

Skills & Employment Committee – 4 September 2023

Public Questions

	Question from:	Question to:	Question
1.	Cllr Alex Bulat (Cambridgeshire County Council)	Skills & Employment Committee	<p>Due to historical changes in Government policies on adult education and lifelong learning over the past half-century, Cambridge no longer has a specialist adult education and lifelong learning centre - a function that was previously undertaken by the Cambridge Collect for Arts & Technology (CCAT) on East Road until the late 1980s.</p> <p>In December 2020, the House of Commons Education Select Committee concluded: "Adult community learning providers are the jewel in the crown of the nation's adult education landscape.... We are not persuaded that the Department fully grasps the value and purpose of community learning. Nor does it appear that the Department has a vision or strategic approach for boosting this vital area of lifelong learning."</p> <p>I thank the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for previous conversations on adult education and how communities like my division in Abbey could benefit from further investment in this area.</p> <p>Now that Marshall's Airport is consulting about what to do with its site, and now that Hills Road Sixth Form College is consulting about opening a new college north of Cambridge, what consideration has the CPCA given towards establishing a lifelong learning centre in Cambridge that is easily accessible by public transport? Furthermore, what conversations is it having with both developers and large employers on both their skills needs and their willingness to contribute towards the costs of refurbishing an existing site or building a new bespoke site for lifelong learning in Cambridge - one that again is accessible to residents living in surrounding villages via public transport?</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
2.	Cllr Sam Davies (Cambridge City Council)		<p>"Research by the Queen Edith's Community Forum in 2019 identified that institutions in Queen Edith's ward host more than 50% of all sixth form students in Cambridgeshire.</p> <p>To give you an idea of the scale, Hills Road and Long Road Sixth Form Colleges now each host over 2600 students. Abbey College, The Perse and The Oakes (Netherhall) now each have around 400 sixth form students while CAST has around 140.</p>

			<p>The evidence suggests that facilities to meet the needs of these students has not kept up with the expansion in their numbers. For example, staff at Addenbrooke's have told me of their frustration that students use the food outlets on the concourse there at lunch time, delaying staff on breaks. Similarly, the issue of student overcrowding at the Cambridge Leisure Park during the day was raised at the recent city council elections. And if you speak to the students themselves, they tell you that they don't have sufficient independent study space, with long enough opening hours, and so many are relocating either to the Central Library, cafes or - if over 18 - to pubs and bars</p> <p>What conversations has the CPCA had with students, staff, and managers at Hills Road & Long Road Sixth Form Colleges, CAST Cambridge, The Perse and Abbey College regarding their student numbers and lack of sufficient facilities? What are the policy options available? Please could officers report back with an update at the next board meeting."</p>
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