><b>Update on Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) Peterborough Project</b></p> <p>Jim Cunningham, Interim Assistant Director Delivery, provided members with an update on progress with the development and delivery of Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) Peterborough</p>

6.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) 84% of students had chosen ARU because it was local and they did not have to move. Members queried whether that level of demand would still continue or would the University have to adapt and provide accommodation/halls of residence in order to offer a fuller, more traditional university 'experience'.
- b) The University would continue to focus on attracting local residents as the community had been identified as a further education cold-spot.
- c) Smart manufacturing and the creative industry had been targeting Peterborough and this could lead to development opportunities for the University.
- d) Any sector that had a relationship with the university could help to shape the curriculum.
- e) Extraordinary progress had been made in a comparatively short space of time but it would take time to develop areas of expertise.
- f) Members suggested that a future meeting of the Committee be held at ARU and that the principal Ross Renton be invited to speak to Members.

**RESOLVED**

That the Skills and Employment Committee:

1. Note the contents of the report and comment on how the work of the Committee can be further aligned to supporting the University's and partners' ambitions to maximise the economic impact of ARU Peterborough.

**ACTION:**

1. To arrange that a future meeting of the Committee be held at ARU Peterborough and that its principal Ross Renton be invited to speak.

**7 Further Education Cold-Spots Projects Update**

7.1 Parminder Singh-Garcha, Head of Education and Skills Strategy, introduced the report which, following a request at the September meeting, provided Members with an update on the Further Education Cold-Spots projects in East Cambridgeshire and St Neots.

7.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) ARU Peterborough was an excellent example of where investment had been made in educational cold spots.
- b) The point reached in the project was the commissioning of a feasibility study to see whether the growth in Ely and St. Neots justified the commissioning of additional provision.
- c) The Chair referenced a meeting in which the heads of the FE colleges, which were already supplying excellent provision across Cambridgeshire, expressed some scepticism about whether the growth in the 16-19 population was sufficient to make the provision of additional Further Education colleges in these areas the right answer. The local authorities, however, were expecting extensive growth in the Ely and St. Neots area which would fuel demand so it would be interesting to see what conclusions the consultant's feasibility study came to.
- d) There was recognition from the Committee that that there was a serious need for better provision in the Ely and St. Neots areas but that there were different ways in which that need could be met.
- e) New provision should not compete with existing FE colleges but should instead be looking to have a definitive offer in the additional skills that were needed, such as in the green economy.
- f) Further discussion with involved parties, including the Employment and Skills Board, and the next steps to be taken, would flow from the data presented in the consultant's report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Skills and Employment Committee:

1. Receive an update on the FE Cold-Spots projects in East Cambridgeshire and St Neots.

2. Note the revised milestones for the FE Cold-Spots projects including the proposal to reprofile the allocated funding as part of the MTFP process.

## **8 State of the Economy Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Summer 2023)**

8.1 Domenico Cirillo, Business Programmes and Business Board Manager introduced the report which updated the Skills & Employment Committee on the latest data in overall economic performance for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough.

8.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) On a positive note, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough were showing slightly more signs of recovery than other areas.
- b) The Pharmaceutical, Lifestyle and Agro-tech sector were showing signs of growth but there were signs of a slight slowdown in manufacturing sectors.
- c) The productivity gaps that were evident pre-pandemic seemed only to be getting worse post-pandemic and a strong apprenticeship offer was one of the things that could help address this.
- d) The CPCA needed to be mindful of the impact of transport on people's ability to access improved training opportunities.
- e) The risks around electricity and water would be a major factor in achieving growth.
- f) Members queried how the Education and Training achievements referenced on page 162 of the pack were being defined.
- g) The Committee was reminded that much of the information was based on a data set from 2021 as this was the last set of ONS data available.
- h) Members asked whether PHD students were being tracked as they were not employees but were the pipeline into roles into the higher skill sectors and this would give a perspective on potential capacity gaps.

### RESOLVED:

1. The Skills and Employment Committee resolved to note the latest Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Economic Update for Summer 2023

### ACTIONS:

1. Officers to check with Metro dynamics on the definition of education and training achievements and report back to the Committee.
2. A further update, including the latest data available, to be tabled at a future meeting of the Committee.
3. Officers to check on the concentration of PHD students and report back to the Committee.

## **9 Employment and Skills Board Update**

9.1 Melissa Gresswell, Project Manager: Skills Bootcamps and Special Projects, and lead officer supporting the Board provided a verbal update on the meeting of the Employment and Skills Board which took place on 10 October 2023.

9.2 During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) Vic Annells had been appointed as Chair of the Employment and Skills Board and chaired the October meeting. The meeting had been a very positive one with the Board committing to re-energise itself and, under its remit as an advisory board to the Employment and Skills Committee, focus on offering strategic advice and supporting decision making.
- b) The Board was in agreement that it did not currently have enough industry and sector representation so was actively looking for new membership.
- c) Going forward, the Board would be much more aligned with the work and forward plan of the Skills and Employment Committee.

- d) The Board's members were committed to making the work of the Board a success and the way in which they could do that was by making an impact and serving the Skills and Employment Committee more closely. It was therefore critical that the Board got tasked by the Committee to undertake work.
- e) It would be useful for Board members and Committee members to meet one another.

**ACTION:**

- 1. Officers to arrange a meeting between Board and Committee members

**10. Budget Performance Report**

10.1 Bruna Menegatti, Finance Manager, introduced the report which provided an update of the financial position for 2023/24 and analysis against the 2023/24 budgets, up to the period ending September 2023.

10.2 During discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) It was important to note that the some of the underspends were not actual underspends but just shifts in the year in which they would be spent, and that the activity would still go ahead.
- b) The CPCA would continue to spend the Bootcamp monies and get as many people as possible onto bootcamps.
- c) It was disappointing that, due to capacity issues, there were delays of six months to work on the AEB budget and the Cold Spots project which should have been happening this Autumn rather than in the Spring.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Skills and Employment Committee:

- 1. Note the financial position of the Skills Division for the financial year 23/24 to September 2023
- 2. Review and comment on the current Skills and Employment budgets within the Combined Authority's Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme.

**11. Skills and Employment Committee Agenda Plan**

11.1 There were no comments from the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Skills and Employment Committee Agenda Plan be noted.

**12. Exclusion of Press and Public**

12.1 **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Skills and Employment Committee move into exempt session.

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The public session of the meeting was closed at 12.12pm

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**14. Date of Next Meeting**

13.1 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 15 January 2024

Meeting Ended: 12.37pm